



## *The West Texas Historical Review*

The West Texas Historical Association (WTHA) was organized on April 19, 1924, at the Taylor County Courthouse in Abilene, Texas. A short history of the organization can be found at <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/west-texas-historical-association>.

Since 1925, WTHA has produced the publication, *The West Texas Historical Association Yearbook*. Published annually, the *Yearbook* contains peer reviewed articles as well as other information about the organization. In 2014, the name of publication was officially changed to the *West Texas Historical Review* (WTHR).

More information on the West Texas Historical Association is available at <https://wtha.wildapricot.org/>

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*Hibernia Grace*

# West Texas Historical Association Year Book

VOL. I

JUNE, 1925

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- CARL C. RISTER, Simmons University.
- W. C. HOLDEN, McMurry College.
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Marcy's Reconnaissance Through Northern and Western  
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tions (*Parker's Notes*); Report of the Post Surgeon at the  
Post on the Clear Fork of the Brazos (Phantom Hill) for  
1852; Frontier Letters. Edited by Rupert N. Richardson.

Published by  
THE WEST TEXAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
ABILENE, TEXAS



# *West Texas Historical Association*

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The Association was organized April, 1924. The annual dues are three dollars. The Year Book and other publications of the Association are sent free to all members. Correspondence may be addressed to R. C. Crane, President, Sweetwater, or Carl C. Rister, Secretary of the West Texas Historical Association, Abilene.

## INTRODUCTORY

This is the first Year Book of the West Texas Historical Association. As soon as circumstances will justify we expect to publish a quarterly.

The Association was organized to promote the study of the history of West Texas, to collect and preserve its traditions, and to mark the noted and historic spots left within its borders by some of the founders of our part of the Empire state.

Our people have hardly begun to realize that our region has just as colorful a history as any other part of Texas; and it shall be our main aim to apprise the people inside and outside of West Texas of the fact that we have a history which the present generation and those who come after us should know more about.

In making up this Year Book it has been a question of selection from a mass of material; and in the nature of things no one subject could be made exhaustive.

We are printing some source material bearing directly on the history of this section which has been taken from old newspapers and books not generally known about and difficult to obtain.

The original papers herein included were read at the first annual meeting of the Association held at Cisco, April 18, 1925.

It is hoped that this book may be of use to teachers seeking source material on the history of West Texas for class use as well as to club women and others who are studying the history of this section.





# THE WEST TEXAS HISTORICAL YEAR BOOK

Vol. I.

June, 1925

## THE SETTLEMENT IN 1874-5 OF INDIAN TROUBLES IN WEST TEXAS

BY R. C. CRANE, OF SWEETWATER, TEXAS

History is defined to be "the recorded events of the past"; "that branch of science which is occupied with ascertaining and recording the facts of the past."

History deals with FACTS; and history can only be reliable where it is written by persons not interested in the outcome of the treatment to be given men or events dealt with.

What we now call propaganda is and has been too often mistaken for historical facts. It has been demonstrated that very much of the greatness of the Adams family in American history is dependent on the unsupported admissions of members of the family; that members of the family have always been fine press agents for the family's assumed importance. There is no doubt but that much of what goes as history would have been differently recorded if the writer had had access to the FACTS or had not mistaken propaganda for facts.

So far little attention has been paid to the facts having to do with the history of West Texas while every phase of the history of the older portions of the State have been dealt with, the period before the War between the States over and over again; and it has become evident that those of us living in West Texas must be the ones to search for the facts which will make our history known, not in a sectional spirit but to the end that our history—which is a part of that of Texas as a whole—may be made known to its own people as well as the outside world; for it has a history all its own, just as fascinating and colorful as any other part of Texas.

If we wish to look into the facts of a period, to get anything like a correct perspective we must have access to ALL of the facts. We



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If we wish to look into the facts of a period, to get anything like a correct perspective we must have access to ALL of the facts. We

cannot get the perspective if we pick out a man of minor importance and build the narrative of events to magnify his position. Nor can we get the correct perspective of a war, or of a train of events by picking out one battle or isolated incident of minor importance if considered as a part of the whole, and study that battle or incident only.

The time has come in West Texas, when we have begun to delve for the facts of its history; for us to begin to place men and incidents in their proper light and perspective, and view them as a whole.

In 1874-5 incidents and fighting occurred in the Plains section of Texas and the adjacent regions of Indian Territory (now Okla.), Kansas and New Mexico which settled the Indian question for West Texas and thereby began its real history and laid the foundation for its settlement and development now so much in evidence.

During the period mentioned, at one time as many as 2,000 soldiers of the United States were in the field in West Texas, under some of its very best officers fighting hostile Indians; and when they had finished their work, West Texas was ready for the settler; and to all intents and purposes the State of Texas had had an Empire added to its domain, for prior to that time West Texas was given over to the Red man and no settler dared to go west of the 100th meridian unless under the very guns of a fort.

Ten years prior to that time an all-day battle between soldiers of the United States under the command of the noted frontiersman, Kit Carson, then a colonel of New Mexico Volunteers, took place at the site of the original Adobe Walls in Hutchinson county, Texas, when Carson, leading about 250 men out of his total force of 321 soldiers and 75 friendly Indians, attacked a large force of Comanche, Prairie Apache and Kiowa Indians, and only by the most heroic fighting and the use of two machine guns and the protection of the old walls was he able to avoid annihilation, for the Indians brought into action against him the largest number of Indians which had ever been brought into battle west of the Mississippi river, their numbers being estimated as high as 3000.

During the Summer and Fall of 1864 while the war between the States was at its bloodiest, these Indians had been depredating extensively in Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico, especially on travellers on the old Santa Fe trail; and in the Fall Colonel Carson was



ordered to fit out an expedition against them, at Fort Bascom on the Canadian river in eastern New Mexico. With 321 men, about 75 friendly Indians and his wagon train, he travelled down the Canadian river for about 200 miles. It was understood that the Indians were camped at Adobe Walls. Leaving his camp and supplies fifteen miles behind under guard, with 246 men he attacked an Indian village at Adobe Walls, captured the village and about 200 of their lodges, but in turn was surprised and counter-attacked by a much larger force of Indians from other villages down the river. The Indians were well equipped and fought hard. The fight lasted from early morning until nightfall. Carson was surrounded and had to fight in the open except for the slight protection afforded to some of his cavalry horses by the old walls. He was outnumbered about ten to one, but he managed to make it a drawn battle, drove off the Indians with 21 casualties, one soldier and two friendly Indians killed and 18 wounded. Not being in position to pursue the hostile Indians, he returned to Fort Bascom and called for 700 more men to finish his work. But they were not furnished and there the incident was closed. The Indians lost about 60 killed and wounded.

*That* was the Battle of Adobe Walls, and not the attack by 200 Indians in June 1874 near the same place on 28 buffalo hunters and traders.

The original Adobe Walls had been built prior to 1840 by the Bents Fort people at the request of the Indians because the tribes in that vicinity were not then on good terms with the other Indians located in the region of Bents Forts on the Arkansas. The Indians however patched up their differences and the Adobe Walls fort as it was called, was abandoned after a few years; though the same people put in several trading posts higher up on the Canadian.

In the Spring of 1874 the Comanche, the Kiowa, Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians were restless on their reservations in Indian Territory. The government was but illy taking care of them, probably sufficient in itself to make them restless. But in addition, the slaughter of the buffalo was in full swing. The discovery had been made that the hide of the buffalo had a commercial value, and these animals were being slaughtered wholesale. Over four million buffalo were slaughtered in 1872-3 and 1874 in the regions north of Texas, to say nothing of the thousands which were killed in Texas.

The buffalo furnished food, clothing and shelter to the Indian; and from time immemorial they had depended on the buffalo for these articles; and the pressing of settlers in the middle west on their reservations, and the construction of several Pacific railroads and the consequent cutting up of the decreasing buffalo herds, all made them more restless.

Old maps indicate that by treaty the Plains and Panhandle region of Texas were set aside to the Kiowa and other Indians for hunting grounds in about 1864.

Prior to 1874 they had had express agreements with U. S. Government officials that the Arkansas river should be the deadline for buffalo hunting, and that the white man must not hunt the buffalo south of that river.

Under these circumstances a lot of buffalo hunters and several post traders at Dodge City, Kansas, seeing that the buffaloes were getting scarce around that region sent an emissary down into the Panhandle of Texas to investigate hunting down there. Word came back that hunting was good, and 50 men with 30 wagons went down and located a camp about a mile from the original Adobe Walls, carrying with them goods for a store (a second one coming a little later), a blacksmith shop and a saloon. Buildings were erected and business opened up. Guns and ammunition were carried in stock, and the post traders bought the buffalo hides; and freight wagons plied back and forth to Dodge City frequently. Buffalo camps were dotted all over the Panhandle, many other buffalo hunters quickly following the establishment of the post traders at Adobe Walls.

The coming of these people was actuated solely by love of adventure and the commercial instinct of making money out of the buffalo hide industry. They were not settlers and had no thought of the future or of the possibility that settlers would ever locate in that region.

They well knew when they crossed the Arkansas river that they were crossing the deadline; that they were violating treaty obligations of their government made with the Indians; that they had no right to go and that in going they were absolutely taking their lives in their own hands.

Notwithstanding all of this they decided to go; and as stated they went into the Indians hunting grounds.



The several Indian tribes named above, under all of these circumstances, held a meeting at Medicine Ridge in Indian Territory and determined to go on the warpath against the whites. They divided up into varying sized forces, went on the warpath, taking different directions. They killed, burned and plundered in South-west Kansas; they attacked and killed whom they met in Western Indian Territory right at their very reservations; they attacked Major Compton of the U. S. Army with a small force of U. S. soldiers near where Woodward, Oklahoma, is now located and were beaten off.

They killed four buffalo hunters at two different camps near Adobe Walls, and this fact becoming known that the Indians were on the warpath, sent a number of the hunters into Adobe Walls.

This was the situation at Adobe Walls early on the morning of June 27, 1874. There were 28 men in the saloon and two store buildings during that night; they had been staying in for several days on account of the Indians being on the warpath, and had been having a good time.

In the very early morning of June 27th an unusual noise waked several of the men, including Billy Dixon, and they decided to stay up, and thus were able to detect the Indians in their attempt to deliver a surprise attack on Adobe Walls.

The Indians attacked viciously and frequently the men in the several buildings, riding right up to the buildings and firing. But every man in the buildings was a crack shot, else he would not have been there; and the hunters succeeded in fighting the Indians off. Several men on the outside of the building were killed, and on the fifth day one of those on the inside was killed accidentally.

Just how many Indians were killed or wounded was never known as the Indians always carried away their wounded and killed wherever possible. But there were twelve or more killed right at or near Adobe Walls. The statement has been published that this attack commenced on Sunday morning. The calendar shows that June 27, 1874, came on Saturday.

After the fight was over, and when the stench began to annoy, the men dug a pit for 12 horses which lay piled up together between Rath's store and the saloon, and buried them in it; and the

other horses that had been killed and the dead Indians were dragged off on the prairie and left to the coyotes and the-buzzards.

All of the hunters' horses had been killed or taken off; and so they were afoot. But other hunters soon came hurrying in after the fight, with horses. After about a week a party consisting of Dixon and several others set out for Fort Dodge, Kansas, to report the situation. They went to Fort Dorge because it was nearer to that place than to any post or settlements in Texas.

The Indians were under the care and protection of the Interior Department of the Government at Washington, and before the U. S. army could take the field against them, though the Indians were on the warpath, permission had to be gotten from the Interior Department. Permission was granted on July 21st.

Immediately thereafter, General Nelson A. Miles, then a Colonel in the U. S. Army, was ordered to Fort Dodge to fit up an expedition to make war on the Indians in the region of the Panhandle of Texas, western Oklahoma, southwestern Kansas, and eastern New Mexico. His force consisted of about 900 men, well equipped.

General Miles was one of the best known Indian fighters in the army.

At the same time, Major Price was ordered eastward from Fort Bascom, New Mexico, the same fort from which Col. Carson had come. He came down the Canadian with about 250 men.

Lt. Col. Davidson was ordered to proceed westward from Fort Sill with another considerable force; and Major Buell and Lt. Col. Neill took position with their forces near the reservations in Indian Territory.

General Mackenzie was ordered up from Texas with eight companies of cavalry, using Fort Griffin as his base. There was not a more effective Indian fighter in the whole army than General Mackenzie.

All of these several officers were ordered to a common point—the Panhandle of Texas—with orders to crush the hostile Indians wherever they were found.

Thus there was placed in the field 2000 or more men, of the best that the U. S. Army had, under officers as good as the army contained. At least six of them had risen to the rank of Brigadier General or Major General of Volunteers in the War between the States; four of them subsequently became Brigadier Generals, three



of them Colonels, and two of them became Lt. Generals and Commanders-in-Chief of the U. S. army, (Miles and Chaffee.)

Genl. John Pope, was in command of the Department of the Missouri, with headquarters at Fort Leavenworth. Genl. Sheridan was in command of the Military Division of the Missouri, with headquarters at Chicago, and therefore in general command of the situation.

Genl. Pope for 1874 reported that when the post traders and the buffalo hunters applied to him for protection to permit them to remain and continue in business, he flatly refused for the reason that they had no rights in the region; that they had no trading license or permit of any sort to be there, and that they had been selling whiskey and arms and ammunition to the Indians contrary to law.

Billy Dixon, one of those who was in the thick of the fighting when the Indians attacked Adobe Walls on June 27th, accepted service under General Miles as a guide and scout, and came back with the soldiers, and continued in that position until 1883.

The soldiers arrived at Adobe Walls just in time to ward off another attack by the Indians.

When the post traders were refused the protection they had asked for they abandoned their business ventures, hauling off some of their goods but leaving some of the groceries, etc., which the Indians were too suspicious to use.

And thus the war in the Panhandle opened; and continued until the Spring of 1875. During that time there were twenty-five engagements between hostile Indians and U. S. soldiers, in the region in question; and twenty of them occurred on Texas soil.

One of the largest engagements occurred near the mouth of Tule canyon on the banks of Red River, between General Miles commanding twelve companies of U. S. Cavalry and a much larger force of Indians.

The Indians had posted themselves in good military fashion so as to get the protecting benefit of the bluffs on the banks of Red River, and were in position to have given the soldiers more serious trouble than they did; but Genl. Miles surprised them, routed them and drove them out onto the open plains, killing and capturing many ponies and killing quite a number of the Indians, the exact number not stated.

General Mackenzie moving up from the south by way of Fort

Concho and Fort Griffin, took position in Blanco Canyon near where is now located the famous Hank Smith first rock house ever built in that region and at which there was established (later) the first postoffice in that section of country, and probably the first in all of the Panhandle-Plains country.

The land in that vicinity by the way, is now owned by Hon. C. U. Connellee, Vice President of this Association. The military map of the period designates this headquarters of Genl. Mackenzie as Anderson's Supply Camp; and it was maintained as a U. S. army camp for several years.

General Miles and the other officers and forces cooperating with him would hunt down the Indians, whip them and drive them to their reservations. Or, if they managed to get away, they would be forced southward into Genl. Mackenzie's area of activity; and there he would catch and whip them with his 640 picked U. S. soldiers.

About a month after General Miles' engagement at the mouth of Tule canyon, Genl. Mackenzie had an engagement near the same place, when he killed and captured 1400 to 2000 Indian ponies, this battlefield being marked for years by the bleached bones of Indian ponies. The Indians were whipped, their ponies taken from them or killed, and they were sent into their reservations afoot.

These are but samples of the battles and the manner of warfare that it took to clear West Texas of the Indians; that went very earnestly on until the Spring of 1875.

"The Indians were given no time for rest. Regardless of weather they were hunted down everywhere. Even in January, 1875, when the thermometer was 25 degrees below zero and the streams of the Panhandle were frozen over so hard that the army wagon trains crossed over on the ice, the work of the army in subduing the Indians went right on; and the loss inflicted on them in killed and wounded, in ponies, lodges and property of other description was great and irreparable." No reports were made of the number of Indians killed by the soldiers—General Sheridan was in general command, and he believed that there were no good Indians except dead ones.

"Their favorite haunts were cleared and occupied, and though they tried by every means to evade pursuit and make it impossible, they found no place of security, and as they explained when driven

in to the agencies, they could find no place to have a quiet night's rest. Their usual depredations incident to a season of hostilities was, to a great extent, prevented while they were continually harassed, hunted down and whipped in every engagement of importance until the powerful tribes that a few months before went forth in the possession of thousands of ponies, abundant weapons of war and their own prowess, were thoroughly subjugated, humbled and impoverished and were finally driven to surrender their arms, their stock and their captives, and place themselves at the mercy of the government"; and thus the Indian question for West Texas was settled, 'as it was likewise settled between 1874 and 1880 in a belt of country about 400 miles wide and extending from the Rio Grande to Canada.'

While in the field subduing the Indians the troops under General Miles travelled over 1000 miles, mostly in Texas.

Military operations in the Panhandle put a stop to buffalo hunting in all of that region; but in a little while operations were transferred to the country south of the lines held by Genl. Mackenzie. With Fort Griffin (near Albany) as headquarters many of the hunters who had been active in that business operating out of Kansas soon were doing a thriving business. C. C. Rath who had one of the stores at Adobe Walls when the Indians attacked it, came down and put in a business on the south edge of Stonewall county; and for some time this was called Rath City at which were maintained stores, saloons, dance halls, etc., in fact all of the usual accompaniments of a wide-open, frontier town. This place can still be located at Pringle Moore's ranch about twelve miles northwest of Hamlin, by a few graves, several traces of cellars and of adobe walls.

This work of slaughter of the buffalo continued until they were all gone. During the winter of 1876-7 one outfit operating out of Yellow House canyon slaughtered 7,500 buffalo and cured over 100,000 pounds of buffalo meat. Hundreds of people from Texas and everywhere else took part in the wild scramble to help to kill out the buffalo.

