



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/>

WTHA Yearbook Volume 4, 1928

Thomas, A.B. "Yellowstone River, James Long and Spanish Reaction to American Intrusion into Spanish Dominions, 1818-1819, The": vol. 4: 3.

Holden, W.C. "Frontier Defense in Texas During the Civil War": vol. 4: 16.

Holt, R.D. "Saga of Barbed Wire in the Tom Green Country, The": vol. 4: 32.

McAllister, S. B. "Building the Texas and Pacific Railroad West of Fort Worth": vol. 4: 50.

Webb, Walter Prescott. "Land and the Life of the Great Plains, The": vol. 4:58.

Granberry, John C. "Making History in West Texas": vol. 4: 86.

Mooar, J. Wright. "Frontier Experiences of J. Wright Mooar": vol. 4: 89.

Chalk, Sam L. A letter written to R. C. Crane. "Early Experiences in the Abilene Country": vol. 4: 93.

Crane, R. C. "Old Man Keeler": vol. 4: 100.

Hutto, John R. "Uncle John Marlin": vol. 4: 105.

Richardson, R. N., editor. "Eldredge's Report on His Expedition to the Comanches": vol. 4: 114.

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Hyman Grace

West Texas Historical Association Year Book

VOL. IV

JUNE, 1928

Publication Committee

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CONTENTS

THE YELLOWSTONE RIVER, JAMES LONG AND SPANISH REACTION TO AMERICAN INTRUSION INTO SPANISH DOMINIONS, 1818-1819, by A. B. Thomas	3
FRONTIER DEFENSE IN TEXAS DURING THE CIVIL WAR, by W. C. Holden	16
THE SAGA OF BARBED WIRE IN THE TOM GREEN COUNTRY, by R. D. Holt	32
BUILDING THE TEXAS AND PACIFIC RAILROAD WEST OF FORT WORTH, by S. B. McAllister	50
THE LAND AND THE LIFE OF THE GREAT PLAINS, by Walter Prescott Webb	58
MAKING HISTORY IN WEST TEXAS, by John C. Granberry	86
FRONTIER EXPERIENCES OF J. WRIGHT MOOAR, by J. Wright Mooar	89
EARLY EXPERIENCES IN THE ABILENE COUNTRY (A letter written by Sam L. Chalk to R. C. Crane)	93
OLD MAN KEELER, by R. C. Crane	100
UNCLE JOHN MARLIN, by John R. Hutto	105
ELDREDGE'S REPORT ON HIS EXPEDITION TO THE COMANCHES, Edited by R. N. Richardson	114
PROCEEDINGS OF THE 1928 ANNUAL MEETING	140
BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES, by R. N. Richardson	142
CONTRIBUTORS TO THE YEAR BOOK	144
ANNOUNCEMENT	146

Published by the
WEST TEXAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
Abilene, Texas

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

INTRODUCTORY

The Publication Committee of the West Texas Historical Association is pleased to present to the lovers of history in West Texas the fourth *Year Book*. We feel that in the contributions of the preceding annuals substantial progress has been made in bringing to light many facts, heretofore little known, on the early history of the western part of this great state.

It is commonly believed that our love of country is deepened in proportion to our knowledge of the traditions, historic heritages and lore of its past. Partially on this basis we believe that the work of our organization during the past four years has been of some consequence in contributing to the progress of our state. West Texans are proud of the past achievements of our pioneers, whether they were in East Texas or West Texas; but since we feel particularly obligated to the large portion of the state to which this publication is dedicated, we have endeavored to publish herein articles and accounts based largely on West Texas.

The membership of the association may feel justifiably proud of the contributions in the 1928 *Year Book*. Running through the broad range of time from the period of the Spanish *Conquistadors* to that of the orderly development of the state as indicated by the building of the Texas and Pacific Railway through West Texas, such a variety of subjects are well discussed. Covering, as it does, such a varied number of interesting articles and accounts this volume contains one of the most interesting collections yet published in this annual.

THE WEST TEXAS HISTORICAL YEAR BOOK

VOL. IV

JUNE, 1928

THE YELLOWSTONE RIVER, JAMES LONG AND SPANISH REACTION TO AMERI- CAN INTRUSION INTO SPANISH DOMINIONS 1818-1819.¹

ALFRED B. THOMAS

Introduction

A significant aspect of the American frontier conflict of 1818 and 1819 is presented herewith in a letter of Viceroy Venadito of New Spain. The document, a digest of various official reports from Philadelphia to Acapulco, Mexico, gives details of the threatened American invasion, Spanish preparations, and the Spanish point of view bearing on the approaching danger. Regarded as a whole the report of Venadito calls attention to the essential unity that characterizes American history in its widest sense. The problem, for example, of defending Spanish frontiers at such widely separated points as the mouth of the Sabine and the mouth of the Yellowstone was exactly the same. So, too, the American danger in the early nineteenth century must be closely associated with French and English encroachments that constantly disturbed the Spaniards in the preceding two centuries; indeed, the fear of foreign invasion from the north was first brought home to the Spaniards when they opened the rich mines of Mexico in the later sixteenth century. A brief survey of New Mexican and Texan frontier history will reveal the continuity of this theme in western American history and provide, as well, a background for the understanding of the Viceroy's report on this latest threat to Spanish dominions.

A principal cause for the founding of New Mexico between 1598 and 1608 was the fear that the English pirate, Drake, had

1. The following article presents an aspect of a study of Spanish activities beyond New Mexico 1592-1821, material for which the writer obtained in the Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain, during the years 1925-1926.

found the mythical Strait of Anian, believed to be somewhere north of Mexico, and had thereby opened the way for English advance on the Spanish mines. Less than a century passed before the French came from Canada to settle in the Mississippi Valley, whence Indian tales, soon wafted into New Mexico, put the Spaniards there on the alert for the westward moving voyageurs. Shortly afterwards the establishment of the French in the Gulf Region brought another province, Texas, into the colonial history of the United States. Like New Mexico, its main purpose was to protect the mines of northern Mexico, this time from the French. Barriers were thus formed, but throughout the eighteenth century until 1763 actual intrusion into and the possibility of seizure by France of these two provinces constantly preyed on the Spanish mind.²

The expanding English settlements that filled in the French possessions, after 1763, east of the river only proved a more serious menace to the Spanish. When, shortly, the revolt of the English colonies changed the name of the settlers from English to American, the Spaniards soon learned they had lost none of their virility. Thus the two-century old problem on the north and east continued to plague Spain as Venadito's letter here testifies.

One of the chief measures adopted by the Spaniards, particularly those of New Mexico, in protecting their provinces against invasion was to dispatch expeditions beyond the frontier to ward off the intruders. In the early eighteenth century, 1720 to be exact, such an expedition left Santa Fe, marched to the far away Platte in present western Nebraska, to investigate rumors of French in that quarter, reported by friendly Spanish Indians. From that time until 1819, so far as is known, this exploration remained the "farthest north" of Spanish expansion activities from New Mexico.³ At the beginning of the nineteenth century it is known that Spanish trading expeditions went yearly into that general region to visit the Arapaho.⁴ To this northward movement there now appears, reported by Melgares to Venadito, a new advance which carries the

2. Bolton, H. E., & Marshall, T. H., *The Colonization of North America 1492-1783*, passim.

3. Thomas, A. B., "The Massacre of the Villspur Expedition at the Forks of the Platte River," in *Nebraska History*, Nebraska State Historical Society, Vol. VII, No. 3, pp. 68-81.

4. Bolton, H. E., "New Light on Manuel Lisa and the Spanish Fur Trade," in *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XVII, pp. 61-66.

worried Spaniard far away to the mouth of the Yellowstone River, an achievement hitherto unknown in the annals of New Mexico. As such, Charvet's expedition adds a valuable detail not only to the subject considered here, but to the story of Spanish expansion in North America as well. The whereabouts of the diary of this exploration is unknown; its appearance will mean a contribution of value to many aspects of western history at this period.

One is tempted to speculate on the route taken by Charvet. The study of former expeditions in that direction from Santa Fe revealed that the Spaniards always crossed the Taos Mountains on their way to the plains of present eastern Colorado and then proceeded northward along the foothills of the Rockies.⁵ This route seems the probable one followed by Charvet and his fifteen horsemen since a direct march would involve the crossing of the mountain masses of present Colorado and Wyoming, which, as Melgares noted, present a barrier on the north.

It is particularly unfortunate that Melgares did not give us the full tribal name of the twenty-eight Indians who came to Santa Fe from the neighborhood of the Yellowstone River, but only set down their initial A. The discovery of Charvet's diary, it is hoped, will clear up this obscurity. Possibly the reference is to the Arapaho tribe who lived on the plains of eastern Colorado and among whom Manuel Lisa tells us in 1812 the Spaniards were accustomed to send yearly expeditions.⁶ The exact range of the Arapaho is in doubt; no reference, however, indicates that they wandered as far north as the Yellowstone River.⁷

The details that Melgares gives concerning the Spanish parties that have been searching during 1818-1819 over a hundred leagues east of the fortifications at the Pass of Sangre de Cristo and the canyon of San Fernando contribute important information concerning Spanish activities beyond New Mexico.⁸ For one thing proof that there

5. Thomas, A. B., "Spanish Expeditions into Colorado," in *The Colorado Magazine* of the State Historical Society of Colorado, Vol. 1, No. 7, pp. 1-12.

6. Bolton, "New Light on Manuel Lisa," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XVII, pp. 62-63. Attention should be called to the fact, too, that the Assiniboines lived in the neighborhood of the Yellowstone.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-63. There Professor Bolton notes the contemporary statements which give the range of the Arapaho in present Wyoming and Colorado.

8. For a summary of Spanish activities beyond New Mexico in this part of present Colorado, see Thomas, "Spanish Expeditions into Colorado," *Colorado Magazine*, Vol. I, No. 7, pp. 1-12.

was a fort at the Pass of Sangre de Cristo establishes the first known Spanish post north of New Mexico, as well as the first in the history of the region which later became the state of Colorado.⁹ The term Sangre de Cristo in Spanish documents of the eighteenth century had reference to the "front" range of the Rockies, particularly the high mountain wall in the southern part of present Colorado. The Pass of Sangre de Cristo beyond doubt is one of the several well known passes through this range. The writer inclines to the belief that the pass fortified was La Veta Pass of today. The exact date on which this post was founded is unknown. It will be noted in Venaditos letter, however, that he himself ordered the construction. From this statement we may conclude that the posts were established between 1816, the year Venadito became Viceroy, and July 9, 1819, the date Melgares wrote Conde concerning these points and his defensive measures there.¹⁰

Canon de San Fernando is beyond doubt the well known canyon of San Fernando creek near Taos, New Mexico, customarily used by Spanish expeditions throughout the eighteenth century, journeying to the plains of present eastern Colorado.¹¹ Melgares' remarks are likewise too brief to indicate the extent of this exploration by these parties. In this connection, however, the writer has just received a number of interesting tracings made by Mr. William E. Baker of Spanish names, accompanied by dates, inscribed on rocks along the Cimarron River in the western panhandle of Oklahoma.¹² One of these, too weather-worn to be entirely deciphered, is as follows:

E my Terio Jueb ena

Maio 1818

It is fortunate in this case that the date Maio 1818, May 1818, is entirely clear. That the parties Melgares referred to were engaged

9. Bancroft gives 1880 as the date for the earliest fort established in Colorado. See Bancroft, *History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming*, p. 353, note 16.

10. It is possible that the attempt of A. P. Chouteau and De Munn, who entered New Mexico from the north, to establish trade with that province in 1817, was responsible for the Viceroy's order to erect these posts. It is not without interest to speculate on the precise location of the fortifications, whether they were at the head or the foot of the pass. The discovery of ruins and evidence of Spanish occupation at any one of the passes would be significant in this connection.

11. Thomas, A. B., "Spanish Expeditions into Colorado," *passim*.

12. Mr. William E. Baker, of Boise City, Oklahoma, is doing commendable work in searching out and making known evidences of aboriginal, Spanish, Mexican, and early American historical remains in his county.

in exploring east of the mountains as early as May 1818 is known from other reports by this official, so that it is not impossible that the Cimarron came within the compass of these explorations. Whether or not the Spaniard who left this inscription on the rocks of the Cimarron River was a member of one of these parties, the fact remains that we now definitely know for the first time that the Cimarron may be numbered among those streams east of New Mexico, the Platte, the Arkansas, and the Canadian and others, which fell within the explorations of Spaniards from New Mexico.¹³

The part of Venadito's letter concerning news of Long's preparations is self-explanatory.¹⁴ It gives, particularly, enlightening details concerning the Spanish reaction and preparations to this invasion of Americans in the neighborhood of the Sabine. It should be noted among other things that the efficiency of the Spanish secret service in gathering news from such widely separated points as Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Havana and the resulting preparations for the invasion suggests one of the major causes for the prompt destruction of Long's expedition. On the other hand it should be observed that the diversion of such large bodies of troops, as Venadito mentions, to the northern frontier, while Mexico itself was in rebellion, undoubtedly operates as a cause of Spain's ultimate defeat at the hands of the rebels in Mexico.

In this connection, the strictures of Venadito on the government of the United States during this time deserve serious thought. If we view the position in which Spain found itself in Mexico in 1819, facing revolution within and threatened by foreigners from without, it is not surprising that Venadito should express himself so strongly concerning the "perfidious policy of the Anglo-Americans" and that the United States were trying "to take possession of the Province of Texas by adventurers, making a false show that they have not been able to restrain them, and keeping them in it (Texas) under the pretext that the King, Our Sovereign, cannot or does not desire to defend it, as they did in Amelia Island and the Florida region." This point of view, regarding the process of United States

13. The Cimarron River in Oklahoma and Kansas was undoubtedly crossed before this by Spaniards making expeditions to the buffalo plains east of New Mexico. See Thomas, A. B., "Spanish Exploration of Oklahoma," in *Chronicles of Oklahoma, Quarterly, Oklahoma Historical Society, Vol. VI, No. 2, pp. 188-218.*

14. For an account of Long's expedition into Texas see Bancroft, *North Mexican States and Texas, II, pp. 47-51*; also Garrison, *Texas, pp. 122-124.*

expansion is, of course, totally at variance with the usual American interpretation of our westward movement. It suggests accordingly that this and other similar movements in our history heretofore regarded by ourselves as purely national problems, are, in effect, profound international problems as well, and have a different interpretation in that field. The significance of the international character of United States expansion can perhaps be better understood when we consider that the details and the differing point of view provided by Viceroy Venadito are among those which make up the historical background and dominate, in a measure, the thinking of the Spanish American peoples with whom we are now dealing.

Translation of Viceroy Venadito's Letter:¹⁵

Venadito to the First Secretary of State

Mexico, September 30, 1819.

No. 30.

The Viceroy of New Spain, Count of Venadito, continues giving an account of the events that have occurred on the coasts and in the Internal Provinces of that Kingdom, through the Minister of War under this date, I say among other things the following:

Most Excellent Lord:
In the report of military occurrences of the present month, of which I am giving an account to His Majest-

* * * * *

Documents from number one to five of copy number three which I am likewise forwarding to Your Excellency subjoined are those from the offices of the Vice-Consuls of San Luis de los Yllineses and Natchitoches Don Juan Gualverto and Don Felix Trudeau, directed to the Consul of New Orleans Don Felipe Fatio, who has remitted them to me with his letters of the 16th and 24th of last July.

15. Venadito al Primer Secretario de Estado. Mexico Septiembre 30 de 1819. No. 30. Estado de Mexico. Legajo 14. Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla.

16. Several paragraphs not dealing with the subject considered here are omitted. The first two of the omitted paragraphs concern the visit of John Dowens, commander of the frigate Macedonia, to the port of Acapulco. The port captain there reported to Venadito that Dowens came ashore with his men, conducted himself with the greatest tact, and attempted to trade. The people of Acapulco, however, looked on the Americans with aversion and closed their doors while the former were passing through the streets! The next two paragraphs were devoted to explaining defensive measures the Viceroy had taken against some Chilean privateers who came to Mexico at the beginning of 1819 in an attempt to assist the Mexicans in their revolution; the Chileans were expected to return. The next paragraph deals briefly with a report from Melgares, stating that the Navajos have been defeated in their revolt and have signed a treaty of peace with the Spaniards. The remainder of the document is concerned with the subject considered here.

The first sets forth that there have been passing through the above mentioned S. Luis which is the capital of Upper Louisiana, twelve hundred Anglo-Americans who intend to join three hundred others at the point called La Bellefontaine,¹⁷ all under the orders of Benjamin O'Fallen, with the purpose of invading the Province of New Mexico, working in concert with the major forces which are at the mouth of the Rio Roche Jaune or Piedra Amarilla (the Yellowstone River) near the confluence of this river with the Missouri.

In my reports numbers seventy-three of November 30, 1818, and ninety-one of June 31 of the current year, I told Your Excellency that from the same points of S. Luis there was setting out on the 30th of August of 1818 a battalion of three hundred men, Anglo-Americans, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Talbot Chambers, with the object of ascending the Missouri and establishing themselves in the above mentioned spot of the Yellowstone, which is three hundred leagues to the north of Santa Fe, the capital of New Mexico, and two hundred and forty from the head of the river called Del Norte. Those are greater distances than there are from Santa Fe to S. Luis de los Yllineses, according to the report which Lieutenant Colonel Melgares gave concerning these details which I forwarded to Your Excellency in report number ninety-one.

The said Melgares stated that because of the above mentioned distances, as well as because of the great obstacles which the deserts of that country and the mountain range, which serves as a barrier for New Mexico, present, he believed it very difficult for the Anglo-Americans to penetrate into the said Province but that nevertheless he was taking proper measures to impede them and was maintaining spies and confidential agents who would communicate news of the movements of the foreigners. He was inclined to believe that the object of the Anglo-Americans in that expedition was to take away from the English of Canada the commerce in pelts which they have with barbarous tribes; concerning this point, the office of the Vice-Consul of San Luis also speaks.

The same Melgares in an official letter directed to the commander of the Internal Provinces of the West and inserted in copy number four, which I am likewise forwarding to Your Excellency subjoined,

17. Bellefontaine, probably this one, was a settlement about thirty-five miles northwest of Kaskaski. The name was applied by the early French to a large spring south of present Waterloo. Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, Vol. 27, p. 194, note 67.

states under date of July 9th of this year that there were just in Santa Fe twenty-four Indians and four Indian women of the gentile tribe A having come from the neighborhood of the Missouri. These knew nothing of the Anglo-American battallion at the Yellowstone. He states likewise that in spite of the detachments that are continually reconnoitering the plains country at more than one hundred leagues distance from the Pass of Sangre de Cristo and Canon de San Fernando, points fortified at my order in the Sierra of New Mexico, and of having despatched as far as the neighborhood of the Yellowstone the Interpreter Charvet with fifteen men well mounted for the purpose of making a reconnaissance of the above mentioned point, he has not been able to acquire any news of the march of the Anglo-Americans.

Notwithstanding these antecedents, since the Vice-Consul of S. Luis stated there had passed through there the twelve hundred Anglo-Americans who left word that they would unite in the place of Bellefontaine with three hundred others, and (since) the Consul Fatio painted a picture so lively of the enterprising and obstinate character of the commander of the expedition, Benjamin O'Fallen, as document number two of copy number three sets forth, I have notified General Garcia Conde to send him copies of the above communications, to order reconnaissances made at the points mentioned as the case may require, and if in view of these, it should appear necessary, that he prepare with despatch the troops that may be required to make illusory the projects of the foreigners, giving me advise in detail by executive mail, according to my order, whatever he may dispose, as document six sets forth. I remain very watchful of what may occur in order to take other measures which circumstances may require.

The same documents from number one to five of copy number three concern the expedition which was being brought together to invade the Province of Texas (one of the four interior ones of the east) on the Sabine River, on the Trinity, at Nacogdoches and at Natches under the orders of the Anglo-American General James Long of which I spoke to Your Excellency in my report number ninety-nine of August 31, last. Consul Fatio states in number two that this expedition is the most serious that has menaced this king-

dom since the beginning of the revolution as its undertakers neither lack the pecuniary means for its purpose nor the best organizing leaders who have directed previous ones. He judges that if the troops of the United States who are at Natchez shall act with negligence in restraining these unruly ones (such negligence) can only originate in some secret order of that government.

Fatio himself states that the first body composed of more than three thousand men has already crossed the Sabine River, that it is being augmented daily by recruits whom they receive from all parts of those states; that they are also relying on a party of Spanish rebel commanders, which is considerable, under the revolutionary leader Bernardo Gutierrez who was in Nacogdoches. Considering the people of Louisiana who have taken part in the enterprise and favor it, he states that he must believe that the Anglo-American government not only will countenance it but that it will supply the assistance which it has always given these rebels in defiance of law and good faith whenever it suits their selfishness and particular purposes.

He likewise reports that he knows that near Galveston and the Trinity River that the number of adventurers are being augmented daily at that point; that those of the Trinity can be considered as the vanguard of those who have crossed the Sabine, and that while they have connection with the Pirates who are maintaining themselves at Galveston it will be very easy for them to receive supplies and munitions of war through that channel and transport them to convenient points for the progress of the expedition. Consul Fatio believes that the French ex-General L'Allemand will join it with his resources and the Vice-Consul of Natchitoches says that there will be five generals, among them Robertson, Ader and Humbert. The Gazettes and map that Fatio says he has remitted to me with the first copy of his letter I have not received. When they arrive I shall send to Your Excellency a copy of the map and of the Gazettes.

Document number nine of the third copy is a letter from the charge d'affairs of His Majesty in the United States, Don Mateo de la Serna, written in Philadelphia on the 19th of July last, setting forth, with reference to an article in the Gazette of Natchez published there, what the revolutionists have achieved: that a plan of

operations is being formed by a part of those citizens who have the means and that several parties have already set out secretly, and many more were preparing to set out with the same secrecy; that their object apparently was to form an agricultural project in Texas, but that no one would be mistaken as to its purpose.¹⁸ The writer of the Gazette believed that he would be able to give very soon circumstantial news of the outcome of the expedition which no doubt will be favorable to the adventurers. He (Serna) was just assured that the American authorities took strong measures to apprehend the leader of the rebels in Natchez, but that they were unable to do so. Serna judges that it is a pretext in order to have a safe position in reclaiming prisoners who may be taken by the Spanish troops.

Document number eleven is a letter which the Captain General of the Island of Cuba sent me, from General James Long written in Nacogdoches on the 24th of June last. In it the rebel says that he had at that point hoisted the independent colors of Texas. Of this country he promises to take possession, to destroy Arredondo; that they may put in revolution the provinces that the latter has in his rear. At the same time he sets forth that his resources are numerically very few; that they are without artillery, arms and munitions. He begs the Pirates to make common cause with him against the Spaniards that he aid him in these objects, that he unite with him to resist Arredondo and that he will give him a privateers patent to make reprisals under the banner of Texas.¹⁹ These notices supposing that this letter is authentic, in no way agree with those which Fatio has communicated to me concerning the strength and great resources on which those rebels rely.

Notwithstanding the divergence which is noted in the assertions of one and the other, since I know the perfidious policy of the Anglo-Americans, the attempts they have made since the beginning of the revolution, either underhanded or in the open to assist it, giving all kinds of aid to the rebels and permitting them to take out of

18. That the Americans were in reality planning an agricultural colony is borne out by the later activities of Long. The principal feature Garrison says of the provincial government set up by Long was an arrangement to dispose of public lands to raise revenue and attract immigrants. Garrison, *Texas*, p. 122.

19. Undoubtedly this is Long's letter to the pirate La Fitte. See Goodwin, C., *The Trans-Mississippi West*, p. 158, for La Fitte's refusal to aid Long.

that country, people, arms, and munitions to continue the unjust war they have made against its legitimate sovereign, Senor Don Fernando VII, and finally that they are suspicious that His Majesty may not approve even the treaty to arrange the boundaries and cessions made recently by Minister Onis, that they are trying to take possession of the Province of Texas by means of adventurers, making a false show that they have not been able to restrain them and keeping them in it under the pretext that the King, Our Sovereign, cannot or does not desire to defend it, as they did in Amelia Island and the Florida Region, I judged accordingly not only to carry forward the measures I communicated to our Excellency in my last dispatch, number ninety-nine, that Brigadier Don Joaquin de Arredondo collect a body of five hundred cavalry and send them to make a reconaissance on the Sabine River with the precautions which I spoke of to Your Excellency, but that, having sent you by executive mail with all diligence, copies of all the cited documents, as I have been receiving them, as I have informed you, and as numbers seven to fourteen and sixteen of copy number three sets forth, it cannot be doubted that the rebels are at Nacogdoches, a pueblo of the Spanish territory of Texas, I shall labor with offensive celerity against them, not resting until ejecting them from the points which they are occupying.

Besides the troops which Arredondo can distribute in the Provinces under his command, I have notified the Commander General of those of the West to send to Saltillo, without losing a moment, under the orders of that chief, four hundred dragoons as a precaution. I ordered him since the 25th of August last to enroll and prepare them with all that was necessary to march at the first notice as I told your Excellency in the said dispatch, that they should take some supply mounts besides those of their complement in order to function with usefullness and energy, so that with this they would not have to await re-enforcement from the frontier Presidios as previously, as has been ordered and stated in the cited document number sixteen, charging the said Commander Generals with the greatest activity and zeal in fulfilling these dispositions, and to communicate to me by executive mail the news that occurs.

If the news communicated by Fatio be confirmed concerning the

forces of the adventurers, I shall augment those of Arredondo with the expeditionary regiments of Zamora and the Infante Don Carlos, the first of whom is in the province of Potosi and the second in that of Guanajuato, as I told your Excellency in despatch number ninety-nine. That official will bring together another thousand men of all arms in the provinces under his charge with a regular train of artillery, composed in all of a body of more than three thousand men with which, he promises me, the assistance of God intervening, to restrain the rebels and prevent them from establishing themselves in the dominions of His Majesty placed under my care.

Accordingly, I call to the attention of Your Excellency the content of my letter number one hundred of the 26th of the present month, directed by extraordinary mail with the commander of the frigate Sabina and whose duplicate I am forwarding annexed, so that it may incline the spirit of His Majesty to send me substitutes of infantry for the Expeditionary Corps, a body of cavalry or dragoons, and the ships destined to Vera Cruz and San Blas, which I have petitioned, in order to act with the greatest ease and to stop the aggressions of foreigners which I suspect go on a great deal and will have no end while these provinces of my command are so near the vicinity of the United States. Concerning this particular, I have spoken to this Supreme Ministry and to that of the State in the several despatches I have sent since my entrance into this kingdom, according to the ideas which the facts and my experience have caused me to form.

The above mentioned occurrences are the only ones which have taken place the present month in the Internal Provinces of the East and West and the coasts of the South Sea, those districts continuing to remain in entire quiet and tranquillity, as the dispatches of their commanders inserted in the Gazette numbers 124 to 130 set forth, which, with the rest of the same month, I am sending to Your Excellency subjoined.

There is being transferred to Your Excellency, accompanying the copies referred to, the continuation of the dispatches that I have directed to this Supreme Ministry concerning the particular details

so that Your Excellency may be pleased to place them before the royal notice of the King, Our Lord.

May God guard you many years. Mexico September 30, 1819.

Most Excellent Lord.

TEI Conde del Venadito

(Rubric)

Duplicate

Most Excellent Lord, First Secretary of State and of the State Department of this Ministry.

FRONTIER DEFENSE IN TEXAS DURING THE CIVIL WAR

W. C. HOLDEN

The year, 1861, was one of transition and confusion on the frontier. Fortunately, the Indians were considerably quieter than they had been for the previous two years, or great havoc might have been wrought. Why they failed to make full use of their opportunity remains a mystery.

The Secession Convention met at Austin on January 28, and two days later a committee of public safety of fifteen members was appointed.¹ On February 6, the committee designated three commissioners to confer with General Twiggs in regard to surrender of the public arms, munitions, posts and property of the United States.² The military posts were surrendered, February 18. General Twiggs's action was severely disapproved by the War Department and the next day he was superseded in command by Colonel C. A. Waite.³

The taking over of the military posts and the protection of the frontier was a matter of grave concern to the Convention. The old line of defense was divided into three districts. J. S. Ford was commissioned as colonel and placed in command of the first district extending from Fort Brown to a point midway between Fort McIntosh and Fort Duncan.⁴ Ben McCulloch was made a colonel of cavalry and given the command of the second district, beginning at a point midway between Fort McIntosh and Fort Duncan and extending to Fort Chadbourne. His brother, H. E. McCulloch, was appointed commissioner with the rank of colonel of cavalry and placed in command of the third or northwest division which extended from Fort Chadbourne to the Red River.⁵ These commanders were directly responsible to the Committee of Public Safety.

Between February 18 and April 13, the eighteen federal posts in

1. *Journal of the Secession Convention of Texas*, (Austin, 1912), 28.

2. *Ibid.*, 364. *Dallas Herald*, February 13, 1861.

3. *Journal of the Secession Convention of Texas*, (Austin, 1912), 274-276. *Dallas Herald*, February 27, 1861.

4. Ford, J. S., *Memoirs*, University of Texas, 940 cf.

5. *Journal of the Secession Convention of Texas*, 271, 318, 367.

Texas were abandoned or surrendered.⁶ Some of the federal troops were allowed to withdraw from the state; others were held as prisoners of war.⁷ A few entered the service of the Confederacy. The three state commanders hastened to send small garrisons to re-occupy the abandoned posts. With a few exceptions the garrisons were so small, numbering from fifteen to thirty men, that the forts could scarcely be called picket posts.

