



## *The West Texas Historical Review*

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

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

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

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Dale, Edward Everett. "Romance of the Range, The": vol. 5: 3.

Haley, J. Evetts. "Grass Fires of the Southern Plains": vol. 5: 24.

Richardson, R. N. "Comanche Reservation in Texas, The": vol. 5: 47.

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Barrett, Arrie. "Transportation, Supplies, and Quarters for the West Texas Frontier Under the Federal Military System, 1848-1861": vol. 5: 95.

McKay, S. S. "Some Attitudes of West Texas Delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1875": vol. 5: 109.

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*Hybernia Grace*

# West Texas Historical Association Year Book

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VOL. V

JUNE, 1929

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*Publication Committee*

C. C. RISTER, Simmons University

W. C. HOLDEN, Texas Technological College

R. N. RICHARDSON, Simmons University

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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 interest of Southwestern students in Texas history has been augmented in recent years as the result of bringing to light many important facts relating to West Texas history. From the time of the bold Spanish conquerors to the disappearance of the Southwestern frontier the colorful changes which have taken place in this part of the state have been such as to astonish research students. The battling of the forces of civilization against those of the wild West contributed much to the historical lore of West Texas. Much of this has been recorded by the historians of the Southwest, but much yet remains to be written. It is the purpose of the West Texas Historical Association in its *Year Book* to blaze the way and reveal the many possibilities in connection with that yet to be done. To this end the Publication Committee is happy to present to the lovers of Texas history the 1929 *Year Book*. Then, too, the members of the committee feel that a compilation of volumes of our publication by collectors of Southwestern history will add an indispensable element to any well balanced library, and added to the many articles contributed through the medium of the preceding year books by scholars and pioneers are interesting contributions in our 1929 volume by writers equally able.

As may be seen from a perusal of the table of contents of the 1929 *Year Book*, the articles contributed, with the exception of one, pertain to the last half of the Nineteenth Century. From the grass fires of the plains to the routine of the cattle business the average life of the West Texas prairies is reviewed; and from the turbulent reservation days of the Brazos to the Comanche-Kiowa War of 1874-1875 the drama of our Indian history is re-enacted. Then to give a glimpse of the reconstruction days following the Civil war the constitution makers of 1875 are discussed. Believing as we do in the merits of the contributors of our annual we submit the 1929 *Year Book* for your approval.



# THE WEST TEXAS HISTORICAL YEAR BOOK

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VOL. V

JUNE, 1929

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## THE ROMANCE OF THE RANGE

BY EDWARD EVERETT DALE

The business of herding or live stock raising is one of the most ancient and honorable of all industries. The Bible is filled with allusions to pastoral life, and the strife of Cain and Abel has been characterized as the first example of warfare between range and grange.

Not only is herding one of the earliest pursuits of mankind, but there has ever clustered about the business and those engaged in it something of the glamour of romance, of daring deeds and high adventure. Badger Clark in his poem "From Town" has expressed this in picturesque fashion when he says:

"Since the days when Lot and Abram  
Split the Jordan range in halves  
Just to fix it so their punchers wouldn't fight.  
Since old Jacob skinned his dad-in-law of six year's crop of calves  
Then hit the trail for Canaan in the night,  
There has been a taste for battle  
Mongst the men who follow cattle  
And a love of doing things that's wild and strange, <sup>1</sup>  
And the warmth of Laban's words  
When he missed his speckled herds  
Still is useful in the language of the range."

Since that time many rival ranchmen have "split a range in halves" to keep down strife among their punchers; more than one enterprising young man has "skinned his dad-in-law" of a liberal share of various crops of calves, the taste for battle has manifested itself in many places resulting in "wild and strange doings," while

1. Badger Clark, *Sun and Saddle Leather*.

not a few men who have missed a portion of their "speckled herds" have resorted to language even more forceful and picturesque than was included in the vocabulary of the ancient Laban.

Men engaged in pastoral pursuits seem, moreover, to be peculiarly favored by Divine Providence. Mohamet was a herder and a camel driver before he became the founder of the religion of Islam. To a band of herdsmen of northern Spain appeared the mighty light which led them to the body of St. James the Elder, and caused the founding of the shrine of Santiago, de campostella, while to shepherds watching their flocks by night came the Angel of the Lord bringing "good tidings of great joy."

It is not in the old world alone, however, that the herding industry has been crowned by a halo of romance. The business in America has not been lacking in that respect and the rise and fall of the range cattle industry on the western plains constitutes one of the most remarkable epochs in all American History.