With the buffalo gone and the Indians back on their reservations thoroughly subdued by the soldiers, the Indians have never again gone on the warpath to invade West Texas. Of course incursions of small parties of Indians from the reservations into West Texas

did not at once stop, but for several years they would make occasional raids, killing, stealing and plundering. Likewise on the Mexican border these occasional raids continued for a time.

Following the close of military operations in the Panhandle against the Indians, on the recommendation of Genl. Miles, Fort Elliott on Sweetwater Creek in what is now Wheeler county, was established as a safeguard against possible Indian depredations into the Panhandle from their reservations in Indian Territory; and thereupon at once the grazing lands of the Panhandle region began to attract the cattlemen.

Miles O'Laughlan of Miami was one of the very first, possibly the first to take advantage of the protection afforded by the presence of the soldiers at Fort Elliott. His father's place in southwest Kansas had been burnt in the summer of 1874 when the Indians went on the warpath. He has been engaged in the cattle business in that region ever since. Charles Goodnight and others came soon after, while to the south the cattlemen began to push out farther and farther from the forts and camps, and establish their ranch headquarters rather gradually at first, but when the buffalo had been killed down to where it was no longer profitable to hunt them as a business in about 1877, cattlemen pushed out rather rapidly into all sections of West Texas and located ranches for themselves.

Buffalo bones were so plentiful over the prairies of West Texas, when the Texas & Pacific Railway was built through in 1881-2, that the gathering of these bones to the railroad for shipment as a fertilizer became quite an extensive business engaged in by many. One man while hauling the wire for a ranch fence for Charles Goodnight, from Colorado City, is said to have made over \$1500 by hauling buffalo bones to town when going for his load, instead of going empty.

In 1876 the Texas legislature gave tangible evidence that the state recognized the fact that West Texas was a part of Texas, and proceeded to carve about 56 counties of that region located west of Taylor, Jones and Haskell counties, and north of Tom Green county which then extended westward to New Mexico; and this action on the part of the legislature appears to have been taken as an indication that settlers were wanted in West Texas, and they began to trickle into that vast region, slowly at first.

With the settlement of the Indian question the U. S. government



recognized the need of re-adjusting its military forts and arrangements, all over the country. Fort Richardson in Jack county was abandoned in 1878; Griffin in 1881; McKavett in 1883; Stockton in 1886; Concho in 1889; and Elliott in 1890, while large posts were built at San Antonio and El Paso, with a few old forts along the Rio Grande retained.

General Miles in his memoirs indicates that he was shocked to find when the soldiers arrived at Adobe Walls on August 19, nearly two months after the attack of the Indians, that the heads of twelve Indians were sticking on the corral pickets and the bodies of the Indians left where they fell.

Many of the U. S. army officers engaged in the campaign just outlined won promotions, several winning medals of honor, etc., from Congress. General Miles alone recommended seventeen by name for promotion, including Genls. A. R. Chaffee and Frank Baldwin. A number of these officers afterwards in Cuba and the Philippines and elsewhere fighting Indians, won further distinction.

And thus the way was cleared, West Texas relieved from further molestation from the Indian, and its settlement and development made possible.

"The men of the U. S. army freely offered their lives and actually cleared this vast region during that brief period (1874-80) giving it to civilization forever."

"It is to be hoped that the services and sacrifices of these men will at least be remembered by the people who occupy this country and enjoy its benefits."

"That part of the country freed from the ravages of the Indians by the campaign of 1874-5 is alone larger than all New England, together with New York, New Jersey and Delaware."

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## FORT GRIFFIN.

BY CARL C. RISTER

When the United States acquired Texas in 1845, the people of the new state thought that they could return to their homes in peace, take up their occupations without any fear of hostile invasions again being directed against them such as those formerly sent from across the Rio Grande; but little did they count on the power of the wild savage races on their western frontier. For these Indians to feel that they were bound by treaty agreements was exceedingly difficult. They had been accustomed to the free, open life of the plains, and naturally regarded the efforts of settlers to restrict their freedom on their former hunting grounds with jealousy and suspicion. More and more they found themselves circumscribed in their hunting grounds; and faced with an ever narrowing circle of advancing people from Kansas and the Platte on the north, and from Texas on the south, a war of extinction faced them<sup>1</sup>. Thus the period of depredations and border forays which followed was largely the consequence of this state of affairs.<sup>2</sup>

Since it was recognized by the Federal Government that this would lead to a prolonged struggle, a line of defense was thrown out in advance of the frontier to protect the exposed settlements in the western part of the state. This chain began with Eagle Pass on the Rio Grande, running northward to Preston on the Red River. The line of defense was composed of the following forts: Duncan, Clark, Territt, McKavett, Chadbourne, Phantom Hill or "Post on the Clear Fork of the Brazos,"<sup>3</sup> and the supply post at Preston.

During the period of the Civil War the frontier posts were abandoned by the Federal Government and the frontier was occupied by state troops; but with the close of the war in 1865, it was necessary for the state forces to abandon the frontier, leaving the frontier settlers to the mercy of the marauding Indians.

When the dawn of peace came following the close of the Civil War, the frontier presented a pitiable spectacle. Homes were in

1. Agent Wm. Bent, in Annual Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1850, pp. 137-139, gives this as a cause for Indian depredations.

2. The departmental reports of the frontier officers from 1850 to 1854 dwell at some length upon the growing hostility of the Indians. As a type of such an attitude, see Annual Reports of the Departments of Texas, 1854, on file in Old Records Section, Adjutant General's Office, War Department.

3. Designated as such by War Department Reports.

ashes; horses and cattle were gone; fields were filled with weeds and grass; fences were down; and along the entire border were evidences of desolation. The frontier had been pushed in for a distance of 150 to 200 miles, and where civilization once held sway, now wild beasts and savages roamed at will.<sup>4</sup> The "Waco Register" of April 21, 1866, carries an account of a visit made to the frontier by some of its citizens in the following words: "The Indians seemed to swarm all through the country—mostly Comanches. Not more than one-fifth of the old ranches are occupied. The inhabitants remaining, for the most part, have run together and fortified<sup>5</sup> up for self preservation. A great many people have left and others are leaving, and the whole country seems to be in a desperate condition indeed." One of these observers gave it as his opinion that one reason why the Indians were so numerous on the frontier was that the buffalo range extended sixty miles east of Camp Cooper and Phantom Hill, and that the Indians naturally followed their game.<sup>6</sup>

The white people taking up the unoccupied lands on the frontier at this time were dismayed to find that the Federal Government was slow in sending adequate forces to the frontier after the Civil War. Here was to be found a far-flung frontier of 1300 miles, open to depredations of the Indians and white outlaws. The border people were helpless to prevent the constant incursions directed against them.<sup>7</sup> Unaccustomed as they were to border warfare and savage cunning, their half-hearted attempts to defend themselves were pitifully futile. Usually when news spread through the country that the savages were pillaging, before a posse could be organized to follow them up, the Indians would be well out of reach of any such

4. "Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians," p. 16, compiled from official records, Headquarters Division of Missouri, 1862, has this to say of Indian forays: "So boldly has this system of murder and robbery been carried out that since June, 1862, not less than 800 persons (1868) have been murdered,—the Indians escaping from the troops by traveling at night when the trail could not be followed, thus giving enough distance and time to render pursuit, in most cases, fruitless." Another writer has this to say: "The whole of the frontier line of counties of the state west of Grayson County has been, for the past four years, subject to the inroads of the Indians during the fall of each year. Prior to the war the population of Jack County was about four fold of what it is now; the settlements have been deserted during the war, owing to increased dangers from the Indians, at a time when fighting material was engaged elsewhere." Circular No. 4, S. G. O., Washington, D. C., Dec. 5, 1870.

5. A custom of several families of one of the frontier settlements seeking protection from Indian forays by choosing one of the stronger houses of the community as a defense position.

6. The "Flakes Daily Bulletin" (Galveston) of April 27, 1866, called attention to the fact that the Indians were depredating in the vicinity of Austin.

7. The general impression the frontier people were acquainted with all phases of Indian warfare does not seem to be well authenticated by documentary evidence.

punitive expedition. The blow from the marauders would fall suddenly, and without a moment's loss of time, the stolen stock would be hastily driven from the country. The quickness with which this was done was due to the fact that the Indians were usually mounted on swift, agile ponies, and to the additional fact that they knew every hill, valley, and plain intervening between their camping grounds and the settlements. Knowing the character of the country over which they had to drive their stolen stock gave them every advantage in out-distancing their pursuers. Under these conditions even the soldiers, trained in border warfare, were no match for the savages when it came to pitting their skill against that of the latter. Much less then could the settlers be expected to protect themselves against such raids.

With the increased depredations from the Indians it became necessary that the old frontier posts be occupied and new ones built. This policy was soon put into operation with the result that there was a frontier line of defense beginning with Ft. Richardson on the north, and passing through Fort Griffin; the picket posts of Belknap, Phantom Hill, and Chadbourne; Fort Concho; Fort McKavett; then almost to the west of Fort McKavett, in the "Big Bend" country, were the four posts of Stockton, Davis, Quitman and Bliss. Then from Fort McKavett was another line composed of Forts Clark, Duncan, McIntosh, and Brown, which followed the Rio Grande.

It was the line of posts from Fort Richardson to the Rio Grande, including the four posts of the "Big Bend" District, which played the more important role in the defense against the hostile Indians. Of these posts none was more important than Fort Griffin. This post was established on the afternoon of July 31, 1867, by Brevet Colonel Sturgis, Lieutenant Colonel of the Sixth United States Cavalry. The forces under his command consisted of four companies of the Sixth Cavalry, which formerly had been stationed at Fort Belknap. The latter place was found to be unsuited for a military post, due to the fact that the water was insufficient for the use of the garrison stationed there.<sup>8</sup>

When the military authorities decided upon the giving up of Fort Belknap, a surveying board was sent out to locate a site for a new

8. Besides a well at the post, which was almost dry during dry summers, the nearest supply was a stream about six miles distant.—*Med. Record of Post*, Vol. 51, pp. 1-3.



post. After carefully going over the surrounding country, a site was finally located on the Clear Fork of the Brazos River, thirty-seven miles above Fort Belknap. The post was first designated Camp Wilson in honor of Lieutenant Wilson, son of a United States Senator from Massachusetts. The name was subsequently changed to Fort Griffin by the officer commanding the post in honor of General Griffin, a commander of the department after the Civil War.

It was proposed to construct the permanent buildings of stone, and every preparation to that end was made. Steam saw mills, window sashes, door frames, tools, etc., were provided for and a number of mechanics were sent out by Brevet Colonel J. B. C. Lee, Depot Quartermaster at San Antonio, Texas. As it was supposed to take years to complete the permanent structures temporary quarters for the officers and men were erected.<sup>9</sup> Small wooden houses were built for the privates and non-commissioned officers, and a line of officers' quarters were put up, consisting of one room and kitchen each. Two buildings of two rooms and a hall each were hauled in from deserted ranches nearby, one of which was to be used for commissary quarters and the other for a hospital. A sufficient number of huts could not be erected at this time with the result that six men were compelled to sleep in one of these huts, fourteen by eight feet, and five feet and ten inches to the roof.<sup>10</sup>

During the early period there were no stables built with the result that the horses suffered severely,<sup>11</sup> many of them dying from pneumonia. The hospital, commissary, and Quartermaster's storeroom were originally made of logs; but additions made from time to time, as the necessary lumber could be secured from the sawmills, partially satisfied these needs. Much of the lumber, however, was sawed from the timber in the vicinity and put up before it had dried out sufficiently with the result that the winter winds and the summer showers made it uncomfortable for the men while inside the huts. When the lumber began to dry out much it would warp, leaving great cracks in the buildings. Due to the fact that the frontier

9. One writer complained that the soldiers were being used to erect comfortable quarters for the officers rather than defending the frontier. Cf. "San Antonio Daily Express," March 3, 1871.

10. For details connected with the building of the posts, number of houses, etc., cf. Medical Record of Fort Griffin, Vol. 51, pp. 1-3.

11. *Ibid.* All the frontier posts to the north of Fort McKavett were built on very much the same plan.

moved on westward, the more permanent buildings were never erected; however, inexpensive buildings were added from time to time, as was the case in the history of a majority of the posts, when there was an imperative need for such additions.

The experiences of the men stationed at this post were monotonous enough to them, but to those who read of their activities, colorful and romantic. Arduous were the duties of these frontier soldiers. Patrols were constantly out on the frontier, escorting Government mails, surveying parties, cattle drivers, and following up and punishing bands of depredateing Indians. The arduous nature of many of these expeditions is typified in the following order issued by the post commander at Fort Griffin on June 19, 1873: "First Lieutenant J. U. Kelly, Tenth United States Cavalry (Negro troops) with two non-commissioned officers and ten privates, will leave the post at once and proceed to Matthew's ranch, there take the trail of a party of Indians supposed to have stolen stock from the latter place, and endeavor to overtake and punish them. He will not merely follow on until it is lost, but will continue on until every effort and strategem is exhausted, sparing neither men nor horses."<sup>12</sup>

It is needless to say that the majority of these expeditions sent out did not succeed in overtaking the savages, but some of them did with the result that the Indians were punished. Even where success was met with in such enterprises, the post commanders were meager in their details of them, as is illustrated by the following account: "A party was sent out from Fort Griffin, Texas, commanded by Captain A. R. Chaffer, Sixth Cavalry, composed of troops from companies F and I, Sixth Cavalry, consisting of four officers and sixty-two enlisted men, and seven Indians. Departed March 5, 1868; returned March 9, 1868. Passed through Haskell and Jones counties. Traveled a distance of 130 miles to operate against the Comanche Indians. Indians killed, seven; property captured, two horses, two ponies, one mule, with bows and arrows, and all the saddle equipment of the party; enlisted men wounded, three; Privates Ryan, Company F, Hoffman, Company I, and Butler, Company I, Sixth Cavalry, were wounded."<sup>13</sup> Another account of this same engagement is as follows: "Company F, Sixth United States Cavalry, left Fort Griffin, Texas, March 4, 1868, and marched

12. Special Orders, Fort Griffin, Texas, Vol. 1, p. 222.

13. Messages and Documents, War Department, Part I, 1868-1869, pp. 713-714.

to Ledbetter's ranch, from thence (marching in the night) to Deadman's Creek, and camped on the night of March 5th or March 6th at Paint Creek. Attacked a camp of Comanche Indians and succeeded in killing seven. Privates Hoffman and Butler wounded. Returned to Fort Griffin on the 9th of March, 1868. Distance marched about 150 miles."<sup>14</sup>

More than once the work of pursuing troops was interfered with by vast herds of buffaloes. As an instance of this on July 8, 1870, a scout was sent out from Fort Griffin westward in pursuit of Indians, consisting of thirty-seven enlisted men and ten Tonkaway Indian scouts. The marauders were overtaken and a sharp encounter followed in which one Indian was killed and a captured herd of cattle was turned back toward the range from which it was being driven. In the melee the Indians managed to escape and were again followed, but the trail was finally lost because of the fact that herds of buffaloes passed between the pursued and the pursuers. After having traveled a distance of 324 miles the scout returned to Fort Griffin on July 22, 1870.<sup>15</sup>

One engagement in which a band of Comanches was severely punished is told of in the following brief account: "11th of February, 1874—Lieutenant Colonel Buell and command reported on last return as absent operating against hostile Indians, rejoined post having marched about 220 miles, and defeated a party of hostile Indians encountered on the fifth of February, 1874, at a point in the valley of the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos River; about twenty-six miles west of the Double Mountains, killing eleven Indians and capturing twenty-six head of stock."<sup>16</sup> Aside from those killed in this engagement a large number were wounded and taken from the field by their brother warriors.

Many of the depredations in the vicinity of Fort Griffin were committed by white outlaws and not by Indians. As an instance of the culpability of these white desperadoes the following is a type: "May 5, 1873, 1st Lieutenant R. H. Pratt, Tenth Cavalry, with detachment from Company D, Tenth Cavalry and three Tonkaway scouts, scouted through Jones and Throckmorton counties in an effort to find the Indians who had stolen horses from Kennedy's

14. "Return of the Sixth Regiment of United States Cavalry," March, 1868.

15. "Expeditions and Scouts," Department of Texas, 1870.

16. "Post Returns," Fort Griffin, Texas, February, 1874. A brief account is also found in *Med. Hist.*, Vol. 52, p. 14.

ranch, eighteen miles distant, but upon arrival, Kenneday informed Colonel Buell that the thieves were white men and not Indians as first supposed. He stated that he had followed the trail for five or six miles and had exchanged shots with them at long range. The command arrived on the ground eighteen hours after the thieves had left and in the meantime it rained and obliterated the trail, so the command returned to the post on April 18.<sup>17</sup> On the next day, however, another expedition was sent out from the post toward the north after horse thieves and followed their trail for seventy miles but did not succeed in overtaking them.

The harboring place for these desperadoes was a settlement of whites and Tonkaway Indians called "The Flats" near Fort Griffin. Here gathered the most desperate and lawless gangs of thieves and desperadoes in the entire west. The post surgeon at Fort Griffin in May, 1872, said that a short distance from the post in the valley of the Clear Fork was a camp of Tonkaways and a settlement of "squatters." Prominent among the latter was a saloonkeeper called "Tol Bowers," a noted desperado, who killed a citizen named Cockerall without being tried by military authorities. He stated that such a state of lawlessness existed in this settlement as to make it unsafe for one to go there unless well armed. Tonkaway Indians intoxicated were so dangerous as to keep the settlement in constant terror. He said that "It becomes a frequent sight to see Indians with men and women in a state of beastly intoxication."<sup>18</sup> So turbulent were the lawless characters in this notorious settlement that robbery was frequently perpetrated in open day light, and at night "The Flats" was an inferno of ribaldry, lewd women, drunken gamblers, and designing thieves. The soldiers of the fort had very little to do with the inhabitants of "The Flats" save when they were off duty and came to the settlement saloons for liquor. On these occasions many tribulations were brought to those in authority at the post by reason of the many excesses in drink. It was because of this condition that the post commander on one occasion wrote: "Fully one-half of the surgical cases occurring in times of peace are produced through whiskey supplied to the troops."<sup>19</sup>

The environment of the post together with the loneliness of frontier life probably caused many of the troops to desert. On April 6,

17. "Tabular Statement of Scouts and Expeditions, Department of Texas, 1873."