Colonel Ford's regiment was at first made up of volunteers, of minute men character. After the federal troops had been expelled from his district he reorganized his command, allowing all who wished to return home. The remainder were mustered into six companies for a term of six months.⁸

Colonel Ben McCulloch's immediate task was to raise and command a force which would support the commission appointed to negotiate with General Twiggs. For this purpose he called for temporary volunteers. About five hundred rallied to his command. Their purpose was achieved in a few days and most of them went home. The remainder were detailed as small garrisons, from ten to twenty-five each, to Forts Davis, Stockton, Lancaster, Hudson, Mason, Inge, Duncan, and Camps Verde and Wood. No regimental organization was retained by Colonel Ben McCulloch for the second district.⁹

Colonel H. E. McCulloch left Austin February 11 and proceeded to Brown County *via* Belton and Gatesville. On the way he collected five companies of mounted troops. With these and two hundred citizens under Lieutenant Cunningham he moved to Camp Colorado on the 22nd and received its surrender from Captian E. Kirby Smith. Leaving a company to garrison Camp Colorado, Colonel McCulloch proceeded to Fort Chadbourne, which he occupied after some delay and garrisoned it with Captain Holley's company.

For some time it seemed that there would be friction between Colonel McCulloch, who held a commission from the convention as the commander of the northwest frontier, and Colonel Dalrymple,

6. *War of the Rebellion*, official records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, I, 502.

7. *Dallas Herald*, March 20, 1861.

8. *Journal of the Convention*, 1861, p. 401.

9. *Ibid*, 305.

who held a similar commission from Governor Houston. The latter with over two hundred men had been actively engaged in Indian operations between the Brazos and Red Rivers since December. When Colonel Dalrymple learned of the secession ordinance by the Convention he demanded the surrender of Camp Cooper, which took place February 21.¹⁰ The capitulated troops moved to Fort Chadbourne where they met Colonel McCulloch. He considered their agreement with Colonel Dalrymple unofficial and had them surrender all over again to him. Colonel McCulloch then moved to Camp Cooper which he found occupied by Captain Rogers with a detachment of Colonel Dalrymple's command. McCulloch ordered Rogers to surrender the post to him, as commissioner of the convention; the latter could only acquiesce before a superior force. Colonel Dalrymple was absent at the time with two hundred of his men somewhere in the Red River country chasing Indians.¹¹ When he returned he acknowledged the superiority of the Convention. Colonel McCulloch immediately recommended to the Convention that his command and Colonel Dalrymple's should be consolidated.¹²

The Confederate government professed grave concern in regard to the Indian frontier in Texas. On the same day that Lincoln was inaugurated, L. P. Walker, Confederate Secretary of War, directed Ben McCulloch to raise a regiment of ten companies for the Texas frontier. Ben McCulloch passed the order to his brother, H. E. McCulloch who was still in command of the state troops from Red River to the Rio Grande. After the surrender of the federal posts, the second district was consolidated with the third district. Colonel H. E. McCulloch accepted the commission, mustered the troops already in his command into the Confederate service, and set about raising the five additional companies.¹³

Colonel McCulloch had hardly gotten his regiment organized when he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and ordered to another command. The companies of his old regiment had been mustered in for various lengths of time which expired in the fall

10. *Dallas Herald*, February 27, 1861.

11. *Journal of the Convention*, 1861, p. 383.

12. *Ibid.*, 383.

A Circular, August 2, 1861, *The Burleson Papers*, University of Texas.

13. *War of the Rebellion*, Series I, Vol. 1, p. 617.

and winter of 1861-1862. The legislature, foreseeing that the Confederate government would not provide sufficient force for frontier defense, passed an act, approved February 7, 1861, authorizing each of the thirty-seven frontier counties to organize a company of minute-men, not to exceed forty. The men were to receive pay while in actual service. Practically all the counties were quick to make the organizations.¹⁴ The major portion of the frontier defense for 1861 was furnished by these units.

By November, it was clear that the Confederacy had other things to think of than the frontier of Texas. The state must shift for itself. The legislature felt than a more permanent arrangement should be made to replace the minutemen companies. An act was passed and approved December 21, providing for a regiment of ten companies of rangers to be stationed on a line from Red River along the edge of the settlements to the Rio Grande, and thence to Brownsville.¹⁵ The minutemen companies were to be discontinued after March 1, 1862. A second defense act, approved December 25, 1861, perfected the militia organization of Texas.¹⁶ The state was divided into thirty-three brigade districts, each under the command of a brigadier general.¹⁷ The districts adjoining the frontier rendered some aid for its defense from time to time, especially District Number 21 under Brigadier General Throckmorton. The brunt of the task fell upon the Texas Frontier Regiment, as it was officially called.

Colonel James M. Norris was appointed on January 29, 1862, by Governor Lubbock to command the new regiment.¹⁸ While the companies were being enlisted Colonel Norris hastened to Red River from whence he started with Lieutenant Colonel Obenchain and Major J. E. McCord on a tour to the Rio Grande for the purpose of selecting a line of posts. On March 17, he stationed one half of Captain J. A. Cureton's company at Camp Cureton, where the Gainesville-Fort Belnap road crossed the West Prong of the Trinity in Archer County; the other half of the company was stationed at Camp Belnap near old Fort Belnap in Young County. On the 21st,

14. Gammel, *Laws of Texas, 1862-1866*, p. 346.

15. *Ibid.*, 452.

16. *Dallas Herald*, February 22, 1862.

17. Gammel, *Laws of Texas, 1862-1866*, 455.

18. Lubbock, F. R., *Six Decades in Texas or Memoirs of Francis Richard Lubbock*, Ben C. Jones, Austin, 1900, p. 357.

he placed one half of Captain John Salmon's company at Camp Breckenridge, at the town of Breckenridge, in Stephens County; the other half, at Camp Salmon near Sloan's Ranch, on the East Prong of Hubbard Creek, near the northeast corner of Callahan County on the boundary of Eastland and Callahan counties. On the 23rd, he selected as a station for one half of Captain T. N. Collier's company, Camp Pecan, where the road from Camp Cooper to Camp Colorado crossed Pecan Bayou in Callahan County; the other half was stationed at Camp Collier at Vaughn's Springs on Clear Creek in Brown County. On the 26th, he placed half of Captain N. D. McMillan's company at Camp McMillan at Hall's Spring on the head of Richland Creek in San Saba County; the other half, at Camp San Saba where the road from Camp Colorado to Fort Mason crossed the San Saba River, on the line of San Saba and Mason Counties. On the 29th he placed one half of Captain H. T. Davis' company at Camp Llano, near the mouth of Rock Creek on the Llano River in Mason County; the other half, at Camp Davis on Whitlock Creek about four miles from its junction with the Pedernales River. On the 31st, he selected as a station for half of Captain Charles De Montel's company, Camp Verde, two miles below the old post of Camp Verde in Kerr County; for the other half, Camp Montel, on the head of Seco Creek in Bandera County. On the 4th, he placed half of Captain J. J. Dix's company at Camp Dix at the Black Waterhole where the road from Sabinal to Uvalde crossed the Rio Frio in Uvalde County; the other half, at Camp Nueces where the road from San Antonio to Eagle Pass crossed the Nueces River, near the corner of Uvalde and Dimmit Counties. On the 7th, he stationed half of Captain Robb's command at Camp Robb where the road from San Antonio to Eagle Pass crossed Elm Creek in Bexar Territory; the other half, at the Rio Grande Station at old Fort Duncan.¹⁹

This was the first complete line of defense to be established since the federal troops had been withdrawn just one year before. It may be observed that Colonel Norris and his staff selected an entirely new line of defense much shorter than the old one. The number of stations were trebled, although the detachments were not nearly so large, numbering from fifty to sixty troopers. Only nine companies

19. Norris to Dashiell, April 23, 1862, Records Adjutant General's office.

were enlisted. The tenth was intended to serve between Fort Duncan and Fort Brown, but Colonel J. S. Ford's regiment had been taken over by the Confederate government and ordered to occupy the old line of forts from Fort Brown to Fort Bliss; the tenth company was, therefore, not needed.²⁰ The total strength of the Frontier Regiment was 1089 men who had at their disposal 1347 horses. Regular beats were laid out for patrolling details between the posts. The entire distance along the line was traversed every other day, at least. The idea behind this system of activity was to discover any trail of raiders going into the settlements, give the alarm up and down the line, and at the same time a detachment would take the trail in pursuit. The idea was good, but the Indians soon saw through it, and accordingly, began to cross the line on foot, slip into the settlements and secure mounts from the stolen herds. They did not need to take any precaution going out; for, once they got a few hours start, they were seldom overtaken. On the whole, the work of the Frontier Regiment was effective; fewer depredations were reported during the two years it was maintained as a state organization than during the previous four years.

Life in the regiment was hard, especially during the first few months. The men were indifferently armed; each man had provided his own weapons; they were poorly mounted. In most cases the horses were grass-fed. Much sickness prevailed. Measles broke out and spread through all the companies during April and May. The men had no shelter, were without surgical aid or medicine, and in many instances without cooking utensils. The regiment had no regular ordinance or commissary department. Subsistence and forage had to be gotten anywhere they could be found.²¹ Later the regiment fared better. Some tents were procured; during the summer, huts were built, and by winter conditions were somewhat improved.

One of the most serious drawbacks to the regiment was lack of a good quality of powder. Lead and caps were often lacking. In speaking of this deficiency, Colonel Norris said,

"At this time we could not make a successful defense, if attacked by Indians, for want of ammunition, the principal

20. Hyde to Dashiell, May 2, 1862, Records Adjutant General's office.

21. Norris to Dashiell, April 23, 1862, Records Adjutant General's office.

lack being lead and caps, though a great part of the powder sent us would not kill a man ten steps from the muzzle loaded with all the powder that could be forced into the cylinder."²²

Much trouble was experienced in the matter of discipline. Insubordination became the rule rather than the exception. This was due to two things. First, to Colonel Norris who was a misfit as a commander; he lacked tact and failed to command the respect of his men. As time went on, he became very unpopular. In the second place, trouble was due to the frontier individualism of the men; military discipline was irksome to them and they would have little of it. The successful company commander was the successful leader of his men. If the men did not like an officer, they did not hesitate to tell him so, and at times flatly refused to obey orders. The company officers had the same attitude towards their superior officers.²³ A violent quarrel broke out between Captain Cureton and Lieutenant Colonel Obenchain. Obenchain preferred court martial charges against Cureton. The row dragged on; two of Cureton's friends killed Obenchain and took refuge among Cureton's neighbors in Palo Pinto County. Colonel Norris sent a detail of men to arrest them, but as public opinion was opposed to the object, the soldiers failed to secure the men. The result was that the murderers were never made to answer for the crime. Cureton was relieved of his command, but was glorified in the eyes of the men and the frontier people in general.

Colonel Norris tried to make amends for what he could not prevent. In an effort to establish some kind of discipline he resorted to courtmartial proceedings. A half dozen general courtmartials were held during the summer, each lasting from three days to a week. A courtmartial was always detrimental to the service, for it required an officer from practically every company on the line. He would have to be absent from his company for ten days to two weeks; in his absence the company would not have sufficient officers to carry on its routine work. Finally, Colonel Norris despaired of courtmartials as a method of establishing and maintaining discipline on the grounds that it raised the resentment of the men and officers

22. Norris to Dashiell, June 20, 1862, Records Adjutant General's office.

23. *Ibid.*

and made things worse.²⁴ The question may arise, how could anything be accomplished by the regiment with such lack of discipline prevailing? The fact remained that, although these frontiersmen disliked army regulations, they could still fight Indians. They were deadly shots and knew the cunning and tricks of their red foes. The Indians knew this and stayed as far away from them as they could.

Subsistence and forage were always hard to get, especially on both ends of the line. Captain Dix in the Nueces country had great difficulty in procuring beef at all, and nothing could be had in Eagle Pass for Confederate money. Bread and beef were practically all the food obtainable on the southern end; the beef would often have to be pressed into service, and the small allowance of corn sent out for the horses would often have to be ground into meal for the men.²⁵

The difficulty in obtaining provisions on the southwest was not due so much in 1862 to scarcity of beef and grain as it was to Union sentiment in the region. As Lieutenant Lane expressed it, "The conscription law has driven the people into the mountains." Captain H. Y. Davis, whose company patrolled the Llano and Peder-nales region, reported on July 25,

"Our country is getting in a deplorable condition, more especially this portion of the line. I am satisfied unless something is done soon our companies will have to concentrate, our camps are threatened by the Union men in the mountains, they say they must have provisions, and by making an attack on the weak camps along this portion of the line they can supply themselves. I am confident beyond doubt, that they are concentrating in larger bodies with what view nobody is able to tell. There are no Indians in this portion of the country, the patrol scouts have become worthless, they generally meet the Union men in larger numbers than themselves, consequently, they can do nothing. I am really afraid sometimes they will get the scouts' horses, the patrol that I send out cannot compete with from twenty-five to forty well armed men, unless there are

24. Norris to Dashiell, October 28, 1863, Records Adjutant General's office.

25. Lane to Daschiell, July 26, 1862, Records Adjutant General's office.

Confederate troops sent to this frontier to aid the southern regiment, companies will have to be concentrated against the opposers of our government who are getting so numerous on this line, that I think we will have to abandon Indian hunting and turn our attention to Yankee hunting, for it is apparent that no Indians are coming into a country where so much sign of white men is found. I hope our Colonel will look into the matter immediately, and place us in a condition to not only defend ourselves but arrest those men and bring them to judgment."

Colonel Norris asked Governor Lubbock to call the situation to the attention of the Confederate commander in Texas. The result was the Duff expedition.²⁶

The term of service of the Frontier Regiment, which was for one year, expired in January. Governor Lubbock issued an order re-enlisting a new regiment of the same personnel and organization for a term of three years, or the duration of the war.²⁷ His action was approved by the Legislature on March 6, 1863.²⁸ On January 10, Colonel Norris resigned as commanding officer; he frankly confessed that his "remaining in office would no longer benefit the country."²⁹ His successor was chosen by election. The choice unanimously fell to Lieutenant Colonel J. E. McCord.³⁰

A little unusual excitement happened on the southern end of the line during January. Brigadier General H. P. Bee, Confederate commander of the western subdivision of Texas, concluded that the Union forces were about to make an attack on Brownsville. He hastily called upon the southern batallion to come to the defense of the town.³¹ The news was received with great joy by the men on that sector. For a year they had been carrying on the monotonous patrols. No Indians had been in that region. Their food had been scant and bad. Anything now for a change. To their dismay, before they could depart, the danger had passed and the

26. For account, see Biggers, D. H., *German Pioneers in Texas*, (Fredericksburg, 1925), p. 57.

27. Lubbock, F. R., *Memoirs*, p. 475. *Northern Standard*, February 15, 1862.

28. Gammel, *Laws of Texas, 1862-1866*, p. 607.

29. Norris to Lubbock, January 10, 1863, Records Adjutant General's office.

30. He had been promoted after the death of Lieutenant Colonel Obenchain.

31. Bee to Robb, January 5, 1863, Records Adjutant General's office.

request for their service was countermanded.³²

The regiment started its second year's service under considerable handicap. Its size had been reduced to about two-thirds its old number. It was repeatedly proposed to recruit it to full strength by a militia draft from the frontier counties, but this was never done. The ever increasing demand for men on the Confederate front was too great. By February, destitution along the thin line amounted to actual suffering. Many of the horses died of starvation and former hard work. There were no percussion caps on the line. In some instances, the men refused to patrol or scout, alleging that to do so would be to endanger their lives without a corresponding benefit to the service.³³

The Indians were quick to discover the weakness of the line and began to make more numerous raids and with greater boldness. A protracted drouth during the spring and summer of 1863 made grass scarce, and the horses of the regiment remained in a weakened condition.

Colonel McCord changed the whole policy of the regiment as to its internal regulations and method of defense. He had the unquestioned loyalty of both men and officers. No more court martials were necessary. He controlled the regiment after the manner of a ranger organization rather than attempting to follow army regulations. Had Colonel Norris done this, his experience might have been much happier, considering the character of his men. Upon the unanimous recommendation of the officers of the regiment and citizens of the adjoining settlements the patrolling system was abolished.³⁴ That system had served only to jade the horses and make life monotonous for the men. The patrols of Company H, located in the section where the Indians were most numerous, sighted Indians but one time during 1862. This party of Indians would have probably not allowed itself to be seen had there been more than two men on the patrol detail.³⁵ Colonel McCord's policy was to concentrate each company at one station, in order to eliminate one detail for camp duty in each instance, and conduct unexpected scouting expeditions in unfrequented parts of the coun-

32. Bee to Dashiell, January 17, 1863, Records Adjutant General's office.

33. Norris to Dashiell, February 6, 1863, Records Adjutant General's office.

34. McCord to Dashiell, August 27, 1863, Records Adjutant General's office.

35. Whiteside to McCord, April 13, 1863, Records Adjutant General's office.

try. In this way he hoped to surprise Indian raiding parties and make their beloved occupation more dangerous.

The effects of the new policy were plainly visible. After the regiment was supplied with good ammunition in July, more engagements were fought, more Indians killed, and more horses recaptured in five weeks than during the entire year of 1862. It must be remembered, however, that there was greater opportunity for these things in the summer of 1863, than during 1862, because the Indians were down in far greater numbers.³⁶

Colonel McCord was severely criticized and reprimanded by the Adjutant General, Colonel J. Y. Dashiell, at the instance of Governor Lubbock, for leaving off the patrolling system and taking up the scouting system. However, after the efficiency of the new system was demonstrated, it was allowed to remain in use.³⁷

It fell within the scope of the Frontier Regiment to protect the salt works in Shackelford County. An abundance of salt near the top of the ground and easy to mine, had been discovered there prior to the beginning of the Civil War. After the embargo had caused salt to become very dear in the South, the Shackelford County mines furnished salt for most of the Trans-Mississippi Confederate army and for the people at large of the northwestern part of the state.³⁸

In the fall of 1863, Colonel McCord faced a new problem in his administration of frontier defense. During August, Governor Lubbock issued an order making a draft of part of the militia. The sparsely settled country along the edge of the settlements became a rendezvous for draft evaders. They gathered in groups, and, of course, had to live off the country. They came to constitute a menace second only to the Indians. On one occasion they captured and detained for a time some recruits who were enroute to join the Frontier Regiment.³⁹ It became one of the duties of the Regiment to scour the country occasionally for the purpose of rounding up draft dodgers and turning them over to the nearest enrolling officer.⁴⁰

A wide-spread spirit of uneasiness grew up on the southwestern

36. Whiteside to Dashiell, August 27, 1863, Records Adjutant General's office.

37. *Ibid.*

38. Martin to Pearce, February 3, 1862, and Barry to Dashiell, May 6, 1863, Records Adjutant General's office.

39. McCord to Dashiell, October 9, 1863, Records Adjutant General's office.

40. General Order No. 16, Camp Colorado, September 11, 1863, Records Adjutant General's office.

frontier during the summer and fall of 1863. That region had been practically clear of Indians during the previous year. Now it was full of raiding parties. The companies of that section were doing their best, but their line was too long and their numbers too small. Furthermore, a rumor spread through the country that the Frontier Regiment was to be removed. The citizens of Llano, Mason and Gillespie counties held a mass meeting at Fredericksburg and organized a volunteer mounted company of eighty members. The men, almost entirely Germans, and fearing they might be drafted for the Confederate army, tendered their services to the state with the expressed understanding that they would never be called upon for any service except "for home protection against all depredators and murderers."⁴¹ Letters and petitions to the Adjutant General and the Governor indicate that the uneasiness was even more widespread in the region between the Frio and the Rio Grande.

In December, 1863, the entire system of frontier defense was radically changed. For over a year the state authorities had been bickering with Confederate authorities in respect to transferring the Frontier Regiment into the Confederate service.⁴² The principal motive of the state was to get rid of the expense of maintaining the regiment.⁴³ The Confederate government had been willing to accept the organization from the first, provided it also acquired the right of withdrawing the regiment from the state. Governor Lubbock had held back on that provision. It was known that the Governor-elect, Murrah, was favorable to the conditions.⁴⁴ To offset the loss of the regiment, the legislature in December, 1863, passed an act completely reorganizing frontier defense. It provided that all persons liable to military duty in the counties west of and including a line made by Cook, Wise, Parker, that part of Johnson lying west of the Belnap and Fort Graham road, Bosque, Coryell, Lampasas, Burnet, Blanco, Bandera, Medina, Kendall, Atascosa, Live Oak, McMullen, La Salle, Dimmit, and Maverick Counties, should be enrolled and organized into companies of not less than twenty-five nor more than sixty-five men, rank and file. The Governor should divide these counties into three districts each of which would

41. Schultze to Bechem, August 10, 1863. Also Schultze to Lubbock, November 1, 1863, Records Adjutant General's office.

42. Lubbock, F. R., *Memoirs*, 469-471, 483.

43. Lane to Norris, May 8, 1862, Records Adjutant General's office.

44. *Dallas Herald*, July 8, 1863.

be under the command of an officer with at least the rank of major. Each company was to be divided into four parts and at least one part should be in the field all the time.⁴⁵

The Frontier Regiment was concentrated temporarily in March at Fort Belnap, but ceased to be an important factor in frontier defense. At the same time the new organization was perfected. The northern district, Number 1, under Major Quayle, of Decatur, had a total of 1517 men subject to active duty. The middle district, Number 2, under Major Erath, of Gatesville, had a total of 1413 men,⁴⁶ and the southern district, Number 3, under Brigadier General McAdoo had 1334 men. The total number of men subject to call was 4,264, of which 1,066 were supposed to be engaged in scouting duty all the time.⁴⁷

Beginning in the spring of 1864, and continuing until close of the Civil War, the attention of the frontier forces was directed mainly to jayhawkers and deserters. The frontier had become their rendezvous. They congregated in large armed parties, and became far more dangerous than the Indians. For some cause but few Indians were seen during this period. Perhaps the reason was that the country was so full of jayhawkers, deserters, renegades and military parties hunting them, that the Indians considered it a very unsafe place.

In Lampasas County alone there were in May and June, 1864, an organized band of about seventy jayhawkers and deserters. Major Erath kept a force of 120 men there for three weeks in an effort to capture them. Some were arrested; the others dispersed to join other bands. At the same time over two hundred had gathered on the Concho River and were living off of the country. When threatened by a superior military force, they dispersed in several directions, some going to El Paso, some to the mountains in southwest Texas, and some to Mexico. Within three months after the new frontier defense organization was made, Major Erath had caused 103 deserters to be arrested in the Second District and turned over to the Confederate authorities.⁴⁸

The thing that made the deserter problem so hard to handle was the fact that in some localities a majority of the people were in

45. Gammel, *Laws of Texas, 1862-1866*, p. 677.

46. Erath, G. B., *Memoirs, University of Texas*, 106-107.

47. A memorandum, Records Adjutant General's office.

48. Erath to Culberson, June 30, 1864, Records Adjutant General's office.

sympathy with them. This was especially true in Blanco, Gillespie, and Jack Counties. The number of citizens disloyal to the Confederacy along the entire frontier was astonishingly high. Partizan feeling was strong. In some places deadly feuds broke out. Because of this state of affairs many good men voluntarily asked to be transferred from the frontier organizations to the Confederate service for safety. They preferred to face Union guns to taking their chance on the bushwhacker's rifle.⁴⁹

In January, 1865, an Indian engagement of considerable size temporarily diverted attention from the deserters. A party of about six hundred Kickapoos, claiming they were disgusted with the war between the North and the South, decided to leave the Indian territories and go to Mexico. They entered Texas, crossed the Brazos and travelled in a southwesternly direction. The trail was discovered and reported to Major Erath.⁵⁰ He immediately dispatched Captain S. S. Totten with two hundred troops to follow the trail and investigate its meaning. A Captain Fosset with about eighty Confederate troops hit on the trail about a day's march ahead of Totten. Fosset came upon the Indians camped on Dove Creek, a tributary of the South Concho. He waited for Totten to come up, and without investigating to see whether the Indians were friendly or not, the two commanders ordered a charge. The Indians had no inclination to fight, and tried to explain they were friends to the whites and were on a peaceful mission. The whites would not listen. The Indians then fell back to a ravine and returned a deadly fire. In fifteen minutes fifteen of Totten's men were dead and sixteen wounded. He ordered a retreat, leaving his dead on the field. Fosset captured the Indian's horses, but the Indians rallied and recaptured them. A few days later, Totten returned to the scene, found the Indians had evidently left the camp in a hurry, leaving their own dead unburied. Totten's own men lay where they fell, none of them scalped. An official investigation revealed that the conduct of the state and Confederate troops in this particular case was not a thing of which to be proud.⁵¹

As a further means of simplifying frontier defense the Governor

49. *Ibid.*

50. Erath, G. B., *Memoirs*, University of Texas.

51. Brigadier General McAdoo to Burke, February 20, 1865, Records Adjutant General's office.

issued a proclamation in May, 1864, forbidding immigration to and settling in the unorganized counties of the state. Anyone violating the proclamation became liable to conscription into the Confederate army. All officers of the frontier organizations were ordered to arrest and hand over to military authorities of the Confederate States all offenders.⁵²

During the winter of 1864-1865, and the spring of 1865, deserters flocked to the frontier in ever increasing numbers. They came from all the Confederate organizations in the west. Sometimes they slipped off as individuals, and, sometimes, in groups. On one occasion eighty-eight men of Dellure's regiment, near Crockett, deserted in a body and marched in order for four days through towns, villages, and public highways, stealing as they went, and no effort was made by the military to pursue.⁵³ Perhaps, the commanding officer was afraid the pursuing party would join them. Brigadier General J. W. Throckmorton estimated that no less than five hundred men passed between the Red River and Austin, going west, during the last two weeks in March, 1865. On April 3, Captain Pickett with seventy state troops and Colonel Diamond with a slightly larger number of Confederate troops overtook and captured an organized body of ninety eight deserters along with 150 stolen horses on the Little Wichita.⁵⁴ Nor were all deserters confined to the Confederate organizations. The state troops, including the frontier organizations had their share. An examination of the muster rolls at the time of the surrender shows that from one-fourth to one-half of the active force of the companies were listed "deserters."

The surrender of General Kirby Smith on June 2, 1865, ended Confederate resistance in Texas.⁵⁵ The officers and men were paroled until the proper exchange or release could be made by the United States.⁵⁶ This action had some effect on the frontier. The isolated Confederate companies stationed at the old posts on the Rio Grande, and what was left of Colonel McCord's regiment and

52. Proclamation by the Governor, May 26, 1865, Murrah Papers, Texas State Archives.

53. Throckmorton to Murrah, April 5, 1865, Records Adjutant General's office.

54. Hill to Walsh, April 5, 1865, Records Adjutant General's office.

55. Bancroft, H. H., *History of the North Mexican States and Texas*, II, 478-479.

56. *Dallas Herald*, June 15, 1865.

Colonel Bourland's regiment, which had been stationed on the north Texas frontier, were disbanded. Fortunately, the state system of frontier defense, under the act of the legislature, December 15, 1863, did not immediately break down, and continued to provide some protection for the next few months.

On the whole, the Texas frontier held its own during the Civil War. It fell back temporarily in some places, but the deserted settlements were soon re-occupied. There were Indian raids, to be sure, and they were increasing in numbers during the spring of 1865, but there were not nearly so many as during 1866 and 1867. This was the time when the frontier actually fell back more than a hundred miles.

THE SAGA OF BARBED WIRE IN THE TOM GREEN COUNTRY

R. D. HOLT

The last half century, year after year, has written a wonderful story of change across the face of the Concho-Colorado Country. Fifty years ago, in 1878, the buffalo and the Indian were rapidly being driven ever westward by an advancing frontier of cattlemen, who in turn were being pushed from the counties of Comanche, Lampasas, Brown, and Coleman by "The man with the plow."

The first semi-nomadic herdsmen coming into the Tom Green country, found the range free and vast in extent. They stayed on near the streams and prospered. Others came in and remained and likewise prospered. They had found "a bovine paradise."

By the late seventies the cattle industry of Texas was booming. The northern drives were furnishing a market to Texas cattlemen. Then outsiders were attracted and came to the west to engage in the cattle business. Ranges became scarce and the Tom Green country became well stocked. Farseeing cattlemen began to purchase the land.

Another factor also entered upon the scene in the Seventies. In 1875 a salesman brought to Texas that new invention called "barbed wire." Within a few years it was in use to a limited extent in the more populous counties. Prior to its advent the cowmen had believed themselves safe from the approach of farmers into the prairie portions of the west. Farmers could not fence their fields on the prairie due to the great cost of rails or stone; and besides, they could not make a living in a dry country, it was believed. But they reckoned without considering the inventors of barbed wire—Mr. Joseph G. Glidden, Issac L. Elwood and Jacob Haish and others.

In 1880, Tom Green County was the second largest county in the state, covering an area the size of Massachusetts.¹ The area of the county was 12,500 square miles and its population was 3, 615.² At that time a few big ranch outfits held ranges at different points but the country was open and unsettled. Free grass and free water were

1. *Texas Farm and Ranch*, April 15, 1884, p. 12.
2. *The San Angelo Standard*, May 3, 1924.

calling other stockmen to come on. And they came, both cattlemen and sheepmen.

Free Grass and the Tom Green Country

After 1876 there was a marked movement of stock westward. Free grass and water caused the Tom Green Country to be stocked up and then overstocked. The first settlers could not have held on without free grass but when more settlers came in free grass proved to be a curse. The time finally came when there was no more free grass and the farsighted stockmen prepared for this by buying or leasing land, for his own use. Barbed wire fencing made it possible for him to get the exclusive use of this and thus prevented the destruction of all the range.

In the days of free grass it was every man for himself. Sheepmen did not mind if they overran the cowman's range. Range rights were hard to defend when grass was scarce and stock numerous.

Fortunately when this condition was reached a remedy presented itself to the stockmen of the prairies. This was none other than barbed wire.

Fences were in common use in the Eastern part of the state where timber was plentiful. Rail, lumber or even rock fences could be used there, but on the prairies of West Texas the cost was prohibitive.