18. Fort Griffin, Med. Hist. of Post, Vol. 51, p. 266.

19. *Ibid.*

1873, the "Post Returns" records: "One Sergeant and six privates of cavalry left the post in pursuit of deserters. Returned April 24 with one deserter . . . Several small detachments have been sent in pursuit of deserters during the month."

To the young recruit from the East, Fort Griffin was a lonely place indeed. The only means of communication with any town or nearest railway station (which was Calvert, Texas) were government trains. These trains consisted of a number of wagons drawn by horses, mules and oxen; sometimes as many as ten wagons were tied in one train. These trains were often, during the rainy season, obliged to camp on the banks of rivers for some days before they were able to cross.

Four mails per week were received at the post, viz: from the East via St. Louis and Fort Smith, Sundays and Thursdays; from the west via San Antonio and Fort Concho, Mondays and Thursdays. The mails were often delayed by floods and freshets that occurred during the rainy season, and occasionally were captured by the Indians. Eight days were required for a letter to reach department headquarters and twelve days to reach Washington. The arrival of the stage coach was an event of considerable interest to the shut in soldiers. It was then that they received news from the outside world.

Then again, another cause for desertions might have been the kinds of food which the soldiers had to eat. Rations consisted of the following articles: pork, bacon, fresh beef, flour, hardbread, cornmeal, beans, peas, rice, hominy, coffee, tea, sugar, vinegar, candles, soap, salt and pepper. Concerning the diet of the troops on duty, the Post Surgeon of Ft. Griffin wrote: "When the troops are on escort duty, they are furnished with an abundant supply of fresh meat, by killing buffaloes, large herds of which are found in northern Texas. . . . When the troops are absent on escort duty or scouting expeditions, they are furnished with flour and bake their own bread in dutch ovens. A large amount of baking soda is used in its preparation, and the bread is of a most unwholesome character. There is no doubt that many cases of diarrhea and diseases of the digestive system are produced by the bad quality of the bread."<sup>20</sup>

Since vegetables could not be raised in sufficient quantities in

20. Med. Record, Fort Griffin, 1875, Vol. 52, pp. 37-39.



the post garden, and since they would decay before the freighters could bring them to the post, the soldiers suffered greatly from the lack of vegetables in their diet. To make up partially for this deficiency, canned vegetables were used, but even this did not wholly meet the need.

The frontier developed so rapidly that Fort Griffin soon found itself within the line of settlements. However, the settlers still desired the government to retain forces there. On August 2, 1873, having heard of a proposed abandonment of Fort Griffin, the citizens of Shackelford, Throckmorton, Young, Stephens, and Palo Pinto counties sent a petition to the Secretary of War asking that the post be not abandoned, giving as their reason for the petition the frequency of Indian raids. The petition called attention to the fact that the abandonment of the post would make it necessary for the people to vacate the country.<sup>21</sup> In transmitting the petition of the people to the Secretary of War, Colonel Buell gave it as his opinion that the abandonment of the post would result in the depopulation of the country.

In the following year the Commander of the Department of Texas made a tour of the frontier line of defense and in his report, concerning the conditions at Fort Griffin, said: "At most of the posts they are comfortably quartered. (Speaking of the men). Fort Griffin is an exception to this rule. It may be made to answer this coming winter, but no longer, and if troops are to be kept there another year, new barracks must be built for them. There is nothing there on which repairs can be made. The buildings are mostly huts. One building alone at the post is possibly worth intrinsically one hundred dollars. This post is a very important one, in my opinion, and should be retained. I respectfully recommend that \$80,000 be asked for to build suitable quarters there for six companies, four companies of cavalry and two of Infantry."<sup>22</sup> The recommendation of the Colonel was never carried out as it became more and more evident that the post must be abandoned.

The coming of railways and the remarkable growth in population along the frontier made the Indian frontier posts unnecessary. General Augur, commander of the Department of Texas, in his annual report of 1881, said that Forts Concho, McKavett, and Stock-

21. House Ex. Docs. No. 284, 43 Congress, 1st Session, Vol. XVII, p. 38.

22. Messages and Documents, War Dept., Part I, 1874-1875, p. 43.

ton were thus rendered unnecessary, and that Fort Griffin, ceasing to serve a useful purpose, was abandoned in May of that year. Thus the history of one of the most colorful forts on the Texas frontier comes to a close.

*Texas Frontier Forts*

	OCCUPIED	ABANDONED	REOCCUPIED	ABANDONED
Fort Belknap .....	1850	1861		
Fort Chadbourne .....	1852	1861		
Fort Phantom Hill .....	1851	1854		
Fort Bliss .....	1848	1860	1867	
Fort Davis .....	1854	1861	1867	1891
Fort Clark .....	1852	1861	1866	
Fort McIntosh .....	1847	1861	1868	
Fort McKavett .....	1852	1860	1868	1883
Fort Quitman .....	1858	1861	1868	1877
Fort Griffin .....	1867	1882		
Fort Richardson .....	1868	1878		
Fort Concho .....	1867	1889		
Fort Stockton .....	1858	1861	1867	1886

and married her. Today they are in demand for concert work all over the world; they were in San Antonio only last fall. Percy Granger, the Australian pianist, is interested in tribal melodies; he adopts and uses them in concerts; he has made "Turkey in the Straw," that old southern melody, famous the world over by giving it various variations. Oscar Fox of San Antonio, one of Texas' few famous composers, has put some of the cowboy ballads to music. A few years ago he brought out *Rounded Up in Glory*, which has been used by artists everywhere. Recently, he has brought out the "Cowboy's Lament," and critics say it will be as famous as *Rounded Up in Glory*. Adrain Onderdonk became a famous artist by painting Texas blue bonnets, Texas cacti, and Texas mesquites.

Architects are taking local styles of the aboriginal architecture and are expressing them in modern house designs. The designers go to the peasants of southern Europe for their ideas for the bright color combinations and designs for the tapestries, china painting, mantillas, and other fineries you will find on display in modern shops.

The three best prize-plays of 1923 were built on this sectional idea. They were "Lightening," "Sun-Up," and "Hell Bent for Heaven." The last named was a result of such a movement as we are trying to inaugurate here. A learned old English Professor in a University in North Carolina told his students to write about real life. He insisted upon their spending their vacations among the people about whom they wished to write. One of his students went to the mountains and spent several months among the mountaineers. He wove the mountain life into a play, using an old feud as a base. The work is so realistic that the critics tell us that it will live as good literature. Incidentally, it was the best prize-play of the year. We have in this country feuds, people, and material for a hundred prize-plays just as good as "Hell Bent for Heaven."

Perhaps the most intensive sectional movement at the present time is the Modern Irish Movement. It grew out of the political strife of the Irish with England, and the decision of the Irish to boycott English Literature. The leaders were William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, and John Synge. They began to write in Gallic, but that did not take very well, so they resorted to English. Then they began to dig up Irish folk-lore. Synge tells us with bitter reality of the joys and sorrows and tragedies of the simple fisher folk

along the seashore. "Riders to the Sea" is the tragic story of how all six of the sons of a peasant widow were lost at sea one by one. There have been enough tragedies in this region to furnish a dozen Synge's with material to write scores of stories entitled "Riders to the West."

Yeats went among the peasants and studied them first hand. He found they really believed that fairies are fallen angels who were not good enough to be saved and too good to be lost. They believe that the fairies take whatever size and shape they choose and that their chief occupation is dancing, feasting, fighting, and love-making. The only industrious person among the fairies is the shoemaker, for they wear their shoes out dancing. The Irish contribute every strange phenomena which they cannot understand to fairies: when the wind whirls the straw and the leaves as it passes, the peasants believe it is the fairies fighting, and take off their hats and say, "God bless them." The Irish have three festivals a year in which the fairies are supposed to celebrate too. They are May-eve, Mid-summer-eve, and November-eve. On Mid-summer-eve when the bonfires are lighted on every hill in honor of St. John, the fairies are supposed to be at their gayest, and, sometimes, they steal away the most beautiful mortals to be their brides. On November-eve the fairies are at their gloomiest, for, according to the Gallic reckoning, that is the first night of winter. That night they dance with ghosts, the witches weave their spells, and the girls set a table with food in the name of the devil, in order that the witch of their future lovers may come through the window and eat the food. When the fairies are angry they paralyze men and cattle with their fairy darts; when they are gay they sing. The peasants believe that all of the beautiful tunes of Ireland are fairy melodies which have been caught by some eavedroppers. They say in England that fairies sometimes die, for Blake saw a fairy's funeral once; but in Ireland they are immortal—that is, according to Yeats.

I want to ask this question: "What is it that makes Ireland a land of fairies and blarney-stones?" It is not because Ireland has more folk-lore than other regions, but it is because she has had a Yeats to dig up the lore that she does have and give it to an appreciative public. This country has folk-lore which we have never dreamed of its having. It may not deal with fairies so much, but it is rich with ghosts, goblins, superstitions, mysteries, and beliefs.

## POSSIBILITIES OF LITERATURE IN LOCAL HISTORY.

BY W. C. HOLDEN.

It is my belief that we have too long followed slavishly in the footsteps of our predecessors along the well beaten roads of history without occasionally broadening our understanding by our wandering off for awhile into inviting by-paths. There is no more effective way of making history an interesting, living, breathing subject than by introducing legends, stories, traditions, and folk-lore as side lights. These are the things that bring the dead past to life again, or rather, transplant us temporarily back into the past, where we live with the characters and times of old. Although we have scarcely given it a thought heretofore, our own West Texas is literally rich in legends, traditions, and folk-lore.

Professor Frank Dobie has collected a volume of Texas legends, many of them taken from West Texas. This work shows what one man has done by devoting only a part of his time to it. There are volumes more of such material to be obtained when the country is combed with a fine comb, as it will be when people realize the richness of the possibilities. Mr. Lomax has collected a volume of cowboy ballads, which is a distinct western collection, and typifies this region.

A few years ago a cowboy by the name of Will Jones began to write philosophically of cowboy life. He was uneducated, and used the typical cowboy diction. His writings were so truly representative of cowboy life and his style was so forceful that his articles were published in *Scribner's* magazine during 1922 and 1923, and when anything is published in *Scribner's* it is likely to live as good literature.

All literature comes directly from the people. Only those things last which deal with the essentials of life. The so-called society literature does not last because it does not go to the bottom. Shakespeare and Dickens last because they dealt with human nature and life in all of its modified relations.

It has become the custom now-days for any author who wishes to produce something that will live to specialize upon some section of the country which has characteristics peculiar to itself and work up these peculiar characteristics. Joel C. Harris did that sort of thing in *Uncle Remus*. He simply took those tales, which made him famous, from the people. Mark Twain has characterized the Mis-

issippi River. Edgar Valentine Smith, whose articles appeared in *Harper's* in 1923, wrote of the old South. Willa Cather has given us a cross-section view of the life of the immigrants of Nebraska. Many of you remember *My Antonio* which came out in the *Century* in 1923. Bret Harte has done more to give us an understanding of the rough and reckless life of California during the gold rush than all the historians combined. Thomas Hardy has made the simple life of the heath people of Wessex known the world over. Kipling has idealized the life of the British Tommy and soldier life in India by his *Barrack Room Ballads*. Joseph Conrad has idealized the sea. Hamlin Garland has done the same thing for the frontier life of the middle west in his *Main Traveled Roads* and *Son of the Middle Border*. David Grayson has the ability to find the most remarkable adventures in common everyday affairs of the common people. Southern feuds have been immortalized by Thomas Dixon, Thomas N. Page, and George W. Cable. Robert W. Service has given us the better realities he experienced in the Yukon and in the trenches. Carl Sanburg has made poetry out of the grind, the grit, and the smoke of Chicago. Robert Frost has interpreted New England life in literature that will live always. Ruth Cross, the novelist, who has recently made a daring leap into fame, put Texas before the eyes of the nation. It is likely that her *Golden Cocoon* will not live, but it is said to be the greatest seller of the year. It is also a fact that Ruth Cross made no impression until she interpreted Texas life.

Emerson Hough and Rex Beach, both professional writers, have taken advantage of this sectional tendency in literature and have commercialized the local history idea. *The Covered Wagon, North of 36*, and *Flowing Gold* are examples of this sort of thing. The "101" Ranch of Oklahoma has done the same thing with the motion picture.

This tendency to play up sectional life is not confined to literature, but is true in music and art. Charles Wakefield Cadman lived among the Indians. He took down their tribal melodies score by score, then he put words to them and produced such pieces as *Land of Sky-blue Waters*. His productions are used by musicians and singers the world over. Thurlow Lieurance did the same thing with other tribes. No doubt you recall the romance of how he fell in love with the beautiful and accomplished Indian Princess Tsinina



West Texas has a color, an atmosphere, a people, a feeling, a hospitality, and a spirit all of its own which makes it different from all other places in the world. The sandstorms, for instance, have a peculiar sort of fascination all in themselves; they are disagreeable and have a wholesome effect upon the disposition and personality of the people, and after we have survived them for a number of years and then go to another section of the country, we miss them, and have an occasional desire to return to them for awhile. The periodical drouths leave their stamp upon the people and have a tendency to show up the fortitude, courage, and faith of West Texans.

What we need is another Will Jones to give to the world in the form of good literature the now almost extinct cowboy life of this region. We need a Thomas Hardy to immortalize the common western life of today in all of its own local color. We need a Yeats, a Lady Gregory and a Synge to "dig up" the folk-lore which abounds here without limit. When this is done the world will begin to realize that West Texas has a literature as well as a local history all of its own.

## DOCUMENTS RELATING TO WEST TEXAS AND HER INDIAN TRIBES

EDITED BY RUPERT N. RICHARDSON

### MARCY'S RECONNAISSANCE THROUGH NORTHERN AND WESTERN TEXAS.

(From "*The Report of Capt. R. B. Marcy's Route From Fort Smith to Santa Fe,*" published in the "*Reports of the Secretary of War,*" Senate Executive Document, number 64, 31st Congress, 1st Session, Washington, July, 1850.)

NOTE.—On the second day of April, 1849, Captain R. B. Marcy received orders to lead an expedition composed of some eighty soldiers from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Santa Fe, New Mexico. He was to pursue a course along the Main Canadian, by the most direct practicable route. The principal objects of the expedition were to ascertain and establish the best route from Fort Smith to Santa Fe, conciliate as far as possible the different tribes of Indians frequenting that region, and give protection to the emigrant parties along the route. The Captain was instructed to make accurate examinations of the country, make careful notations of suitable camping places, keep a correct journal of each day's march, and make and record all observations that might be useful to future travelers and other persons interested in the country.

In case Marcy should be able to find among the Comanches an intelligent Indian who could guide him on his return over the South Plains from some point a hundred and eighty or two hundred miles below Santa Fe across to Fort Smith, he was to employ such Indian as guide and return by this southern route.

After a number of interesting experiences the journey to Santa Fe was completed successfully June 28. Here the party rested until late in August, when Manuel, a Comanche, was secured as guide for the return journey. The Captain determined to try the southern route, and accordingly moved down the Rio Grande to Dona Ana, a town on the east bank of that stream, about sixty miles above El Paso. Here was secured for a few days an additional guide, who directed the expedition in a southeastward direction to Guadalupe Peak. From this point the Captain moved to Delaware Springs at the head of Delaware Creek, a tributary of the Pecos, arriving

there September 13. Following the valley of this creek the party reached the Pecos not far from where the thirty-second parallel intersects it. Here the guide told the Captain that it would be impossible to go directly from that point to the head waters of the Colorado or Brazos—that not even an Indian would attempt it. It was, therefore, determined to go down the Pecos for some fifty miles before they crossed it.

Marcy was probably the first man to lead a wagon train across the South Plains. He was certainly the first man to make a map of his route and to describe the country with that accuracy and detail characteristic of a trained mind. His report is partly responsible for the cordon of military posts the Government placed along the Central West Texas frontier in the early 'fifties. The Pacific Railway survey through Texas, made a few years later, followed the general course of his route. The Southern Overland between Saint Louis and San Francisco, established in 1858, was routed over the southern way principally because of his favorable report on the practicability of a highway through this section. As the greatest explorer of western Texas (for he made many other reconnaissances in West Texas) he deserves to be better known by students of Texas history; and we hope this reprint of that part of his report covering his journey from the Pecos to the "cross timbers" will prove of interest.

We have not thought it necessary to provide explanatory notes. In a few cases the author is evidently in error when he makes references to certain geographical features of West Texas, such as to the number of branches that join to make up Red River or to the source of the Brazos. In these matters he was merely laboring under the mistaken notions concerning our geography which were current among the best informed of that day. However, the reader who is acquainted with the geography of West Texas will not find it difficult to follow his route by observing his references to such well known points as "The Big Spring," near the city that now bears that name and "The Double Mountains," well known to every inhabitant of the upper Brazos region.

(p. 205) "*September 21.*—I was obliged to resort to one of those expedients which necessity often forces travellers in this wild country to put in practice; and that was, to invent and construct a substitute for a ferry-boat to transport our men and baggage across

the river. This I did by taking one of our wagon beds and placing six empty barrels in it, lashing them down firmly with ropes, and tying one on each outside, opposite the centre. I then attached a long stout rope to each end of the bed, and placed it bottom up in the water; a man then swam the river with the end of a small cord in his mouth, and to the end of this was tied one of the ropes of the wagon, which he pulled across and made fast to a stake upon the opposite bank. Some men then took passage upon the inverted wagon boats, and the current carried it to the other shore, the rope attached to the stake preventing it from going down the stream further than its length. The boat was then drawn back by men for another load, and in this manner we crossed our men and baggage in a short time. We could transport two thousand pounds of freight at one load, perfectly dry. Our wagons were then lashed fast to the axles, with ropes tied to each end, when they were pushed into the river and hauled across. There were fifteen feet of water where we crossed. As the current ran rapidly and the banks were muddy and steep, I was fearful that our mules would not make the passage. I therefore tied a rope to the neck of each one and pulled them across.

*September 22.*—This morning we made a march of nine miles down near the left bank of the river in a direction of N. 82 degrees E., where we struck a narrow laguna, or lake, which we followed for about two miles, and encamped near the southern extremity. The soil has been a rich loam, and I have no doubt would prove very productive. There has been a chain of sand hills in sight to-day, running from north to south across our course, about twenty miles to the east of us, (upon the Llano Estacado), in which our guide informs me that there is water, but that we are obliged to pass over a sandy road for about fifteen miles to get through them. I have, therefore, determined to remain at this place until I can send ahead and ascertain whether I cannot pass to the south of them.

*September 23.*—I sent out Lieutenant Sackett, with an escort of dragoons, this morning, to explore the country in the vicinity of the sand hills, and shall remain here until to-morrow evening, by which time I expect to learn the results of his explorations.

*September 24.*—After filling our water barrels, and giving our animals all they would drink, I made a start this evening at two o'clock, and (p. 206) travelled ten miles in a direction nearly per-

pendicular to the valley of the river. Shortly after we left the laguna, an express returned from Lieutenant Sackett, informing me that, after making a thorough examination of the range of sand hills for about forty miles south of our course, he was of the opinion there was no place within that distance where they could be crossed with wagons. The whole surface of the country in that direction seemed to be one continuous succession of white sand hills, from twenty to one hundred feet high, in which his horses sunk to their knees at almost every step, from which I infer that the route indicated by our guide is the only one in the vicinity where this formidable obstacle can be passed. I shall, therefore, take a direct course for the pass in the morning, and expect to reach the hills during the day.

*September 25.*—We reached the sand hills this afternoon, about two o'clock, over a good level road, except about four miles near here, which is sandy, making the distance from the Pecos twenty-three miles and four-tenths. There is a great abundance of good water in the sand hills at several places, but it is necessary to drive animals to it, as it is half a mile from the road and wagons cannot pass nearer. There is a trail leading to the water from where the road strikes the hills. These hills, or mounds, present a most singular and anomalous feature in the geology of the prairies. They extend (so far as we have explored) at least fifty miles in a nearly north and south direction, and from five to ten miles east and west; they are white drift-sand thrown up with much uniformity into a multitude of conical hills, destitute of soil, trees, or herbage.

In following up the trail from our road into the midst of this ocean of sand, we suddenly came upon several large, deep pools of pure water—the very last place on earth where one would ever think of looking for it. We are told by our guide that water can always be found here in the dryest season, and, judging from the rushes and other water plants growing in the ponds, I have no doubt that such is the case.

*September 26.*—As we have a long march before us still, and as the road through the hills is sandy, I have concluded to double teams to-day, and send one-half of the wagons to the last watering place, five miles from here, and take up the remainder to-morrow.

*September 27.*—We moved up to-day with the wagons that were left behind yesterday, and found the water at this place equally

as good as at the other. Although there are but two particular points where trails lead from the road to water in the hills, yet it can be found almost any-where between the two points by going about half a mile to the east of the road, among the highest hills.

*September 28.*—Eight miles of sandy road which we passed over today brought us out upon the hard prairie again. Thus the entire distance from where we first encountered the sand to this place is about seventeen miles; but only about one-half that distance is bad, and this not worse than some parts of the road upon the Rio Grande. There is good grass near the hills, and sufficient wood for fuel.

*September 29.*—Leaving the sand this morning, we pushed out upon the high plain of the Llano Estacado, not knowing whether we were to find water before we reached a laguna about sixty miles distant. As our guide had passed over this portion of the road but once before, and then in a hurry, he was not very familiar with the localities. I therefore (p. 207) sent a party in advance to search for water, and felt some anxiety as to the result; I was relieved, however, about 11 o'clock, when a messenger returned with the cheering intelligence that the party had found a large pond of good water about sixteen miles from where we left this morning. This good news appeared to inspire our men and animals with renewed vigor. From the cheerless silence of the last two hours, the aspect of everything changed in a moment to humorous jokes and boisterous merriment. The whips were heard cracking from one end of the train to the other, and the mules appeared to move along with more ease than before.

From the sand hills our road followed an old Comanche trail until we turned to the left, two miles from our present camp. The track we make is plain, and travellers will have no difficulty in following it to the water. We are near two ponds in the prairie, where, judging from present appearances, there will always be water found, except in the dry season; the grass is good. Our course from the sand hills is N. 57 degrees E., and the distance fifteen miles and three tenths.

*September 30.*—In consequence of the hard work we have given our mules for the last four days, I "lay by" to-day to give them rest and grass, after the long journey of about fifteen hundred miles which they have made from Fort Smith; they require much

care and attention, and it causes more delay than is agreeable; but there is no alternative.

*October 1.*—This has been a most fatiguing day to me, as I have been suffering for the last five days with an attack of dysentery; it has reduced me to such a weak state that I am obliged to be carried in a wagon in a lying posture, and every slight jar of the wagon sends the most acute pain through my whole system.

We marched seventeen miles in a course N. 67 degrees E. over a firm high prairie, and are encamped near a pond on the plain. About half way between this place and our last camp, we discovered a small lake about one mile to the north of our road, where it is thought there will be water at all seasons; it is about three feet deep, covers several acres of ground, and has rushes growing in it. There are also numerous trails made by mustangs leading to it, showing that it is much frequented by them; and as the horse requires water every day, he would not likely stay at a place where it could not be found at all times. This lake I have called "Mustang Pond"; and as it is situated about half way between the sand hills and the laguna, (which is ahead of us,) I conceive it to be very important for travellers. Nine miles from our last camp, there is another large pond about half a mile to the right of the road, and I have driven a stake in the middle of the road opposite to it, with directions written upon it how to find the pond; this is a mile west of the Mustang Pond. By keeping this in mind, and remembering that the trails in the vicinity all concentrate at the water, there will be no difficulty in finding it. As our road does not go directly to the pond, and as there is much sameness in the aspect of the prairies upon the Llano Estacado, persons might pass this place without finding the water, unless they follow the directions given above.

*October 2.*—We marched twenty-three miles to-day in a course N. 72 degrees 22 minutes E., which brought us to the laguna, or salt lake. The country has been similar to that of yesterday, over the high rolling table lands of the (p. 208) mesa, with no wood except the small mesquite brush. The water in the laguna is brackish, but there is a small pond south of the road where we encamped, which, although it is slightly sulphurous, is not unpalatable.

Should travelers come to this place, on their way to New Mexico, in an extremely dry season of the year, I would recommend them to



carry from here in their wagons a supply of drinking water sufficient for two days, as this would last them until they reached the sand hills, if, by accident, they did not discover the mustang pond.

*October 3.*—Leaving the salt lake this morning, our bearing was N. 71 degrees E. for eight miles, where we reached the border of the high plain, and descended an easy slope of about fifty feet to a bench below; here we could see two low bluffs in the direction we were marching, near which our guide informed us we could find a fine spring of water. Fourteen and a half miles' travel over a beautiful road brought us to the spring, which we found flowing from a deep chasm in the limestone rocks into an immense reservoir of some fifty feet in depth.

This appears to have been a favorite place of resort for the Comanches, as there are remains of lodges in every direction; indeed, our Comanche guide informs me that he has often been here before, and that there was a battle fought here some years since between the Pawnees and Comanches, in which his brother was killed. He also informs me that there is a good wagon route from here to the Rio Pecos, striking it some seventy miles lower down than where we crossed, keeping entirely to the south of the Llano Estacado, and crossing the head branches of the Colorado.

There is a Comanche trail leading over this route, and it would, undoubtedly, be the best between this point and Chihuahua, as it is nearer than the one we have travelled, with no sand upon it and an abundance of water.

I think by taking the trail at this place and keeping the crest of the Llano Estacado on the right, one would have no difficulty in getting through to the plains at the Chihuahua crossing.

The mezquite trees are becoming larger as we descend from the high plain, and the soil better; several fossil shells of the muscle species were found here.

*October 4.*—We left the "Big Spring" to-day at one o'clock p. m., and travelled 12 1-8 mile in course N. 43 degrees E. to a spring in a beautiful timbered valley, with excellent grass. The spring is in the limestone rocks to the south of the road, and furnishes a good supply of water. It is a tributary to the Concho. We have passed over a rolling country to-day, covered with mezquite trees.

*October 5.*—Our course to-day was N. 47 degrees 28 minutes E,

over a rolling and rather broken country, of good soil, and covered on each side with large mezquite trees.

After marching 11 1-3 miles we encamped in an extensive bottom or flat, through which there is good water standing in pools along the bed of the stream, and a great abundance of the finest mezquite grass. Manuel, our Comanche guide, leaves us at this place, and returns alone through a wild Indian country, some six hundred miles, to his home at San Miguel. He strikes directly across the "Llano Estacado" to "Bosque Redondo," on the Rio Pecos, over the route which has been spoken of before as passable (p. 208) for wagons. He expects to make the journey in fourteen days, and has no fear but what he shall reach home safely. I have found him a man of much more than ordinary judgment and character; and should it ever become necessary to make an examination of the route from here to the Bosque Redondo, and then to Joya d Cibaletta, I would have no hesitation in recommending him as the best guide that can be found in New Mexico.

*October 6.*—For about eleven miles after leaving camp this morning our road passed over a perfectly flat prairie, covered with short buffalo grass, and through a continuous dog town almost the entire distance. We then struck a creek bottom, crossed and followed down about three miles to its junction with a large stream, which is the main Red Fork of the Colorado, or, according to Comanche nomenclature, the Pash-a-ho-no. We found this a stream of twenty yards in width, six inches deep, and running rapidly over a rocky bed; the water has a red tinge, and is slightly saline. The banks are bold and rocky, and I should imagine this to be the character of it to its source in the "Llano Estacado." This is the first tributary of the north branch of the Colorado that we have crossed. The main Rio Colorado has, near its head, two principal tributaries—the Concho and the Red Fork; all others are affluents of these two.

The country through which we are passing now is becoming much more interesting than it has been; there is some timber and streams of running water. Our camp is in a grove of mezquite and wild china trees upon the bank of a creek running into the Pash-a-ho-no.

We have seen wild turkeys upon this creek—the first since leaving the Rio Grande. Quails and meadow larks are common everywhere upon our route.

*October 7.*—Lieutenant Harrison started out after dinner to-day to examine a ravine two miles from here, and, as he has not returned, I think he must have wandered further than he intended, and has not been able to reach camp before dark. I have had our cannon fired, and if he is within twenty miles of us he will be likely to hear it, as the atmosphere is perfectly still and clear. Should he not return before to-morrow morning I shall send out parties to search for him; but, as he is a good woodsman, I am in hopes he will find his way to camp alone.

We remained in camp to rest our men and animals, intending to resume our march to-morrow.

*October 8.*—This has been a most melancholy day to us. As Mr. Harrison did not return during last night, I concluded that he might have become lost upon the prairies, and at daylight this morning I had another gun fired, in order that, if within hearing, he might take the direction and return to camp. I also sent out Lieutenant Updegraff and Beaver to take the track of his horse, follow it to the ravine, and, if possible, find out where he had gone; besides sending several parties of dragoons in different directions to search for him. In the course of two hours Lieutenant Updegraff returned, and stated that he had followed the track about one mile and a half beyond the ravine, where it appeared Lieutenant Harrison had been met by a party of Indians, and gone off with them in a southern direction. I immediately ordered Lieutenant Sackett to take all our mounted force, get upon the trail of the Indians, and follow them until he overtook them and recovered Lieutenant H.

(p. 210) Lieutenant Sackett followed the track about two miles from where he was met by the Indians, to a small branch of the Colorado, where, to his horror and astonishment, he suddenly came upon the murdered and mangled corpse of poor Lieutenant Harrison, lying down among the rocks, where they had thrown him, scalped, and stripped of all his clothing. The Indians had then struck out upon the prairie, and set off at full speed.

These facts having been reported to me, I dispatched a wagon for the body, had it brought to our new camp, (three miles from that of last night,) and am preparing a box, in which I hope to take it to Fort Washita.

As it was late in the day before we got the corpse to camp, and as it was impossible to follow the trail after night, I directed Lieu-

tenant Sackett to postpone his departure until early to-morrow morning. They have already had sufficient time to get a long distance from us, and, as our horses are most jaded and poor, I have not much expectation of his overtaking the murderers, unless they have gone to an encampment where there are women and children; but, from the course they have travelled, and their manner of encamping, Beaver thinks that they may be able to form a very correct idea as to the part of the country they are making for, and perhaps tell to what tribe they belong.

There are several circumstances which have led me to believe that the act has been committed by a party of Kioways. There has been a large band of them lurking about the head of the Rio Concho during the whole summer, committing depredations upon the inhabitants of the state of Chihuahua; and it is but a short time since they stole several horses from an emigrating party from Louisiana upon this same stream.

The emigrants followed them, but, on overtaking them and not finding their animals, determined to keep them prisoners until they were returned. This resulted in an encounter, in which several of the Indians were killed, and among them their chief. Besides this, I heard of two other instances where Indians of this same tribe have committed depredations upon emigrants on the northern routes to New Mexico.

It has occurred to me that a remnant of the band upon the Concho may have been following us to get revenge for the loss of their chief. If so, they have taken most ample compensation; for a better young officer, or a more courteous, amiable, and refined gentleman, never lived. He was universally beloved by all who knew him: his kindness of heart and gentleness of disposition were remarked by every one.

When the melancholy news reached us that he had been murdered, there was such an expression of gloom cast over the command as I have never witnessed before. Our soldiers who had often seen their comrades falling by their sides in battle, and whose hearts, it might be supposed, were steeled against manifestation of what some might consider weakness, were seen to turn away their faces to conceal their tears. They knew that in his death they lost a good friend.

*October 9.*—After starting Lieutenant Sackett, with all our

mounted force, in pursuit of the murderers, I moved forward, this morning, over a fine rolling country of prairies and timber, with good soil, and in many places well watered. At eleven miles we passed a pond in which there will be good water for all seasons. At nine miles from this we struck the (p. 211) first affluent of the Brazos, (a tributary of Clear Fork,) running north. All the branches of the Colorado upon our route run south.

Our camp is upon the creek, where we have good grass and mezquite wood.

Lieutenant Sackett, with his command, returned about ten o'clock this evening, and reports that he took the trail of the Indians, and followed it for a few miles, when he came to a spot where they had made a fire, coked meat, and departed in great haste, after night, leaving a pair of new moccasins, a lariat, and a saddle, from which we infer that they did not know that we were so near, were alarmed at hearing our gun, and left immediately. Their course from here was almost due north for fifteen miles, (the distance he followed them).

Finding that some of his horses were failing, one giving out entirely, and the Indians far ahead upon fresh animals, he reluctantly abandoned the pursuit, and returned to camp.

Beaver pronounces the saddle and moccasins the same kind as those used by the Kioways; and, as their permanent abiding place is nearly opposite the Antelopes buttes between the Canadian and Arkansas, the bearing of the trail would lead there. These are additional evidences of the correctness of my first suspicion.

It is well known, furthermore, that these Indians are a most deceitful and treacherous race; even the Comanches will not trust them. Lieutenant Harrison has always, in the goodness of his heart, had great confidence in the effect of kind and hospitable treatment toward the Indians, in order to secure their good will; and has often been heard to remark that, should he meet with a party of Indians when alone on the prairies, he would approach and greet them cordially. He was well armed and mounted; and it is thought that, if he had made the attempt, he might possibly have reached camp unharmed.

*October 10.*—Our road today passed over a very level plain, mostly covered with mezquite wood, until we reached this place.

Our course has been N. 62 degrees 28 minutes E.; and the distance travelled thirteen miles.

We encamped upon the same stream that we left this morning, and have good water standing in large pools where our road crosses. About four hundred yards below, however, there are salt springs running into the creek, which renders it nauseous and unfit for use.

We passed over some gypsum rock to-day, near a small creek, and here we found the water bitter and unpalatable, as it has always been when we have met with that mineral.

*October 11.*—Leaving camp early this morning, we marched about two miles, when we struck a piece of sandy road three miles in extent; but we passed over it without difficulty, and had a most capital road from there to our camp.

There have been low bald mountains in sight, about ten miles to the north, nearly all day, which are good landmarks. They are upon the head of the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos, and give it its name. We have been travelling through groves of mezquite timber, with a beautiful carpet of rich grama grass underneath, nearly all day.

There has not been so much water upon our road as usual to-day. We, however, passed one pond, where we obtained sufficient to water our animals. At our camp, we are upon the head of a creek which is slightly (p. 212) brackish, but is drinkable, and our animals appear to be more fond of it than of sweet water. We have several fresh Indian trails to-day, and they have been telegraphing with their signal-fires in several different directions. One was about twenty-five miles to the northeast of us, in the mountains opposite the main Brazos, and another in our rear. This is a method by which they communicate to each other intelligence of the approach of strangers, and various other facts known to themselves.

*October 12.*—Our course to-day has been north 55 degrees east, and our road passing over a rolling prairie, with but little timber for the first seven miles, when we came upon the high banks of the Double Mountain fork of the Brazos, or "Tock-an-ho-no," as the Comanches call it. Where we struck the stream it was fifty yards wide, twelve in depth, and very rapid, with a rocky bed at one place, but generally quicksand. We did not cross, but continued to the south, crossing a spring branch, and passing over as beautiful a country for eight miles as I ever beheld. It was a perfectly level

grassy glade, and covered with a growth of large mezquite trees at uniform distances, standing with great regularity, and presenting more the appearance of an immense peach orchard than a wilderness. The grass was of the short buffalo variety, and as uniform and even as new mown meadow; and the soil equally as rich, and similar to that in the Red River bottoms. This, together with the fact of its being well watered with small spring brooks, gives it all the requisites for making beautiful plantations that the most fastidious amateur in agriculture could desire. We encamped on a creek to the south of the road.