Wire Fences Built in Tom Green Country

In 1879 the Tom Green Country was wide and open. Antelope, deer and even bears were common sights. The cowboys rode their way unhampered and unchecked. The nearest wire fence was in Brown County.³

But the large profits in the sheep and cattle business soon came to greatly enhance the value of the land. About 1883 the cattle business was paying about 30 per cent on the money invested.⁴ The profit in the sheep business in Tom Green County one year with *another* ranged from 25 to 33 per cent on capital invested.⁵

The rapid occupation of the land and the wild scramble for grass taught stockmen that such conditions could not last. They began

3. Ben C. Mayes in *San Angelo Standard*, May 3, 1924.

4. *Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, June 18, 1883, p. 8.

5. *The Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, January 10, 1884.

to buy or lease the state and railroad sections and, in order to get the use of these, began to fence in the country as was being done to the eastward.

The use of the wire fence came gradually westward. About 1889 the first wire fence was erected in Coleman County.⁶

In the early 80's the barbed wire fence was attracting considerable attention all over Texas and more especially in the Western portion. One writer of the period declared that "the person who first conceived the idea of barbed wire for fencing was inspired," and that such material made a fence that was "horse high, pig tight and bull strong." Another writer of the same period said that such a fence was "a costly calamity at best." Experience proved that wire fences were successful and so they came to be built, as the frontier of farmers pushed westward.

One of the first barbed wire fences to be built in the Tom Green Country was erected by Mr. L. B. Harris, on the Colorado River and Buffalo Creek, in Coke County. This was in 1882.⁷ The wire used was heavy galvanized barbed wire and enclosed a pasture of 160,000 acres. In September 1883 the fencing was still going on. Two carloads of wire had been used and two more were on the road. This was the largest pasture under fence in the country.⁸ The first large pasture fenced in the present county of Tom Green was by Col. John R. Naseworthy. He owned all the land under fence. The next large pasture was fenced by Mr. C. B. Metcalfe in 1883. This was the Arden ranch on the Middle Concho and consisted of 10,000 acres. In 1883 he leased and fenced 18,000 acres of Washington County School land and in 1884 fenced 20,000 acres of X. Q. Z. pasture.⁹ The wire used cost about 20 cents per pound and wire fence could be built for about \$400 per mile, while a cedar rail fence would have cost about \$1 for a panel 5 feet long or over \$1,000 per mile.

Other stockmen rapidly took up the idea of fencing. There was a steady encroachment upon the grazing lands of the cattlemen. Sheep men and then "nesters" or small farmers, came in. Fences came to be strung across the face of the Tom Green Country. Barbed

6. *The Dallas Farm News*, April 4, 1924.

7. F. L. Harris, San Angelo, Texas.

8. *The Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, September 6, 1883, p. 2.

9. *San Angelo Standard*, May 3, 1924.

wire made it possible for the farmers to settle up the country whereas before only small patches or fields could be fenced with rocks or rails. Land continued to advance in price. Barbed wire had helped to make it valuable, because it was soon found that fencing increased the utility of the land to the stockman and was a necessity to the farmer on the prairie. Those who could not buy land, leased it and fenced it. Thus the second stage in the history of stockraising was entered upon in the Tom Green Country, the era of the leased range. By the beginning of 1884 the fencing of the ranges was an accomplished fact. Ranchmen were making arrangements with the rightful owners of the land, in most cases, and then were protecting their leases with barbed wire fences.

There were many advantages of barbed wire fences and some disadvantages. By 1883 the wire fence question had become an issue in Texas. Men opposed wire fences because these fences offered the only existing material for inclosing the range and were thus ending free grass. Other men favored wire fences as a protection to their own grass on their own land. The wire fence meant transition from the old open range system and this meant the end of occupation for the cow boy as well as the old time cattleman of free grass days. These wire fences often inclosed the only water in the vicinity and they often obstructed travel and forced the traveler to go a few miles out of his way.

Many could not fit themselves into the new scheme of the fenced range. Some felt that they were not being treated fairly and were filled with deep resentment when they thought,

“They have tamed it with the harrow; have broken with their plows; Where the bison used to range it, someone’s built himself a house; They have stuck it full of fence posts, they have girded it with wire; They have furrowed it with ridges, they have seeded it with grain; And the West that was worth knowing I shall never know again.”¹⁰

There were some who could not break away from the idea of the open range and free grass. Some would even fence their own land in order to keep their cattle on the open range and save their own land, although this was probably in extreme cases only. The story is told of one man in West Texas, during the 'Eighties, who owned 10,000 cattle and 320 acres of land. By and by his cattle became

10. F. W. Neill, in *Hunter's Frontier Magazine*, May, 1916.

rather too familiar about his camp. Then he fenced his little claim against them, remarking that he did not propose to have "the damned cattle" bothering him.

Fence Cutting

In the Tom Green Country, just as in other parts of Texas, there were some who were not prepared for the transition from free grass to fenced pastures. Some were without means to buy or lease land and fence it. Others did not conceive of such a radical thing as the actual fencing of the prairies and believed and hoped that barbed wire was just a "new-fangled" idea that would not work out in practical experience.

In November, 1883, the Harris pasture fence on the Colorado was completed. Cowboys and small stockmen living nearby saw their best grass land enclosed and rather suddenly, at that. Men with cattle had been counting upon the use of free grass for the winter. But when they saw their winter pasture enclosed, they were surprised and it was too late, they considered, to look for new range. Their only experience had been with free grass for all and they could not comprehend that a man had the right to fence his own grass for his own use.

In the fall and winter of 1883 there was an epidemic of fence cutting in Texas and the state newspapers of the period carried much discussion of the subject. The Tom Green Times in October of 1883, said that there were no fence cutters in Tom Green County but that Texas would be thrown back 20 or 25 years by the fence cutting lawlessness, which meant the loss of trade, loss of capital, scarcity of money, and decrease in wages.¹¹

In the first part of December, 1883, the fence around the Harris pasture on the Colorado was cut for a distance of about 19 miles by unknown parties. It was cut at night and cut once between every post. A carload of wire belonging to Mr. Harris was piled on a large stack of cedar posts and burned. The total loss was estimated at \$6,000.¹²

Governor Ireland, soon afterwards, issued a proclamation offering \$500 reward for the arrest and conviction of any party that had

11. *The Galveston News*, October 8, 1883.

12. *The Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, December 11, 1883.

destroyed the fence material of L. H. Harris, of Tom Green County.¹³

In those days labor was cheap and, as the posts were left standing, Mr. Harris soon had the wire spliced and the fence repaired. It was cut several times after this and always at night. Some of this wire is still in use on the McCabe ranch in Coke County.¹⁴

On December 10, 1883, the pasture fence of John R. Naseworthy was cut and destroyed for over five miles. He owned or leased all land enclosed. The fence of John R. Frost and Company was also cut. The excitement ran high in Tom Green County.¹⁵ About this time the Austin Statesman in denouncing the fence cutting, said, "A fence cutter is the noblest work of his Satanic majesty," and "Fence cutting is the last outburst of oxcartism tintured with double distilled deviltry. It would throw back Texas' progress twenty-five years for the sake of a few longhorns."

After Mr. Naseworthy's fence was cut, he addressed the fence cutters in the Tom Green Times, as follows:

NOTICE TO FENCE-CUTTERS

"Gentlemen:—A few months ago I fenced in a ranch for myself, about four miles from the town of San Angelo, of six thousand acres, owning every inch of land inside of my enclosure, except a vacancy claimed by two parties, and both of them agreeing that they would give me the preference to purchase when either of them should get a patent. Now for convenience to the public, I put up large double gates, in every instance where there was a road running through my enclosure. Whenever I rounded up my pasture, I went to the expense of having notices printed and circulated them so that my neighbors, or any one else that might have stock in there could come and get it. Now, gentlemen, I am a citizen of this state and a tax payer and what is the use of forcing taxes from parties only to pay to our government to see that each and every person is protected in his rights. If you are going to take the law into your own hands, commence right; commence like men, like our forefathers did, open and above board,

13. *Texas Wool Journal*, December 25, 1883. p. 9.

14. Mr. J. Q. McCabe, who came to Tom Green County in 1879.

15. *The Austin Democratic Statesman*, December 18, 1883.

and when the strong stands, the weak falls, not the right. Now a word then I shall say no more. It is, that I have been as liberal as any, if not more so, than any pasture men in the state about my pasture, but I see that it does, no good. Now gentlemen, be reasonable. I intend fencing again and if the State of Texas does not protect me with its strong arm, I have but one word to say, and that is that I shall keep on fencing until I am broke, or until I have not one cent left to purchase more wire with. Why? Because it is mine, mine only, and it does not interfere with you nor anybody else, and gentlemen, to cut and destroy my fence without any cause only robs me of mine and that which belongs to my family. I only publish this to those probably led to believe otherwise.

JOHN R. NASEWORTHY.¹⁶

A United States Soldier Turned Fence-Cutter in Tom Green County

The only fence-cutter probably ever apprehended, tried and fined in Tom Green County was Lieutenant L. C. Lane, of the United States army, stationed at Fort Concho. He was indicted for fence cutting in Tom Green County and the comptroller at Austin paid the \$30 reward for conviction for this offense as the State of Texas had promised.¹⁷

The Fort Worth Gazette, of December 14th, in an editorial, said that this officer had disgraced his uniform by such conduct in "prowling around at night and destroying other peoples property."

This incident of the soldier fence-cutter in Tom Green County seemed to attract considerable attention all over the state. The Austin Statesman of December 18, published a statement from San Angelo regarding the incident. This statement said that the editorial in the Fort Worth Gazette of the 14th, entitled "Disgraced his Uniform" had caused some indignation in San Angelo because the editorial had been unfair to "a popular and efficient army officer." The Lieutenant in question had not applied the nippers on wire fences, as had been charged, nor had he in any way cut fences in a malicious spirit. He had merely been one of a hunting party and in order to save a trip of 5 or 10 miles had removed some posts and laid the wire down to allow their vehicle to pass

16. The Fort Worth Daily Gazette, December 22, 1882.

17. The Fort Worth Daily Gazette, December 18, 1883.

over. They failed to replace the posts and some of the stock escaped from the pasture at that point. Ample satisfaction had been made to the owner of the pasture. The soldier had entered a plea of guilty to the County Court. It was pointed out that his case was unlike the ordinary fence cutting case, and some believed that the reward paid by the governor was not called for, due to the particular circumstances of this case. The sentiment was general in San Angelo, so the correspondent stated, that the Fort Worth papers had dealt unfairly with the soldier fence-cutter.¹⁸

This was the only indictment and conviction for fence cutting in Tom Green County during the period when other parts of Texas were having much trouble with fence cutting. It was one of the few instances where a reward was paid by the governor of Texas for conviction for fence cutting before the special session of the legislature made the offense a felony. The case was unusual and not like the ordinary fence cutting case, it is true, but it serves as a good illustration of how wire fences were often treated when they obstructed the most convenient route of travel in those days.

Fence Cutters Leave Sign on Fence Post

On the night of December 17, 1883, the pasture fence of Mr. C. D. Foote was cut by unknown parties and some ten head of short horn cattle were driven off. A fine imported bull was included in this lot and the following sign (in crude handwriting) was left on a fence post:

∫“If your bull you hunt for, call at the first ranch this side of Hell, and brand him when you get him.”¹⁹

There was no clue as to whom the guilty parties were.

Mass Meeting Called to Discuss the Fence Question

By the last of the year 1883, the wire fence question was something of an issue in Tom Green County. The people wanted permanent access to water and to the roads. Many also wished to get advantage of the use of the grass on state owned and non-resident owned land that was unleased. On the other hand, men owning

18. *The Austin Democratic Statesman*, December 18, 1883.

19. *The Galveston News*, December 19, 1883.

land desired the privilege of fencing it and wanted their property protected from destruction.

The intense antagonism and the destructive spirit prevailing in some sections did not appear to exist in this county. The cooler heads seemed to control and called mass meetings to settle the issue.

It was reported that in the latter part of 1883, a "Law and Order Association of Tom Green County" was formed due to the work of the fence cutters in the County. The purpose of the Association was declared to be the suppression of fence cutting and of fence burning and the suppression of the fencing of lands not owned or controlled by the parties enclosing it.²⁰

On January 7, 1883, the people of the county met to discuss the fencing law. The resolutions adopted at that meeting were substantially the same as were later written into a bill by the special session of the legislature in January, 1884. This meeting went on record as opposed to the enclosure of public lands and public streams, as opposed to the herd law, which compelled the erection of fences to control stock; and as favoring the establishment of roads and the erection of gates at least every three miles.²¹

A meeting of some fifty or sixty persons was reported to have been held at Ben Ficklin on the night of January 9, 1884, for the purpose of discussing the fence cutting trouble. The sentiment of the people was in favor of free range and a resolution was adopted opposing the herd law. Several of the largest owners voted for this due to their fear of injury to their property, it was reported.²²

More Fence Cutting

On December 20, 1883, the fence of Mr. C. B. Metcalfe was destroyed for a distance of five miles. In regard to the cutting of his fence Mr. Metcalfe said that a bunch of hands working for a cow outfit north of his ranch cut the fence between every post.²³ He had the wire spliced and the fence rebuilt. He found the owner of the cow outfit, to whom he "presented such arguments, backed by a shotgun, against the repetition of the cutting" that he was not molested again.²⁴

20. *The Texas Wool Journal*, January 1, 1884, p. 7.

21. Mr. W. F. Holt in *San Angelo Standard*, May 3, 1924.

22. *The Dallas Daily Herald*, January 11, 1884.

23. *The Texas Wool Journal*, December 25, 1883, p. 9.

24. *The San Angelo Standard*, May 3, 1924.

"The Ragtag and Bobtail Ruffians, These Hell Hounds of Texas"

In October of 1883, a man from Runnels County, in writing to his brother at Austin, said that he would not pay the freight on barbed wire from Abilene to Runnels if the wire were given to him. He also stated that fence cutters were getting more sympathy in that part of Texas than were the fence owners. He emphasized the fact that unless the state government did something the Western part of Texas would be ruined. The Pritchard pasture fence had been cut and 6,000 cedar posts had been hauled six miles from the pasture and burned.²⁵

In 1881 or 1882 Colonel Odom had occupied the entire range around old Fort Chadbourne, now in Coke County. His range extended from the heads of Valley and Spring creeks, nearly to the head of Oak Creek and to the Colorado River. About that time nesters began coming in and settling on the heads of these creeks. In order to keep their stock from drifting into his range, Colonel Odom built a wire fence across the watershed of the creeks, cutting the nesters off from water and winter pasturage. His fence was cut and considerable trouble resulted in that section of the country.²⁶

The Nashville American reported that Representative Odom, representing Runnels, Taylor and other counties, had bought \$12,000 worth of wire and posts to fence 17 square miles of land. A large force of cowboys piled all the posts in a huge pile, placed the wire coils on the top and "fired the whole as a burnt offering to the days that were fast passing by, when they were lords of all they surveyed." This article was headed, "Frolicsome Cowboys and Their Fight Against the Barbed Wire Fence." This evidently did not portray the real facts of this case. It was nesters desiring water, not cowboys, who did the fence cutting.²⁷

Colonel Odom appealed to Governor John Ireland for help in stopping the fence cutting. The executive was induced to send rangers to Runnels County. A man by the name of Warren was sent out to the Fort Chadbourne area to get information about the fence cutting. His mission was discovered and he was killed at Sweetwater while he and Colonel Odom were sitting in a hotel. Someone

25. *The Galveston News*, October 24, 1883.

26. Judge H. C. Hord of Sweetwater, Texas, to R. D. Holt.

27. Judge A. R. Ragland, Sweetwater, Texas, to R. D. Holt, October 19, 1927.

fired through a window, evidently intending to kill both Warren and Mr. Odom, but only the former was killed. One Neal Boyett was given 10 years in the penitentiary for this, while several others were indicted for fence-cutting. However, none were convicted, although the suspected parties left the country.²⁸

In the summer of 1884 a number of men were arrested by rangers and by the sheriff of Runnels County for fence-cutting. They were released on bond for appearance at trial in December at the session of the District Court. These parties brought damage suits against Ranger Captain G. W. Baylor and Colonel Odom, the owner of the fence cut, for false imprisonment.

No doubt Colonel Odom was highly incensed against the fence-cutters. He appealed to Governor Ireland to protect the fence-owners. Probably his influence had much to do with the governor's calling of the legislature into special session on January 7, 1884, and no doubt representative Odom's influence helped to pass the law which made fence-cutting a felony.

On January 28, Mr. Odom, in a speech in the House of Representatives, said that the legislature had favored the fence-cutters and was trying to crush out of existence the greatest enterprise in Texas—cattle-raising. He said that there were \$10,000 in fences destroyed by the nippers and property to the amount of \$100,000,000 in the state damaged by "the ragtag and bobtail ruffians, these Hell hounds of Texas." He expressed himself as ready to fight to keep Texas one and inseparable but if justice were not done to all classes, both cattlemen and fence-cutters, he would be glad to see the state divided and would vote for it. This speech created quite a sensation in the House of Representatives as well as in the newspapers of the state.²⁹

Gates Destroyed and Stolen

One gate of the pasture fence of Mr. John R. Naseworthy was cut down in January of 1884, and two other gates stolen and taken away. The next day complaint was filed against a man, who was arrested on two charges; one of malicious mischief and the other, theft of property over \$20. The case was called before the Justice

28. Judge H. C. Hord, Sweetwater, Texas, to R. D. Holt.

29. *The Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, January 29, 1884.

of the Peace but was dismissed over Jurisdiction. The evidence was circumstantial only.³⁰

Barbed Wire Fences Had Come to Stay

The fences cut were usually rebuilt, probably only to be cut again. Tom Green County did not suffer much from fence-cutting troubles but the situation had underlying grievances which might have led to serious trouble. Most people saw the advantages of fenced pastures demonstrated and when the special session of the legislature passed a law in January, 1884, declaring fence-cutting to be a felony, the fence troubles apparently ended in Tom Green County. It was generally recognized that barbed wire fences had come to stay and were advantages to the country in general. The man with cattle but no land saw the handwriting on the wall. The transition from the open range had well begun.

Other land holders and lease holders began to fence; but for many years no improvement was found over the barbed wire fence and its use became general. One attempt at the improvement of the barbed wire fence was the fence erected by Mr. John A. Loomis on his ranch near San Angelo. He installed an electric signal system which so operated that the opening of a gate anywhere on the ranch was recorded at the ranch house. The system did not prove practical, but it furnished entertainment for the cowboys and visitors on the ranch.

Another fact which encouraged the building of wire fences in the middle 'eighties was the trouble which grew out of blotched brands in counties southeast of Tom Green. It was reported from Mason that the fence-cutting in Tom Green and Brown Counties had caused a large number of cattle to drift southward as far as the San Saba River. The brands of many of these were blotched by unknown parties. The cattle were collected and held for identification by the sheriff of McCulloch County. It was some time before this difficulty was settled and stockmen saw that it would be advantageous to them to keep their cattle nearer home.³¹

From that time wire fence building rapidly spelled change for the Tom Green country. The modern ranching era received its impetus

30. *The Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, January 22, 1884.

31. *The Austin Democratic Statesman*, February 5, 1884.

and the revolution of the system of stockraising was well under way.

The rapidity of fence building is well demonstrated in the reports of the Commissioners sent out by the Land Board to investigate the public land situation. In November, 1885, Grass Commissioner J. D. Stephens, whose district included Tom Green County, said that the whole eastern half of this county was completely under fence. The pastures were in the shape of every figure known to geometry and few were used for anything except cattle. The sheepmen in the County were having a good time and in many instances the sheep ranges were fenced also. Mr. Stephens estimated that at least 300,000 head of sheep were grazing on lands not belonging to their owners or not paid for.³²

Soon after this, Commissioner Stephens in a speech at Comanche, said that one might start from San Angelo and would never be outside of a practical enclosure of some kind until he entered the Indian Territory. This showed the extent of the building of pasture and drift fences in West Texas at the time.³³

Tom Green County had rapidly been filling up in the last two years. All of one-third of its area was under pasture fence, controlled by big stockmen.³⁴

Stockmen vs. the Farmer

Barbed wire was a direct cause for the farmer coming to the prairies and plains of West Texas. Without it the "man with the plow" could never have protected his crops from the ravages of stock in a country primarily devoted to stock raising. No practical substitute for wire fences has yet been found for West Texas, although the kind of wire fences has undergone great change.

The strife did not exist between the stockmen and the actual settlers in Tom Green County, that existed in some other sections. A San Angelo correspondent in November, 1885, reported there were no cases of stockmen forcibly preventing actual settlers from occupying lands awarded to them, but that in some instances the latter occupied the leased land of the stockmen, turning their stock loose in the stockmen's pastures. The correspondent also reported

32. *The Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, November 9, 1885.

33. *The Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, February 12, 1886.

34. *The Texas Annual*, Vol. 2, No. 17, p. 28 (Published at Austin by W. N. Ramey).

that there were other agents more potent than the actual settler at work to do away with big pastures. He pointed out that as the value of the land increased it would not pay to occupy it exclusively for grazing. He ended with a rather strong argument for free grass and open range, however, by saying that big pasture, short grass and hard times made their appearance about the same time and that the fattest cattle were to be found where there were the fewest fences.³⁵ He did not take all the factors into consideration nor did he seem to accept the fact that wire fences had ended the old system, that stockmen must care for their stock in pastures—by feeding, providing shelter, and water. The following report from the San Angelo Standard of November, 1885, illustrates the growth of agriculture in Tom Green and how stockmen came to cultivate a part of their lands:

“Two months ago a stockman sat in our auditorium and gravely gave it as his opinion that this section would never be any good for farming. Yesterday we saw him buying a whole sack of seed wheat* * * *Farming cannot injure the stock interests, but under the coming mode of handling stock can but prove a benefit and blessing, and will soon be recognized by all. The two interests can and will be harmonized in West Texas; and when the proper proportion of this section is tilled we believe the stock interest will be more profitable to those engaged in it* * * *”³⁶ The Standard prophesied well. The proof is to be found in the modern stock farms that dot the face of the Tom Green country. The United States Department of Agriculture has proven that the “family sized” ranch is the most efficient, but experience had proven that long before in West Texas.

The old timer of Tom Green County has seen the farmers flock to the West and settle up practically all the land that could be cultivated. Neither the old time stockman nor the big pasture owner of a later date could resist the advance of the plowman.

Drift Fences in the Tom Green Country

Tom Green, like its neighboring counties to the north, had its day of the drift fence and the line rider. These drift fences were, in th 'eighties, built to the north of Tom Green County and extended

35. Fort Worth Daily Gazette, November 25, 1885.

36. The Fort Worth Daily Gazette, November 11, 1885.

east and west so as to keep cattle from drifting southward into the Tom Green ranges. In the 'nineties a drift fence was built in the northern part of Schleicher County, along the old Vermont Ranch line, to keep the cattle from Tom Green and other counties to the north from drifting into the Vermont ranges.

These barbed wire drift fences often spelled disaster and death to cattle drifting before a "norther." They would strike the fences and there die by the hundreds. The following report from San Angelo will illustrate the destructive effect of the drift fence:

"The full grown norther has pretty thoroughly convinced some of the stockmen that a barbed wire fence on a bald, snow-clad prairie is not so wholesome a thing for cattle to drift against in a blizzard as the sunny side of a thicket, while the chilled and famished herds find the fences a great impediment to their getting below the snow line and gaining access to sunshine, running water and nutritious grass of the southern range. It would not be surprising if those stockmen who have neither feed nor shelter for their herds should soon raise the cry, 'The wire must go!'"³⁷

The following also shows the sentiment against the drift fences of the plains and the prairies:

"THE OLD OUTLAW STEER

"The calamity of this blizzard's been awful,
 'Tis talked of wherever we go—
 How our cattle all froze on the prairie,
 Being caught in the sleet and snow.
 Really it seems so pathetic and makes us all sad and blue,
 When we think how the old herd drifted to fence, and couldn't pass
 through.
 You know this old state of ours with its plains, its rivers and hills,
 Is nature's own home for the cowman who furnishes most of our
 thrills.
 Now you see if we hadn't had fences, and other such civilized things,
 The old outlaw steer would naturally have drifted in the way he
 should,

37. *The Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, January 31, 1885.

And would have gathered them all into shelter in some secluded wood.

“But time has wrought changes a plenty,
Each day science says something new,
But I still think my theory the right one
And wish he could o’ passed through.”³⁸

The drift fences caused stockmen great losses in the winters of 1885 and 1886 as well as at other times. The system of drift fences did not prove successful and so merely served as a transition from the open range to the fenced pasture. They actually hastened the building of pastures and the inclosing of cattle in the pastures because every owner saw that he must provide feed and shelter for his herds in winter and in drought. The losses of the drift fences thus tended to dissolve the great herds of cattle into smaller herds, which were put in the fenced pastures and more carefully cared for. The old drift fence, the barbed prison and the death cell for thousands of head of drifting cattle, came to be replaced by the pasture fence and even by the field fence.

The opposition to the old time drift fence often reached the stage of positive action of some kind. In the early days a drift fence was erected in what is now the northern part of Schleicher County and as this fence controlled much land not owned by the fence owners there was considerable dislike to the fence. The “old-timers” would often take it down and leave it down when it obstructed their path. It became common sport for the boys living near by to meet and practice roping the posts of this fence. With their ponies at a dead run they could cast their loops and then see how far they could drag the posts and fence. The crowd once prevailed upon a newcomer—a long, tall, rough lad—to try his hand at it. He was new at the game but was more than anxious to show that he was a jolly good fellow. Accordingly he chose the largest fence post that he could find so as to better demonstrate his skill. The post he chose was a corner post and had been placed there to stay. The cowboy made a perfect throw. The loop settled neatly over the top of the post and came to rest on the top wire. The onlookers were thrilled. All went well until the slack in the rope was taken up by the running pony and then “business picked up” in a hurry. The

38. Bess Border Hudgins, in *The Cattleman*, February, 1925.

saddle girth snapped and the saddle and the cowboy came to a sudden and unexpected stop. The onlookers doubled up with mirth but the ungainly cowboy got up with the remark that they could fence up all West Texas if they wanted to, he'd be damned if he cared.

The Work of Barb Wire in Tom Green

Barbed wire, that commonplace commodity used in fencing, has imbedded itself deep in the history of the Tom Green country and deep into the lives of the old timers. The barbed wire fences as a monument to those pioneer stockmen and farmers who withstood innumerable hardships in order that the country might be settled and in order that law and order might prevail.

There are numerous tangible results of the introduction and use of barbed wire fences. It definitely and surely caused the end of the open range and the free grass era; it literally cut Tom Green into thirteen separate and distinct counties; it brought in the farmer, who before its introduction could not secure cheap fencing material for the prairie and as a result remained near timber or else relied on stock raising; the barbed wire fence thus caused the prairie and plains region to be settled and peopled by permanent settlers, taking the place of roving herdsmen; it led to the development of the modern stock farm with its cross fenced pastures, its improved blooded stock, its windmills and water tanks and its barns and comfortable homes. It may be truly said that the barb wire fence also fostered individual ownership; caused pioneers to see the necessity of buying land and stopped, to some extent, "cattle rustling."

It may truthfully be said that civilization began in the Tom Green country with barbed wire fences rather than with the plow. Barbed wire preceded both the plow and the railroad and prepared the way for both. When the railroad was built into Tom Green County in 1888, the barbed wire fences had already obstructed the northern overland cattle trails thus making a home market and transportation by rail almost a necessity. Barbed wire had settled each stockman upon a definite plot of land and the immediate development of the country was begun.

But barbed wire, like the other pioneers of the 'seventies and 'eighties, is passing on. It has, like the other "old timers," per-

formed its task and fulfilled its destiny. Now the more modern equipment, the woven wire wolf-proof fencing is taking its place, but barbed wire is still being used in great quantities in the Tom Green country and is never apt to be replaced entirely

So, as you see the miles and miles of the gray steel bands stretching across the face of West Texas, do you ask yourself the question—what would this country be today, if barbed wire had not found its way into the West? We may well wonder if the windmills, the tractors, the white-faced cattle, and the typical western home, in short, we wonder if West Texas would be what it is today—a good place to live—had not barbed wire done well its work of civilization.

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BUILDING THE TEXAS AND PACIFIC RAILROAD WEST OF FORT WORTH

S. B. McALLISTER

The influence of railroads in the development of Texas has never been sufficiently emphasized. Every section of the State has its inland villages, dead, as far as the possibilities of growth are concerned, and standing as reminders of the power of the railroad to make or mar the development of certain localities. This paper concerns a railroad that has played a major part in the development of Texas, and especially that part of the State west of Fort Worth.

The idea of a railroad through Texas from east to west first began to take definite shape about 1850 when the Secretary of War recommended the building of a transcontinental road over the southern route. This national plan was silenced by the slavery question. Texas now undertook to build the road alone. On February 16, 1852, the legislature of Texas chartered the Vicksburg and El Paso Railroad Company, which act marked the beginning of what later became the Texas and Pacific Railway in Texas. Lack of capital, the greedy purposes of railroad officials, and the Civil War, put an end to railway construction in the State. After the war Texas was too poor to finance the construction of a railroad, hence, attention was again directed to Congress.

On March 3, 1871, the bill chartering the Texas and Pacific Railroad Company was signed by President Grant, and thus the only railroad company with a federal charter ever to operate in Texas was created.

One of the first acts of the newly chartered company was to buy the rights of companies previously chartered to build a similar road. With this done, the construction work was turned over to Colonel G. M. Dodge, the building genius of the Union Pacific, and active work was begun.

For surveying and construction purposes the whole line was divided into major sections. East of Fort Worth there were three divisions, and west of that point there were four divisions. The Brazos division began at Fort Worth and extended to a point a little west of the one hundredth meridian, a distance of about two hundred and ninety miles. The Pecos division extended thence to Fort

Bliss or El Paso, a distance of four hundred and five miles. Each of these sections was placed under the control of a division engineer whose business it was to locate the most feasible route for the future road. The general character of instructions under which these men worked is shown by a letter written by Colonel Dodge to one of his division engineers. The letter in part said, "In giving instructions to the parties making the surveys west of Fort Worth, I lay down the following general rules to be observed: The party should be in charge of an engineer who can intelligently grasp the situation. . . . In building the Texas and Pacific, we must have in view the commercial as well as the engineering qualities of the line, we want a road through Texas which the country when settled, is susceptible of supporting by its local trade when built. The party will therefore note carefully the quality and capacity of the agricultural, grazing and mineral resources of each township and county. . . . The party taking the field must be armed, and the chief must be a man of energy and one who will not run at the sight of an Indian."