*October 13.*—It has been threatening rain for the last four days; and this morning, as we had everything in readiness for marching, it commenced, and continued all day, accompanied by a cold north wind. We made nine miles over a beautiful country, covered with mezquite trees, and intersected with numerous small spring rivulets, tributaries of the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos.

We encamped on one of these, and had much difficulty in making a fire, as everything had been saturated with water. Our road has been heavy, and the cold "norther" has had an effect upon our animals which I did not anticipate; many of them failed before we reached camp, five gave out entirely, could not be got in, and died during the day. Three more have already died since we reached camp, and I very much fear, if the storm does not abate, we shall lose many more before morning. They are principally Mexican mules, raised in a warm climate, and could not (in the low state of flesh they are now in) stand cold rains.

*October 14.*—We have had during last night one of the most terrific storms I have ever witnessed in the whole course of my life. The wind blew a perfect tempest from the north, and it appeared as if the whole flood-gates of the heavens were suddenly opened, and the accumulated rains of a year poured out in torrents for fifteen consecutive hours upon us. The whole surface of the earth was deluged; even upon the tops of the hills there were three inches of water, and it filled every ravine and hole about us. The creek upon which we are encamped had but very little water in it last night; it is now full to the top of its banks, and would float a steamboat.

Our poor mules have suffered severely from the effects of the storm, and twenty-five have perished. I trust, however, that the vio-

lence of the storm (p. 213) has passed, and that we shall be enabled, with care, to preserve the remainder. I have had several of our wagon covers cut up, and made blankets to cover the weakest of them. We cannot move from here until the creek runs down, and our animals recover some strength, as at present many of them are but barely able to walk.

We have now remaining twenty days rations, which would have been more than sufficient to serve us to Fort Washita; but the storm has placed me in a situation which could not have been anticipated, and I have reduced the allowance of flour one third, to provide against any further contingencies.

Previous to the storm, we were moving along finely at the rate of about sixteen miles per day, and our mules were doing as well as could be expected; but the loss of thirty-three in one night has placed a very serious obstacle upon our movements, and I am obliged to leave a part of our wagons, reduce the amount of our baggage as much as possible, and endeavor to get on with what we cannot dispense with, after the ground becomes a little settled.

I have felt the most lively anxiety for our mules from the commencement of the journey, knowing that our progress depended entirely upon them, and have therefore required the teamsters to pay the most unremitting attention to them; but it appears that they cannot endure one of these bleak northers upon the prairies.

Our oxen did not suffer in the least from the storm, and some of them belonging to our sutler, that were very lean when we left Dona Ana, and have hauled very heavy loads around from Fort Smith, have been improving from last month, while our mules, with lighter work, have been falling off. I am decidedly of the opinion, after the experience I have had with different kinds of cattle, that oxen make better teams for prairie travelling than either mules or horses. In the very warmest weather of summer, over sandy roads where there is but little water, mules are preferable, but under any other circumstance I should prefer oxen. They will travel from 20 to 25 miles from day to day over good roads with perfect ease; and there is no danger of their being stolen by the Indians. In hot weather they should be driven morning and evening, and allowed to stop during the middle of the day.

*October 15.*—We remained in camp to-day awaiting the termination of the storm, and giving our animals time to recover a little



from the effects of it. As we lost no more last night, we hope to be able to preserve those that we have left. The cold wind continues to blow from the north, with intervals of rain, but I think the storm is nearly over; and as soon as the creeks (which are now swimming) run down, I shall endeavor to go on. I reduced the flour part of the ration one third yesterday, and as the men see the necessity of it, they submit to it cheerfully. Indeed, they have upon all occasions performed their arduous duties with the utmost alacrity and good will, and upon the whole of our long march of some seventeen hundred miles I have seldom had occasion to reprove one of them.

*October 16.*—This has been a day of general drying, and cleaning our wagons of all articles that could conveniently be dispensed with upon our march. I have taken five of our oldest wagons to pieces, and placed them in a low place near the creek on the south side of the road. I have also had other surplus articles boxed up and buried about fifty yards from (p. 214) the road, and a large fire made over the spot, with directions written upon a tree to the right where these articles may be found.

The storm has passed, and we have a bright, warm day, with a south wind. If this continues I shall move ahead to-morrow to the next creek, about four miles from here.

*October 17.*—We made a start this morning, and marched four miles to another small creek, which we found too high to cross, and encamped upon the west bank. This creek unites with the one we left this morning, and runs into the Clear Fork of the Brazos.

The country continues of the same character as before, gently undulating, smooth, and well situated for farms. We pass from one creek to another every three or four miles over high and dry mezquite openings, which slope very gently towards the creek bottoms on each side, and the soil cannot be surpassed. There is no part of it that cannot be made available for cultivation. We find upon this creek mulberry, elm, and hackberry, wild china, and oak.

*October 18.*—We crossed the creek this morning, and after traveling two miles in an east course, struck another, which we found still too high to cross, and were obliged to encamp on the west side to await the fall of the water. We have seen signal fires at several points today, showing that Indians are about us.

*October 19.*—Last night was one of the coldest I have ever known at this season of the year. About dark the wind turned to the

north, bringing clouds and rain, and this morning the surface of the ground is covered with snow. Our mules fortunately found cover in the timber on the creek, and did not suffer so much as we were fearful they would. Much to our surprise and delight we found the creek had fallen six feet during the night, and was now fordable. We crossed after digging down the banks, and marched four and a half miles in a course 1 degree thirty minutes south of east, when we reached another creek tributary to the "Qua-qua-ho-no," or Clear Fork of Brazos; we crossed it, and encamped on the east bank. There are several kinds of hard timber upon this creek, with fine grass. All these small streams have buffalo, cat, and several other kinds of fish in them. We have seen fresh Indian signs today, but as yet none have shown themselves.

*October 20.*—We travelled to-day over a very beautiful succession of ridges and valleys between clear running brooks, skirted with a variety of different kinds of timber for ten miles, in a direction N. 70 degrees twenty minutes E., when we came to the hills that border the valley of Qua-qua-ho-no, a branch of the Clear Fork of Brazos.

I was about three miles in advance of the train, with Beaver and three others, when we discovered five Indians coming toward us, driving pack horses. As soon as they saw us, they changed their course, and appeared afraid to come nearer. I sent Beaver out alone to meet them, and to invite them to approach. Instead of going directly to where they were, he went to an eminence to the right, where they could see him distinctly, and beckoned to them with his left hand to come to him, at the same time placing his right hand in token of friendship. After repeating this pantomime several times, with great formality and precision, one of the Indians galloped towards him until he reached with two hundred yards, when he halted and went through the same gestures as Beaver had done; after this they approached and embraced, when questions were asked by each (p. 215) as to who the other was, where they were going, etc., etc. They were a party of Comanches, and stated that their village was but a short distance off on the bank of the "Qua-qua-ho-no." After remaining but a few minutes with us, they rode off again at full speed towards their camp, and in a short time parties were seen coming towards us from all directions. As our train had reach us I made a halt, and we soon had several hundred

men, women, and children around us. I permitted them to approach, as I knew they would commit no depredations while their families were with them.

They had been with us but a short time, when we saw another large party approaching, which Beaver instantly pronounced to be his friends the Kickapoos—and this proved correct. They numbered one hundred warriors—fine, dashing looking young fellows—all well mounted, and armed with good rifles, upon some of which we saw the familiar names of “Darranger” and “Tyron,” “Philadelphia, Makers.” They had their families with them, and were going to pass the winter in hunting upon the Colorado, where they expected to find game abundant. They had a very large number of horses and mules, to transport their provisions and baggage, and were in every respect well fitted out for their hunt. The name of their chief was “Pa-pe-qua-na,” a good looking old man, who said he had always been a friend to the whites.

Among the Comanches were several chiefs and captains; who, after the usual prelude of expressing their entire devotion to the American people, showed me letters from various persons who had passed through their country, requesting the whites to treat the bearers kindly. Among them I remember the names Se-na-co, Pe-a-te-quash, and Was-se-na-ha. Se-na-co was a dignified, fine looking old man, and showed me numerous testimonials of his friendship and good will towards the whites. Among others, he had letters from Major Neighbors, the Comanche agent, Colonel Montgomery and Major Gates, of the army, all giving him a good character. He kept these with great care, and appeared to regard them as of much importance. He is principal “war chief” of the southern Comanches, and appears to be sincere in his professions of friendship for us.

While the Kickapoos remained with us, I inquired of them if they had heard anything among the Comanches relative to the murder of Lieutenant Harrison. They had not, but were of the opinion that the act was committed by the Kioways; and the chief promised to make diligent search among all Indians he met, for the horse and other articles that were taken at the time. These were minutely described to him, and he felt confident he should be able to learn everything connected with it before his return home to the

Creek Nation, in the spring, and promised to report his discoveries to the commanding officer at Fort Washita.

These Indians are brave warriors, good shots, and prepared to meet any of the prairie tribes, either in peace or war. They carry our goods on their hunts, which they exchange for mules, and drive them to the settlements in the spring; thus they form a commercial communicating medium between the white traders and the wild Indians, and drive a profitable trade, while they indulge in their favorite amusement, the chase.

After I had made the chiefs a present of some tobacco, I invited Se-na-co and his suite, eight in all, to our camp for the night. He appeared much (p. 216) gratified with his reception, and, when he parted from us, shook me warmly by the hand, saying that "he was not a Comanche, but an American"; and, as I could not be outdone in politeness by a wild Indian, I returned the compliment by telling him that I was soul and body a Comanche, and that there was not a drop of Anglo-Saxon blood in my veins; all of which was no doubt duly understood and appreciated.

The Qua-qua-ho-no, upon which we are encamped, unites with the Clear Fork of the Brazos about two miles below here. It is forty yards wide, two feet deep, and runs rapidly over a gravelly bottom. It is shut in on both sides by ranges of hills about two hundred feet high, between which the creek flows through a most beautiful and picturesque valley two miles wide, of fine rich soil, intersected at every few hundred yards by rapid spring rivulets, affluents of the main stream. This is and has been for many years a favorite place of resort for the Comanches.

The valley being covered with several kinds of grass that remains green during the winter, they come here in Autumn, graze and fatten their horses, and are ready for the buffalo on their winter migrations to this region. We found the first pecan timber here that we have seen since we left the Creek Nation.

*October 21.*—We crossed the creek this morning and passed out of the valley of the Qua-qua-ho-no through a ravine which winds by a very gentle and almost imperceptible grade to the top of the plain, crossing several small branches before we reached our present camp, seven miles from the last.

We are upon a clear spring branch fifteen feet wide, abounding with fish. Our poor mules are so much reduced that I am obliged

to husband their strength with great care in order to get along at all. I therefore make short marches, to give them ample time to rest and eat. The mezquite wood and grass continue very abundant and we occasionally see the grama grass.

The principal rocks for the last four days have been sandstone of different kinds, some dark and highly impregnated with iron, and having the appearance of volcanic productions; others in very thin slabs or plates and of an exceedingly fine texture, the fracture resembling that of a bone. I observed this evening a variety of the thistle which is new to me! it has a stock of about three feet in height, with a most gorgeous and beautiful blossoms of a deep royal purple color. It has something the shape and appearance of the passion flower.

*October 22.*—At three miles from our last camp we crossed a large spring branch twenty feet wide, which runs into the Clear Fork of Brazos. Our road from there was over a smooth, undulating country, abounding with small streams and covered with mezquite timber; after travelling nine miles and three-fourths, we encamped upon another small tributary of the Clear Fork of Brazos. The weather begins to be warm and clear, and our mules are improving.

*October 23.*—Our course to-day has been N. 68 degrees 8 minutes E., over beautiful fertile ridges and valleys, covered with live-oak, post-oak, and mezquite timber for nine miles, when we struck a rapid stream of clear water about twenty feet wide and eight inches in depth, with high banks skirted with a variety of large timber, such as live-oak, wild china, elm, hackberry, and cotton-wood. The valley, which is a miles wide, has a most luxuriant (p. 217) grass and other vegetation, indicating the best quality of soil. There are bluffs about fifty feet high bordering the valley, and these are covered with groves of post-oak. The stream runs to the east of the Clear Fork into the main Brazos. About thirty miles north of our camp there is a sharp mound visible from the hills about here, and Beaver tells me that directly at the foot of this mound runs the Big Wichita, one of the principal tributaries of Red River, and that thirty miles in a northwest course from that mound the Red River forks; one branch, coming in from the west, is called Ke-che-a-quah-no, or "Prairie-dog Town river," from the circumstance of there being a round mound upon the stream which has a prairie

dog town on top of it. This branch rises in the Llano Estacado. The other or northern branch is the principal stream, which rises in the Salt Plains near the head of Dry river.

*October 24.*—After marching 6 7-10th miles this morning, we came upon the bluffs which border the valley of the main branch of the Rio Brazos; we descended about fifty feet by an easy slope into the valley and struck the river at a place where it is fordable. It was a much larger stream than I had anticipated, being 200 yards from bank to bank, with a current of about four miles an hour, and three feet deep in the channel at this time, (when the water is at a medium stage.) Judging from the "drift," it does not appear to be subject to a rise of more than five feet above its present depth, and does not overflow its banks. The bed is red sand, which becomes soft quicksand during a rise or fall, and is then difficult to ford. It was falling rapidly when we reached it, and we were obliged to take off our mules, drive them across, and pull the wagons with ropes, the men taking the water for each wagon. This stream rises in the salt plains of the Llano Estacado, some hundred and fifty miles west of here, and I am told runs through a rough broken country for a portion of the distance; indeed the mountains along its borders were frequently pointed out to me by our guide along our route west of here. The water is brackish and unfit for use; there are, however, small streams running into the river so frequently that fresh water can be found at almost every place where it is required. The valley of the Brazos is (where we crossed it) three miles wide, elevated about eight feet above the water in the river, and skirted on each side with a range of hills, from fifty to two hundred feet high, covered with timber. The soil in the valley upon the west side is rather sandy, but on the east side it is good. The adjacent country upon both sides is very fertile. Should our government at any future time decide upon establishing a military post as far west of the frontier settlements of Texas as this, I am of the opinion that near this place would be the best that could be selected for the following reasons: The Rio Brazos runs through a country much frequented by all southern prairie tribes of Indians east of the Pecos. Upon the south and west side range that numerous and powerful tribe the Comanches; also the Kioways, Lepans, and Tonkeways. Upon the north and east side are found the Wichitas, Caddos, Wacos, and those other small tribes which inhabit the

country between the Washita and Red river. The Brazos forms the boundary between the Comanches and the tribes living east of it, and the latter are not suffered by the Comanches to hunt upon the west side of this river. A military post established here would therefore be in close proximity to all of these tribes, and (p. 218) would unquestionably have the effect in a great measure to put a stop to the depredations which they commit upon the frontier settlements of Texas. From all I can learn, there is a very superior tract of country between here and the extreme western settlements in Texas. This would be occupied in a short time, if farmers could have the protection which a garrison at this place would afford. As this is nearly on a continuation of the line dividing the waters of Red River from those that run south into the Brazos, Trinity, and Sabine, and as the geography of the country would point out this ridge as being the most favorable location for a road, it would strike the Brazos at this place. There is oak building-timber and stone in abundance in this vicinity. The grass remains green during the entire winter, and animals thrive and fatten without any other food. The climate is mild and salubrious, the atmosphere dry and pure, and can not prove otherwise than healthy. These, with other local advantages, such as pure water, rich soil, good fuel, etc., make this the most favorable point for a military post I have seen. We encamped tonight upon a small branch running through the Brazos valley, about two miles east of where we crossed.

*October 25.*—We passed up a ravine by a very gradual and easy ascent to the plain on the east side of the Brazos, and taking a course N. 65 degrees 50 minutes E., travelled over rolling mezquite and post-oak openings, with occasional prairies, for twelve and a half miles, where we encamped on a small affluent of the Brazos.

The soil on this side of the river is different from that on the west side, being a mixture of reddish clay and sandy loam; it is however, equally as fertile, and produces a luxuriant vegetation. We have passed several ledges of dark hard sandstone to-day, which would make good building material.

*October 26.*—Leaving the creek this morning, we passed up through a grove of heavy post-oak and black-jack (the latter a species of oak) of about four miles in width. This is upon a ridge which divides the Brazos from the west fork of the Trinity river. Continuing on in a direction north 45 degrees 28 minutes east,

over smooth ground, we made 13 1-10 miles and encamped on a small stream (ten feet wide) which our guide calls the head of the main west fork of Trinity. It is fringed with a narrow strip of large oaks and other hard timber, suitable for buildings and rails, and flows through a valley about a mile in width, of good soil, (a rich sandy loam) which is in every respect adapted for farming.

There is grass in this valley which grows to the height of six or eight feet, with a round pointed stock, and a head upon the top filled with seed which our animals eat eagerly, and I think it very nutritious.

The timber increases in size and quantity as we advance. We are now passing through groves of oak, and do not find so much mezquite timber as we did on the other side of the Brazos. The grass has also changed from the grama to the mezquite variety. Upon the last hundred miles of our route we have seen but little game, as we have been in the vicinity of Indians who are constantly hunting and drive it off; but now we are coming where the Indians seldom hunt, and the game is more abundant. Two deer and three turkeys were brought into camp this evening, and we have seen the first grouse to-day since leaving the vicinity of Chouteau's trading house, on the Canadian. These birds appear (p. 219) to stay near the settlements, as we have seen none upon our whole march at any other place.

*October 27.*—We passed out of the valley this morning; and, after travelling three miles, struck upon the ridge dividing the Red river from the Trinity. Here we found a fine smooth road, and travelled 14 1-2 miles in a direction north 65 degrees 15 minutes east, encamping upon a small branch of the west fork of the Trinity.

The road upon the "Divide" crosses the heads of numerous creeks, running into the Trinity on the south and the Little Wichita on the north, and upon nearly all of them there is a great abundance of timber and good soils. Between the tributaries of the Trinity (which occur every two or three miles) there are ridges of rolling prairie, covered with luxuriant grass. The western border of the Upper Cross Timbers has been in sight to the south all day.

*October 28.*—Our road has continued near the crest of the divide all day, sometimes crossing the head of an affluent of the Little Wichita, and at others a branch of the Trinity. Our average course has been north 74 degrees 32 minutes east, and we travelled 13 1-10



miles. We are encamped in a rich bottom between two small spring brooks, and have fine grass and wood.

We passed through a dense grove of oak to-day of four miles in width, and have seen many more on both sides of our road.

When we arrived, we found there had been a large number of Indians encamped here about five days hence, and Beaver, with his usual sagacity, immediately pronounced it a Kickapoo camp. Having a curiosity to learn how he arrived at this conclusion, I asked him what he had seen to indicate that this was an encampment of that particular tribe? This led to a conversation, in which he instructed me how, on seeing an old Indian camp, to determine at once what particular tribe had occupied it.

The Comanches make their lodges by placing poles on the ground in a circle, and tying the tops together, thus forming a frame-work of a conical shape, which they cover with buffalo hides.

The Wichitas make their lodges in the same manner, but do not unite the poles at the top, leaving an opening at the top for the smoke to pass out. This, when covered, forms the frustrum of a cone.

The Kickapoos place the poles in a circle like the Comanches, but, instead of bring them to a point at the top, they bend them so as to unite in an arch with those of the opposite side; the lodge is thus round upon the top.

The Delawares and Shawnees carry tents, and leave the poles standing wherever they encamp.

The Cherokees have tents also, but make their fires different from the Delawares; they place the wood in the fire as it burns away; whereas the others place each stick pointing to the centre of the fire, like the spokes of a wheel.

These facts, although simple and apparently of little importance in themselves, might be of great service to a traveller upon the prairies, as it would enable him, should he find a camp that had been recently deserted, to tell whether it had been occupied by friendly or hostile Indians; and, if they should be enemies, by observing the trail they had made on leaving, he would know what direction to take to avoid them.

*October 29.*—Our road continued upon the Divide in a course N. 82 degrees E., until we encamped upon a small creek running into Red River, twelve and a half miles from our last camp. Our

present position is nearly due south from the junction of the Little Wichita with Red river. We have been passing near the borders of the "Upper Cross Timbers" all day, and gradually approaching them until we are within a mile. We have seen but little mezquite timber today, and the mezquite and grama grasses have almost entirely disappeared; but we find the other kinds of prairie grass in abundance.

*October 30.*—We entered the "Cross Timbers" this morning, and passed on the north side of the "Divide," crossing the heads of the Red river affluents every mile or two to our camp. We are upon a clear creek, about fifteen feet wide, running rapidly towards Red river through a beautiful bottom of prairie and timber interspersed. The "Cross Timbers" have thus far been principally post oak and black-jack, with many small glades or prairies through them, and abundantly watered with clear streams. A mile from our last camp we struck a fresh wagon trail which followed the divide, and was upon our course; we have therefore continued in it. This is the first indication of civilization that we have seen upon our route since we left Dona Ana, and it looks as if we were approaching near the settlement. Game is becoming more abundant as we advance east. Beaver and myself have seen several fresh bear tracks to-day, and each killed a deer; we have as yet, however, seen no bears.

NOTE.—*The expedition continued in a northeastward course crossing Red River at Preston and reaching Fort Smith November 20, 1849. Let us conclude by giving a part of Marcy's conclusions.*

Hence you will perceive that from Dona Ana to Fort Smith, a distance of 994 miles, our road passes over smooth and very uniformly level ground, crossing no mountains or deep valleys, and for five hundred miles upon the eastern extremity runs through the heart of a country possessing great natural advantages. I conceive this to be decidedly the best overland wagon route to California for several reasons, among which are the following:

1. I was assured by several of the best guides in New Mexico—among others Messrs. Lereaux, Kit Carson, Hatcher, and Thomas—that there was no point upon the Rio Grande north of San Diego from which wagons could pass through the extensive ranges of mountains lying west of that river, and that it would be necessary to take Colonel Cooke's route to the head of the Gila. Should

emigrants go to Santa Fe, therefore, they would have to travel three hundred miles down the river to reach this point, whereas our return route leaves this road almost directly at the placer.

2. The roads from Fort Smith and Independence to Santa Fe being over eight hundred miles, and the distance down the Rio Grande three hundred more over a very sandy road, makes these routes longer than the southern route from Fort Smith by two hundred miles.

3. As there is grass upon this route at all seasons of the year, it can be travelled at any time. It is true that the old grama grass dries up early in the spring, but appears to cure like hay, and does not lose its nutritious properties.

4. As San Diego on the Rio Grande, the mouth of the Gila river, and San Diego on the Pacific, are all very nearly upon the same parallel of latitude, (32 degrees 45 minutes 54 seconds,) our southern route would form a direct line of communication with Cooke's road from the United States through to the Pacific, and probably shorter by several hundred miles than any other.

PARKER'S NOTES TAKEN WITH MARCY

LOCATING THE TEXAS INDIAN RESERVATIONS.

*(From NOTES TAKEN During the Expedition Commanded by CAPT. R. B. MARCY, U. S. A., Through UNEXPLORED TEXAS, in the Summer and Fall of 1854. By W. B. PARKER, Attached to the Expedition. Philadelphia, 1856.)*

The State of Texas by an act of her Legislature approved February 6th, 1854, appropriated eighteen leagues of land to form a reservation for the settlement of Indians within her borders in case the government of the United States should accept the grant by locating, surveying, and inducing the wild Indians to settle on it.

Capt. R. B. Marcy was ordered by the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Interior to repair forthwith to Fort Smith, Arkansas, and organize an expedition to carry out the provisions of the act. Marcy acted with his accustomed energy and left Fort Smith June 1, 1854, with a train of nine wagons. June 28, he was joined by a military force of forty non-commissioned officers and men. With some Delaware Indians as guides the expedition moved into Texas, following the Fort Belknap road for some distance. However, he moved toward the Wichita rather than the Brazos, for he had instructions to explore the unknown territory about the head waters of these two streams before he should complete the main duty assigned to him—the location of the Indian reservation. An advance party reached the head of the Big Wichita. From this point the party moved south and occasionally southwest; and some four days of travel seems to have brought them to the cap rock of the plains where the South or Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos breaks away from the plains in Garza county. The party ascended the cap rock, but did not journey far into the plains country. They returned to their main camp on the divide between the Wichita and Brazos, feeling, "That the dangers we encountered and the privations we suffered had not been in vain, establishing as they did the fact, that for all purposes of human habitation—except it might be for a penal colony—those wilds are totally unfit. Destitute of soil, timber, water, game, and everything else that can sustain or make life tolerable, they must remain as they are, uninhabited and uninhabitable."

The party then moved to the Clear Fork of the Brazos, and pitched

their tents on that stream not far from where the road from Fort Belknap to Fort Chadbourne crosses it. Here they awaited the arrival of the Southern Comanches, who had been informed by Major Neighbors of Fort Belknap that the United States Government desired them to assemble on the Clear Fork of the Brazos for a "talk" in regard to their location on the reserve.

W. B. Parker was attached to Marcy's expedition, and the notes he took of the experiences of the party were published at Philadelphia, 1856. We regret that we do not have space to give the reader a complete copy of Parker's book, which has long since been out of print. Few, indeed, of the books of American adventure make more interesting reading. However, his observations and impressions of the Comanche who assembled at the Clear Fork to "talk" with Marcy are especially interesting and valuable to students of history and ethnology, and we shall include that part of his book, beginning with the fourteenth chapter, which pertains to the dress, habits and customs of the Indians he observed.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

(Pp. 188 ff. of PARKER'S NOTES Taken With Marcy, Through UNEXPLORED TEXAS, in the Summer and Fall of 1854, Philadelphia, 1856) :

"August 14.—When Major Neighbors sent out runners to the Comanches, he intimated to them the plans of the government, and they in reply expressed their wish to be settled upon the Clear Fork, as it was their old hunting and wintering ground. Ke-tum-e-see having corroborated this statement—preparations were immediately made to explore in the vicinity of camp, but about ten, A. M., just as the party were about to start, two sub-chiefs of Se-na-ca's band rode in to hold a talk. Their names were Qua-ha-we-tah, or tall tree, and Oti, or hunting a wife. The latter was by birth a Tonkaway, but was taken prisoner by the Comanches when a child; he had adopted their habits and tribe, and become a chief among them. Both were tall, powerful, athletic men, very savage in their appearance, scantily dressed, and fully painted. They rode into camp, bareheaded, with *umbrellas* hoisted, an incident which occasioned some merriment.

Previous to holding the talk, they improved their toilette, when I perceived what gave Oti his more than usually diabolical appear-

ance, which I could not account for before on account of the load of paint with which his face was covered. Producing a small looking glass and a pair of rude tweezers, which he used with great dexterity, he proceeded to pull out every hair he could find on his face. His hair on his head was cropped close, except the crown tuft, from which depended his buffalo hair plait, and commencing at the roots of the hair on his forehead, he pulled out eyebrows, eyelashes, beard, etc., and then smearing the whole with yellow clay, streaked his eyelids with vermilion, spotted his cheeks with the same, and finished by daubing his chin with black, making a most hideous specimen out of himself in a very short time. The other was not so particular, but with his matted hair, hooked nose, and wide mouth, was ugly enough without any effort to increase it.

They held their talk, and told us that we must not believe Ke-tum-see, that he was a liar and a scoundrel, and that they would go off and bring in Se-na-ca, who alone was authorized to speak for the tribe; they said the tribe was friendly, and would accede to the proposed settlement. Rations were then served them, and they passed the night under the trees in the valley, intending to leave early in the morning.

In the course of the afternoon Oti asked me for some sugar from the dish standing on our camp-table; and as our stock was small, I took out several large lumps and offered them. He shook his head and walked off, apparently angry. Pretty soon he returned, and pointed again to the dish. I nodded my head, and he deliberately poured the whole into his bag. The same thing happened with their rations; they refused them, and the commissary corporal immediately reported the case to the captain, who told him to double them; this was done, and they took them at once.

*August 15th.*—On coming out this morning, I was surprised to find the chiefs still lingering around camp, although having saddled up their horses. I found out that they had seen some whiskey and wanted to get it. Both were armed with bows and arrows in addition to their rifles. I tried to barter for a bow, quiver and arrows, offering goods and money to much more than their value, but no, they would trade for nothing but whiskey, and upon my offering it, (which I did to try them), were willing to give their bows and arrows for a bottle full.

Conner told me that this was their way, if they want anything,

they must have it, let it cost what it will. He said he once got a mule, which he afterwards sold for *fifty dollars*, for a *plug of tobacco*, and, as I observed before, I could readily have got the two bows, quivers and arrows, for a *short quart of whiskey*. They care nothing about money, as they cannot use it, all they think of is the gratification of their appetite, even if this, as in this instance, should cost them the very means by which they sustain life. As I would not give them the whiskey, they mounted and rode off looking very glum and disappointed.

Conner told me that it was but a short time since the Comanches would drink whiskey, always refusing it and saying that it made fools of them and that they did not like it, but a colony of Germans settled upon the upper waters of the Canadian, and from frequently visiting them the appetite had been acquired by occasional indulgences, and now is quite prevalent among them.

He related a strange tale connected with this German settlement, which although savoring so much of the marvellous, I am obliged to believe, from his earnest assertions of its truth, and my own observations upon the character of the wild Indians.

Shortly after the German emigration, a wild Comanche who had never seen them, met one in the prairie. The German wore his full beard, which with his hair was long and shaggy. Surprised at this unusual sight, the Indian shot him and skinned his *whole head*, the skin having been afterwards found in his possession, preserved and shown as a specimen of an unfound race of men.

Notwithstanding this bloody stretch of curiosity, Conner said that the Germans and Indians lived on terms of great amity, the former treating them with great hospitality whenever they visited the settlement, and a very straight road to a wild Indian's heart is through his stomach, as they are always ready to eat and drink.

August 16th and 17th were spent in explorations to find a suitable tract to be surveyed for the location of the Comanches, and finally one was selected about three miles farther up the stream from our camp, comprising every essential of upland and meadow, with fine water and timber, the amount of land necessary being six square leagues.

*August 18.*—Se-na-ca and his party arrived to-day. He was very prepossessing in his appearance, about five feet eight inches in height, not stout, but his frame firmly knit, very dark complexion,

with a countenance mild but decided. He dressed without any ornament, and in this respect was a great contrast to his followers.

With him came Qua-ha-we-ti and Oti, the chiefs who had previously visited us, and Naroni, or *little piece of meat thrown over a pole*, and straight-fellow, two war captains, besides a large party of warriors, women and children.

A very interesting woman accompanied the party. She was the widow of San-ta-na, a celebrated chief who died about three years since, and still mourned her loss, going out every evening in the neighborhood of camp, to howl and cry and cut herself with knives, according to the custom among them of persons in affliction. She had separated herself in a measure from the tribe, and formed a band of women, seven in number, like herself widows. She owned a large herd of mules and horses, and was a most successful hunter, having alone shot with her rifle fifteen deer in a morning's hunt. She was a fine looking woman, an Amazon in size and haughty bearing, rode astride, and dressed in deep black.

There was an invalid in the party, a chief, crippled with rheumatism and disease of the spine, drawn into a sitting posture by his ailments, emaciated to a skeleton, and a most pitiable sight, particularly distressing to us from our knowledge of the hardships and privations suffered by them in their wandering life.

The poor creature was perched upon a rude contrivance of sticks lashed on a horse, and bolstered with bags of grass, with a blanket and circingle passed over and around the whole to keep him steady, and having the feeble use of his hands he guided the horse without assistance. A rude litter accompanied him, upon which he could ride during heat and exhaustion. This was constructed by lashing long poles to either side of a mule, leaving the ends trailing upon the ground. Cross sticks were lashed upon the trailing ends, and skins slung to these made the bed, and by the addition of two poles bent in semicircles and fastened diagonally over the bed, a shelter from the sun was made by covering them with green branches.

He had a *slave* to lead or drive the mules and lift him back and forth. This was a boy about sixteen, a Mexican, taken prisoner in some foray, dressed and painted like an Indian, and apparently quite reconciled to his degraded life, the whole forming a wretched picture of misery and poverty, mixed with considerable ingenuity and contrivance.



Naroni rode in in grand costume. He wore an old blue military coat, with tarnished epaulettes, and covered with bullet buttons, a wampum necklace, almost equal to a breastplate, numerous earrings, finger-rings, and a large ring in his nose, completely encircling his mouth, and bright red leggins.

But his crowning glory was his head-dress. From the crown of his head started out four long eagle's feathers, two on each side. To the center was attached his buffalo hair plait, studded at intervals of an inch or two, with enormous silver medallions, of an oval shape, and at least four inches in largest diameter. This plait swept the ground, and he seemed to set great store by it, as nothing would induce him to part with one of the ornaments. A rifle and bow, quiver and arrows, completed his costume and equipments; but being slender in figure and short in stature, his appearance was not at all imposing.

Straightfellow was very miserably clad, dirty and ragged, with a very forbidding countenance, indicative of cunning and cruelty.

The women were ugly, crooked-legged, stoop-shouldered, squalid and dirty, with haggard and prematurely old countenances, their hair cropped close to their heads, and with scarce a rag to cover their nakedness.

They led, or drove off, the pack-horses and mules into the valley, and soon all was life and bustle—some cutting down green limbs to construct their temporary shelter, some building fires, cooking, etc., and others unsaddling, unpacking, watering and tethering their animals.

Some of the visitors made their shealings on the prairie above us, so that, in a little while, we were surrounded by these wild creatures. Among these was a warrior armed with a lance and shield. The lance was a long, straight piece of steel, about two feet and a half long and an inch wide, tapering to a point. This was fixed into a slender handle of bois d'arc, about four feet and a half long, making the weapon seven feet in length; the handle ornamented with tufts of coloured cotton yarn and strips of cloth worked with beads.

The shield was round, and about two feet in diameter, made of wicker-work, covered first with deer skins and then a tough piece of raw buffalo-hide drawn over, making it proof against arrow-heads. It was ornamented with a *human scalp*, a grizzly bear's claw and a

mule's tail, significant of the brave warrior and successful hunter and horsethief, and the fastenings for the arm were pieces of cotton cloth twisted into a rope.

During their stay, we endeavoured to get this man to show us his exercise with these weapons, but he peremptorily refused, and this I understood is universal with them, a proof of their cunning.

These Indians had plenty of horses and mules, but generally a very inferior stock, the rest of their camp material was meagre and scanty in the extreme.

*August 19.*—The first thing wild Indians ask for on coming into camp, is something to eat, they are always ready and consume large quantities.

The Captain had an ox killed for them this morning, and the women were soon busy in preparing it for present and future use. Every edible part was consumed, even the entrails, which are considered a choice delicacy, were drawn through the coals and devoured, reeking with excrement.

The women boned the flesh and then split it, haggling and carving it into long chains of lumps and then throwing it over poles, dried it in the sun, when it looked like links of stale sausage. The caul, suet, and other inside fat, were dried whole, and the cannon bones and hoofs first scorched before the fire and then hung up in the sun.

The portions of meat intended for present use, were prepared by placing them upon a rude scaffold over a slow fire, in the same way as previously described among the Kickapooos, and which I have seen done by frontier squatters. It dries the meat, without depriving it of its juices, and prevents decomposition. A supply of corn from the rancho above us, together with some coffee and sugar, capped the climax of their happiness, and their bivouac wore a very cheerful appearance during the day.

The men of the party spent the day in painting themselves and lounging in their shealings, or wandering listlessly from tent to tent, expressing either surprise or pleasure by a grunt or a grin.

The intense heat—thermometer one hundred six degrees—caused them to denude themselves entirely, except the breech-cloth, so that with the yellow, black and red paint, they presented a motley appearance.

They parted their hair from the centre of the forehead back to

the crown, and made a streak of yellow, white or red, along the divide, a custom in which they were greatly assisted by large beds of yellow and white clay, which they discovered in the valley some distance down the stream. I could not discover whether each had distinct style of daubing himself, but suppose this to be the case, as all were different.