But the people west of Fort Worth were destined to wait several years before they were to be given the pleasure of hearing the whistle of the locomotive. The panic of 1873, struck the Texas and Pacific with its terminus at Eagle Ford, a point eight miles west of Dallas. During the next three years building languished, and it was not until the nineteenth of July, 1876, that the first locomotive entered Fort Worth.

The western terminus was destined to remain here nearly four years. This was an unkind blow to those people west of Fort Worth who had been anxiously awaiting the coming of the railroad. They became exceedingly bitter in their attitude toward the railroad officials, but due to labor troubles, and a lack of market for railroad securities, further construction was impossible.

In 1880, Jay Gould and Russell Sage took charge of the Texas and Pacific. They immediately made plans to extend the road to El Paso. In keeping with this they entered into a contract with the Texas and Pacific Improvement Company, which was to build the road to El Paso by January 1, 1882, at a cost not to exceed \$25,000 per mile.

Most of the lumber used for cross-ties, piling, trestle-work, and so forth, was brought from East Texas. Building stone and ballast

were found in limited quantities all along the route. The water supply was the most serious problem. Ponds and shallow wells furnished most of the water, but springs were found in many places. Thus at Big Spring, the spring from which the town took its name was located about two miles from the railroad. At first water was hauled to the town which was building up near the railroad, and there sold for twenty-five cents a barrel. The railroad company used so much water it found it profitable to lay a pipe to the spring, and bring the water to the town in this way.

~~The road~~ was pushed on across West Texas with a track-laying force of three hundred men and fifty teams. This force could lay about twelve miles per week. The telegraph line was usually kept along about ten miles ahead of the road. "The contractor with a herd of over one hundred and eighty fat beeves keeps right up to the front all the time," says the *Dallas Herald* of February 3, 1881. "No Indians have been met with along the line for two months past."

As the road reached on across the prairies, towns were laid out and started at points which seemed to offer the greatest advantages for growth. Thus, Abilene, taking its name from Abilene, Kansas, which had become a great shipping point for cattle driven from Texas, was expected to become the greatest cattle shipping point of the Southwest.

The living conditions of these early railroad towns were far from being satisfactory. They were not wholly unlike conditions in a modern oil town. With the exception of the railroad people themselves, there was little material for the creation of a town. Many of the railroad laborers were people of low morals, and the high wages which they received . . . about \$1.75 per day on the average. . . . hindered rather than helped them as they spent their earnings in low gambling and vice dens. The following from the *Dallas Herald* of June 8, 1881, is typical of these early railroad towns. In speaking of Big Spring it says, "The population of the town at present is composed largely of fast men and women, who live in tents and seemingly take life easily. It is almost exclusively of that class who flit along the road as it is completed, and many are already leaving and making preparation to move to the Pecos river. There is nothing there now to supply even a moderate sized town, as there are but

few cattlemen in the vicinity, and in the county of Hopkins, there has never yet been introduced a plow or a hoe for the purpose of tilling the soil." The railroad was making possible the development of a truly virgin country.

The greatest incentive for rapid work on the line west of Fort Worth was furnished by the rapidly approaching east-bound Southern Pacific. This line was being built from California to New Orleans by way of El Paso and Houston. From El Paso to the Pacific coast this paralleled the one over which the Texas and Pacific was to be built. The Southern Pacific was being built with private capital; the Texas and Pacific was depending on Congressional aid, which aid would hardly be given unless the Texas and Pacific built its road before another occupied the same field, as the country west from El Paso would not support two competing roads. In this railroad race Huntington and his Southern Pacific won. This sealed the fate of the T. & P. as a truly Pacific railroad. The westbound Texas and Pacific met the eastbound Southern Pacific on January 1, 1882, at Sierra Blanca, a point ninety miles east of El Paso, and it was at this point in construction that the famous Gould-Huntington agreement was reached. The three chief provisions of this agreement were: First, That the Texas and Pacific would have the right in perpetuity to use the line of the Southern Pacific from Sierra Blanca to El Paso for a compensation of \$600 per mile per year plus one-half of the expenses of maintenance. Second, The roads were to be operated as one continuous line, the gross common earnings to be pooled, and then divided on an equitable basis. Third, Gould and Huntington both agreed that neither would ever buy or build a road that would compete with the other. It is thought by some that this last provision has served to restrict railroad building in the Southwest.

Any railroad that built through this part of the country in 1880 would necessarily depend on through traffic for the greater part of its income. The population of Texas in 1880 was slightly over one million, the larger portion of which was found in the southern and eastern parts of the State. A few villages had sprung up in the region west of Palo Pinto, and a few settlers had gone into what was then known as Far Western Texas, but these represented only a very small part of the population. This region was awaiting the

entrance of the agent of development . . . the railroad, which would offer both transportation facilities as well as protection to those who would eventually fill up this section.

The study of traffic movements during the early days of the Texas and Pacific throws some light upon the development of Western Texas. For example, the greatest single article of transportation on the westbound trains was lumber. The annual increase of lumber shipments during the eighties was about thirty per cent. This lumber was being used chiefly for the building of towns, which were springing up all along the route of the road.

The transportation of manufactured goods also showed a rapid increase. The average immigrant was slow to make an extensive use of manufactured goods as most of them had landed in Texas with little or no capital, and so, it was necessary for them to do without all the luxuries and a part of the necessities of life. Tools with which to work the land, and cooking utensils were usually brought in from outside the state. Rather than pay the transportation charges caused by having to haul goods by wagon from some river port, usually Jefferson, the early settlers of Western Texas had learned to do without everything except the most necessary articles. After they had been in Texas two or three years, they began to accumulate a little money. This fact, together with lower transportation costs, caused the shipment of manufactured goods to increase about four hundred per cent during the first three years of the life of the new road. As the settlers began to accumulate small savings they began substituting "store bought" clothes for "homemade" ones. Certain kind of groceries which had been used only on special occasions, were now becoming articles of everyday use. Thus the road receipts for general merchandise increased from forty thousand five hundred and thirty six tons in 1876 to seventy seven thousand six hundred and ten tons in 1878.

The building of the Texas and Pacific was a great boon to the West Texas cattle raiser. It not only meant protection for his herds but it meant the end of the long troublesome drive to northern markets. As soon as the road reached Dallas, the cattle of the west began to be driven to its terminal. In the year 1875, seventy one thousand one hundred and sixty eight head were moved over the T. & P. As soon as the road was built through the western part of

the state, it had to increase its livestock facilities more than 400 per cent. This type of traffic was never as profitable to the railroad company as appearances indicated because the stock movements were seasonal, taxing the capacity of the road for about a month in the spring, and then these stock cars had to be brought back from the markets as "empties."

For several years the traffic west of Fort Worth was not enough to pay the expenses of maintenance but the railroad company could fall back upon its lands, donated by the state, to meet any deficit. For the construction of the whole line, from Marshall to Sierra Blanca, the Texas and Pacific received from the state 5,167,360 acres of land. This land, however, did not bring in as much money as the number of acres might indicate. It cost the railroad company about one dollar per acre to survey and perfect its title to its land, and then it was obligated to alienate its lands in comparatively short periods of time. As other railroad companies were under similar obligations, there developed a competition among them in disposing of their lands, the result was that the average price of land sold ranged from \$1.50 to \$2.12 per acre.

The one big controlling motive of the land department of the road, was to secure immigrants. The company could best profit by locating agriculture lands and then selling them to small farmers, since this would increase the population of the country and help to develop a two-way traffic.

Various kinds of schemes were used to get people to Texas. Efforts were made to remove the ideas detrimental to immigration, which prevailed among many of the people of the eastern states. This company tried to counteract the idea that Texas was a land of lawlessness in which no man's life was safe. Rumor had it in the eastern states, that if an immigrant was not scalped by the Indians, he would be killed by a desperado. The saying that the "Great American Desert" occupied a large part of Texas was disproved, and the "blue northers" of Texas were shown not to be any worse here than the cold spells in the eastern states.

Prospective land buyers were shown various preferences and courtesies by the railroad company. Immigrants were permitted to ride on half fare or no fare at all. Immigrants depots were erected

in the larger towns, at which places prospective land buyers would be housed free of charge by the company, while they were making investigations.

That these methods were successful is shown by a study of the passenger traffic during the seventies. In 1874 the number of immigrant passengers traveling east was 8,212; those traveling west 13,962. The number of *local* passengers eastbound was 53,230; westbound, 53,631. Thus in this year 5,760 people came into Texas over the Texas and Pacific who became settlers of the state. Five years later the figures were:

Eastbound immigrant passengers.....	16,821
Westbound immigrant passengers.....	37,067
Local passenger eastbound.....	111,811
Local passenger westbound.....	133,301

In this year 20,243 immigrants who had come in on the Texas and Pacific, remained in Texas, and 21,491 local passengers had moved further west. The people were heeding the advice of Horace Greeley—and going west.

As these immigrants began to push toward the west, towns sprang up with "railroad speed." Not many people could keep up with the names of the new towns started. A typical newspaper account of that day concerning these towns says: "Eastland is a good town and the county seat of the county which bears its name. The country around it is filling up with a good, industrious people, and in the face of many predictions it will advance steadily but surely." None can doubt this statement when it is pointed out that the taxable wealth of seventeen counties increased from \$19,880,740 to over \$70,000,000 within six years after the Texas and Pacific built through them.

To the majority of the pioneers of Western Texas who had come to this region previous to the building of the Texas and Pacific, and to those who had come with the advent of this road, the completion of the road to Sierra Blanca where it would join with the Southern Pacific, was an event to produce exultation and joy. Anticipating the joining of these two roads to make a second transcontinental road, the *Dallas Herald* speaking for the settlers of this region said:

"We are told by the general managers and their officers that by

the close of this month of November we will be in direct rail communication with San Francisco and with New Orleans; that the Texas and Pacific and the Southern Pacific are about to meet eighty miles this side of El Paso, and that the New Orleans Pacific will, in a few days hence, tap the Morgan roads in Louisiana and thereby form an all rail route to the Crescent City. The remaining gaps to be filled in are so short and the construction forces and material on hand so ample as to leave no room to doubt the conclusions of Messrs. Hoxie and Dodge. It is a moment for exultation in our section. Lying equidistant between the great port of the Gulf and Arizona and the rich territories of the Northwest, this great line will attract attention to and in a short time densely populate Northern Texas. For a distance of 600 miles west of Dallas scarcely anyone lives, and yet the lands are rich and the climate as salubrious as our own. New counties and new cities will quickly spring into being. . . . In the short space of four weeks from today passengers will be flitting by Dallas for San Francisco, who will be subjected to only one change of cars on a run of 2,000 miles. And next Christmas day—only six weeks off—our tables will be supplied with rich fruits direct from the jeweled daughter of the Pacific. California and Texas will be neighbors and friends interchanging commodities and civilities. We will breakfast in Dallas today and in New Orleans tomorrow morning. No man can measure the magnitude of this event or rather events, or tell their influence upon our country, immediate and for all future ages.”

THE LAND AND THE LIFE OF THE GREAT PLAINS

WALTER PRESCOTT WEBB

It should be borne in mind that this study takes into consideration the whole of the Great Plains region.

An effort to understand the historical influence of the Great Plains on American civilization would be futile without a clear comprehension of the physical forces that have worked and continue to work in that region. These forces, historically speaking, are constant and eternal. They make, therefore, a permanent factor in the interpretation of history, one that must be understood. If the Great Plains forced man to make radical changes, sweeping innovations in his ways of living, the cause lies almost wholly in the physical aspects of the land. A study of these physical aspects, land formation, rainfall, vegetation, and animal life, not only illuminates the later historical development, but explains it in large measure. These aspects themselves when compared and contrasted with those of the humid area go far to prove the general thesis that conditions in the Great Plains were such that a civilization entering them from the humid east was compelled to modify its methods and means of utilization.

1. How the Great Plains Were Built

In the formation of the Great Plains—in the geology—is found the first contrast between the arid west and the humid east. This general statement will be elaborated in the following paragraphs.¹ In general the topography of the humid region is what it is by virtue of stream erosion and degradation, by virtue of a surplus of moisture; the topography of the Great Plains is what it is by virtue of a desert condition, of stream deposit or aggradation.

The upper soil of the Great Plains rests upon a “structural slope of marine-rock sheets uplifted with general uniform eastward inclination.”² It is not necessary in this study to go into the geology

1. Willard D. Johnson, “The High Plains and their Utilization,” *Twenty-first Annual Report of the U. S. Geological Survey, Vol. IV* (1900), pp. 609-741. This study is continued in the *Twenty-second Annual Report, Part IV* (1900-1901), pp. 635-669. This study is the pioneer systematic work on the plains, and remains today in a class by itself. Unfortunately it is hidden away in the government documents, long out of print, and is available only to those who have access to good libraries.

2. *Ibid.*, 21st, p. 627.

of this underlying, eastward sloping marine-rock sheet. The surface alone concerns us. It is necessary to study the structure that has been laid upon this foundation, because that structure makes up the soil and the surface of the Great Plains.

The surface of the Great Plains, as it appear today, is mantled by a debris apron composed of the material brought by the "swinging rivers" down from the mountains. Or, to put it another way, the Great Plains, i. e. the level surface, were created by the wearing down of the mountains and the spreading of the debris as a foot-slope. This long footslope is a characteristic of desert mountains.³ Thus it appears that in the surface origin the Great Plains afford a striking contrast to the land forms of the humid east. There plains are formed only at the sea shore by delta formation, whereas in the arid country plains are formed where the streams issue from the mountains onto a more nearly level surface.

The mantle of soil, the debris apron, laid down on the marine rock sheet varies in thickness from a few feet to 500 feet.

The way in which the debris apron—i. e. the surface of the Great Plains and the High Plains was built up is instructive and serves to explain many aspects of plains life, particularly with reference to ground water and well-making.

The debris apron is "a built product of dry-climate drainage."⁴ The process involved in this statement is neither simple nor easy to explain clearly. The following explanation represents an effort to present the steps in the process stripped of a good many modifications.

1. The mountainous region west of the Great Plains is relatively, and due to local causes, a humid region supplying moisture as rain or snow much of which must eventually find its way eastward towards the Mississippi.
2. Within the mountains the grades are steep and the streams run strong, and "carry through." They are loaded with silt, with debris, weathered and washed from the mountain region.

3. In reality there is no such thing as a desert mountain. A mountain in an arid region is relatively hum'd. It is the rain and snow of the mountains that furnish the vehicle for carrying the mountain waste away and spreading it out as a footslope or plain. Johnson *The High Plain*, 21st, p. 613.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 613.

3. Once the streams pass beyond the mountain boundaries, into the arid land, they fail, dwindle and deposit their load. Their failure is due to rapid evaporation into the dry air, to absorption into the porous and dry earth, and to lack of local precipitation and lack of augmentation from tributaries.
4. If, for the sake of clarity, it is supposed that the stream emerges into a true desert and is dried up completely, then it is easy to see that its total load will be deposited on the surface, and thus the stream bed will be built up. But when this is not the case, when the stream is strong enough to carry through, as it is with the larger streams of the plains, then the result is the same. The stream flow not only fluctuates in both volume and rate, but with a given volume and rate, both diminish, and diminishing, the stream deposits its load.
5. Thus, when in a dry climate a stream issues from a mountain range, it spreads an apron of debris against the mountain's base. The process is almost identical with that of delta formation by which coastal plains are built up. The deposit in either case is due to the diminution of the rate of flow without regard to volume.
6. The next step in the process is evident from the preceding one. With this constant aggradation, the stream bed rises above its level and the level of the plain, and eventually overflows into new channels to the right or left repeating the process and forming in time a fan-shaped deposit—a desert delta mantling the foot of a mountain. Again there is a close analogy between the fan which the desert stream builds at the foot of the mountain from which it emerges and the delta which is built at the mouth of the stream. There is, however, this marked difference, that in the desert stream the tributary system and distributary system are closely coupled while the delta may be separated by great distance from the tributary fan.
7. Along the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains, not one fan-building stream brings or has brought, its burden to build the footslope, but many—literally hundreds great and small—have been working more or less in multiple, parallel to one another.

These alluvial fans spread outward and downward with the apex of the fans lying against the mountain face. As the fans spread, they join and in time the mountains appear as rising above a gentle and apparently level foot slope of great extent. The desert streams have built a plain, did build the Great Plains, through fan-formation with debris brought from the mountains. The process is practically identical with that of coastal plain building by delta deposits.

Another feature of the action the desert streams have had in building the Great Plains is what is known as sheet flow and laced drainage. An explanation of these rather highly specialized, if not technical, terms is necessary in throwing light on the problem of water supply in the Great Plains, and, in fact, in the whole plains environment.

The formation of symmetrical fan forms and their final union in a level plain would seem to indicate that the water issuing from the canyon mouth distributes itself in a sheet over the entire fan. If this were the case, it would result in sheet flow. But in reality there is no such thing as sheet flow, a body of water spread equally over a land surface and flowing everywhere at the same velocity. What, in reality, takes place is laced flow. The sheet of water is in reality a net of water currents, each strand flowing at its own rate, and not necessarily at the rate of another strand. As this sheet advances, the meshes of the net become lengthened in the direction of the slope, the stream spreads over the fan, and the net becomes "frayed" as the streamlets dry up and disappear, depositing their load and building the fan. There is a constant shifting, necessarily so, of these currents because this is an aggrading stream which fills and destroys its own channel. The aggrading stream is impartial, and in time deals alike with all parts of its fan. Now it builds here, now there, and in the end, barring local interference, the fan is symmetrical and regular in form. The fans join, as before indicated, and in time the surface presents to the eye a dead level. The streams themselves are of the same nature, going here and there, seeking the low places and raising them, swinging backward and forward over the plain. This explains why the plains have been called "the land of swinging rivers." The whole process is summarized by Johnson and at the same time the contrast is drawn between these western rivers and the eastern ones:

"The degrading stream persists upon a line once taken; but the aggrading streams shift from course to course, abandoning considerable lengths at a time. And fan building is accomplished not by a net of streams working simultaneously over the whole area, but by a few threads of streams continually shifting, producing a net of stream courses in final plan."⁵

By way of summary it may be stated that the Great Plains surface was composed of a debris apron built up, or graded, by streams playing across the surface. "In short . . . series of streams from a mountain range . . . may in arid lands unite by broad branching and interlacing flow and build up the original surface (in this case the marine rock sheet tilted eastward) to a smooth and far-extended apron of debris."⁶ Theoretically this debris apron stretched its level surface unbroken from the foot of the mountains to the humid region of the Mississippi Valley. Actually it probably never had a perfectly plane surface because disturbing influences, incomplete work, and earth shifting changes, disturbed the equilibrium of a graded plane.⁷

The debris apron constituting the surface of the Great Plains appears to have been built "from the middle Tertiary to early Pleistocene." The present surface of the Great Plains, i. e. the topography, has been disturbed by forces which have altered the original surface. There is, however, a part of the Great Plains that survives as an undisturbed fragment, or fragments, of the original debris apron. This survival, the High Plains, remains as a belt—a plateau belt set upon the middle of the Great Plains.

On the profile cross section map of the United States, as shown by Lobeck, the High Plains appear as a slightly raised platform

5. Johnson, *The High Plains*, 21st, p. 619.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 622.

7. The theory that the level surface of the Great Plains is due either to marine or lacustrine origin is, apparently, disposed of by Johnson. The theory of marine origin is untenable, because the fossil remains are land animals. The lacustrine, or fresh water lake theory, is not thus easily disposed of. It was set forth by Professor Williston in a paper on "Semi-Arid Kansas," published in the *University of Kansas Quarterly*, Vol. III, No. 4, 1895, pp. 213-214. He believes that the Plains are lake beds raised by geological forces. Johnson points out in support of his theory that (1) The buried valleys of the Great Plains have much the same form and direction that the present ones have. (2) The deposits of silt and the gravel beds are elongated in an east west direction, that they are interlaced, a natural result of laced stream flow. (3) Gravel beds are formed extending from the mountains to the eastward limits of the Great Plains, but the size of the stones composing these beds constantly decreases away from the mountains. These facts, if no other were available, would seem to establish Johnson's theory of stream origin of the surface of the Great Plains.

built upon a more extended but lower plain. What has happened is that the equilibrium of the original graded slope—of which the High Plains is a survival—has been etched away on both sides leaving fragments of the original and true plains in high relief. On the east is the Low Plains; on the west is the bad land topography.⁸

It remains to explain the survival of the High Plains above grade in the midst of destructive forces that have etched both their eastern and western margin to a new level. The explanation is found in the climate and in the vegetation that the climate produces. The High Plains lie well within the sub-humid belt between the humid region on the east and the arid on the west. Erosion has been more rapid in both marginal sections than on the High Plains. The resistance of the High Plains has been due to the sod cover, the grass turf that mats the surface and saves it, just as a sloping lawn is saved from erosion by a sod surface. In the eastern humid region the rainfall is so heavy that the grass gives way and erosion begins and goes on at a rapid rate. In the arid west sod disappears and bunch grass takes its place. "The tufted growths of bunch grass and light 'brush' of the arid zone fail almost completely in protection because they do not constitute a continuous cover; and sod, on the other hand, is completely effective, not because it resists the erosive work of well-developed drainage, for that it can not do, but because it prevents the initiation of drainage. It is effective against the first faint beginnings."⁹ It is a fact, however, that once erosion begins in the alluvial soil of the High Plains, it goes forward rapidly. The High Plains are being etched from both sides, and are being reduced to a new level. They are, geologically speaking, disappearing fragments of the old debris apron, fragments that have survived from Tertiary of early Pleistocene time.

This brief and inadequate account of the origin of the Great Plains and of the High Plains which lie upon them has been given in order to make clear the nature of the land under consideration and to furnish a basis for understanding a number of problems incident to the occupation of the region, e. g., the problem of well making. Underneath the surface water is found in greater or less quantities in the debris apron that mantles the marine rock foundation. This water is slowly making its way down the plane to the

8. A. K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of the United States*, 1922.

9. Johnson, *The High Plains*, 21st, p. 629.

east. It travels best in the gravel beds left by the swinging rivers; it travels poorest in the clay. Well makers seek these gravel beds and shun the clay. And on the Plains civilization took hold and developed only where water existed or could be procured.

The account of the way the surface was built up by aggrading and diminishing rivers also explains the presence of lime and alkali in the soils west of the one hundredth meridian, mentioned so often by Plains explorers. Since the advancing waters were being constantly absorbed into the ground or evaporated, the river was constantly giving up its load, and a large part of the minerals carried in solution. The process is not different to that which goes on in an enclosed or salt lake, except in degree.

The structure of the Great Plains, and of the High Plains, has been treated, not exhaustively, but still at some length. The intermountain region between the Rocky Mountains and the crest of the Pacific slope, while forming a portion of the Great Plains Environment as here defined, will not be treated structurally at all. This does not mean that the Great Plains are typical in a geological sense of the mountain region. Parts of the basins lying between the mountain region are of lacustrine origin. Other parts are of river origin. It was not in this far western region that the utilization of the Plains was worked out. The mountains dominated, but in the plains and valleys, the institutions adopted to the Great Plains could be used. The determining factor was here aridity.

From the above explanation, brief though it is, certain features of the Great Plains become intelligible:

1. The plains are barren of minerals—especially metals—because the surface is of fluvial origin.
2. The rivers are unsuited to navigation because they are aggrading and shallow. Therefore river boating played no part on the Plains.
3. The rivers were full of quicksand and dangerous to the early travelers and cattle drivers, due solely to the fact that they are aggrading.
4. The water was impregnated with salts for reasons given.
5. The oil that has been found in such quantities, especially in Texas and Oklahoma is found below the fluvial soil under the marine rock foundation.

2. *The Climate of the Great Plains*

The distinguishing climatic characteristic of the Great Plains environment is a deficiency in the most essential climatic element—water. The Great Plains from the ninety-eighth meridian to the Pacific slope are sub-humid. Within the area there are humid spots, due to local causes of elevation, but there is a deficiency in the average amount of rainfall for the entire region. It is this deficiency in moisture that accounts for the peculiar life and ways of life in the West. It conditions plant life, animal life, and human life and institutions. In this deficiency is found the key to what may be called the plains civilization. It is the feature that makes the whole aspect of life west of the ninety-eighth meridian such a contrast to life east of that line.

The accompanying chart, showing the average annual precipitation, clearly indicates the situation in the Great Plains environment. The line of twenty inches follows approximately the hundredth meridian. Nowhere west of that line does the rainfall rise above twenty inches over any appreciable area short of the Pacific slope. Over great stretches it falls below twenty, to fifteen, ten and in the true desert to five. The mountains complicate the problem to such an extent that any effort to arrive at a mean average for the entire area would be a mere approximation. Judging by the precipitation map, however, it is safe to say that it is hardly more than fifteen inches.

It is generally agreed that wherever precipitation is less than twenty inches the climate is deficient. This means, or has come to mean, that the land cannot be utilized after the methods employed in the region where precipitation is more than twenty inches.¹⁰

Precipitation is not the only factor that must be taken into account in determining the climate of any region with reference to rainfall. Seasonal distribution and evaporation are of vital importance.

10. O. E. Baker, Agricultural Economist in the U. S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics, says "The United States may be divided into an eastern half and a western half, characterized, broadly speaking, one by a sufficient and the other by an insufficient amount of rainfall for the successful production of crops by ordinary farming methods." U. S. Department of Agriculture Yearbook, 1921, p. 413. It has become customary to speak of the rainfall in the West as deficient. The term is relative, coined or adopted by a people from a wetter region. Had the Great Plains been taken over by a people from a desert another term, expressing the opposite meaning, would have been applied.

From the standpoint of utilization, particularly agricultural utilization, it is of utmost importance to know the seasonal, and monthly distribution of rainfall. With reference to distribution, the Great Plains environment falls into three fairly well defined rainfall types—two sharply defined and the third transitional between the two. They are the Great Plains type, the Inter-mountain type, and the Pacific type.

In the Great Plains proper the rain falls in the summer months, beginning in April and approaching a maximum in May or June and back to the minimum in November and December. In the Great Plains the summers are wet and the winters dry.

On the Pacific the reverse is the case. From April to October is the dry season, while in December, January and February the season is wet.

The region lying between the Pacific slope and the Great Plains—the intermountain type—presents great irregularity. In general, however, it is more closely akin to the Pacific type. The accompanying chart presents the situation in graphic form.¹¹ This variation in rainfall types, as will be shown later in the treatment of dry-farming, has had important historical consequences.

The rate and amount of evaporation is also of importance in an arid and semi-arid region. The effective precipitation is only the actual precipitation minus the evaporation and the run off. An examination of an evaporation chart of the United States reveals clearly that, due to variation in temperature, much more precipitation is necessary in the southern portion of the Great Plains environment than in the northern latitude. At San Antonio, Texas, the evaporation during the growing season, from April to September, is forty-six inches; at Williston, North Dakota, it is only thirty inches. San Antonio would have to receive sixteen inches, or over 50% more rainfall than Williston in order to have equivalent rainfall. The southern portion of the Great Plains has a drier climate with a given amount of rainfall than the northern portion. This fact has had a great effect on native vegetation and on agriculture. The vegetation zones tend to cut diagonally across the precipitation zones. The growth of short grass which extends from Montana to

11. Lyman J. Briggs and J. O. Belz, "Dry Farming in Relation to Rainfall and Evaporation." U. S. Bureau of Plant Industry, *Bulletin* 188, p. 12 (1910).

Texas serves to illustrate this. In Montana short grass grows where rainfall approximates fourteen inches; in Colorado where it is seventeen, and in Texas where it is twenty-one inches.¹²

Briggs and Belz have illustrated the influence of evaporation on the chart here reproduced. Twenty inches of rainfall on the Canadian line is equivalent to thirty or more in Texas, so far as effectiveness on plant life is concerned. This fact explains why in Texas the timber line swings eastward into a region where rainfall is twenty-five or more inches annually.

Another climatic feature that has had important economic and historical consequences for the Great Plains environment is the wind. No where in the world has the wind done more effective work than in the Great Plains. The Great Plains, particularly the High Plains, is a region of high wind velocity, especially as compared with the humid east. The level surface and the absence of trees give the air currents free play. On the whole, the wind blows harder and more constantly on the Plains than in any other portion of the United States save on the sea shore. The average wind velocity on the Plains is equal to that on the sea shore.

The effect of the wind on the life in the Great Plains offers an alluring study for the student of social institutions and for the psychologist. The novel, *The Wind*, by Dorothy Scarborough is a powerful and suggestive psychological study of the tragedy the wind wrought in the soul of a sensitive woman. The picture may be overdrawn for literary purpose, but it is at the same time very suggestive:

“Very striking,” says Professor Ward, “is the broad zone of the Great Plains, with wind velocities closely resembling those along the eastern seaboard and the Great Lakes—winds which are ocean-like in character, as vast stretches of the Plains are themselves ocean-like in their monotony and in their unbroken sweep to the far-away horizon. No more striking illustration of the wind velocities on the Great Plains has ever been given than Captain Lewis’s description of the occasion, on the famous Lewis and Clark expedition, when one of his boats, which was being transported on wheels, was blown along by the wind, the boat’s sails being set! Surely this story emphasizes the

12. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

analogy between the winds of the ocean and the winds of the Plains. Over this great treeless open country, but little retarded by friction, blow winds of remarkable uniformity and of relatively high velocity, averaging ten to twelve miles per hour, and even reaching fourteen or fifteen miles in the region of the Texas Panhandle."¹³

The abundance of wind has compensated in great measure for the scarcity of water in the Great Plains country. In another paper on windmills this question of the utilization of the wind will be treated at greater length. The purpose here is to lay the physical basis for the later work.