A fat, chubby warrior, painted a facsimile of a *saw* around his jaws in black, his cheeks red, his eye-lids white, and his forehead and divide of his hair yellow, smearing his body also with yellow.

The invalid painted his face red, his eyelids white and streaked his face with black, like a ribbed nose babboon. Another painted one side black and the other yellow, continuing the process down to his waist. Another daubed yellow on one side and red on the other, his eyelids white and streaks of black upon his cheeks, in imitation of snakes. The boys also painted themselves; and several of the women had cheeks and hair stained with red. In short, all that savage fancy could do to increase savage ugliness was done, and a more diabolical, and at the same time ludicrous set, it would be hard to meet with.

About nine at night several of them collected upon the prairie to sing and dance. Seated on the ground in a circle, the leader commenced drumming upon a tin mess pan, accompanied with a low, guttural, monotonous chaunt, at intervals raising his voice louder, when a general grunt or a yell was added by the rest, and the whole strain ended with a prolonged *ugh*.

They sang for more than an hour, occasionally two or three throwing their arms up and hopping around like what children call playing at frogs, ending by seating themselves again with a grunt.

I soon tired of the scene, which by the light of a low fire, looked more like a parcel of monkeys at dull play than anything else. Their audience of teamsters and soldiers, however, seemed greatly pleased, and as a novelty it was somewhat interesting.

*August 20th.*—The usual morning toilette was gone through with by the men, but the intense heat—one hundred and five degrees in the shade—kept all quiet in and about camp, except the women, some of whom were unusually busy, conspicuous among whom were the two wives of the chief Ke-tum-a-see.

Our Delawares took the opportunity to have their deer skins—

of which they had accumulated quite a large bale—dressed by these women, and the process was very simple but rapid. Having soaked the skins thoroughly, they drew them over a log leaned against a tree at an angle, and then taking a rib of a deer in both hands, removed the hair by scraping it against the grain; they then stretched and dried them, when they became beautifully soft and white. To color them, they tied several into a chimney shape, hung to a limb, and building smouldering fires under them they soon changed to yellowish brown on the hair side, and light yellow on the flesh side.

Great apprehensions were entertained that Ke-tum-e-see, (the chief who had gone out to bring in more of his people) had been waylaid and murdered, as he was absent so long, but about noon he rode in, and gave as a reason for his delay that he had spent the time in endeavoring to persuade his followers to come in, but without success. His two wives ran to meet him, and seemed quite overjoyed at his arrival, most probably because he had left them entirely among strangers, as I cannot imagine any affection in the case.

At dusk the chiefs were assembled in council, and seated on the ground around the light of candles and lanterns, pipes were smoked, and Captain Marcy addressed them, through Conner, the interpreter.

Captain Marcy told them 'that he had seen their Great Father in Washington, and he had sent him out to locate and survey lands for them, that they might have homes and learn to cultivate the soil and no longer lead the uncertain life they did; that buffalo had disappeared from these plains and deer and other game were fast disappearing; that in a few years they and their children would have to resort to some other means than chase for subsistence; that they would not be permitted to depredate upon the white settlements, and there was no alternative—they must learn to cultivate the soil.'

He told them 'that their Great Father would send them agricultural implements and seeds, also men to teach them to farm, and that he would provide for them until a crop was raised. That he—Captain Marcy—had been among tribes in the North, who once lived as they were living, but who, on advice, had learned to cultivate the soil, and were now living like the whites, with plenty to eat and wear. That if they would do as their Great Father wished

them, they would have reason to thank him in a few years. That an agent would be sent to reside among them, and with the assistance of the United States troops would see that they were not molested by white men, or other wild Indians if they remained friendly.

Se-na-ca rose and replied, speaking in a low, distinct and impressive tone, using but little gesticulation, but repeatedly placing his hand upon his heart. He said, 'The chiefs and head men of the Southern Comanches have authorized me to reply to the talk which our Great Father has sent us by our friend, Captain Marcy.

'What I am about to say will be straight-forward and the truth and the sentiment of all my people.

'We remember what our former chief, Mo-ko-cho-pe told us before he died, and we endeavor to carry out his wishes after he is gone. He visited our Great Father at Washington, and brought us a talk from him.

'He told us to take the advice and example of the whites, and it would make us happy and benefit us.

'We are glad to hear the talk which has been sent us at this time; it makes our hearts warm, and we feel happy in knowing that our Great Father remembers his poor red children on the prairies.

'We accept this talk, and will endeavor to accede to all our Great Father requires of us.

'I am pleased to see our friend, Captain Marcy, once more, I well remember seeing him five years since, near this place, when I stayed over night with him, and often inquired of the whites I have met, what had become of him, and I was much pleased when I was told he was to meet us here.'

He stopped, seated himself, and many questions were put to him, which he answered freely and favorably.

All this time Ke-tum-e-see sat like a statue, glum and silent, evidently displeased at not having been spokesman.

Although he and Se-na-ca expressed themselves anxious to meet the views of the government, they were evidently afraid of their followers, and we anticipated that much perplexity might arise from this cause.

The presents—consisting of printed cotton, handkerchiefs, blankets, knives, stroudding for leggins, armlets of silver, long wampum

beads, paint, etc.,—were now handed in bulk to the chiefs, and, after another smoke, the council closed.

*August 21.*—This morning the chiefs distributed the presents, and great delight was manifested, particularly among the squaws, who kept up a continuous chattering.

It requires a good deal of knowledge of Indian fancies to select presents with judgment. Different tribes have different tastes. The northern Indians like gay clothing and blankets, ear-rings, brooches and beads of bright colours. The Comanches prefer dark clothes and heavy silver armlets, and long wampum beads, both the latter being very expensive, particularly the wampum beads, which are to be procured but in one place, a small town in New Jersey.\*

Our stock of presents was very well selected, so that all were pleased and spent the rest of the day in painting and bedizening themselves, making many a funny show.

I surprised a party of women whilst they were bathing in the stream at mid-day, or rather they surprised me, as they bathed along side of the road and in sight of camp. I observed, however, that they showed great dexterity in avoiding unnecessary exposure. Wrapping blankets around themselves, they entered the stream where a tree or a bush stood or hung convenient for them to place their blankets on so soon as they were immersed, and thus avoided exposure almost entirely.

The Comanche are very fond of bathing, both men and women, but cleanliness is only partially promoted, by it, as they are either unable or neglect to change their clothing, but wear it in a filthy state.

The women observed the same modest caution in mounting their horses. They rode astride, and like all Indians mounted upon the right side of the horse. Drawing the left foot up, after placing the right in the stirrup, they extended it over the saddle at right angles to the right, instead of describing the arc of a circle, performing the feat and seating themselves with much ease and grace. This fact was common to all the females we met.

Towards sunset I observed one of the Chief's wives leading a

\*Wampum is made of the thick and blue part of sea clam-shells. The thin covering of this part being split off, a hole is drilled in it, and the form is produced and pieces made smooth by a grindstone. The form is that of the cylindrical glass beads called bugles. When finished they are strung upon small hempen cords about a foot long. In the manufacture of wampum from six to ten strings are considered a day's work.

horse and mule slowly backwards and forwards through a slow fire, which scattered over quite a large bare spot of ground, made a dense smoke without flame, and at the same time I was sensible of an aromatic perfume pervading the valley. Upon inquiry, I found it was the process of hardening the hoofs by exposing them to the smoke and vapour of the wild rosemary—artemisia—large quantities of which grow in the valley of the Clear Fork.

*August 22nd.*—A little Mexican made his appearance among the Indians this morning, dressed in a gay dressing gown and pantaloons, and was immediately recognized by the Captain as a worthy he had seen during his Red River trip among the Witchitas. At that time, the Captain asked him why he did not leave the Indians and go home among his own people. He replied, "Me bin so long mong Witchita, me lie, me steal horse good as any, me big rascal, same as Witchita."

If an honest confession is good for the soul, this certainly is a case in point, if there is any truth in physiognomy, for a more cunning rascally countenance no one ever saw.

He rode off in company with some of the party when they left, having succeeded in getting a handkerchief and some other articles, either by begging or stealing.

Se-na-ca and some of the chiefs, with their followers, left us during the day, shaking hands all round and apparently very friendly. They had dined and supped with us several times, behaving with great decorum, sitting at table and using knives and forks, but wild Indian-like, never stopped until everything edible was consumed. This peculiarity applies, in a great measure, to all Indians; so much so, that rations had to be issued to our Delawares for three days only at a time, for just as like as not, they would consume the whole in one day. They have no idea of economy or of to-morrow, but let that take care of itself.

All are proverbially hospitable, both to strangers and acquaintances, never turning a hungry man away empty as long as a scrap to eat remains in camp, but they are wasteful and improvident.

*August 23d.*—But few articles could be obtained in barter from these Indians, as they were scantily supplied even with essentials, but what they had, and would part with, was readily taken up by different persons in the command, conspicuous among whom was a full blooded Choctaw, a teamster, whom we had hired when we

passed through the nation, a shrewd fellow, who had provided himself with quite a stock of goods, and obtained a good supply of white buckskins, bows and arrows, etc., in exchange for vermilion, looking glasses and calico.

In connection with this subject, I may remark, that the present system of trading with the prairie tribes has a great effect in checking all efforts of the government to prevent depredations upon the frontier settlements, and in this way, viz., a number of Delawares, Shawnees and Kickapoos, have for several years visited these tribes, with such articles as are most necessary for them, and which they will have at any cost, and have made large profits by the traffic. The articles they take are of small value, such as tobacco, paint, knives, beads, calico and wampum; and as the Indians have nothing of sufficient value to exchange for them, except horses and mules, they necessarily give them, and in large numbers. All these animals are obtained by marauding upon the frontier, and in proportion to the amount traded for, so is the corresponding amount of depredation.

A good plan to prevent this would be an annual donation by the government of such articles as are supplied by the traders, with the understanding that this should continue so long as no forays were made, and thereby depreciating the value of these articles, would render the trading business no longer profitable.

The tribes are accustomed to exchange presents in their friendly intercourse with each other, and have no idea of friendship under any other form; they also value the strength of attachment by the amount of presents received, as an incident related by Captain Marcy will illustrate.

He once held a talk with a chief of one of the tribes, and told him that the President of the United States was their friend, and wished to live on terms of peace with them. The chief replied, that he was much astonished to hear this, for judging by the few trifling presents the Captain had given his people, he was of opinion that the "Big Captain" held them in but little estimation.

There is no doubt but that a small amount of money, annually expended in this way, would go far towards doing away entirely with the many and frequently bloody depredations of these people upon our poorly protected frontier.

*August 24th.*—The Indians continued to leave in parties of two



or three, during the day, until all were gone except Ke-tem-e-see and the invalid, who seemed to be great friends.

Neither had anything to say, but lounged around under the trees, evidently with some object in view, which greatly excited our curiosity, but the weather was so intensely hot, that we could take but little interest in anything except the means of keeping cool.

Our larder had been most bountifully supplied for a few days past by a dragoon from Fort Belknap, who with a party, an escort to an invalid officer, had been spending a week with us, and discovered a colony of squirrels in a bottom on the opposite side of the Clear Fork. They were a large species, tawny on the belly and legs, and grey on the back, and so numerous that he shot fifty-five in four days, (going out for an hour at a time before the heat of day) which made into a stew were deliciously delicate and juicy.

*August 25th.*—Ke-tum-e-see disclosed his intention in remaining this morning. He walked up to the Quarter Master's tent, and demanded more beef and corn, but was peremptorily refused, told that he must not expect any more, and must now look out for himself. He walked off very angry, and soon we saw his wives bustling round, preparing him to leave.

Some of us went down to his bivouac, and found him seated, looking as black as a thunder cloud, and taking no notice of anything.

The invalid was at the same time made ready, and when his slave had saddled and led up his horse, the women lifted him on and fastened him with great difficulty, every movement of the poor wretch being made with a groan.

Ke-tum-e-see's horse was then saddled and led up by his wives, when he mounted, and led the way across the prairie, not deigning to turn his head or grunt out a good-bye, and this was the last of the Comanches.

The knowing ones predicted trouble from this man, whom they said was revengeful and treacherous. We kept a good look out for him, however, and were constantly on the alert, as we had been during our stay in that wild spot.

*August 26th.*—The weather was still intensely hot—averaging one hundred and six degrees in the shade—and as the twenty-seventh was Sunday, the Captain determined to commence his survey on Monday, the twenty-eighth; the party was consequently busy all day

in preparations, and those of us who had the opportunity, kept as quiet as possible, as the most discreet plan under such a sun.

I thought we had done with the Comanches, but was mistaken. Towards evening one made his appearance in the distance, and proved to be Naroni; but oh, how changed from the Naroni of the council-fire. Dressed in an old torn vest, breech cloth and leggins, with a shabby straw hat upon his head, his buffalo tail, medallions and uniform laid aside, the little man looked smaller still, and miserably forlorn. He had shot two bucks, and came to barter the carcasses for corn. Lounging around for a time, and finding no trade, he rode off, and we saw no more of him.

*August 27th.*—Sunday, intensely hot, and a general quiet reigning in our camp.

Shifting their homes so constantly as these Nomads of the plains do, they are very careless of offal about camp, and in time of plenty this evil accumulates.

Our visitors left their temporary abode in a very disgusting state—half gnawed bones, and masses of cooked raw flesh lying around, which soon, under the sun's intense rays, made us sensible of their locality.

As a sanitary measure, the Captain determined to break up our camp on the morrow, and move farther up the stream, and though we should miss the fine spring at this point, we should be nearer the land to be surveyed, which would be more convenient.

*August 28th to September 4th.*—Last night was one of great excitement in our camp. About midnight a general stampede of our horses took place, and as Ke-tum-e-see had left in such a bad humor, we concluded of course that the Indians had stolen them, but immediate pursuit being ordered, they were found in a ravine some miles off, much frightened, but supposed to have been by wolves, large packs of which had been prowling and howling around us every night during our stay.

We had scarcely got quiet again, when a mounted dragoon rode into camp, calling loudly for the Captain, and exclaiming that his comrade had been murdered at the rancho a mile above us.

An officer with the Doctor and a sufficient force, were sent up, when it appeared that the express rider from Fort Belknap to Fort Chadbourne, with a single dragoon as escort, had arrived at the rancho about two o'clock A. M., and not wishing to disturb the

inmates, were quietly tying up their mules to feed them, as was their custom at this place, when a young man, who was sleeping in the open air, being aroused, rushed to the house and shouted Indians. The man inside sprang out of bed, and seizing his gun, rushed to the door and fired two shots, both taking effect upon the poor soldier and mortally wounding him. He lingered insensible until eight A. M., and died. Our carpenter made a rude coffin, and we buried him upon a hillside, along side of a dragoon who had been killed sometime before, by the Witchitas.

This incident shows how exciting is frontier life, and how constantly upon the alert the settlers must be against attack or surprise.

We moved camp six miles up the stream, on the same prairie and to a similar spot to the one we left, though the water was not so good.

Major Neighbors returned to his home near San Antonio, and took with him Conner, the two Jacobs and Jack Hunter—the Shawnee. We parted with the Major with regret, his fund of anecdote of Indian life and customs, and his great experience on the frontier, imparted with so much affability and enthusiasm had wiled away many an hour in camp and on the march, and we missed him very much.

We remained at this point until the fourth of September, the surveying parties actively employed in running the lines and marking them, which was done by raising mounds at intervals of half a mile along the line.

Our mess was well supplied with wild turkeys, catfish and turtles, and a stream in the vicinity, a tributary of the Clear Fork, afforded fine sport to anglers, with a fish called here a trout, but which proved to be a species of bass, very game and rising readily to the fly.

The soil was very fertile and the country around rich in minerals, affording a fine field for geologizing.

The rock was limestone, appearing on the south-west edge of the prairie piled up in layers of rectangular blocks, looking in the distance like a regularly built fortification.

After the surveying party completed its work on the Clear Fork the expedition returned to Fort Belknap, and a little later moved down the Brazos to locate a reserve for the "Caddos, Ionies,

Ah-nan-da-kas, To-wac-ko-nies, Wichitas, and Ton-kah-was, who exist in this neighborhood.”

*In his fifteenth chapter Parker gives considerable detail about Fort Belknap and some of the smaller Indian tribes that frequented that section in the early 'fifties. This account in part is as follows:*

“Fort Belknap, one of the most distant posts on this frontier, is situated about a mile from the Brazos, upon an elevated, sandy plain, and though called a Fort, is destitute of any sign of fortification. One or two substantial stone buildings have been erected, but the major part are in the style called *jacal*—huts built of logs stuck up on one end and roofed in with long prairie grass, the quarters scattered over a very extended surface, affording a fine drill ground in front.”

At a council held here, (Fort Belknap) the Ionies and Ah-nan-dah-kas were represented by Jose Maria, the Caddos by Ti-nah, the Wichitas and Wacos by O-che-rash and Ask-a-quash, and the To-wac-ko-nies by Utsiock, Jose Maria—a fine looking man about sixty—was spokesman. His speech was in substance as follows:

‘I know our Great Father has power to do with us as he pleases; we have been driven from our homes several times by the whites, and all we want is a permanent location, where we shall be free from further molestation. We prefer being near the whites, that we may be free from the depredations of the wild tribes.

Heretofore we have had our enemies, the whites on one side, and the Comanches on the other, and of the two evils, we prefer the former, as they allow us to eat what we raise, whilst the Comanches take everything, and if we are to be killed, we would much rather die with full bellies; we would therefore prefer taking our chances on the Brazos, where we can be near the whites.’

Here follows a description of the great Delaware scout, Jim Shaw:

“The interpreter at this council was *Bear Head*, a famous Delaware, employed by the Indian agent for these tribes as guide and interpreter. His American name was Jim Shaw. He had been adopted into the Caddo tribe, and became a chief among them. He was the finest specimen of the Indian I saw during the trip, about fifty years old, full six feet six in height, as straight as an arrow, with a sinewy, muscular frame, large head, high cheek bones, wide

mouth, and eye like an eagle—his countenance indicative of the true friend and dangerous enemy.”