Certain special weather features of the Great Plains are of sufficient importance to merit notice. These are the hot winds, the chinook, the northers, and the blizzard, named here in the order of descending temperature.

The hot winds blow in summer in the southern portion of the Great Plains, principally in the High Plains, between 34° and 45° north latitude.

"The chief characteristics of these winds are their intense heat and their extreme dryness. They come in narrow bands of excessively hot winds, ranging from perhaps one hundred feet to a half mile or so in width, in a general hot spell, with intermediate belts varying from a few yards to a few miles in width of somewhat less terrific heat between them. . . . Their direction is usually southwesterly or southerly, but occasionally they blow from the southeast and even from the north. Their velocity varies from a gentle breeze to a gale . . . July and August bring most of the hot winds, but they also occur before June and into September."¹⁴

The economic disaster occasioned by these hot winds is terrible. Everything goes before the furnace blast. It has been reported that over 10,000,000 bushels of corn were destroyed in Kansas in one season. The writer, as a boy, has seen fine fields of dark, green corn utterly destroyed in two days. The hope of the farmer is to mature the corn before the hot winds begin to blow. Ward reports that a

13. Robert DeCourcy Ward, *The Climates of the United States*, pp. 156f. Professor Ward's comparison of the Plains and the Plains winds to the ocean and the ocean winds is but one example of this analogy.

14. *Ibid.*, 405.

case, for which he makes no citation, is on record where traffic on the Southern Pacific Railroad in Texas was suspended for a time because the excessive heat expanded the rails until they were warped out of alignment. A more common effect is that they render people irritable and incite nervousness. The throat and respiratory organs become dry, the lips crack, and the eyes smart and burn.¹⁵

The chinook wind occurs in the northern Great Plains along the eastern foot slope of the Rocky Mountains from Montana southward to Colorado. It has been observed westward through the mountains to the Pacific slope and there have been doubtful reports of its occurrences eastward on the Plains. It is pretty well localized, however, in the plains country near the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains.

The chinook is a warm wind that blows from the mountain down into a colder region, mitigating greatly the severity of the cold, melting the snow, and in some cases evaporating it so rapidly as to leave the ground on which it lay perfectly dry. "Evaporation and melting are so rapid that a foot of snow may disappear within a few hours, being 'sucked up from the ground' without even a trickle of water as one description has it."¹⁶

The norther is the name given in Texas to a cold wind descending from the north over the Great Plains into a warm area. In this respect it is the reverse of the chinook—a warm wind descending into a cold area. But, unlike the chinook, a norther may be "wet" or "dry." The norther is said to be the local name for a cold wave, or the clear weather side of a revolving gale. It comes suddenly from the north or northwest, often accompanied by a solid sheet of black cloud, and clouds of sand, and causes the thermometer to drop with incredible speed from twenty-five to fifty degrees. The norther lasts from one to three days when the wind shifts and warm weather prevails. While it lasts it occasions suffering for range stock, and discomfort to people.

The blizzard is the grizzly of the Plains. The term seems to be a

15. The writer has relied largely on Robert DeCourcy Ward's recent book, *The Climates of the United States*, for the facts set forth here on hot winds, chinooks, northers, and blizzards. The purpose is to establish the fact of the existence of these weather features and not to deal with controverted points. Ward's bibliography on each subject is ample.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 417. Ward says that the term chinook wind is applied to a warm moist wind on the coast of Washington and Oregon. This is a wrong use of the term. The chinook is a dry wind from the mountains, identical with the Swiss foehn.

modification of the German word, *blitzartig*, meaning "lightning-like" and appears to have come into use in America after 1860. Ward suggests that it may have been first used by German settlers on the northern Plains.¹⁷ The term blizzard is used loosely to apply to any severe cold accompanied by high wind and snow. This, declares Ward, is unfortunate. Blizzards occur rarely in the east. Their real home is on the northern Plains. The blizzard is the most ferocious and dangerous of weather features. A North Dakota blizzard of 1865 has been described thus:

"It was a mad, rushing combination of wind and snow which neither man nor beast could face. The snow found its way through every crack and crevice. Barns and stacks were literally covered by the drifting snow, and, when the storm was over, cattle fed from the tops of the stacks . . . Persons lost upon the prairies were almost certain to meet with death, unless familiar with the nature of these storms . . . I learned of many instances where persons were lost in trying to go from the house to the barn, and of other instances where cords were fastened to the house so that, if the barn should be missed, by holding onto the cord the house could be found again."¹⁸

Another weather feature of value in considering human life on the Great Plains is hail. The subject perhaps should have received consideration in the paragraph devoted to rainfall. Economically, hail is not rain; it is more nearly akin to hot winds and blizzards, a curse on the country it visits, while rain—in the Great Plains—is a blessing. The map given by Ward shows that the hail area lies almost wholly within the Great Plains. "The maximum frequency of hail during the frostless season is seen to occur over the Plains and Rocky Mountains region."¹⁹

The five weather phenomena—hot winds, the chinook, northers, blizzards, and hail storms—are all localized in the Great Plains country. Four of the five bring distress and economic ruin to man and beast. The chinook is beneficent in that it mitigates a condition that is so bad that it could scarcely be worse. It is not in itself

17. Ward, *Climates*, pp. 380-382. "Its real home is on the northern Plains, but it also occurs, with diminishing severity and with lessened frequency, as one passes to greater distance from its northern habitat."

18. C. A. Lounsberry in *Northwest Magazine*, reprinted in *American Meteorological Journal*, Vol. III (1886-87), pp. 112-115, quoted by Ward, pp. 380-81.

19. Ward, *The Climates of the United States*, 335-338.

good except by contrast. The hot winds, chinooks, northers, and blizzards are the most novel features of United States weather. The fact that all find their habitat in the Great Plains is worth noting because it reveals a part of the unusual conditions which civilization had to meet and overcome in that region. An arid region to begin with, it is burnt by hot winds, chilled by northers, frozen by blizzards, and flailed with ice stones.

3. The Vegetation of the Great Plains

Vegetation furnishes the most obvious aspect of the contrast between the eastern and western parts of the United States. It is, in turn, an index to climate, particularly to rainfall or precipitation. The natural vegetation zones correspond in general with the isohyetal lines, and that correspondence extends into the mountains where both are conditioned by the accidents of altitude. A vegetation map is a rainfall map slightly modified by latitude and altitude.

The ninety-eighth meridian separates the vegetation of the East from that of the West. In its primeval state practically the entire region east of the line was heavily timbered, truly a forest land. West of the line, excepting the northern Pacific slope, and the islands in the mountains—the rain shadow area—there is a scarcity or a complete absence of timber.

In their monumental work, *Forest Resources of the World*, Zon and Sparhawk set forth the forest situation in the United States:

“In general, there are three broad forest belts. One stretches inland from the Atlantic Ocean to beyond the Mississippi River, with its farthest limits at approximately the 97th meridian. The second extends eastward from the Pacific Coast across the Sierra and Cascade ranges. The third, which is more or less interrupted, lies along the Rocky Mountains and outlying ranges, from the Canadian boundary to Mexico. Between the eastern and Rocky Mountain forests is a wide expanse of grassland, with occasional tree growth along the streams, while the region between the Rockies and the Sierra-Cascade ranges and also east of the Rockies in New Mexico and Texas is a more or less desert country, covered for the most part with low shrubs, or in more favorable situations with open woodland of stunted

trees. On the higher mountains there are forests of better timber of varying density."²⁰

According to figures given by Zon and Sparhawk the central region—which is called the Rocky Mountain region—contains eight per cent of the timber acreage of the United States and ten per cent of the saw timber in cubic feet. Originally two-thirds of the timber was in the eastern region, but at the present time this region contains about forty per cent “while over half is in the three Pacific states.”²¹ By deduction this leaves less than ten per cent for the Great Plains region, including the Rocky Mountains, where it is mostly found.

As before indicated, the distribution of forests in the Rocky Mountains is very uneven, and is closely related to both altitude and rainfall. And for the most part, except in the extreme north and extreme south, they have been largely utilized to meet local requirements.²² There are islands of timber which stand high above the plain where people can live. The lowland is barren and treeless—a true plain.

The position of the grassland in the United States and in North America may be most clearly pictured when taken in connection with the timber regions, or the rainfall map. The eastern forest and the western forest come together in Canada, where they form a continuous subarctic forest extending from ocean to ocean.²³ In the south the two forest belts unite in Mexico. Between these two forest belts is a great oval whose characteristic natural vegetation is grass and desert shrub. This grassland “acts as a barrier between the species of the two regions even more effectively than a body of water of the same extent.”²³ The non-forested area—the Great Plains environment—falls into three subdivisions, the tall grass or prairie, the short grass or plains, and the desert shrub. These areas lie in north-south belts from east to west in the order named. They correspond closely to the rainfall of the regions:

20. Raphael Zon and Wm. N. Sparhawk, *Forest Resources of the World*, Vol. II, p. 520.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 526. In arriving at the timber situation in the Great Plains Environment, one must work largely by deduction. The timber studies are devoted to the positive side, where timber is, not to the negative side where it is not.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 524.

23. H. L. Schantz and Raphael Zon, “Natural Vegetation,” *Atlas of American Agriculture*, Part I, Section E, p. 8 (1924).

Tall grass	humid	Low plains and prairie
Short grass	sub-humid	High plains
Desert grass (mesquite)	semi-arid	Southern High Plain
Desert shrub	arid	Intermountain

In an historical study of the Great Plains, the reason for the existence of grasslands throws considerable light on the nature of the country as an abode for man. To put the matter briefly, grass prevails only where conditions are hard, unfavorable for more luxuriant forms of plant life. The following quotation, when interpreted into human affairs, is quite suggestive of hard conditions and difficulties:

“Grasslands characterize areas in which trees have failed to develop, either because of unfavorable soil conditions, poor drainage and aeration, intense cold and wind, deficient moisture supply, or repeated fires. Grasses of one kind or another are admirably suited to withstand conditions of excess moisture, excess drought and fires which would destroy tree growth.”²⁴

If the above conditions are translated into terms of human experience, their meaning would be that grasslands would offer many hardships to man. History seems to bear out the theory, for European civilization has developed in a forested region, never in a plains environment.

The accompanying map of native vegetation, highly generalized, shows the relation between the timbered and non-timbered regions. Within the latter it shows the tall grass lands, the short grasslands, and the desert shrub. From east to west—from the humid to the arid region—the grass differs in the form in which it grows.

The tall grass, as the name indicates, is luxuriant, has deep roots and rank growth; the short grass forms a sod, a heavy carpet, though the roots do not penetrate to great depth. Further west the sod gives way to tufts, or bunch grass because the climate is too dry to support a continuous growth. It is a characteristic of the desert that all vegetation is widely spaced. In wet seasons tall grass encroaches on the short grass area and the short grass on the bunch grass, and, theoretically the bunch grass would tend to push into the desert. In extremely dry seasons the reverse is true.²⁵ The tall

24. Schantz and Zon, *Atlas American Agriculture*, Part I, Section E, p. 7.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 7

grasses grow in regions where the moisture penetrates two feet or more. The short grass grows pretty largely in a region of summer rainfall where precipitation averages from twelve to fifteen inches. It grows on land where moisture ordinarily does not penetrate more than two feet. The boundary between the tall grass and the short grass is also marked by a soil boundary. Beneath the short grass sod at a depth of from twelve to thirty inches is a layer of carbonate accumulation which separates the surface moisture from the dry soil and the water table below. If this carbonate layer lies deeper than thirty inches, or does not exist at all, then tall grass grows. The real soil boundary separating the short grass region and prairie grass region is the line where the layer of carbonate deposit disappears, where there is no layer of dry soil between the surface water and the water plain. This means that more water falls upon the ground than can be evaporated or liberated by plant transpiration. The water percolating into the ground makes contact with the water plane and removes and destroys the carbonate layer that is found further west.

East of the line where the carbonate layer disappears, where the soil is moist all the way down, the prairie should logically give way to forests and timberland.²⁶ But it does not, due to occasional drought and to prairie fire in the tall grass which destroyed the young trees and pushed back the prairie into the timbered region.²⁷

The boundary between the short grass and the tall grass is of great agricultural importance. It separates the rich prairie farm lands from the less productive plains.

The bunch grass region lies to the west of the short grass, as before indicated. It grows where moisture conditions are insufficient for short grass. It is characteristic of the intermountain region where winter rainfall is the rule. If the same amount of rain fell in summer, much of the bunch grass would give way to short grass.

In the prairie country the tall grass falls into three subdivisions or communities—the blue stem sod, the blue stem bunch, and the needle or slender wheat grass.

The blue stem sod is found in Illinois, Iowa, eastern Kansas, in parts of Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas, in western Minnesota, eas-

26. Schantz and Zon, *Ibid.*, 16.

27. Old timers in the transition region of Texas declare that in regions now overgrown with oak and black jack was in their memory open prairie.

tern North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska. The whole region is rich, and the central portion forms what is known as the Corn Belt.²⁸

The blue stem bunch grass lies west of the blue stem sod and extends along the boundary of the short and tall grass from Nebraska to Texas, having its best growth in central Kansas and Oklahoma. The rainfall is from twenty to thirty inches, and the soil moisture is from two to four feet with dry subsoil beneath. This is the great winter wheat region.²⁹ The needle grass and slender wheat grass grow in the northern Plains, in Nebraska, North and South Dakota, and Minnesota. The rainfall ranges from eighteen to thirty inches. This region has become a part of the winter wheat region.

The short grasses, or plains grasses, are the gramma, galleta, buffalo, and mesquite. All these types occur west of the line.

The gramma-grass area extends through Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Utah. It is by no means continuous, but occurs in the higher valleys and plateaus. "The gramma-grass type marks the portion of the short-grass area which has the lowest evaporation, and the coolest, shortest season, but which has a relatively low rainfall."³⁰

The galleta-grass area lies south and west of the gramma. It is found in northern New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah. It represents an extension of the plains grass into the Great Basin or arid region.

The gramma-buffalo grass covers a wide belt extending from South Dakota along the boundary line of Wyoming and Nebraska, Colorado and Kansas, and New Mexico and the Panhandle of both Oklahoma and Texas.

The mesquite grass is classified as a desert grass. It grows in western Texas, southern New Mexico, and Arizona. It is a grass of summer rainfall, and can lie dormant for long periods during summer, reviving with a little rainfall.

West of the grasslands lies the desert shrub area, the intermountain region. This vegetation is of three general types:

Sage brush, or northern desert shrubs.

28. Schantz and Zon, p. 17.

29. Schantz and Zon, *Atlas of American Agriculture*, Part I, Section E, p. 17.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Creosote bush, or southern desert shrub.

Greasewood, or salt desert shrub.

In all this region the desert type of vegetation prevails over the grassland. However, from the point of view of utilization, the whole region is closely akin to the Plains. That is, the problems of utilization are the same.

In this study of vegetation much more attention has been given to grass than to the other forms. The reason should be obvious. Grass is the dominant feature of the Plains, and is at the same time an index to the history of the Plains. Grass is the visible feature that distinguishes the plains from the desert. Grass grows, has its natural habitat, in the transition area between timber and desert. It grows where conditions are too hard for timber, but not hard enough to destroy all vegetation. The history of the Plains is the history of the grass lands. So far as civilization is concerned the mountains are negligible. Civilization develops on level ground. The problems—the fundamental problems—that man faced when he crossed the Line are not problems of the mountains, but of Plains. These problems, in the United States, are found not only on the Great Plains proper, but within the mountains wherever plains conditions appear. Unless mountains contain minerals, they are of relatively no importance in the development of human society.

4. Animal Life on the Great Plains

In this study only those animals peculiar to the Plains will be given consideration. The purpose is not to make an exhaustive study of the animals, nor even to study all of them. That task—which apparently remains to be done adequately—lies in another field than history. But the purpose here is to select only such animals among those having their habitat on the Plains as will throw light indirectly or directly on the history of that area.

Historically the Plains animals are significant or they are important, or they may be both. They are significant if they exhibit characteristics which suggest peculiar adaptation to their environment. Or, to be more precise, their characteristics are significant—historically important—because they indicate the nature of the country, serve as an index to what is here called the problems of the plains,

and suggest with some definiteness the directions of institutional development. These characteristics may be offered as more or less tangible evidence of, and emphasis of, the contrast existing between the two regions that lie on either side of the ninety-eighth meridian.

The Plains animals are also of direct historical importance. They are important if they have affected man directly, either for good or for evil. In the Plains area lived one animal that came nearer dominating the life and shaping the institutions of a human race than any other in all the land, if not in the world. True it is that the race was a savage race, but this race was not without its effect—as this study will show later—on the invading civilization. Therefore it may be said that one animal, the buffalo, has had a direct effect on American life.

Some of the animals of the Plains are both significant and important. The jack rabbit is an example. His marvelous speed is significant, but he is important, or has become so, due to his destructive habits with growing crops.

Among the significant animals of the Plains are the antelope, prairie dog, jack rabbit, and the wolf and coyote. The buffalo is the important animal and makes a class by himself.

The American antelope or pronghorn is the purest type of plains animal, and seems to have developed only in the Great Plains of North America. It is not a member of the antelope family of Europe and Asia. Its true common name is pronghorn, and its scientific name is *Antilocopra Americana*. It seems to occupy an intermediate position between the goat and deer. Its horns are hollow like those of cattle or goats, yet it sheds them like the deer. It has the caution and timidity of the deer and the curiosity of the goat.³¹

The habitat of the pronghorn extends from Saskatchewan to Mexico, and from the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains and in the north to the Cascade of Oregon and Washington. It takes its abode solely in the plains country, and has a special antipathy for the woods and canons.

The antelope are peculiarly well fitted for their chosen environment. First, the sense of sight is such that they can "detect danger at an immense distance." Second, they were the swiftest runners on the continent, and can be pulled down only by the greyhound. But

31. Witmer Stone and Wm. E. Cram, *American Animals*, (1913), p. 54.

with them curiosity and caution are strangely mingled. They want to observe any strange or unusual object, and this makes them a mark for hunters. In the primitive state of nature this was safe enough, but with the advent of man and the high powered rifles it became disastrous.³²

Third, the antelope is equipped with a signal system that enables it to communicate danger at great distances. This is the white rump patch. The rump of the antelope is lighter in color than the body. When frightened or interested in anything unusual, the antelope contracts its muscles and the rump patch becomes a flare of white. Ernest Seton-Thompson records that these flashes can be seen further than can the animal itself, flashing in the sun "like a tin pan." Within these rump patches is a musk gland that throws off, when the flash is made, a strange odor. Thus do the animals communicate danger through the sense of sight and smell.³³ Seton-Thompson calls the flash system the antelope's heliograph, suggestive of the development of the sign language, and the American army flag signal system—all of which developed in the Great Plains environment.³⁴

Fourth, the antelope, like all plains animals, possesses great vitality. Dodge says that the "antelope will carry off more lead in proportion to their size than any other animal."³⁵

The western portion of the United States or of North America, seems to be the natural home of rabbits and hares. In the plateau region, comprising the arid mountain or basin region of the western North America, they are most abundant in individual and in specific and subgeneric types. This region extends from Canada into Mexico and in some places it is 800 miles wide. "The climate throughout most of the area is hot and extremely arid in summer." Nelson calls this the Desert Plateau region.³⁶ Here is found all

32. Colonel Dodge says that they do not connect sound with danger. Hunters could draw antelope within range by placing bullets so as to drive them by fear to the hunter. They saw the dust made by the bullet striking the ground but paid no attention to the sound of the gun. They were ruled by sight. *Hunting Grounds of the Great West*, p. 198.

33. Stone and Cram, *American Animals*, pp. 56-57 quoted from *Century Magazine*.

34. The mountain goat and sheep are other western animals, though not plains animals. The mountain goat "is not a goat but an outlying member of the great antelope tribe—to which, by the way, our American 'antelope' does not belong." It would seem that all western animals have been misnamed.

35. Dodge, *Hunting Grounds of the Great West*, p. 301.

36. E. W. Nelson, "The Rabbits of North America," *U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey, North American Fauna*, No. 29 (1909), p. 16.

four genera and all but one of the subgenera known in the continent. "The missing subgenus, *Tapeti*, belongs mainly to tropical America and the southeast coast region of the United States, and is preeminently a forest-loving group."³⁷

Within the American Desert Plateau the rabbits seem to be concentrated in two centers, one in the Valley of Mexico and one in Southern Idaho. Nelson thinks the American rabbits, as well as rodents to which the rabbit is kin, and which are especially numerous here, may have had their place of origin and distribution from this region.³⁸ "The scarcity of rabbits," he says, "both individuals and species, in such humid, heavily forested sections as exist on the northwest coast and even in the wooded eastern third of the United States is in strong contrast to their abundance on the arid plains of the Desert Plateau."³⁹

While the theory that American rabbits and rodents originated in the Great Plains environment and remain most numerous there, need not detain us, the fact remains that they are found all over the continent from the arctic region to the tropics. But in the jack-rabbits are to be found the true Plains rabbit. They are restricted to the region west of the Mississippi River, and are ever to be found in the open country.⁴⁰

The jack rabbit has certain qualities that well fit him for Plains life. His long ears—which make him resemble the burro—gave him the name of jackass rabbit, later shortened to its present form. Since they live on the open plains, they rely for safety on a keen sense of hearing, and on speed, "and all they ask of a coyote is a fair start and an open field."⁴¹ Their long ears indicate keen hearing, but they do not always flee; sometimes they seek safety in crouching. Their hind legs are highly developed, and are much longer than their forelegs. These long hind legs make them swift runners, and cause them to seek level country or an up grade. They dare not run down steep hills for fear of falling over. They run straight or on wide curves, never resort to dodging or ruses, will not

37. *Ibid.* Only one representative of *Tapeti* lives on the western coast, and that one is in Mexico where the two cultural areas tend to unite.

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-18.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

41. Vernon Bailey, "Biological Survey of Texas," U. S. Biological Survey, *North American Fauna*, No. 25 (1905), p. 155.

seek refuge in holes, rock fences, or in trees, but depend wholly on flight and none but the swiftest hounds can catch them.⁴²

Because of his size the individual jack rabbit does great damage to growing crops. It is a common saying in the West that a jack-rabbit will eat as much as a horse, and the farmers have been at war with them since they crossed the ninety-eighth meridian. The rabbits attack the young and tender plants and gnaw the bark on young fruit trees. They are impatient in their destruction of grain and forage crops, vineyards, nurseries, and orchards. Bounties have been offered for them in practically all western states. It is estimated that crops in Tulare County, California were damaged one year to the amount of \$600,000 and that one county in Idaho paid in one year \$300,000 in bounties. As many as 20,000 jack rabbits are said to have been killed in one drive. In the ten year period, 1888-1897, a total of 494,634 jack rabbits were killed in California alone as a result of drives.⁴³

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that the jack rabbit is not a rabbit, but a true hare. It makes no foria, does not burrow, its young are born with a full coat of hair, and with eyes open. Like the other Plains animals, the jack rabbit was misnamed. Not only is he peculiar to the West, but he is a pest, must be hunted with a long range gun, and offers some possibilities to the sportsman, either for coursing or for shooting.⁴⁴

The prairie dog, like most of the Plains animals goes under an assumed name. He has "no more of the dog about him than an ordinary grey squirrel."⁴⁵ The prairie dogs inhabit the high, dry plains, and live in colonies large or small. Their food is grass. Not only do they eat the blades, but they dig up the roots—destroying vegetation "root and branch." Vernon Bailey tells of a prairie dog town on the Texas plains between San Angelo and Clarendon that covered 25,000 square miles which was estimated to contain

42. T. S. Palmer, "The Jack Rabbits of the United States," U. S. Biological Survey, Bulletin 8 (1897). This is a complete history of the jack rabbits of the United States and a reliable source referred to by all later writers.

43. Palmer, "Jack Rabbits," table, p. 58. Mr. Haley tells of a custom in the Texas plains indicative of a primitive country. A cowboy bought a five-cent beer, paid for it with a pair of jack rabbit ears worth a dime, and received a pair of cotton tail ears worth five cents in change.

44. C. V. Piper and others, "Our Forage Resources," Yearbook, 1923, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, p. 399; Dodge, *The Hunting Grounds of the Great West* (1877), p. 210.

45. Dodge, *Hunting Grounds of the Great West*, p. 211.

400,000,000 prairie dogs. He estimates the number in Texas at that time (1901) at 800,000,000 and that these would require as much grass at 3,125,000 cattle.⁴⁶

The prairie dog is the squirrel of the Plains. While the eastern woodland squirrel seeks safety in hollow trees, the Plains squirrel seeks it in the ground. Had they been named the Plains squirrel instead of a prairie dog, they would have been in great demand, but the American stomach sticks on the word "dog." Speaking of this subject, an old stage driver said to Vernon Bailey: "If them things was called by their right names there would not be one left in the country. They are just as good as squirrel and I don't believe they are any relation to dogs."⁴⁷ Bailey agrees and adds that "they are in reality a big, plump, burrowing squirrel of irreproachable habits as regards food and cleanliness." Colonel Dodge says, "I regard the prairie dog as a machine designed by nature to convert grass into flesh, and thus furnish proper food to the carnivora of the Plains, which would undoubtedly soon starve but for the presence in such numbers of this little animal . . . He requires no moisture and no variety of food."⁴⁸ The plains squirrel alias prairie dog has constituted a serious economic problem in the West. He can be reached only by poison, and it is a matter of greatest difficulty to exterminate him in the region that attracts his fancy.⁴⁹

The Plains squirrel is well equipped to survive in his environment. His misnomer illustrates what happened when men crossed into the Plains. In the East men were accustomed to squirrels that climbed trees. When they struck the Plains they found that the animal no longer went *up* but *down*. The contrast was more than their minds could grasp—and they made the Plains squirrel a dog! This contrast is everywhere—from nature to politics, and everywhere it has been misunderstood.

These Plains animals exhibit certain characteristics which are worth noting.

1. All are grass eaters.
2. The antelope and jack rabbit are noted for their speed and

46. Vernon Bailey, "U. S. Biological Survey of Texas," *North American Fauna*, No. 25, p. 90; C. V. Piper et al., "Our Forage Resources," *Yearbook*, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1923, p. 400.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

48. *Hunting Grounds of the Great West*, p. 211.

49. C. Hurt Merriman, "The Prairie Dog of the Great Plains," *Yearbook*, U. S. Dept. of Agri. (1901), pp. 257-270.

both stick to the open country, depending solely on speed for safety.

3. All can get along with little or no actual water supply. The prairie dog and jack rabbit need none. The antelope exhibits great ingenuity in finding water, and by virtue of its speed can travel far for its supply.
4. All these animals are extremely shy, and must be hunted with long range guns, a fact that had a marked influence on the development of weapons in the United States. — In common with all Plains animals, Indians included, these above possess great vitality, the antelope most of all. Colonel Dodge says, "All Plains animals have extraordinary vitality; and nothing but the breaking of the backbone, or a shot through the brain, will certainly bring one down 'in his tracks.' Anyone of these animals is liable to run for a quarter of a mile, though his heart be split as with a knife."⁵⁰ In another place he says, "Antelope possess very great vitality, and will carry off more lead in proportion to their size than any other animal." In another place he makes the same statement about the Indian.

A further fact about the Plains animals is that most of those peculiar to the Plains have been popularly misnamed.

The buffalo is the bison, the prairie dog is a marmot, the jack rabbit is a true hare. This is suggestive of what happened when a people having their background in a humid, forested region came out on a new environment. The point is not important, but worth noting as a symptom of the eastern misunderstanding of the West.

The Plains animals depend primarily on the sense of sight and smell to warn them against danger. The rabbit is the exception.

The buffalo is or was the most important of the Plains animals, and has attracted more attention than any other animal indigeneous to the United States. Originally the range of the buffalo was not confined to the Plains, but it was only in the Plains area that he grew in sufficient numbers to exert any appreciable effect on man, savage or civilized. It is said that the first buffalo seen by a white

50. *The Hunting Grounds of the Great West*, p. 112.

man was viewed by Cortez and his men at Anahuac where Montezuma maintained a menagerie. Hornaday says that the nearest place from which this animal could have come was the State of Coahuila, which is an extension of the Great Plains of the United States south of the Rio Grande. This was in 1521.

A few years later, 1530, Alvar Nunez Cabeza later known as Cabeza de Vaca saw buffalo hides on the Plains of southern Texas, and may have seen the animals. He describes these animals, and mentions the fact that the Indians kill them for food. Coronado reached the buffalo country from the West in 1542. None of the other early Spanish explorers saw the buffalo because they did not go into the country inhabited by them at that time.⁵¹

The English settlers found buffalo as early as 1612, when Samuel Argoll records seeing the animal, probably near the head of the Potomac River. In 1679 the French, Father Hennepin, ascended the St. Lawrence and went into the buffalo country bordering the Great Lakes. Colonel William Byrd's party found buffalo in 1729 when surveying the boundary between North Carolina and Virginia. But the important fact is that buffalo were rare in the eastern woodland area, not numerous enough to exert any influence either on the native races or on the newcomers from Europe. Not until the settlements approached the prairies—the tall grass lands—which stretched along the margin of the timber line, did the buffalo appear in sufficient numbers to make an impression.

The true home of the buffalo was on the Great Plains. Hornaday's map shows that they were practically exterminated east of the ninety-fifth meridian by 1850. West of this line they were still innumerable. The following quotations may give some idea—though only that—of their number.