Further on it is stated:

“Jim led a Gypsy life, with his wife and two children, living entirely in tents, but providing many comforts for them unknown or unthought of by other Indians.”

*We quote from the sixteenth chapter, page 227, as to the numbers of certain tribes:*

“The Caddos, Ionies and Ah-nan-dah-kas, numbered about seven hundred and fifty warriors, women and children; speak the same language and inter-marry. They have a tradition that they issued from the hot springs of Arkansas, and from that went to Red River near Natchitoches, and finally to the Brazos.

“Of the To-wac-o-nies there were fifty one men, sixty-three women and fifty-five children.

“The Wacos numbered sixty-five men, eighty-eight women, and seventy-two children.

“These five tribes were living in great harmony, had numerous herds of horses and mules, all stolen from the whites, and at some of their temporary straw villages raised corn, beans, squashes and melons. They were all of pure Indian blood, and though their women were said to be far from chaste, they did not mingle with white men.

“As far as could be ascertained, there were eighty Wichita men, one hundred and twelve women, and one hundred and twenty-two children.

“They are most arrant horse thieves and scoundrels, and have given more trouble to the settlers in Texas than any other tribe. They have a village upon Rush Creek, a tributary to the Washita, a kind of rendezvous for them, from which they make constant marauding expeditions . . . .”

“The Apaches and Lipans are very numerous, fierce and warlike. They are more generally supplied with fire-arms than other tribes, and are in a state of constant hostility to the whites.

“The Kechies numbered about one hundred warriors, and the Quapaws only thirty-five.”

REPORT OF THE POST SURGEON AT FORT PHANTOM  
HILL, FOR 1852

*(From the Texas State Gazette, Austin, March 24, 1857)*

"The medical statistics of the United States Army prepared by the Surgeon General are before us by the kindness of General Rusk. The paper on the medical topography and diseases of The Post on the Clear Fork of the Brazos (Phantom Hill) was furnished by Surgeon Alex B. Hasson, in 1852.

As this region is now attracting a heavy tide of immigration, we are induced to lay a portion of Dr. Hasson's paper before our readers for the information which it contains. It is proper to state that the experience of settlers since 1852 has shown this to be a most fertile region, and well calculated for corn, wheat and cotton.

"Fort Belknap on the Red Fork of the Brazos is about 75 miles from this station, in a northeast direction; and Preston, the most western town on Red River, containing about 200 inhabitants is probably 165 miles further in the same general direction. The route by the Red River, Preston and Fort Belknap is the only one by which our supplies are at present received.

"Austin, a town on the Colorado River, is about 250 miles distant to the southeast; and it is probably that ultimately a more accessible route for our supplies than the present one will be found in that direction, connecting this post directly with the Gulf of Mexico.

"This post is situated between the Clear and Elm Forks of the Brazos River, about a mile and a half above the point where they unite to form the main Clear Fork. At this point the distance between the two streams is about a mile. Their average width is thirty feet; and usually they can be forded by a man on horseback without wetting his feet; but holes are numerous where the water is much deeper. At high water, during rainy seasons, it is sometimes impossible to ford them; but usually they soon subside.

"The general character of the neighboring country is prairie. A few miles to the west is a thicket several miles in extent, which consists of low scrubby species of oak, called blackjack, and multitudes of green briars which render it almost impenetrable. About thirty miles to the south a small range of mountains, and also a few groves of small timber, mostly post-oak and black-jack. Stunted mesquite trees are thinly scattered over the prairie, and a little

timber grows upon the very verge of the streams, which consists principally of elm, pecan and hackberry.

"The post itself is situated in a grove of scrub-oak, about five acres in extent, and surrounded by prairie. The scarcity of the timber offers many obstacles to the erection of quarters, and they are necessarily of a very temporary character. On the ridges and high ground the soil is poor and thin; but in the bottoms it is probable that fair crops of corn may be made by irrigation, or even without it when the season is favorable with regard to rain; this, however, will always be very precarious in this country.

"This season, owing to the excessive drought, our gardening operations have failed; and even our melons, cucumbers, and other vines are dying; yet we are told by persons who reside in a neighboring portion of this state, that more rain has fallen this year than usual.

"In the bottoms is a deep bed of alluvian composed principally of sand, red clay, and, more deeply, of blue clay. On the higher ground the subjacent rock comes very near the surface, and consists of strata of soft sand stone, the latter containing ammonites. Coal, although found at Fort Belknap, has not yet been discovered here . . . . .

"Our animals subsisted here last winter on grass alone; but they were in a very poor condition, and unable to perform much labor. The young mesquite grass begins to show itself in February; in March the trees were assuming a verdant hue; and in April many flowers were adorning the prairies.

"*Trees.* As before stated, the principal trees which have been noticed here, are post-oak, black-jack, red elm, pecan, hackberry and mesquite.

"*Flowers.* There have been noticed of the natural orders: Asphodelae, Scrophularia, Onagreae, Cacti, Solaneae, Malvaceae, and Compositae. They bloom comparatively early. Species of Helianthus and Aster were in full bloom by June 1. Wild plum bushes about four feet high are numerous. Fruit ripens early in June . . . A plant the men call "wild onion" was abundant in March, but did not last long. The men ate freely of this luxury as they had been many months without fresh vegetables. The poison ivy abounds in the thickets, and the men frequently suffer from its effects. There has been one instance of poisoning from eating a species of mush-

room. The case, which resembled in many respects the symptoms of cholera, recovered.

*"Mammalia.* Those as yet noticed are black bear, panther, big white or grey wolf, grey fox, fox squirrel, prairie dog, raccoon, skunk, hare or jackass rabbit, fallow deer, antelope, field mouse, and bat.

*"Birds.* These are the bald eagle, turkey buzzard, carrion crow, common buzzard, common American crow, a species of goose, crane and heron, great horned owl, little horned owl, mallard duck, green-winged teal, blue-winged teal, long-billed curlew, belted kingfisher, knight hawk, wild turkey, American partridge, pinated grouse, killdeer plover, other species of plover, meadow lark, chuck-wills-widow, swallow-tailed fly catcher, common crow, black bird, American robin, several species of woodpecker, dove, bunting finch, and other small birds.

*"Reptiles.* Rattlesnake (very abundant), small ground rattlesnake, a long yellow snake, called here the prairie racer, and one or two undertermined species; the toad, tree frog, bull frog, horned frog, lizard, tortoise, and turtles, hard and soft shell.

*"Insects.* Tarantula, scorpion, locusts, crickets, grasshoppers, butterflies, house flies, horse flies, mosquitos, fleas, ants, numerous big worms and flies that infest the gardens. The honey bee was seen a few days since.

*"Fish.* These, as yet seen are cat fish, mud cat, gar, sunfish, eel, minnows, bass and a fish called here the 'drum.'

*"Indians.* Small bands of Caddos and Wakoes live about 75 miles below on the main Brazos. They have permanent villages composed of grass wigwams of a conical shape, with a hole in the top for escape of the smoke. They cultivate small patches of corn and melons.

"The Wichatas are occasionally seen here, but the Indians who principally range in this vicinity are the Southern Comanches. This tribe is purely nomadic. Their frail lodges are especially erected wherever they stop, and made of a few twigs or poles cut upon the spot and scantily covered with skins, or, more frequently, with blankets and pieces of cloth procured from the whites.

"Very few buffalo have been seen so far south on this place since the year 1837, and as the Indians raise no corn or melons they are frequently distressed for food. Besides the ordinary beasts



of chase they subsist on mustangs, or wild horses, which they catch on the waters of the Colorado and south of that river. They also depend greatly on war, begging and stealing of animals. Several bands of them came to this post last winter and were furnished with provisions. They consumed all the soft parts of a beef, and readily devoured the entrals without even placing them on a fire.

"Mexicans, both adults and children, are frequently seen among them, who are, for the most part, prisoners taken in war; they appear to mingle on terms of perfect equality with their captors. The tribe is fond of carrying off children for the purpose of recruiting their fast waning numbers, and for which the natural process seems inadequate. . . . Our interpreter tells me that among the Comanche women he has frequently known and heard of cases of death in childbirth, and that he has seen in the tribe many cases of what he called rheumatism and consumption.

"Venereal diseases also are very common among them. They have medicine men whose practice consists in the administration of herbs and the performance of superstitious ceremonies. They are said to possess the knowledge of a plant that is a sure cure for the bite of a rattlesnake, a very numerous reptile in this country, but I have not yet been able to procure any satisfactory information on this point.

"I am not aware that the customs of the Comanches differ much from those of the wild prairie tribes generally. The dress of the men consists of buckskin moccasins and leggings, extending from the upper portion of the thigh down so (to?) the foot, which are sewed so as to fit pretty close to the skin and leave a wide margin of buckskin flopping loosely beyond the seam; a cloth is tied around their middle, and over their shoulders hangs a robe of skins or a blanket. The head is generally naked and adorned with feathers; the hair is worn long, trinkets hang pendant from their ears, and their faces are daubed with paint. They pull out the hair which grows upon their face, and even the eyebrows, but in a few instances where this practice is omitted, they have less hair on their face than the whites. The women wear tight fitting leggings, like stockings, which extend only to the knees; a cloth around their middle, and over their shoulders a blanket which is strapped round their waist. They wear their hair short, and use fewer ornaments and less paint than the men. It is their duty to pitch the lodges,

take care of the animals, and perform all the menial duties of the men.

“In this tribe, as among Indians generally, polygamy is common.

“The youngest children are carried about in a sack made of skins, with an opening for the head, which is suspended from the shoulders of the mother, and hangs upon her back. On arrival in camp this is frequently suspended from a limb of a tree, and the mother swings it occasionally as she performs her work.

“The Tonkaways are a small band who live to the south of this post in the vicinity of Fort Graham, and on the borders of the settlements. They are sometimes employed by the settlers to work upon their farms. I have been told by a respectable Texan that they are Cannibals, and that their pregnant women have been known to cut the feet from dead bodies and eat them under the belief that their children would thus become great walkers.”

It is proper to say that the Indians in this region are now (1857) well provided for on the United States reserves, and the country is found to be almost free from molestations from that source.

## SOME FRONTIER LETTERS.

## INDIAN DEPREDATATIONS.

(From the *Texas State Gazette*, Austin, October 6, 1855)  
*Fort Belknap, Indian Reservation. By Correspondent of the Gazette.*

“Fort Belknap, September 13, 1855.

“Editors of the Gazette: The fall seems with us the season of trouble. Invariable with us at this time of the year, the Indians make some hostile demonstrations and keep us in a broil until spring. Day before yesterday, at 8:00 A. M., Mr. Scidmore (Seidmore?), a farmer near us, was killed, while hunting cattle within a few hundred yards of his house. The Indians were two in number, supposed to belong to a band of Northern Comanches lately here on a visit. The party making the same trail killed an ox and left a young child on the prairie to die. A few hours after the death of Mr. Scidmore, Major Neighbors dispatched an express to the lower reserve for a pursuing party. His call was responded to at once by 36 Indians consisting of Jose Maria and 11 men—Ionies; Plarido and 11 men—Tonkaways; Akaynosh and 11 men—Wacos; with Bill Shaw. Also, Ocherash and Captain Ross, Indian agent in command. This party took the trail as soon as possible. Nothing since has been heard of them. Major Neighbors, with Captain Baylor, Indian agent for the Clear Fork reserve, and several citizens proceeded to the Clear Fork, with the hope of intercepting the murderers, or sending out a party of Comanches from Ketmisi’s band.

“The readiness with which the Indians forming the pursuing party prepared themselves for the chase, illustrates very well the state of mind and discipline the Indians upon the reservation are in. It shows in what light they are beginning to view such conduct, and by adopting the white man’s course toward the murderers, they will induct themselves into the right feeling on such matters—the surest guarantee to their own behavior.

“Captain Baylor has gone on duty as Indian agent and will reside at the Clear Fork of the Brazos with the Comanches. Captain Ross resides upon the lower reserve. These gentlemen intend having their families with them, which will enable them to devote their whole time to their duties. The buildings and other works on the reserves are getting on well. The feeding system works well with

those upon whom it has been tried. It is thought that before it can be attempted with the Northern Comanche they should be whipt. We have no tidings of Senaca's return; thirty-two of his people are with Ketmisi. The supplementary treaty lately made with the Indians in this region, I think, will soon be before the public, and gives a good idea of what they are doing and what they intend to do.

"The weather is beautiful. September came in with a broad smile. The rains in August quite rejuvenated the face of nature and now vegetation is fresh and green. This second spring is well marked by the appearance of many prairie flowers, which I have not seen at other seasons, and am disposed to think are peculiar to this time of year. How pleasant after regretting for a couple of months the drooping parched foliage and grasses to see everything put on the look of a new life. The range in this vicinity will probably remain good until November. The corn crop was poor compared with other seasons. Some farmers failed entirely.

## GRASSHOPPERS AND INDIAN RAIDS.

*(From the Texas State Gazette, Austin, November 17, 1855)*

“Below we give a reliable letter from a gentleman at Fort Belknap. It will be seen that since the departure of the dragoons under Major Stein the Indians in that portion of the frontier have commenced their annoyances. The force under General Johnston will be at Fort Belknap, we learn, in a few days. We, therefore, look for much change for the better at an early day.

‘Editor State Gazette: During the latter part of September and the fore part of this month the grasshoppers have infested this upper country, in many places entirely destroying the fall vegetables. Their first coming was like a dense snow storm, looking toward the sun; the atmosphere seemed thick with them. They are now depositing their eggs, and next spring we will probably have to plant twice. Some farmers burn off the prairie early, and destroy the young; others do not regard them in early spring, but dread the grown ones migrating from other parts in June and July. I notice that California and Oregon were also plagued by them in June last, where the Indians catch them in holes and feed on them. Our Indians occupy themselves differently and pillage. During my stay here there has not been as much excitement and dread of Indians as at present. Applications are made almost daily for quarters in or near the post, and some are occupying abandoned buildings. In fact, I believe all the spare places have been given to them; a number are staying temporarily with the settlers near the post.

‘No depredations have been committed in the vicinity since Mr. Scidmore’s murder, except the shooting of four cattle on the Clear Fork the other night.

‘Eight Northern Comanche were killed by a party of friendly Delewares a few days ago, who were trailing a party who drove off 28 horses from their camp and accidentally fell upon this party. Several horses were captured, and a black cloth coat and a daguerreotype of a well dressed white man were found upon them. This circumstance has alarmed the settlers; supposing that the Northern Comanche would avenge themselves on the community through which the trail of the Delewares passed, which was this.

‘The Southern Comanche on the Clear Fork seem to be in con-

stant dread of a descent of the Northern Comanche upon them, and no doubt would have gone down on the lower reserve, had they not been encouraged by the presence of troops among them from this post.

Senaco's people are gradually coming in. Major Stein's command was last heard from at the Canadian. All well thus far—plenty of grass and water. The major was in good health and in the saddle."

NOTE.—Major Stein, who had been stationed at Fort Belknap, was on his way with his command to New Mexico.

## A DESCRIPTION OF THE FORT BELKNAP COUNTRY.

*(From the Texas State Gazette, Austin, November 29, 1856)*

“Young county was established by the last legislature out of Cook county. A gentleman who resides there furnishes the following information.”

‘Following a beaten track from Fort Graham to Fort Belknap you will, after a tedious journey through the cross timbers, reach a range of ragged but open hills with the Brazos like a silver thread meandering through the valley. Soon you will espy white walls rising above the verdure, with the stars and stripes fluttering in the breeze. This is Fort Belknap, a situation of considerable importance. It has a spacious magazine, comfortable quarters for the troops and a number of cabins for the officers attached to the army. Below the fort is a fine spring and a well of considerable depth, affording an abundance of good water.

‘South of the fort one-half mile distant, is the county site of Young county, which embraces Belknap and the surrounding country. In the neighborhood is a bed of bituminous coal of a superior quality, and at some future day will be a valuable product.

‘Following the course of the river about three miles up stream we find on the west side, the mouth of Post Oak creek with farms in close neighborhood. The creek is about eight or ten miles long, and has a body of land some twelve miles in width covered with post oak. On the east side of the river are the Belknap Springs, affording plenty of water for ordinary purposes. Pursuing the river still higher up, we find the mouth of Elm Creek. Fertile lands border its bank, which are well timbered. Half a dozen families have settled upon it. A little distance higher up is the mouth of California Creek. Here is a beautiful valley of land. Only one settler resides in the valley. Six miles further up the Brazos we reach Boggy Creek. It is of considerable length, fertile soil, and the finest grazing in the state. No one yet claims a home in this lovely valley.

‘On an elevated point on the east side of the river, are a couple of cabins owned by Phillips and McCasky. Here is another of the famous springs of Young county. At present this settlement is the highest up the river. After leaving it, the traveler must not expect

his straining eye to light upon the welcome sight on the frontier of a 'smoking chimney' . . .

"South and east of Belknap settlements are sprinkled over the country at a short distance. Salt Creek, running into the Brazos from the east side, and Rock Creek, from the west side, afford this season a plentiful supply of post oak mast for hogs. Salt Creek supplies the country with considerable building timber. Following the trail from Fort Belknap some twelve miles in a southeast direction, over rugged hills, we come to the villages of the Wacos and Tonkaways upon the Indian reservation. At a distance of a mile is the large trading house of Charles Barnard and the residence of the Indian agent. Six miles further on a beautiful eminence in the bend of the Brazos, we reach the villages of the Delewares, Caddos and Shawnees.

"The condition of the Indians at Caddo village is an eloquent advocate of the policy of the Federal Government. Their dress, their mode of life, their development and their industry, show the steady and the salutary influence which the white man is exerting upon these Indians in civilizing them.

The Clear Fork of the Brazos is a good stream and runs all the year. The valley is settled as far up as Camp Cooper, and emigrants are coming in every week. There has been averaged last season 2500 acres of cultivated lands.'"