“Of all the quadrupeds that have lived upon the earth, probably no other species has ever marshaled such innumerable hosts as those of the American bison. It would have been as easy to count or to estimate the number of leaves in a forest as to calculate the number

51. This account is based on the thorough work by the naturalist, W. T. Hornaday, *The Extermination of the American Bison*, Annual Report of the U. S. National Museum (Smithsonian Institution), 1887, Part 11, 373ff. In his prefatory note Hornaday states that the true name of the animal is the bison (*Bison Americanus*), but that since he is called “buffalo” by millions of people, it would be useless for the naturalists to try to change the custom.

of buffaloes living at any time during the history of the species previous to 1870.”⁵⁴

While it is not maintained that the buffalo was confined to the Plains, it is essential to show that their occupation of the forest and mountains was merely incidental, an overflow from their natural reservoir. Hornaday's study seems to imply that the herds were invading the east when the white man came. But he declares that the herds east of the Mississippi “were mere stragglers from the innumerable mass which covered the great western region from the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains, and from the Rio Grande to the Great Slave Lake.”⁵⁵

A discussion of the migration and habits of the buffalo, interesting though it might be, lies without the scope of this study, and has been done so well by Hornaday that practically nothing remains to be added. It may be worth while, however, to present some notion of the size of the individual herds that roamed the Great Plains, leaving the methods of hunting and the various uses of the animal to a paper on the Indians.

Dodge describes a herd which was estimated to cover fifty square miles, and containing in sight about 500,000. Hornaday estimates that herds might total 12,000,000 and that they certainly would reach 4,000,000 as a minimum estimate. The point is that here was, under the natural conditions on the Plains, an inexhaustible beef supply, unrivaled by anything known to man.

The buffalo had few qualities save massive size—both individual and collective—and gregariousness that fitted him to the Plains. He is described by all observers from Catlin on as the stupidest of all animals, the easiest victim to the hunter, whether red man with bow and arrow or white man with his big fifty buffalo gun. The buffalo was slow of gait, clumsy in movement, had relatively poor eyesight, and little fear of sound. He did have a fairly keen sense of smell which was useless to him when approached from down the wind.

Historically the buffalo had more influence on man than all other animals combined. He was the life, food, raiment, and shelter. The

54. Hornaday, *Op. Cit.*, p. 307.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 388.

buffalo and Plains Indians lived together and together passed away. The year 1876 marks the end of both. Custer's defeat (it is miscalled a massacre) and the last big slaughter of buffalo came in that year, the doom of man and beast.

An understanding of the geography, topography, climate, the vegetation, and wild animal life throws a great deal of light on the history of the Great Plains. Other phases of Plains life will be developed in future studies.

MAKING HISTORY IN WEST TEXAS

By JOHN C. GRANBERRY

This Association assumes by its very name and constitution that West Texas is not an arbitrary designation but stands for a distinctive geographical and cultural unit. The existence of such organizations as the West Texas Chamber of Commerce, somewhat similar characteristics of soil and climate and economic life, the proposal from time to time to divide the State of Texas, and community of educational interests, all go to substantiate this fact.

The purpose of the Association is manifestly to conserve historical interests. The prospectus of this gathering referred to our "glorious" history. We are glad if the history is that of which we may justly be proud, but we are interested in interpreting and conserving the history whether it be glorious or inglorious. Ours is not the point of view of the historian of New Mexico who wrote that it is uncertain whether Cabeza de Vaca entered New Mexico but let every loyal New Mexican hold that he did! The amount and velocity of the winds are to be determined scientifically by experts. To us West Texans these gentle zephers may be as comforting and musical as the rhythmic rise and fall of the waves to the sea-faring man, while in the case of others our splendid sandstorms may tend to produce nervous disorders and catarrhal troubles. Our history needs no apology or defense or doctoring—simply setting it forth.

We must also see it in its proper setting. Merely relating isolated facts and incidents does not exhaust the historian's task. His mission is to understand, to interpret, to relate to a larger life.

It must be confessed that our place in the nation's life, as seen from without, is not a very desirable one. We are not always taken very seriously. We are often the butt of ridicule. There is, to be sure, something interesting and picturesque about us. Texas is considered pre-eminent for its cowboys, spectacular politicians, klansmen, bank-robbers, murdered Mexicans, lynchings, woman-governor, fundamentalist-evangelists, and theological obscurantists.

The mail brings us numerous circular letters, asking us to join this or that national organization for the promotion of some worthy cause. Perhaps we send on the two dollars asked for, or we may

throw the communication in the waste-basket. But suppose we examine the names of the officers on the letterhead and read the list of fifty or a hundred sponsors. How many of them live south of Mason and Dixon's Line? Very few. One wonders in what sense the society in question is national. The personnel is doubtless chosen from among those who have manifested interest, and I make no complaint. The point I am making is that we do not have a large part in activities of national scope. We may belong to national societies of a scientific or professional character, but it is seldom that we are able to attend the conventions.

Again, for local news you have your daily paper, but you get your unified information and form your opinions on the basis of your magazine literature. Virtually all of this is prepared for you in the northeastern part of our country. It may be that conditions, problems, and point of view are very different there from what they are here.

It will not always be thus. There are already signs of change. Just such societies as this West Texas Historical Association mark a self-respect and sense of responsibility that are full of promise.

In this connection the admirable historical work being done by the president of this Association, Judge R. C. Crane, and by the secretary, Dr. C. C. Rister, is very encouraging.

Even in the stormy field of politics there is being manifested a spirit of independence that may have important results. It has long been hoped that an effective opposition party would be built up in Texas, thereby giving the individual voter a greater range of choice and serving as a much needed restraint on the dominant party. Beginnings in this direction have been made, and it appears that if the sentiments of the majority of the people are to be outraged by forcing upon them a candidate repugnant to their moral sense, then the ideal of a two-party State will, for the time being at least, be realized. In any case it is to be noted that many Texans are saying in vigorous language that no hope of party success or consideration of political expediency is sufficient to cause them to abandon the sentiments and ideals and convictions that alone give meaning and vitality to our political life. To put it more bluntly, the ability to please Tammany—or Philadelphia or Chicago, for that matter—is no evidence that one is qualified to

satisfy the aspirations of Texans. Texas will not always be content to serve as the tail of a political kite.

History is being made so rapidly in West Texas that geographies and histories soon become out of date. It occurred to two men connected with the institution where I serve, to assemble in a book important aspects of the civilization of the South Plains. The book is to appear shortly under the title "Llano Estacado," with the subtitle, "The South Plains of Texas." The chapters are written by experts of that school, each in his own field. Hitherto unpublished facts and interpretations of high scientific, historical, and practical value are presented. History, agriculture, industry, art, education, and the like are treated. This, of course, is only a beginning; the book will need constant revision and supplementing. Other similar books will appear. I now have students preparing theses for the degree of Master of Arts in this field. For example, a prominent school superintendent has his work well under way with the subject, "The Pathology of the Plains."

On April first to third another important step was taken in this history-making process. The first conference on international relations ever held in West Texas convened at Lubbock. After a surprisingly well-attended and instructive session, steps were taken toward making the conference permanent. The most significant fact in connection with this conference was that Texans who were convinced that they were not taking sufficient interest in the subject of international relations, were not sufficiently informed on the subject, and were not making their voice heard in determining the foreign policies of the nation in as large a measure as desirable, thought it worth their while to go to the personal expense and give their time in a three-day conference. Now that Latin-American relations are prominent in the public mind, one might expect leadership from the border State of Texas, but we have not been living up to our opportunities. Notable exceptions are Dr. Chas. W. Hackett, of the University of Texas, an authority in this field second to none, and Congressman Tom Connally, whose voice has been heard at Washington, when the voices of other well-known Texans have been conspicuously silent. . . Signs are not wanting that Texas will take a place of leadership in the nation, and West Texas may point the way.

FRONTIER EXPERIENCES OF J. WRIGHT MOOAR

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

As to my early experiences on the frontier of Texas. In September, 1873, I crossed the neutral strip then known as "No Man's Land," between Kansas and Texas from Dodge City, Kansas, entering the northwestern portion of Texas now known as Hansford County to hunt buffalo.

The party consisted of ten men, including my brother John W. Mooar, who was my partner, and eight employed men. We went as far south as the Canadian River before making camp to hunt. In November we moved back to Paladuro Creek, Hansford County, for winter quarters and remained there until spring. We made a good hunt.

During the last of November, Lane and Wheeler came and camped about six miles above on the same creek. During the last of February, 1874, Wheeler was shot by Indians and they moved to Dodge. A supply merchant in Dodge, by the name of A. C. Myers, said if Mooar Bros. and Lane and Wheeler could stay down there all winter and hunt he could put a store there for all the hunters to come to; so he bought a large stock of goods and several outfits and located on the Canadian River about four miles east of some old, abandoned ruins. These were supposed to have been the remains of a former trading post with the Indians built by the traders of Bents Fort on the Arkansas River near the Colorado line and from which ruins the new trading post took it's name of "Adobe Walls" and still shows on all Texas maps.

Charles Rath, a competitor for the hunter's trade, followed with a stock of supplies; James Hanahan with a saloon and Tom O'Keefe, a blacksmith, also followed. I moved over to the new town with the hunter's outfit and made one trip south of the Canadian for hides. John W. Mooar took our freight teams and hauled supplies from Dodge City for the new stores.

June 1st, 1874, we left Adobe Walls, our teams loaded with hides for Dodge City, Kansas, in company with A. C. Myers wagon train, which was also loaded with hides.

June 28th a large band of Indians made an attack on the stores; there were 28 men and one woman in the three houses of the new town. It was a desperate fight and ended buffalo hunting for some time.

During November and December, 1874, and January-February, 1875, we made a successful hunt on Coldwater and San Francisco Creeks in the Texas Panhandle, returning to Dodge City.

In March of the same year we left Dodge for Fort Griffin, Texas, going by Denison, arriving there in May. The trip into the Fort Griffin territory was made with the view of getting on the south-side of the buffalo herd. We stayed some time in Denison recruiting our teams and rigging up some ox teams for freighting our hides. We loaded half our wagons with Government freight and the balance with our own supplies, 12 wagons in all. One of our new drivers had been over the road and knew the best camping places.

After passing Decatur, every day we saw stone chimneys by the roadside; this driver knew their history. All were silent monuments of tragedies where attempts had been made to settle and occupy a home, but in those days the ever present Indian had destroyed all that hope and ambition of the settlers by killing, scalping or worse by making them prisoners and burning the humble log home, leaving only the stone chimney to tell the story of disaster.

On leaving Fort Richardson, where Jacksboro now stands, we saw on Salt Creek Prairie where two years before Indians had massacred Long's train of ten six-mule teams; had burned the wagons and such of the goods they could not take away; killed and scalped ten men. One got away we were told. At Fort Griffin we delivered the Government goods to Gen. Buell, then commander, who did not appreciate a hunting outfit.

With Gen. Buell I had quite a tilt of words after which he forbid our going more than 20 miles out of Fort Griffin, saying the Government could not be responsible for what the Indians did if we went further and in addition it would be his duty to come out and arrest me and bring me in. We did not take the General very seriously and went 100 miles beyond the Fort.

That same fall other hunters came from Dodge and about a

dozen outfits of different sizes went out from Griffin to hunt buffalo and that ended for all time Indians depredating on the settlers for they had more than they could do looking after the hunters and no time to go after the settlers. One small raiding party went to the settlements in 1877, but they never all got back and that was the end. It had been the custom of these Indians for many years to go to Salt Creek Prairie between Forts Griffin and Richardson to depredate on the settlers, get a few scalps, steal horses, some times going as far as Parker County in small bands to congregate at some given point and start their raids. Before the alarm would spread news to reach the Fort, sometimes Rangers got on the trail but before the citizens gathered a party and the Fort ordered a detail and a requisition on the commissary for supplies and 20 rounds of ammunition to each man, pack outfit rigged up, the Indian had slipped by and all of the pursuing parties were behind them on a hot trail which was easy to follow until the Indians got into that vast buffalo herd which destroyed their trail. There the Indians broke into small parties scattered with the buffalo to come together again at some designated point 100 or 150 miles away, which the pursuers did not know about. There was nothing to do but go back home, sad, disappointed and defeated; no fault of theirs; you may place the fault.

With the hunter it was quite different; he lived with and on the buffalo, followed them and ever present had plenty of ammunition and to spare. He had a vastly superior gun to anything the Indian had ever met. In four years the buffalo hunters opened up a vast empire of territory to occupation; put the Indian forever out of Texas; changed him from a bloodthirsty savage to a meek submissive ward.

As the hunters drove the Indian and the buffalo back, the cow man, ever quick and alert to see opportunity, followed in the wake of this forward movement so closely that many large herds were located within hearing of the roar of the Big 50 and so when the buffalo was exterminated the country was stocked with cattle.

Buffalo hunting was a business and not a sport; it required capital, management and work, lots of hard work, more work than anything else. Many magazine and newspaper articles claim the killing of the buffalo a national calamity and accomplished by

vandals. I resent their ignorance. On the 28th day of June, 1874, 28 buffalo hunters killed more Indians at Adobe Walls in three hours time than all the Government Expeditions and all other forces ever did in the Panhandle of Texas, and if it had not been for the accomplishment of the buffalo hunters, the wild Bison would still graze where Amarillo now is and the Red Man would still reign supreme over the pampas of the Panhandle.

And in conclusion I want to state that any one of the many families killed and homes destroyed by the Indians would have been worth more to Texas and civilization than all of the millions of buffalo that ever roamed from the Pecos River on the South to the Platte River on the North.

I thank you for your attention.

J. WRIGHT MOOAR

EARLY EXPERIENCES IN THE ABILENE COUNTRY

NOTE.—The letter below was written at my request when recently I received a communication from Mr. Chalk indicating that he was interested in the work of the West Texas Historical Association. I have known him for more than forty years. He was one of the outstanding surveyors in this section of country in the latter part of the seventies and in the eighties, and had a varied experience on the frontier when West Texas was in the making.

R. C. CRANE.

De Kalb, Texas, April 9th, 1928.

Hon. R. C. Crane,
Sweetwater, Texas.

My dear friend:—

I very much appreciate your letter of recent date and regret that the date of your meeting is so close at hand that I cannot give the subject the thought and attention it deserves. However, as old people like myself (73) are always reminescent more or less, I am going to make an effort, trusting that you will make for me such apologies as you think are needed.

I had planned (if you desired) a series of rather comprehensive letters covering my sojourn in Western Texas from about the beginning of 1877 in Callahan County as a base, extending north to Red River and west to New Mexico a period of twenty five years, practically all of that time as you know, engaged actively in surveying.

I have intended these letters each to cover one county, beginning with Callahan, then Taylor, Jones, Fisher and so on.

Some of these counties have better background historically than others and so deserve more attention than others, and far better treatment than I am able to give. As an instance Jones County properly treated would make a nice little volume. I have enough on Phantom Hill as I saw it more than fifty years ago with its loves and traditions to make a worth while story itself.

But there is not time now to take up these, and I am going to devote all of this letter to Taylor County as you will meet at Abilene.

I spent a good part of 1877 in Taylor County, surveying lands. That year may well be called the beginning of that county. It was then unorganized and the whole population which was mostly nomadic did not exceed one hundred.

There was no law—not a peace officer in the county, and none nearer than Eastland, Coleman or Albany, and strange to say they were not needed often, and if needed they were usually too late.

The people were the most hospitable; always glad to see you, and were ready to divide with you to the last crust. They were seldom sick and there was not a doctor to be had without a long ride.

The people were poor, had very little money or none at all, and did not need much.

There was very little farming done. A few cattle, a few hogs and a good gun seemed to be all that was needed. They were real pioneers of the same sturdy stock that made our country a fit place to live. Neither were they all new comers then—some of them considered themselves old settlers, and really were.

Entering the county from the east there were two main roads passing through the county, the most important known as the Center Line trail which was made by the surveyors in 1874 in surveying the reservation; and followed as closely as practicable the center line or base line of their work from Weatherford to El Paso.

The Texas and Pacific Railway was later built following very closely this road. The buffalo hunters used this road in hauling hides to market and in bringing out supplies. There was also some travel through to El Paso. This Center Line is shown on every county map by a broken or dotted line from Texarkana to El Paso, and the road from Weatherford west was always known as the Center-line Trail. I have felt that we have lost the finest historical monument we had in not naming our fine new highway which almost in its entirety follows exactly the old well known Center-line Trail.

The other road that I have mentioned entered the county on the south side of the mountains and passed through Buffalo Gap to Fort Phantom Hill. This road is also historical as it was used and perhaps made in the establishment of Fort Phantom Hill. At Buffalo Gap this road forked, one branch leading out the southwest to the

Pecos country, and the other to Ben Ficklin in Tom Green County.

There were other later roads which I will not mention now—I have already gone further into the roads than perhaps I should; and would like to say more as I feel that these are our most important land marks and should be preserved at least in name.

Getting back to the citizens or residents of Taylor County early in 1877, a Mr. Breeding lived in Cedar Gap with his family. He was permanently located and I think perhaps one of the first settlers. The next settlement we find in and near Buffalo Gap, perhaps a dozen families. On west in Mulberry Canyon Jim Carter and Dock Grounds had a rather large cattle ranch.

Hughes & Simpson had a cattle ranch three or four miles below where Abilene now is. There were three or four families on the headwaters of Jim Ned creek. There were perhaps a few in the south and southwest part of the county that I did not know. So you have the population in the early part of 1877. Before the end of the year this had increased to several hundred, so much so that they were able to organize the county in the following year.

I speak of 1877 as the beginning for the county as the first stores were opened in Buffalo Gap.

The first regular mail line, the first postoffice established and the first wedding in Taylor County, also my invasion, all occurred in that year.

The first general store was in Buffalo Gap, owned by Wylie and Davis. They carried a good general stock suited to the needs of the country. They later put in a stock of lumber. As the country settled they did a good business. All goods were freighted from Fort Worth and Round Rock.

Corley Brothers of Eastland had the first mail contract from Eastland to Buffalo Gap—twice a week by Belle Plain (the county seat of Callahan County).

The first wedding was a Miss Askins to Ben Brock. The latter became a noted camp cook on the larger ranches which was quite an honor in those days.

In 1878 there was a rush to the county. Many people moved in to make permanent homes. Many herds of cattle were brought in, mostly from South Texas.

The town grew; county was organized; business increased to several stores. Saloons were started and we had a wide open town.

It was in 1878 that the Eagle colony swindle took place. I am reminded of this by the *Dallas News* of Sunday 8th this month in the "fifty years ago" column in which they say that about fifty Germans had landed on their way to Jones County to locate. In fact they were placed on Lytle creek about ten miles southeast from where Abilene now stands. They were said to be well to do but had given all they had to their leader who left them stranded in distress, destitute, without even the language of the country. But the settlers although poor themselves took care of them until they could get back among their own people in the state, a few remaining in Taylor and Callahan counties who were able to get work.

There was a great abundance of game in those days and easily had. Deer, antelope, wild turkey and bear in the mountains.

There was a herd of buffalo estimated at about 800 remained in Mulberry Canyon during the Summer of 1877 and raised a fine crop of calves. I would like to tell you more of this fine herd but am making this too long already. I will only say that they were entirely killed out the following winter, and very few buffalo were seen in Taylor County after that.

The last wild Indians to come into Taylor County was in the summer of 1877. They came and left without doing any damage. I will try at some other time to tell you this—the story will fit in better with my Nolan County letter to you.

Changes came about rather rapidly in 1878 and 79. Many progressive people came, also many of the tough element—the gamblers and gun men that the older pioneers knew nothing of; the cowboys and others from older parts of the state who felt themselves safe to do as they liked. They frequently made the nights hideous in Buffalo Gap as well as very dangerous. The main idea was to shoot up the town and otherwise create all the disturbance possible.

Of course this was not all of the time but entirely too frequent for comfort.

This condition continued through 1879. In the meantime several feuds were started and some murders were committed.

The same condition prevailed in all of those counties in the making. Taylor County being no worse and far better than some.

This brings us to the coming of the railroad which changed everything.

In 1880 when the road was being rapidly extended westward I was still living in Belle Plain though covering several counties with my work. I could see an opportunity ahead of the construction in securing lands along the route where towns would most likely be located and knowing the country well I put the proposition up to my old friend and benefactor Mr. C. W. Merchant and Mr. Ed Seay who later became Mr. Merchant's son-in-law. We began securing lands first at Elmdale where we had several hundred acres. Lands around the present location of Abilene were hard to get as it was difficult to find the ownership. In many instances titles had never been recorded and no taxes paid. I was able through the General Land Office to trace ownership of some of the old headrights along the river which had been surveyed many years before.

We did not secure very much land at this point although I put in some hard work and went as far as Fort Bend County. I bought seven sections of land at and near Merkel.

I had found an apparent vacancy back of the river surveys and made my application to buy from the State. A Mr. Strickland then county surveyor made a survey for me and reported no vacancy. Later it developed that a vacancy did exist and was bought by a Mr. Northington and is in the heart of Abilene.

I will now come to what we may call the birth of Abilene. Mr. J. N. Simpson had become interested in the location of what we expected to be the best town west of Fort Worth, and so it has proven, but I do not think any one visioned the present city. By arrangement we had a meeting at the Hughes and Simpson ranch house with Colonel H. C. Withers who was right of way agent for the Texas and Pacific Railroad and also town site locator.

Mr. C. W. Merchant came from Belle Plain bringing with him Colonel Berry, a merchant in Belle Plain and as fine example of the true Southern country gentleman as could be found anywhere. Colonel Berry was not interested in our scheme at that time but became so later.

Mr. J. D. Merchant, twin brother of C. W. and I spent the pre-

vious night at Buffalo Gap where we had gone for data to be used at the meeting.

We left Buffalo Gap in the morning driving a pair of little Spanish mules to a buggy. Two or three men were needed to hold them. When we started they ran for a mile or two, gradually slowing down until about half way to the ranch they quit; but we managed to get through by slapping them along with a slicker. We arrived at the ranch just before noon. Mr. C. W. Merchant and Colonel Berry coming a little later. Colonel Withers and Colonel Simpson were already at the ranch.

I will say that there was only one Colonel there—Colonel Berry. The others were just Clabe, two Johns and Horace.

After a fine ranch dinner they began the discussion. By they, I mean Mr. H. C. Withers representing the railroad, Mr. John N. Simpson for his firm and Mr. C. W. Merchant, our interests.

They went thoroughly into the matter and looking back over this almost half century I can see the remarkable foresight shown (almost prophetic) in selecting the location of the beautiful city of Abilene.

Colonel Withers left the naming of the site to Mr. Simpson and Mr. C. W. Merchant. They were both cattlemen and were expecting this to be a leading shipping point similar to Abilene, Kansas.

Almost immediately after this meeting I sold my interests to my partners and moved to Baylor County, thus parting with my material interests in Taylor County and Abilene.

I have gone rather far into small details of this meeting as it has proven to have been of far more importance than we thought then.

Now my dear friend if you think after reading this rambling look-back over half a century by an old man worth while I can get you up all of the same dope that you want.

Of course I have given you only a small part of what actually happened in Taylor County in those years as seen by me and I haven't used hearsay in writing this.

I hope you will have a great meeting on the 14th, I wish I could

be with you. If your proceedings are published for distribution I will be glad to have my name on your mailing list.

I will not have time to have this copied and hope you may be able to read it.

Your friend as ever,

SAM L. CHALK.

P. S.—I forgot to say that the year 1877 was very much like this, very cool and on the night of June 9th we had a very heavy frost that killed all vegetation. Timber looked like a fire had passed through.

OLD MAN KEELER

R. C. CRANE

In 1874 the Indians on the Southwestern frontier were restless—the Government's Indian agencies were remiss in distributing to them the supplies which they had a right to expect; railroads were feverishly pushing forward construction on several transcontinental lines through Kansas and Nebraska, thereby cutting up the immense herds of buffalo and preventing them from roaming the Plains in season from Canada to Texas; and buffalo hunters were in the field by the hundreds, engaged in the business of slaughtering the buffalo (the Indians food, clothing and shelter) by the hundreds of thousands.

In the Spring of 1874 the buffalo had begun to get scarce in Kansas on the north side of the Arkansas river, and the hunters came down into the Texas Panhandle, hunting and killing the buffalo by the thousands and freighting their hides and meat back to Dodge City, Kansas.

Traders from Dodge City quickly followed the hunters into the Panhandle, and at a point about three miles east of the original site of Adobe Walls where in 1864 Kit Carson with about 350 men fought off over 3,000 hostile Indians, they put in several stores, a saloon and a blacksmith shop so as to supply the hunters with their needs and to buy their hides.

The site thus established they called Adobe Walls and by that name it is commonly known.

At that time there was not an actual settler in all of the Panhandle Plains region; and the maps of the period show that region as the especial hunting grounds of the Indians; and the wild buffalo was roaming over it by the thousands.

In June 1874, the Indians left their reservations in Indian Territory and went on the war path. They attacked the military forces of the government near Camp Supply, and committed various depredations in Southwestern Kansas.

On June 27th, they attacked the traders and buffalo hunters at Adobe Walls, in overwhelming numbers—variously estimated at from 200 to 1000 (and more) and all accounts indicate that the Indians displayed most unusual bravery in repeatedly attacking the

strongholds of the hunters and traders, riding right up to the doors of the stores through the fusilade of gun fire from the best marksmen on the Southwestern frontier, and trying to batter down the doors of the stores.

But the improvements had been erected with the view of defense from possible attacks by hostile Indians; and the Indians were at a disadvantage, and many of them were shot down.

Behind the walls were 28 determined men.

The Leonard & Myres store was situated in the corner of a stockade built in the shape of an oblong square, inside of which was a mess room, and also a well with an old pump on it brought down from Dodge City after much wear.

Old Man Keeler (Fred Leonard's cook) Fred Leonard and young Billie Tyler were among those caught in the Leonard & Myres store when the Indians attacked.

Early in the action Fred Leonard and Billie Tyler went to the bastion which had been built for defense at the northwest corner of the Leonard & Myres store stockade, but the Indians on the outside, protected from the range of the hunters guns, opened fire on them through the portholes in the stockade, and compelled them to go back to the store door which opened into the stockade (or corral) but firing as they went.

They reached the door safely and Leonard passed into the store, but Billie Tyler pausing in the doorway for one last shot at the Indians, fell inside the doorway, shot through the lungs, and was quickly drawn inside.

The fighting was furious. The Indians attacked in the open with bravery never excelled by them. The defenders shot with deadly accuracy.

When the intensity of the attacks had somewhat abated, Bat Masterson who had been fighting from another building, climbed through the window into the Leonard store there to find his friend Billie Tyler in a dying condition; and with tender care and solicitude he sought to ease the pain of his friend and to comfort him in his last hours.

But Masterson, afterwards to become famous in the annals of the Southwest, was then a mere lad of about 18 years.

As gently and tenderly as he could, he raised the head of his dying friend.

Tyler called for water.

There was not a drop of water in the house.

The only chance to get water for the dying man was at the well out in the stockade and under the guns of the Indians crouching along the walls of the stockade, out of the range of those in the other buildings.

It looked like certain death for any one to undertake to go to that well at that time for the hostile foes were at the portholes ready to shoot down any one who showed enough of his person to shoot at.

But the dying lad in a low moan was heard to call repeatedly for WATER! WATER!

Who would answer the call?

Who could hope to get water for him under the circumstances?

Old Man Keeler the oldest man in the party; a plainsman and the one probably best calculated to understand the dangers that he would face and the almost certain death that would be his, promptly spoke up and said: "Gimme the bucket!" And out of that window through which Bat Masterson had just come, he sprang with the bucket in his hand.

With steady step he walked straight across the corral to the old pump over the well by the side of the mess house!

The Indians, hiding behind the stockades, immediately opened fire on Old Man Keeler!

Would he ever reach the well, through such a gunfire! Those in the house were uncertain about it.

Old Man Keeler's dog, cowed by so much shooting, ran out from its hiding place and crawled between its owners legs.

The pump had already seen its best days at Dodge City. Its every stroke could be heard.

With every movement of its handle, a noise was made, a rasping squeak which could be heard half way to the hills.

That rasping squeak grated on the nerves of those in the Leonard store like the ticking of the fatal clock at a death watch—it gave notice to the watching Indians that there was a man standing there making the noise to be shot at!

Volley after volley came from the guns of the Indians along the west end of the stockade, sixty yards away; but the old man unscathed continued at his task—pumping water for his dying friend inside the store!

The faithful dog of the old man was killed while crouching at his master's feet.

Bat Masterson said: "A shower of bullets fell about the old man."

Those inside the store could picture Old Man Keeler crumpling to the ground every time a shot was fired; and they looked for every sound of the pump to be its last, as a well directed bullet from an Indian's gun should find its mark.

But the sound of the pump did not stop until the old man had filled the bucket with water for that dying friend.

Now he was leaving the well with his bucket filled with water! Would he ever get back to the window with it?

Would the water ever reach the dying friend, only a few yards away, to quench his feverish thirst?

The blaze of the fire from the guns of the Indians was so fierce and so constant, and apparently so deadly, that "it seemed," said Fred Leonard, "as if the whole west side of the stockade was on fire. They were all shooting at Keeler. There were twenty bullet holes in his dog."

"But Old Man Keeler, cook, hostler, roustabout, hunter, frontiersman, warrior, prince, knight, gentleman and hero, walked leisurely across the corral, lifted the bucket up to the window and came in after it, untouched."

But he glanced back at his faithful old friend, his dog, and said: "I'd like to get the devilish Indian that shot my dog."

"I took some of the water," said Bat Masterson, "washed Billie Tyler, bathed his face, and gave him a drink; and then with the roar of a hundred guns outside the stockade in his ears, his head fell over to one side, and Billie Tyler was dead."

Since then many men have been knighted, have received all manner of honors for unselfish daring no more heroic than the act of Old Man Keeler, when he took the chances that he did and went out into that hail of bullets to get a drink of water for his dying

friend on that June morning, in the Texas Panhandle. "Fame has missed him, but Glory and Honor stand sentinel over the buffalo grass that covers Old Man Keeler's lonely grave."

R. C. CRANE, Sweetwater, Texas.

Note.—The facts of the above incident have been taken from "The Battle of Adobe Walls," a bit of frontier history, told "to the narrator by the men who made it," by Edward Campbell Little and printed in 1908.

"UNCLE" JOHN MARLIN

JOHN R. HUTTO

The deeds of our early frontiersmen have found their rightful place in history, but we are too prone to overlook similar services rendered by our own Western pioneers. We find in the person of Uncle John Marlin of Throckmorton, Texas, a worthy representative of our western frontiersman who wrought well and paved the way for the homemakers of the present. Mr. Marlin's grandfather, also named John, migrated from Alabama in 1836 and, in connection with his home, built a fort which was called Buck Snort, but later called Marlin in honor of the family. It was here, on May the 15, 1849, John Marlin was born.

Three summers ago, when the writer was inquiring for some one who could give the most accurate information concerning early days in Throckmorton, he was referred to Uncle John Marlin, as he is familiarly and affectionately called. He has spent the greater part of his life in the cattle and sheep business, is well preserved for a man of his age and is still actively engaged in caring for a little bunch of cattle of his own. From the first of the interview Mr. Marlin brought the Indian into his story. The successive relations found herein indicates his fondness for the Red Man.

Mr. Marlin's father, generally known as Captain Bill Marlin, was captain of a company of Texas Rangers. As a mere lad he figured prominently in a treaty with the Waco Indians. Near a large spring which supplied the Indian village, now within the incorporate limits of the city of Waco, there stood a cottonwood tree that young Marlin climbed and displayed a flag of truce which was readily acknowledged by the Wacos. As a result of that parley a treaty was made which was never broken as long as the Indians remained in that vicinity. At that time the Waco Indians were very thrifty, had their little farms of corn, pumpkins and fruit. Later they were removed by the Government to the Reservations on the Brazos, in what is now Young County. They often returned to the Barnard Trading House, fifteen miles from the present town of Cleburne on the Narrows of the Brazos, where they exchanged buffalo hides, deer skins and like supplies for merchandise. The proprietor of this business, Charles E. Barnard, grew wealthy in this Indian trade, and later became

government supply agent in the Lower Reservation in Young County and at the Upper Reservation in Throckmorton County near Camp Cooper. He and Captain Bill Marlin had a contract with the Government to supply beef for the Indians during the entire time of their occupancy of the reservations.

In the year of 1852 Mr. Marlin moved with his parents, to what is now Young County, near the junction of the Brazos and Clear Fork. The Marlin home was between the Wacos on the Clear Fork to the west and the Caddos to the east on the opposite side of the river. Their only neighbors were these Indian tribes. His mother, Mrs. Rebecca J. Sutton Marlin visited regularly among the Indian women. The Indians were never the least unfriendly. Two examples were given to substantiate this claim.

Captain Bill Marlin had brought a bunch of cattle from his former home in Falls County, and, according to the nature of cattle, they had a tendency to drift back to their former range. Wherever the Indians came across these drifting cattle they invariably drove them back to the Marlin ranch.

The other example was what Mr. Marlin termed a filibustering expedition on the part of the whites which took place in May, 1858. Captain John R. Baylor, who had charge of the Upper Reservation at Camp Cooper, for some reason had been deprived of his position. His displeasure seemed to have been aroused against the Indians, and he visited eastern counties and made speeches against them, representing to the white settlers that the Government was caring for the Indians on the Reservations while they in turn were responsible for the continued depredations on the white settlements. Here the old gentleman was quite emphatic in his statements to the effect that the reservation Indians were in no way responsible for those eastern raids, but that non-reservation Indians, mainly the Comanches and Kiowas, were the leaders. But the agitations of Captain Baylor had the desired effect, and soon a band of about 300 whites had been collected for the purpose of punishing the Indians. Baylor passed through the southern part of the Reservation, killed and scalped an old grayheaded warrior, and fell back to the Marlin ranch. This act so infuriated the Red Men that they collected a band of four or five hundred warriors and gave pursuit. The whites were overtaken at twelve o'clock when they were butcher-

ing Mr. Marlin's pigs and dressing chickens for their noon meal. They beat a hasty retreat to several out buildings made of logs, while Mrs. Marlin and her children, together with two other white families, barricaded themselves in the Marlin home.

The Indians, led by their old Caddo chief, Jose Maria, continued the attack throughout the afternoon. But the whites were well barricaded and had all the advantage. General Bradfute, officer in charge of the Reservation soldiers at Fort Belknap, knew something of Baylor's raid and appeared on the scene with several hundred soldiers. For a while he stood aside and watched the proceedings, but finally urged Jose Maria to call off the attack on the grounds of the old Indian's regard for the Marlin family. This appeal had little effect on the old chief who knew that Mrs. Marlin had no fears of being harmed by the Indians, but he rather expressed his intentions of keeping up the attack and expected to capture the whole band after nightfall. It was only after General Bradfute had threatened to use his white soldiers that Jose Maria was induced to call off the attack.

The Reservations were occupied by remnants of the Caddoes, the Ionis, the Wacos, the Tehuacanas, the Wichitas, the Kechis, the Delewares, the Lapans, and the Tonkawas. Each tribe lived separately on its own plot on the Reservation. Each tribe had its own sign-language which was used in determining friend from foe. The Caddo Indian women dressed much like the white women, but the Comanches wore a kind of robe wrapped around the body in four folds and fastened at the waist with a belt. Most all old Indians wore no clothing above the waist line, while young Indians wore a "kind of Japanese looking garment" with broad sleeves. The Government kept a farm demonstrating agent on the Reservation to teach the Indians the science of agriculture. Horses, cattle and hogs were furnished, also field seeds for planting purposes. The Indians often made goods crops of corn, pumpkins, and other products which they consumed. Schools were also maintained. The first school which Mr. Marlin attended was kept by a Mr. McCoombs.

In this connection Mr. Marlin described how the Indians made their bows and arrows. The bows were made of Bois D'arc, split out, making them about five and a half feet long. The strings were made of the sinews found in the backs of buffaloes, cattle and

deer. These were dried and twisted, and made excellent strings. The arrows were made of dog-wood, pointed with steel and feathered with the wing feathers of turkeys, buzzards or hawks. Three grooves were cut lengthwise in the arrow into which the feathers were fitted. Places were opened up in the feathers for the sinews, the arrow was gripped with one hand, one of the sinews was held in the teeth, while with the other hand the wrapping was done. When the feathers were securely wrapped the edges were trimmed straight with a knife, making each edge the same length. This feathered end gave direction to the arrow and made it a very dangerous weapon.

The Indian arrows which were carried in quivers of calf or panther hides, each holding about two hundred and fifty, were suspended over the shoulder by a strap. The warrior held his bow in his left hand, reached over his left shoulder with his right hand to secure the arrow and placed it in his bow. According to Mr. Marlin's descriptions these could be shot with great accuracy and rapidity.

Mr. Marlin lived among the Indians until he was about 18 years old. He spoke the Caddo language and also understood their sign language. He played and hunted with the Indian boys, used their bows and arrows and could shoot with a considerable degree of accuracy. The Indian boys were peaceable playmates, even more so than the white boys. He never thought of being afraid of a Reservation Indian. The Indian was faithful in keeping his promise and "hated a liar worse than anything." Unscrupulous white men and bad whiskey caused most of the trouble with the Indians. In later years, after the reservation period, he had several skirmishes with the Indians. As a result of these skirmishes, Mr. Marlin has good reasons to believe that he never killed more than one Indian. It was impossible, however, to determine their casualties, since they always removed their dead to prevent them from being scalped. The terror and disgrace connected with this act seemed based on the belief that the scalped Indian could never enter the happy hunting grounds.

It was not difficult for the old gentleman to call to mind the most destructive Indian raid that took place during the early days. He told of the Elm Creek massacre, which took place on October 3, 1864, when a group of Kiowas and Comanches ascended Elm Creek

and cleared the settlements as they came to them. The first man killed and scalped was Joel Myers who was out hunting horses. On reaching the widow Carter's ranch, they killed Sue Durgan, "who fought the Indians from start to finish," captured Mrs. Carter, her son Joe, her granddaughter, Lottie Durgan, and negro Brit Johnson's wife and children. Brit and the cowboys were out on the range rounding up cattle that had drifted away in a snowstorm the day before.

Thornt Hamby, who had just returned from the Confederate army on a furlough, rode up Elm creek, Paul Revere like, and warned the inhabitants of the valley of the impending danger. At the Bragg ranch Hamby and four other men decided to make a stand against the Indians. The ranch house was built of picketts and covered with dirt. It was so constructed that a stile-like picket had to be crossed before the door could be entered. Hamby so stationed himself that he commanded that entrance-way, and being furnished loaded guns by the women he dispatched every Indian that tried to cross the threshold. One of the four men, a Dr. Wilson, was killed and the two others were wounded, but the Indians, finding they were engaged in an uneven contest, withdrew. Another group of Indians who had ascended Boggy creek came in contact with a band of Texas Rangers and killed all save one. They also killed a man named McCoy and his son.

Negro Brit Johnson, who had the name of being pretty shrewd, later went among those Indians on a trading expedition and recovered his family, Mrs. Carter and her granddaughter. Joe Carter, who had been taken with a violent fever while on the retreat, was clubbed to death with a tomahawk.

This T. K. Hamby, who died just a few years ago at McGargle, never ceased to be a hero in the minds of the old settlers in the vicinity of Elm creek. The old settlers have a reunion every year at New Castle in commemoration of that tragical Indian raid.

When asked for the names of prominent families who first settled in the vicinity Mr. Marlin named A. B. Medlin, who came in 1852, the three George brothers, the Andersons, L. L. Williams, the Sutherland family, M. V. Bowers, the Dyers family, Henry and Billie Moseley, Robert Sloan, Nathan Darnell, Roland Johnson, Mat Frances, a Mr. Peveler and seven sons, Harry Williams, the Mills

family, Judge Harmonson and his two sons, Perry and Jack, the Duncans, and Bob Mathews. The first lawyers in Belknap were Woolfork and Lattimer. A man by the name of George was proprietor of the hotel at Belknap.

The people were too busy trying to make a living during those early days to have much time for recreation or amusement. Most of the early settlers made a living by supplying the government post and Indian reservations. The river bottoms grew fine corn and oats. Rainfall was usually ample, and clear spring water was found in all the mountains of Young County. But Mr. Marlin laid stress on a terribly destructive drouth that culminated in 1862. Hundreds of acres of post-oaks died. The Clear Fork and the Brazos went dry and fish died by the wagon loads. Most all the game and wild bees died. According to his statement, the West has never suffered a drouth comparable to the one of 1862, and he doubts if the country has ever fully recovered from its evil effects.

There was a school at Belknap taught by Miss Mollie Dyer, later the wife of Charles Goodnight of Goodnight, Texas. The first sermon Mr. Marlin heard preached was delivered by Rev. Pleas Tackitt who settled in Young County in the year 1856. He was the father of Perry Tackitt, who only recently died at Seymour, Texas. that laid just claims as being the first white child born in Parker County, and he and his wife composed the first couple to be married in Baylor County. While Rev. Tackitt was missionary to the Indians, he did not hesitate to take up arms against them when it became necessary. The old gentleman's cows came up pretty well spiked with arrows one afternoon and he and his several sons conducted a punitive expedition against the Indians. This was known as the Tackitt fight, which took place three miles north of Eliasville, near the Tackitt mountain. It was what Mr. Marlin called "as a dandy little fight."

The settlements received their supplies principally from Houston where two trips were made each year, one in the fall and another in the spring. Five and six yokes of oxen were hitched to each wagon and heavy loads were hauled. The abundance of grass and wild game reduced the freighters' expenses to the minimum. The people lived simple lives and seemed to be happy. At times supplies could be bought at the government post where "condemned sales" were held at intervals to dispose of supposedly damaged goods. Dry

goods and groceries could be bought at prices ridiculously low. Crackers could be purchased by the hog'shead. The Government became suspicious of these "condemned sales," and after orders were issued to burn all condemned goods, the sales ceased.

The honesty of the early settlers was stressed. There were no banks in those days and the medium of exchange in all business was gold and silver. Men generally carried their money in buckskin bags or in their saddle pockets, and never thought of being robbed. In 1870 the cattlemen of Young County rounded up a bunch of beef steers numbering about 1500 for Clabe and John Merchant and delivered them at Buffalo Springs. To prevent robbery by the Indians, the Merchant brothers had secreted their gold under corral pickets. When the delivery had been made these pickets were pulled up in the presence of the entire group and each cattleman received payment for his cattle in gold at the rate of \$15 per head. The Merchants drove the herd to Abilene, Kansas, where they were sold for \$60 per head. During this round-up the principal pastime was gambling. As much as five or six thousand dollars was often seen on the table at one time, staked in a poker game. If the men did not have money they gambled in cattle. This gambling was principally among the owners of the cattle, but the Merchant brothers never engaged in the passtime.

In speaking of contrasts, Mr. Marlin mentioned the loss to the country of mesquite grass. The old-timers have never ceased to deplore the loss of the grass, to a large extent at least, which at one time made this western country one of the greatest cattle grazing regions of the world. He also spoke of the depletion of the wild game. There was an abundance of wild game in the country, such as turkeys, antelopes, deer, and buffaloes. The latter ranged on the Staked Plains during the summer months where it was cool and where there was an abundance of water in the plains-lakes and where grass was fine. But for the winter, when the plains were swept by the cold northers, the buffaloes would drift south in great herds. Owing to the sluggish nature of the animal, buffalo hunting was not very exciting passtime. The frontiersman usually went out in his ox wagon and killed all he was able to carry home. The meat, which was invariably very fine, was cut in pieces about the size of hams, was salted down and left to be eaten in the spring

time when wild game in the surrounding country was poor from the winter season.

Young County, according to the records, seems to have been organized twice, and in each case some of the officers had peculiar appellations. According to the old *Balknap Record* the first organization took place in 1856. Peter Harmonson was elected Chief Justice (County Judge); Patrick Murphy was sheriff; William Burckett was clerk; and L. L. Williams and C. L. Dobbs were commissioners. The officers of the second organization, which was affected in 1874, were: James N. Browning, Justice of the Peace (County Judge), Richard Kirk, sheriff; W. T. Ditto, clerk; G. A. Graham, surveyor; S. M. Glasgow, assessor; and D. C. Brooks, H. D. Williams, and R. J. Johnson commissioners.

Mr. Marlin moved to Throckmorton County in 1879 and soon after his arrival the county was organized with the following officers: a Mr. McCowan, county judge; F. M. Barber, county and district clerk; Glen Reynolds, sheriff and tax collector; and Barney Bartholomew, tax assessor. It seems that the country during those days had but little use for county attorneys.

The land in the eastern part of Throckmorton County belonged to the Texas Immigration and Land Company, that in the western part belonged principally to the Buffalo Bayou Railway Company, or was public school lands alternating sections. The Swenson interests bought most of the railroad land for about eight cents per acre. Where the school lands were bought the Swensons would trade for these alternate sections so as to get their land in one body. Land could be leased for seven cents an acre, and but few people cared to buy. But few people ever thought the country would ever be worth anything except for grazing.

Among the early sheep and cattle men of Throckmorton County were: Mart Childress, E. P. Davis (one of the few who bought large tracts of land in the country), Mark Allen, O. J. Woods, Frank Donald, J. H. Herring, Joe Bell, C. F. Cox, Edsill Brothers, Hawkins and Pearce, Barber and Reynolds, and the following men whose initials were not given: Jameson, Mason, McEachern, McCorquedale, George and Sebastian. Wool was a good price and the sheep man made good money until the tariff legislation enacted during Grover Cleveland's administration ruined the market, most

of the sheep men failed and many of them became "sheep Republicans."

Mr. Marlin was married in 1872 to Miss Almedia Timmons. They have eight children, three boys and five girls. The eldest son, R. B., lives in Long Beach, California. Frank is engaged in the cattle business in Wyoming. The youngest son, Worth, is still single. The oldest daughter married Dave Mathews, the second a Mr. Humphries, the third, J. F. Lindsey, formerly county judge of Jones County, the fourth daughter married S. L. Thomas, and the fifth J. R. Jones.

In this our age, education tends to make all men alike, but not so with Uncle John Marlin. As Andrew Jackson said of Sam Houston, he was not made by the tailor. He was reared in a day when men grew characters all their own. He represents a type that is rapidly passing. But for him and his kind the West could not have been been what it is today.

ELDREDGE'S REPORT ON HIS EXPEDITION TO THE COMANCHES

Introduction

The aggressive Indian policy which characterized Lamar's administration drove many of the Texas Indians far to the north and west away from the frontier settlements. But on December 13, 1841, Sam Houston again became President of the Republic and in his first message to Congress he announced that the Texas government would return to the pacific Indian policy which had characterized his first term. Accordingly, a number of expeditions were sent into the Indian country and various efforts were made to re-establish peaceful relations.

The lesser tribes of sedentary Indians, located principally along the upper Trinity and in the valley of Red River, readily responded to the President's peace overtures. In 1842, a party composed of Ethan Stroud, Joseph Durst, Leonard Williams and others went to the Red River country and secured a treaty of peace with some of these Indian bands. Again, in the spring of 1843, a council was held with representatives of these and other bands at a point not far from where the city of Waco now stands. But the Comanches, the dominating factor in the Texas Indian situation, had not been brought to terms and as long as they were hostile their neighboring tribes could not be depended upon. When Houston sent Indian runners to invite them to come to the council they replied that they might consider doing so if the President would send white men as hostages to their village. Finally, Jim Shaw, an intrepid Delaware guide and interpreter, got in touch with Pah-ha-u-ca, the most influential of the Southern Comanche chiefs, and it was agreed that the Indians would meet the representatives of the Texas government at the Double Mountains, near the line of Stonewall and Kent Counties as it is now located, in the summer of 1843.

Since the Indians refused to come in near the settlements it was necessary that Houston accept this arrangement. Thus, Joseph C. Eldredge was made General Superintendent of Indian Affairs, for the Republic of Texas, and charged with the responsibility of meeting the Indians according to Jim Shaw's arrangement. He was accompanied by Hamilton P. Bee and Thomas Torrey. Eldredge's re-

port of the expedition, which is given in full in the following pages, was filed among the Texas Indian papers and may now be found in the Archive Room of the Texas State Library. So far as I have been able to learn the report is here published for the first time. In his *Indian Wars and Pioneers of Texas*, John Henry Brown gives a rather full account of the expedition, but it appears that he followed an account written by Bee, probably some years after the expedition. Brown's account is considerably briefer than the Eldredge narrative and differs from it in a number of details.

It should be stated that Eldredge's conduct on the expedition did not please Houston. It seems that the Delaware guides, Jim Shaw and John Conner, were the first to secure an audience with the President after the party returned and they may have prejudiced him against Eldredge. This probably accounts for much of the tiresome grumbling and fault-finding found in the report. It will be observed that one cause of the difference between the superintendent and his guides and interpreters was the misunderstanding under which the Indians labored to the effect that they were the real emissaries and that Eldredge was simply sent along to write down what was said and done. However, another cause of the estrangement is not so manifest in Eldredge's report but is quite as significant. The Delawares insisted on getting in touch with General P. M. Butler, who was then United States Indian agent in Indian Territory. Comanche relations with the United States Government were quite cordial at this time and Butler, who had attended one Indian council in Texas, might have rendered substantial aid to the Texans if they had permitted him to cooperate with them. But Eldredge apparently was determined to work alone. The valiant and faithful service which these Delaware guides had already rendered previous to this expedition and were destined to render on later scouts justifies the conclusion that Eldredge's report does not do them justice.

Eldredge later served for many years as paymaster in the United States Navy. Hamilton P. Bee later held a number of positions of honor and trust including eight years in the legislature of Texas and Brigadier General in the Confederate army. Thomas Torrey, of the family whose trading house near the present location of Waco was long a famous frontier post, had been a member of the Santa Fe expedition of 1841. He died soon after his return from the Comanche expedition.

Although the expedition did not result in bringing the Comanches to council that year it was successful to the extent that the powerful Pah-ha-u-ca was pacified. Furthermore, it was an important link in the chain of events that led to a treaty between the Southern Comanches and the Republic of Texas, in 1844.

Washington, Dec. 8th, 1843.

To His Excellency Sam Houston, President:

I have the honor to submit the following report of my operations under your instructions of the 4th May ult., directing me to proceed to the Comanche Nation of Indians for the purpose of inducing their chiefs to attend a Council at Bird's Fort on the Trinity in August, to enter upon a firm and lasting treaty of peace with the Republic.

I left this place on the 7th May, on the 11th arrived at Fort Milam¹ and received from Mr. Marlin, the Comanche prisoner girl, Maria, for whom I was obliged to purchase a mule, saddle, etc., for which I gave a draft on the government for \$100, exchequer bills, in favor of Mr. Adams.

On the 12th at the old council ground on Tahuacano Creek joined my escort consisting of Mr. Thomas S. Torrey, Indian Agent; Jim Shaw, John Conner and Jim Second-Eye, Delaware guides and interpreters, A-cah-quash, the Waco chief, and four young Delaware hunters and runners, pack drivers, etc., together with the two Waco prisoners and the Comanche boy, "William Hockley."²

On the 14th, "Martin," a Delaware captain, requested permission to remain on the frontiers of Texas with his party and hunt until the council in August, which I gave him, requesting the citizens to suffer them to pass unmolested so long as they conducted themselves in a peaceful manner.

On Monday the 15th, all things being in readiness I started for the prairies, after having encountered much difficulty in crossing Tahuacano Creek on account of the overflow and danger of wetting our goods, we encamped, having ridden about twenty miles, at this encampment we were detained three days owing to incessant rains.

1. In the vicinity of where Marlin is now located.

2. It is strange that Bee, who evidently accompanied the party and who was mentioned at least once in a letter Eldridge wrote while on the expedition, is not mentioned in the report.

On the 21st encampment again stationary, our hunters killing buffalo, we were entirely out of meat, towards evening one of the hunters returned and reported having met two Indians supposed to be Wacoe's with nine horses, thinking they were probably some that had been stolen from the falls of the Brazos. I dispatched A-cah-quash with some Delawares to overtake and invite them to our camp. They returned however without success, the Indians probably having become alarmed and fled.

On the 23rd, passed and encamped above the "Comanche Peak"³ about one hundred and forty miles from the settlements, our progress having been thus slow on account of the great weight of the Indians' packs and their unwillingness to travel over fifteen or eighteen miles a day.

On the 24th, Jim Shaw informed me that a difference of opinion existed between Conner and himself as to the locality of the Caddoe tribes of Indians and proposed moving camp about six miles and sending runners both up the Brazos and Trinity to look for them that we might be correctly advised before travelling farther. To this I dissented, telling Shaw that my instructions from your Excellency were to proceed directly to the Comanches at the place designated by him and the Comanche chief for a meeting, and that I did not wish to visit the different villages unless they were in our route, and that he would therefore guide us direct to the "two Mountains" on the Brazos where he stated when in Washington that he had agreed to meet the chief. To this Shaw replied that he was not certain the Comanches were there, that they might either have gone to Matamoros or be upon the head waters of the Canadian, and that his horses and packs would not stand the trip to go to the place designated on the Brazos, and not finding the Comanches there go to where they probably were on the Canadian river. Finding that he was as much at loss as to their locality as myself I was reluctantly obliged to do as he proposed, we accordingly moved camp about six miles and sent off the runners.

On the 25th they returned and reported having met a small war party of Keachies, whom they had invited to our camp and would probably soon be in. In a short time the party appeared and were welcomed and recognized by A-cah-quash as members of his nation.

3. Near the modern village of Fort Spunky.

He immediately sent for me and with all the grace and dignity of a courtier introduced myself and party to his friends—after this ceremony I invited them to be seated and after having smoked the council pipe of peace, gave them all something to eat; smoking again ensued, when the captain of the party informed me through A-cah-quash that he was anxious to hear from me the words of peace. I accordingly addressed a few words to him mentioning that I was glad to meet him in peace in the prairies, that we had eaten and smoked together and were now friends, that it was not only my wish but the wish of the Chief Houston, that there should be no more war between the red and white man, but that the Indian might hunt his buffalo and the white man, plant his corn in peace and security, that after peace had been made with all the tribes, trading houses would be established where they could dispose of their peltries and derive more profit from trading than stealing a few horses from our frontier and risking the lives of their warriors in doing so. To this he replied that he had met me in the woods and been treated as a brother that he had heard my words, and they were good, that from this time forward he would be the friend of the white man, that he and his young men would bury the tomahawk and that he called upon the Great Spirit to hearken to his words, that they were true and he spoke no lies. This ended the interview. I afterwards learned from A-cah-quash that their party consisted of six Keachies, one Wichita and one Wacoe, and had been on an expedition against the Tonkewas who had stolen their horses. The result was disastrous, having had one warrior killed, a boy taken prisoner, and but two horses recovered. From them we enabled to obtain all necessary information in regard to the locality of the different tribes with the exception of the Comanches. The A-nah-dah-kah and Wacoe villages being nearest and A-cah-quash extremely desirous of visiting his chief and restoring the two prisoner girls who had been given up to him. It was decided to proceed thither first. Our guest left us the next morning for Wacoe village. By them I sent presents of tobacco to the head chiefs of the Tahuacanoes, Wacoos and Keachies.

On the 27th started quite early and towards evening came in sight of the A-nah-dah-kah village, encamped and sent a runner to apprise the chief, Jose Maria of our arrival and the objects of our coming.

On the morning of the 28th we were notified of the approach of

the chief. He shortly appeared escorted by thirty of his warriors, splendidly mounted presenting an exciting, novel and interesting sight from their unequalled horsemanship, fanciful costumes and paint. I invited them to dismount and had scarcely finished eating and smoking with them when a runner came in announcing the approach of Nah-ish-to-wah, the head chief of the Wacoes, he happened to be on a hunting excursion when our guests of a few days previous met him and informing him of our arrival he came on immediately to see his white friends and the prisoner girls we had with us. He shortly made his appearance with an escort of about twenty warriors advancing in cavalry style. The commission headed by A-cah-quash proceeded a short distance to meet him when he and three of his chiefs dismounted, embraced us in a cordial manner and expressed themselves glad to see us among them for the purpose of making peace. After inviting them to camp, Nah-ish-to-wah desired to see his girls. I sent for them, but the eldest had secreted herself, the younger came but with great reluctance. The old chief was deeply affected at seeing her, she was his brother's child, but so long a time had elapsed since he had seen her that he had almost forgotten her. The chief was then invited to join the circle and was scarcely seated before a delegation of Keachies was announced. It consisted of a small hunting party with the principal chief at its head, and was encamped within a few miles of the A-nah-dah-kah village, we again advanced to meet them as before and the same ceremonies having been performed each of the chiefs made a short speech to the effect, "that the Great Spirit was looking down upon us and would witness the sincerity of our welcome."

They were also invited to join our circle increasing the number of our guests to about seventy-five. There was no council held at this time but a day appointed for one so soon as the Caddo chiefs came in. I was not previously aware of the necessity of having counsels with these tribes, supposing all matters concerning them had been settled and arranged at the Council on Tahuacano Creek where they were said to be represented by A-cah-quash. This I found was not the case. All these small tribes are friendly with each other, intermarry, join each others war and hunting parties, and act generally in concert. Thus it was that A-cah-quash *represented* these tribes. He had no authority as far as I could learn, even to bind his own tribe to a treaty. His office appears merely to have been a kind of

agent to attend a council, see what inducements were held out to make peace and whether it would be safe for the head chiefs themselves to come in. I therefore found myself obliged to avoid giving offense, to delay and have talks with them when they wished, repeat all the propositions we had to make for peace, and apprise them of the meeting of the council as I found they were ignorant of, or had forgotten it. I was particular in explaining to them the precise day the council would be held as I was fearful I might not return with the Comanche chiefs in time, and I was determined to see them if I remained out six months in search of them, knowing that I would have accomplished but little if I returned without meeting them. I therefore urged upon the chief of these tribes to be *punctual*, and the statement made to the Commissioners at the Council "that I told them to wait until my return" is utterly false.

Towards evening our party broke up when we had quite a scene with the Waco girls. Nah-ish-to-wah wished them to go with them but they positively refused and cried bitterly. The chief then desired me to tell them they must go, which I did, using every argument to induce them, but in vain, their lamentations and outcries were piteous in the extreme. At length the patience of the chief seemed exhausted, and he told me if the Chief Houston had only sent the girls for him to look at and they were to remain with us, he was glad to see them and thanked him, but if they were to be given up to him, the amount of it was he *wanted* them. I told him the girls were his, and he could do as he pleased with them. They were then told that he would wait a little longer until they got their things ready, and if they did not then go willingly his young men should tie them on their horses and take them by force. This seemed to restore them again to their senses, reluctantly they mounted and left us shrieking distressingly.

These girls had been about ten years among our people and imbibed the same prejudices against the Indians that our own children had, and I doubt not, feel as much dread of them.

Jose Maria having invited us to accompany him, we mounted, and in about three miles reached his village. I was informed by our guides that it is situated on a western branch of the Trinity about eight miles from the main river. There are but few lodges and those of an inferior description. I observed they had planted consider-

able corn. I could form no estimate of their numbers, several parties being absent on hunting expeditions. Reports reach us here that the Comanches have just returned from Matamoras where they have concluded a peace with Mexico and since reaching home the small-pox has appeared among them, carrying off by hundreds. This report frightened Shaw and Conner who evinced some disinclination to proceed. I gave but little credence to these various contradictory reports, believing the Delawares to trump them up as occasion required to suit their own purposes of trade and mislead me as to the reason for their delays.

On the 30th Bin-tah, the Caddoe chief and some others arrived in camp and were introduced with the same ceremonies as those who had preceeded them.

About 12 o'clock on the 31st, I met the several chiefs in council. Those present were Nah-ish-to-wah and A-cah-quash, Wacoes, Bin-tah Caddo, Jose Maria Anah-dah-kah Bedi Ironois, Sah-sah-roque and Cah-hah-tic Keachies and their several escorts of chiefs of warriors. Of the proceedings of this council and the insolent behavior and refusal of Shaw to interpret I informed your Excellency in a despatch dated June 2d, 1843.⁴ All the chiefs looked for presents, and although the articles sent by your Excellency were designed solely for the Comanches, yet as I found it would give great offence to neglect them, I distributed some few articles among them, with which they seemed satisfied.

On the 3d of June we left this village and following up the trail of the Santa Fe expedition arrived in the neighborhood of the Tahuacano and Waco villages on the 5th and encamped. A-cah-quash rode over to the village and on his return informed me that the chiefs would meet us on the morrow.

On the 6th considerable bustle was apparent in our camp. Couriers and expresses passed between A-cah-quash and the village and after some time moved forward in order to meet the chiefs and their escort half way. After crossing the river we halted in a shady grove with a small prairie in front and then dismounted. A-cah-quash had informed me that considerable preparations were making to receive

4. Shaw had refused to act as interpreter and had threatened to leave the expedition when Eldridge insisted that he himself and not Shaw was head of the party. Apparently the Delawares were never entirely reconciled to Eldridge's leadership, although they finally agreed to go on with the party.

us in some style. I drew my party up in a line to make as good an appearance as possible and awaited their coming. In a few minutes our ears were greeted with the most terrific screaming and yelling together with the noise of drums and fifes which was nearly deafening. The woods seemed alive with Indians and when the party consisting of at least one hundred and fifty warriors with the old Tahuacano chief at their head came in sight from an opening in the timber the scene was novel exciting, and of intense interest. They performed a great many evolutions such as riding in circles around us at the full speed of their horses, beating their drums and blowing their shrill whistles or fifes and finally drew up in a line immediately fronting us. The principal chiefs then dismounted and were severally introduced by A-cah-quash. The embraces of the Tahuacano chief were apparently affectionate and sincere. We then formed a circle and smoked the council pipe of peace after which accompanied by the chiefs and their escort we mounted and proceeded to the Tahuacano village about four miles distant from the Waco. We did not stop at the later village. It appeared to consist of only a few huts. On nearing the Tahuacano village we passed through their fields consisting of about one hundred acres planted with corn, beans, melons and pumpkins, all of which looked forward and well. The village is situated on a very high hill and extremely difficult of access, the fields are at the foot of it in the bottom of one of the branches of the Trinity. The village is large and the lodges well built, and appear to be comfortable. We encamped in about a quarter of a mile of the village. The report now is that the Comanches are on the Canadian River.

On the 10th I met the Tahuacanoes and Wacoes in council, Keecha-ca-roque, the chief of the former, and head chief of all the associate tribes taking the principal seat—I opened by explaining the objects of my mission and made a few general remarks relative to the pacific policy of the administration and our desire for peace. The Delawares, Shaw, Conner and Second-eye then made some remarks when the old chief having seated myself and Mr. Torrey immediately in front of him replied to me as follows: "The ground upon which you sit is my ground, the water of which you have drunk is my water, and the meat of which you have eaten was mine, and you have been welcome, not many times have the leaves come and gone since I and my people lived near the white man in peace.

Had I wished, I could have slain them all. They were weak and we were strong, but I did not want war. Soon the white man became strong, then he killed my people, took away our lands and blood was in our path. Treaties of peace were then made but were broken by bad men. I thank the Great Spirit that has inclined the heart of your great chief Houston to peace. I have long desired it. The Great Spirit made both the white man and the red man. The same blood runs in our veins. I look upon myself and see the same likeness. The Great Spirit made the white man in knowledge next himself. He taught him to fashion everything he wanted with his own hands. To convert the soil, the winds and the waters to his own use and assistance. To the poor Indian he gave none of these great gifts. He is dependent upon the white man for all. We should all be brothers. The white flag and the tobacco before us are the emblem of peace. I am glad to see them. The white path is now opening. I hope it will be kept clear that our children may see it, and all go and come in safety. I have made a treaty with the United States and intend to keep it sacred so long as the water runs and the earth stands. I want it to be so with Texas. I call upon the Great Spirit to witness the truth of my words. I speak no lies. The Great Spirit looks upon us now and is pleased when he saw that peace was to be made. He sent great rains and floods and caused an overflow of all the rivers that the water might wash away all the blood and bones of our slain warriors from the prairies so that our children might not behold the deeds of their fathers, but the past be all forgotten." The council then adjourned.

In a subsequent conversation the chief told me that he was sorry my chief had not sent him some powder as he had no meat for his people and corn would not be ripe for a long time. He must therefore beg some for his young men. As there was no way of getting round it, pretty liberal presents of powder, lead, etc., made him.

In a communication dated June 11th, I detailed the particulars of another talk had with this chief and the acceptance of his proposition to send runners to the Wichita village where information he thought could be obtained of the locality of the Comanches. I also mentioned the request of Shaw for my consent to go to Strouds for corn and my denial. After departure of the runners, Conner and Shaw told me of their intention to go to Red River and deposit their skins, so that when we obtain information and do move, it will

be with despatch. As the distance was only seventy-five miles and they promised faithfully to be back in seven days at the farthest, I reluctantly assented to their going. That there might however be no greater delay than the time specified, I instructed Mr. Torrey to accompany them, to urge upon them despatch if they seemed inclined to stay. Accordingly on Sunday the 11th, they started.

On the 17th, the runners returned and reported having been to the Wichita village and learned from the chief that two young men had arrived the day previous direct from the Comanches, that the whole body of them were about 250 or 300 miles distant on Big Salt River procuring salt and killing buffalo which were very abundant. That they were daily in expectation of a visit from the Osages, with whom they were to make peace and trade. After which they were coming to the Wichita village and would probably arrive about the time corn was fit for roasting. This was the amount of intelligence as gleaned from Second-Eye, the most miserable of interpreters.

On the 18th A-cah-quash returned me a mule which had been stolen from the falls of the Brazos by one of his young warriors and which was afterwards returned by me to its owner.

On the 21st we received information direct from the Comanches through some Wacoes who had been on a hunting expedition. They report having seen the chief Pah-hah-yuco himself, who asked them concerning the visit Shaw had promised to make them. The tribe is supposed to be about twelve days journey distant.

On the 24th we were visited by a Wichita chief and some Pawnees. The Wichita had been sent by the principal chief to see us, ascertain our numbers and the object of our coming. They had he said "been told so many lies by the Creeks that they were afraid I had a large company with me and wanted to fight them." He was glad this was not so and that we came for purposes of peace. He would say this to his chief who would be glad to see us at his village. A party of about one hundred Pawnees arrived this evening for the purpose of making peace and trading with the wild Indians.

On the evening of the 27th Shaw and Conner returned, offering no explanation or apology for their protracted absence. I questioned them about it but could get no satisfaction. Mr. Torrey re-

ported that he could see no good reason why they should have delayed, that they remained idly lounging in camp at Warren's⁵ and that no persuasion of his could induce them to move sooner; that while there they had a council with the chiefs of their tribes, which resulted in Shaw's dictating a letter to some person about Warren's establishment, which he afterwards saw lying upon a desk directed to Gov. Butler, U. S. Indian Agent and which was afterwards despatched by a runner to Fort Smith. Mr. Torrey thought this letter had a bearing in some manner upon our expedition but could procure no item of its contents. He also mentioned that Shaw and Conner remained two days after the time they told him they would return, to doctor a sick Indian woman for which they boasted of having received twenty-five dollars each. I remonstrated with Shaw upon their conduct in hindering our progress so much (he having been absent sixteen days), and told him that with these vexatious delays continually occurring, it was impossible that we could return in time for the council, that now they had got rid of their packs I should expect them to move expeditiously to make up for lost time, and that I wanted them to start early the next morning.

On the 28th notwithstanding my wishes of the night previous, no preparations were made for a start by the Indians. Upon asking the reason they informed me that their horses were too tired and some of them unwell, with several other trivial excuses. From their conduct I was well satisfied that they did not intend to move until it suited their convenience and inclinations. I would at that time have broken up the commission, if I could have procured an interpreter to accompany me, but being entirely dependent on the Delawares for guides and interpreters, I found myself obliged to give way to them. A-cah-quash was highly indignant at their procrastination, and would sit for hours venting his anger at their conduct. He was extremely anxious to proceed and evinced more interest in the expedition than all the Delawares.

On the 4th day of July, the Indians having no possible excuse for farther delay, preparations were made for a start. Before leaving the Tahuacano chief called upon me and wanted to have a talk. He stated that a long time ago peace was made with all the tribes including the Tonkewas, that the Wichita's stole the Tonkewas' horses,

5. Warren's Trading Post was then located near where Walnut Bayou enters Red River within what is now Love County, Oklahoma.

they retaliated on other tribes, and war broke out again among them all. Again peace was made with the Mexicans at San Antonio, the Wichitas interfered and after involving all the tribes in war retreated into the United States, leaving the Texas tribes who were innocent to bear the brunt of the war. At another time peace was made with Texas at Nacogdoches, the Wichitta's also infringed upon that treaty.

Now that peace was again to be made with the U. S. as well as Texas, he wanted it known who it was that made the trouble in order that they alone might be punished and the other tribes not involved in war. In compliance with his request I stated these facts in a letter to Capt. Blake at Fort Washita. The day being somewhat advanced, and not having anything to eat, our departure was delayed by a report, that a hunting party would arrive in the evening with plenty of buffalo meat and that we would be able to procure some to take with us, there being but little or no game on our route over Grande Prairie. I omitted to mention that during the long absence of Shaw and Conner our hunters were often for days together unable to procure game and I was obliged to purchase of the Indians vegetables for our subsistence, paying for them out of the goods I had with me, and at exorbitant rates.

Early on the morning of the 5th we started. Shaw & Conner having sent their women and children back to Red River; I was strongly in hopes that we would travel expeditiously and be back in time for the Council. But in this I was disappointed. I observed upon leaving that Second-Eye and Jack Harray, one of our hunters, took an opposite direction. I rode up and asked them where they were going, they replied that Shaw had ordered them to go to Red River, and join us again at the Wichitta village in ten days. I inquired their business but could get no information. I then demanded of Shaw his reasons for sending away without my consent two of the expedition employed by the Government and received for answer "that some trouble existed among the Creek Indians with the U. S. Govt. about some powder and he wanted to know all the particulars about it so as to tell the wild Indians."—I knew this to be an evasion and told him that the Creek Indians had nothing whatever to do with Texas or her Indians, and that I looked upon his conduct as highly reprehensible and should report to your Excellency, that not

content with delaying me twenty-four days at the last village he must needs keep me ten more at the next. I would also mention in this place that one of the hunters employed (a brother of Jack Harrys) left us at the Tahuacano village and did not again join us. I appointed another Delaware named Francis to supply his place who is entitled to the pay agreed to be allowed the hunters for the trip. We proceeded about 20 miles this day.

On the 7th we struck Grand prairie, having passed through the cross timbers, I suppose them about seventy miles wide where we crossed them.

On the 9th crossed the Big Wichitta and Red Rivers.

On the 10th crossed the trail of Col. Snivelys party⁶ and encamped on Cache Creek near the Mountains.

On the 11th crossed Cache creek and encamped near the Wichita or Toweash village.⁷ I found but one chief and about ten warriors at home, the balance were absent on stealing and hunting parties. The principal chief was expected to return the next evening.

On the 13th the head chief not having returned, we were invited by the second chief through A-cah-quash to breakfast with him. We went and were cordially received and entertained upon buffalo meat. A-cah-quash then talked about four hours, giving an account of the Council and his visit to Washington, to which they seemed to pay great attention. It was then agreed to meet in council so soon as the head chief arrived who was hourly expected.

Contradictory reports were still received in relation to the Comanches. Shaw informed me that if they were far off he would go no further and Conner said if it were not that he goods with him, he would not have come thus far for \$150. This showed the interest they felt in the success of the expedition. Three months would have enabled us to have gone to the Pacific Ocean, much less 250 miles from this place where the Comanches are supposed to be, but the

6. In the spring or early summer of 1843, Jacob Snively led a party of Texas volunteers from the settlements to the Santa Fe trail. The purpose of the expedition was to capture a train of merchandise it was known would be carried from St. Louis to Santa Fe.

7. At this time the Wichita Village was located near the present Fort Sill which is about seven miles north of Lawton, Oklahoma.

mission had been completely changed into an Indian trading expedition and the Delawares felt no farther concern than the amount of skins and mules they could purchase, and to that fact and on them alone must rest the responsibility of his failure.

On the 14th a report was received that a Wichitta had returned from hunting and met some Comanche women picking plums within about two days ride of our camp. I was extremely anxious to move on, but Shaw insisted we could not leave until the Wichitta came.

On the 15th the report of the day previous was confirmed. A Keachie came in who had seen the Comanche chief, who informed him that he should soon visit the Wichitta village to get corn. I requested Shaw to send runners on to him immediately or else that we should all go and meet him and hurry through with our business that we might get back in time for the Council. This on some trivial grounds was objected to, he seeming to think it quite unimportant whether we returned or not.

On the 18th the chief having returned we met the Wichittas in council. About four miles distant from this village is a settlement of Keachies, who becoming dissatisfied with the balance of their tribe residing on the Brazos and Trinity, seceded, elected a chief of their own and moved up here to live. They with the Wichittas have been the most troublesome Indians in the country. I was desirous that their chief should attend this council, and sent for him, he promised to come, but did not make his appearance. A-cah-quash informed me that he did not wish to make peace, but that it made no material difference as he would be forced to come into measures if the Wichittas made a treaty. I spoke to the Wichittas on the usual topics and was followed by A-cah-quash and the Delawares, when the council adjourned till the next day to receive the talk of the chiefs. I requested of Shaw and Conner that everything might be in readiness early on the morrow so that we might receive the chief's talk and proceed on our journey immediately, to which they consented.

On the 19th instead of doing as they promised, they plead the sickness of one of the company as an excuse for not starting and would not even attend the council as intended, but promised me faithfully to be ready on the ensuing morning.

20th midday arrived, but Conner had not returned from a dance

and frolic at the Keachie village. The council at which the Wichita was to give an answer was delayed without any ostensible reason and we lay lounging and wasting our time in camp, expending the goods designed for the Comanches among the Wichitas for subsistence, our hunters being unable to find any game, while the principal business of the commission remained unaccomplished and unattended to. Second-Eye and Harry have not returned from Red River although sixteen days had elapsed and they were to have been absent but ten. Their absence I believe was the only reason of our delay although other reasons were daily assigned. Towards evening a runner arrived in camp with the information that a company of white men were at the Keachie village. We rode over and found them to consist of a portion of Colonel Snively's expedition under command of Major Chandler, on their return home. I cannot avoid mentioning in this place the praise-worthy conduct of the command who almost destitute of provisions, and in sight of the flourishing cornfields of the Indians, did not touch an ear but what they traded for. Another circumstance spoke volumes for their discipline and desire to conciliate the Indians. It appears that they found in the prairies above a broken down horse which they recruited and brought with them. The Keachie chief as soon as he saw the horse recognized him as one that had been stolen from him by the Pawnees. He informed the commander of the fact saying he had no horse left to ride to the council which he was anxious to attend. To the credit of the corps the horse was given up without ransom, the men agreeing among themselves to remunerate the one who had found him, fifty dollars, his appraised value. I learned that throughout their trip the greatest kindness was shown to all the Indians disposed to be friendly. Such conduct on the part of our people will exert a most beneficial influence on the different tribes.

On the 22d we met the Wichittas in council. The Keachie chief before alluded to as being unwilling to attend was present. The chiefs all expressed a great desire for peace and promised to attend the council on the Trinity. I gave them a small quantity of tobacco and the council adjourned.

On the 23rd the Delawares having no possible excuse for farther delay we started and encamped at an old lodge of Ka-ta-ah-sah, the Wichitta chief.

On the 25th we reached Pecan Creek where we had been informed the Comanches were, but found no fresh signs of them. Owing to the continuance of heavy rains and the severe illness of the Comanche boy, "William Hockley," who was unable to ride, we were obliged to remain encamped. Runners were sent out in quest of the Comanches with instructions not to remain out longer than two days. They did not return however until the 2d of August, having not seen any signs of the Comanches, it was therefore supposed by the Delawares that they had gone down the country. We then concluded to turn our steps homeward on the other side of the mountains from that we came up on.

On the 3d started and encamped with a party of Delaware traders who like ourselves were in quest of the Comanches. On the 4th recrossed Red River and discovered fresh signs convincing us of the proximity of the Comanches. We pitched our camp on the bank of a small creek and almost immediately A-cah-quash cried out "Comanches," two horsemen were seen approaching and proved to be an old blind man and a boy returning from gathering plums. He gave us the welcome information, that the encampment of the Comanches is within five miles of us but unfortunately the chief, Pah-hah-yuco had started in the morning for the Witchitta village. I immediately requested Shaw and Conner to send runners there and acquaint the chief of our arrival at his town, and request his return, being fearful that he might delay his visit longer than he otherwise would if he was aware of our coming. They replied that one of the runners was unwell and the other too tired and that they could not go themselves. I tried to impress upon them the importance of our time as the council day was nearly at hand, but the same indifference as heretofore shown was apparent, and I was obliged to hire an express to send, from the party of traders, allowing him fifteen dollars for the trip, which Conner paid in goods, I giving him a memorandum for the amount. I do not think it should be paid by the government as I consider it was the duty of Shaw or Conner to have gone, more especially as they had sent away without my consent two of the commission, who otherwise would have performed the service.

5th—early this morning the second chief with a considerable body of his warriors visited us, after smoking and a short consultation, presents were made them and we invited to move our encamp-

ment to their village which was asserted to—Upon our arrival, we were cordially received by the wives of the chief who moved out all his baggage and placed his tent at our disposal. We moved in but finding it to be insufferably hot and that A-cah-quash and his wife had also taken up their lodgings there, I had my own tents spread and found ourselves more comfortably situated. Our position was in the town next door to the chief's own abode while our Indian escorts were camped on a creek a few hundred yards distant. We were thus placed I presume for greater protection until the arrival of the chief. The second chief treated us very kindly but I noticed I thought, in his conduct a distrust of some of his people. The encampment was in the open prairie on the bank of a small creek and covered a surface of about half a mile, the chiefs tent was at one end of it, and to the tents in its immediate vicinity we had access if we desired it, but the chief would not permit me to visit the other end of the village saying "it was not good," making at the same time the action of scalping—I observed also that the warriors occupying those lodges did not come near us while the others thronged our quarters from morning till night. From Pah-hah-yucos immediate household we received every attention it was possible for them to bestow. Our Delawares did not find the trade so good as they anticipated. It appeared the Chians and Kickappos had been among these Indians and traded for most of their disposable mules and skins.

On the 7th the runner returned and reported that the chief would shortly arrive. About 10 o'clock he made his appearance escorted by three more wives and a party of warriors. Second-Eye and Harry also returned with them. A-cah-quash as usual on such occasions introduced us with great dignity. The chief received us with a great deal of kindness and appeared pleased to see us. Upon learning that I had brought two prisoners he expressed great anxiety to see them. I sent for them and after having shook them cordially by the hand, he motioned them back to the tent. In personal appearance the chief is large and portly, weighing I should suppose upwards of two hundred pounds, with a pleasing expression of countenance, full of good humor and jovialty. After our reception he threw himself on a buffalo skin, and his wives proceeded to strip him of his moccasins, leggins, and hunting shirt, after which he went into council with his chiefs and warriors and remained in ear-

nest debate until nearly sunset. The council tent was but a short distance from mine and I was enabled to see and hear all that passed. Many of the warriors in their speeches were much excited and violent in their gesticulations and manner. I learned from an interpreter that these had relations slain at San Antonio when their chiefs went in to make a treaty and were strongly advocating a retaliation upon us, after which they were willing to listen to terms of peace. This was argued against by A-cah-quash in a long and animated speech in which as I afterwards learned he laid particular stress upon the fact that our head chief was not the same chief who ruled in Texas at the time of the massacre but was the friend of the red man. I also learned that Pah-hah-yuco objected to this course and advocated a more pacific policy but the majority were against him and at midday it was uncertain how our fate would be decided. Our apprehensions were greatly increased during the afternoon by a visit from the second chief who informed me that a Wichitta and Tahuacanie had just arrived in their camp and told them that since we left their village a number of their people had been taken sick and died and they believed we had poisoned them and that the Comanches must not make peace or attend our council, for if they did we would either give them poisoned food or blow them up with gunpowder. I told him these men must be liars, that A-cah-quash had been with me the whole trip and would tell him that so far from poisoning them I had entirely cured his wife of a violent fever and a Keachie who was afflicted with white swelling, which I had lanced and before leaving the village entirely healed. With this he was apparently satisfied and returned to the council. Towards evening Pah-hah-yuco sent me word that it was decided to hear what I had to say; as the day was so far advanced I deferred meeting them until the following morning. After the warriors had withdrawn to their different lodges Pah-hah-yuco came to my tent and told me of the proceedings of the day, adding that I must go to sleep and rest in safety, for none of his people should molest us during the night. He then mounted his horse and rode through and around the encampment giving commands in a loud tone of voice, the import of which was that no one should trouble us during the night or interfere with our horses or other property.

On the 8th I met the Comanches in council. I had the prisoners neatly dressed and took them with me seating them by my side.

The Alamo council pipe was then produced and smoking commenced. In this ceremony the chief did not participate, nor did he ever smoke with me while I remained with him. After smoking Pah-hah-yuco addressed a few words to the warriors assembled enjoining upon them strict attention to what was said. I then addressed the chief who was seated in front of me in the centre to the following import through the interpreters.

“I am glad to meet my red brother, Pah-hah-yuco, the Great Chief of the Comanches in peace—I am glad that he has been willing to receive the hand of friendship I have extended to him—The Great Spirit is alike the father of the white man and the red—He looks down upon us now and if we speak the truth to each other, he will be pleased and smile upon us—But if we speak lies as with a forked tongue, his anger will rest upon us like the dark clouds of night and we shall never be permitted to live in and enjoy the pleasant hunting grounds beyond the skies. Therefore my talk shall be the truth and the words of my brother, Pah-hah-yuco, shall be laid up as such in my heart—I will remember them and tell my great chief that the words of Pah-hah-yuco are good—that his tongue speaks no lies—Houston the great chief of Texas has always been the friend of the red man—He grew up from a child among them—he has sat by their side and eaten bread with them since he became a man—He has never told the red man a lie nor has he ever turned away from his friends—When he takes Pah-hah-yuco and his people by the hand he will never turn away from them—but while they keep peace and treat us as brothers he will always be their friend and never forget them—nor shall the winds scatter his words. It is his desire and the desire of the chiefs of his councils that there should be no more war and shedding of blood—but that the tomahawk should be buried—the pipe of peace smoked—and the path between the white man of Texas and the red man of the prairies cleared of all the obstacles that hitherto have made difficult the way—For this purpose he has sent me with two others to you having in our hands this white flag on emblem of peace—and these presents—they are not the offerings of fear but the gifts of friendship—as such you will receive them, for no more will be given you until a firm treaty of peace is made—The chief, Houston, is not the same who was chief in Texas when your people were slain at San Antonio—He looks upon such things with abhorrence—If the Comanches have been deceived by

our people, they will never again be told falsehoods—The same chief who has directed me to speak these words to you made a treaty with the Comanches at Houston and while he was chief in Texas it was not broken—It was broken by bad men—and the white man as well as the Comanches have had much trouble and sorrow since—Let us now forget our sorrows and in future live like brothers—There is room enough for the Comanches in the prairies—there you can hunt the buffalo and the white man will not harm you—and when you come to us in peace you will be met as brothers—and trouble will no more come among us—my chief expects if you desire peace that you and your head chiefs will go with me to the great council on the Trinity this moon, and that all the white prisoners you have, you will take with you—Your prisoners shall be there also and will be given up to you—As a proof of my chief's sincerity he has sent you these two, this boy and girl—I now present them to you without price or ransom—(at this moment I advanced from my position in the council with the prisoners and placing their hands in that of the chief—who embraced them cordially and seated them by his side)—This action seemed to give great satisfaction and a general burst of applause from all followed—The grandfather of the girl a very old man then approached, and with flowing tears, embraced us all affectionately, and expressed his thanks for his child and his sincere hope that the peace now making would be as lasting as the hills—I then continued my remarks. “My chief also expects you to send runners to all your different bands with talks of peace saying that the tomahawk is buried, that there is to be no more blood in the path and that the head chiefs must attend the council—I have been told by some that you would not like to go to a council on the Trinity river, fearing some harm would be done you by our people—Do not believe this—I call upon the Great Spirit to witness the truth of my words—no treachery will be done you—You can come and go in safety and not one shall molest you—If you desire it when you go to the council, I will remain a hostage in your camps, and if my words to you this day prove false let my life be a forfeit for the wrong that is done you—There must at some time be peace between the red and white man of Texas—We cannot always continue as we have been for years past, warring with each other and bringing sorrow among our women and children—The present is the most favorable time that can occur to

make this peace and settle all our difficulties—the chief of Texas desires only the good of the red man—He desires to see them living happily among themselves unmolested and not fearing the white man—My chief did not send you the white men you wished for hostages or the uniform you desired—He sent me and the others with me, that you might see us and hear the words of peace from our own mouths—When you make peace with me and go to see him he will give you your uniform and such other presents as one brother would give another who had come a long distance to see him—As this is a council to make peace and the place appointed so far from our homes it will be impossible to get such supplies of provisions there for you as we could wish—After we have made a final treaty and our red brothers meet us in council it will be near our people and we will have plenty to give them to eat—My words to you are spoken—I then produced the letter of your Excellency to Pah-hah-yuco, and after shewing and explaining the nature of the signature and the great seal, read and presented it to him, that it might remind him of what you yourself had said and that your words were the words of peace—with this he seemed pleased and the document was apparently well received. The presents were then distributed to those present by the chief. After this he notified me that another council would be held by his warriors in the evening, and that he would be ready to “talk” on the morrow. The council then adjourned. From appearances at the close I judged that all looked more bright and favorable for us, but there was no doubt considerable division existed among them—I felt however that our situation was extremely critical, placed as we were among many who had lost relatives in their wars with Texas, and were burning with revenge for the wrongs done them at San Antonio, and would greedily have sought our destruction—My confidence in the friendly disposition of the chief was great, but I did not know how far his authority would be respected if the majority was against him. As might be expected we looked forward with considerable anxiety to the morrow when our fate would be decided—

I learned this evening the cause of the delay of Shaw and Conner at the Red River and the object of Second-Eye and Harry's being sent there by Shaw when we left the Tahuacano village. Shaw mentioned to Mr. Sybert, one of my party, in whom I place implicit confidence, some days before Second-Eye returned, that in my talks

with the Indians I always told them the council would be on Trinity River, but that he had "fixed it all," for a letter had been written to Governor Butler from Warrens when he was there and that he waited the arrival of an answer as long as he could, when he concluded to return and send back for it, and that as soon as Second-Eye returned with it, he would give me the letter to read and then "*I should know where the council would be.*" Second-Eye returned however empty-handed.

To this unadvised and ill judged movement on the part of Shaw and Conner must be attributed all the delays we experienced and the consequent failure to return to the council at the appointed time—I never sanctioned the delay of a day when it could possible be avoided on the whole trip, and the sole cause of my unpopularity with the Delawares is, that I was continually urging them to proceed and not by their procrastination defeat your Excellency's expectations and the hopes of the country. My conduct to them was always considerate, and with a knowledge of their disposition and prejudices, conciliating perhaps to a fault. The utmost deference was always paid to their suggestions in my intercourse with the wild Indians, and had they possessed one spark of generosity, they would have been grateful to me, instead of poisoning the minds of the wild Indians against me after I left, inducing them to lie about my proceedings with them in council which unfortunately for me received from many more credence than my written reports.

On the 9th I met the chief in council, when he addressed me in the following words—"My brother, I have heard your talk and listened to the words your great Chief Houston sent me. They are good. I have long desired peace—The children of my people which your chief sent me has made our hearts glad—We know your chief speaks truth and I am willing to assist him to make the great white path between our different people.—I would be willing to attend the council as you wish, but my people will not go to your country until a treaty is made—And their reason is that when we make a treaty, I want it to be a *strong treaty* one that shall last as long as this world exists—all the chiefs of my several bands must be present and there is not time to collect them together—I want them present that there may be no lies spoken on my side—I will visit the different bands and council with and bring them to make a treaty at some future

time—I will send runners as your chief wished with talks of peace to all the chiefs and tell them there must be no more blood—When you return to your chief, say to him, Pah-hah-yuco thanks him for his children and the presents he sent—I have no white prisoners with me or I would send them to him—When we meet again in council they shall all be there.”

I then asked him how long it would require to concentrate the several bands; and at what place he would meet Commissioners in Council—after a little thought he replied —“four moons from this present full moon my people will be on the clear fork of the Brazos river and if the grass is good, winter there.” I tried to induce him to come lower down the country but Shaw told me it was only one day’s ride from Comanche Peak and if I pressed him farther he might get offended with me and not come at all—I was then of course obliged to accept the answer the chief gave me—Accordingly I drew up a treaty for a temporary peace which was entered into and signed by Pah-hah-yuco and myself with Mr. Torrey, A-cah-quash and the Delawares as witnesses—This document is now on file in the Executive Department—

On the 10th preparations were made for a start, before leaving, Pah-hah-yuco, came to me and wished that I would ask the Chief Houston to send him at the next council a silver medal in the form of a double cross, thus a spear, a uniform coat and sword, which I promised him to do. Happening to see my sword, he insisted upon having it. I gave it to him as Shaw had promised to bring one up, and he seemed disappointed in not receiving it. The necessity of sending another is thus avoided.—Preparations were also made by the tribe for a move.—Upon driving up our horses two were found to be absent.—I mentioned the fact to Pah-hah-yuco who immediately sent some of his Mexican servants in search of them.—They shortly returned and reported not only the loss of ours, but five of their own.—Inquiry was then made and it was ascertained that a Mexican prisoner had taken this opportunity to escape, and it was supposed had driven off the horses with him.—The chief then informed me that he had sent in pursuit and if my horses were recovered he would take charge of, and return them at the council in December. About midday we started on our return for the Wichitta village.—The chief remained at my tent until all his people were out of sight, when bidding us a kind farewell he mounted his horse and left us.