Ranching has existed in the United States as a frontier pursuit since very early times. Almost the first English settlers along the Atlantic seaboard brought cattle with them, and as the better lands along the coast were taken up and planted to crops, men owning a considerable number of animals removed farther west in order to find pasture for their herds on the unoccupied lands of the wilderness. Thus once agricultural settlement was well started in its westward march across the continent, there was to be found along its outer edge a comparatively narrow rim or border of pastoral life. For a century and more it was there, slowly advancing as the area of cultivated lands advanced, a kind of twilight zone with the light of civilization behind it and the darkness of savagery before. The ranchmen could not push too far out into the wilderness because of the fierce tribes of Indians that inhabited it. On the other hand they could not linger too long on their original ranges or they would find themselves crowded and hemmed in by the men who depended upon cultivated crops for a livelihood. The American people had become "that great land animal." They pushed eagerly westward, occupied lands formerly devoted to grazing, cleared fields and planted crops, thus forcing the live stock growers again, and again to move on to "new pastures."

Strange as this century long westward march of an industry

may appear, the final phase is even more startling and has no parallel in the economic history of any other nation in the world. Soon after the Civil War this comparatively narrow belt of grazing hitherto fairly constant as to width and area, suddenly shot out into the wilderness and spread with amazing rapidity until it covered a region larger than all that part of the United States devoted to crop raising.<sup>2</sup> This region became the so-called "cow country" where ranching was carried on for several years upon a scale vastly greater than ever before until the homesteaders advancing slowly, but steadily westward, had at last invaded nearly every portion of it and taken over all of the lands suitable for cultivation.

A number of factors influenced this sudden rise of the "cow country." The close of the Civil War released from the armies many young men who came west in search of adventure and fortune. Over the western plains roamed countless herds of buffalo, a potential source of food, clothing and shelter for the fierce Indian tribes that occupied that region. Buffalo hunting became at once a popular and profitable pursuit. Within two decades the great herds had been exterminated, and the Indians finding their food supply cut off removed more or less willingly to reservations set aside for them where they lived to a great extent dependent upon the bounty of the Federal Government. The plains were thus left open to occupation by herds of the cattlemen and the latter were not slow to take advantage of the opportunity presented to them.

Even so, ranching could not have spread so rapidly had there not existed a great reservoir from which animals might be drawn to stock these western plains. That reservoir was the great state of Texas. Even from earliest times everything in Texas seemed to promote live stock raising. Range, climate, and the land system were all distinctly favorable to grazing. The early Spanish settlers brought with them cattle of the lean, long horned type that the Moors had raised on the plains of Andalusia for a thousand years. These increased rapidly and American settlers coming into Texas brought with them cattle of the North European breeds. These crossed with the original Spanish type produced animals that were larger and heavier than the Spanish cattle, and yet with the en-

2. Nimmo gives the area devoted to cattle raising in the U. S. in 1885 as 1,355,000 square miles. See Joseph Nimmo, *The Range and Ranch Cattle Business of the United States*, (Washington 1885) p. 1.

durance and ability to take care of themselves so necessary on the open range.

Spain, and later the Republic of Mexico gave out large grants of land to individuals and later the Republic of Texas continued this liberal land policy. Also when Texas was admitted as a state it retained possession of its own unoccupied lands, and these the state sold in large tracts and with liberal terms of payment. Thus at the outbreak of the Civil War Texas was, largely speaking, a region of great landed proprietors, nearly all of whom owned herds of cattle.<sup>3</sup>

The war came and the Texans, "ever eager for a fight or a frolic," and sometimes willing to regard the fight as a frolic, hurried away to join the armies of the Confederacy. For four years they fought bravely for the Lost Cause proving their mettle upon many a bloody field. During all this time Texas was less touched than any other state of the Confederacy by the ravages of war. While Virginia was devastated by the armies of both sides, while Sherman's army ate a hole fifty miles wide across Georgia; and while the fields of Mississippi and Alabama lay fallow or grew up in bushes and briars for want of laborers to till them, the cattle on the broad plains of Texas grew fat and sleek and increased rapidly under the favorable conditions of range and climate. The result was that when the war closed and the Texans returned to their homes they found their ranges fairly overflowing with fine, fat cattle for which there was no market, though cattle and beef were selling at high prices in the north.<sup>4</sup> Stock cattle could be bought on the Texas prairies in 1866 at from one to three dollars a head while fat beeves sold at from five to six or seven dollars. Even in 1867 three year old steers were quoted as having an average value of \$86.00 in Massachusetts, \$68.57 in New York, \$70.58 in New Jersey, \$40.19 in Illinois, \$38.40 in Kansas, \$46.32 in Nebraska, and \$9.46 in Texas.<sup>5</sup>

3. The Census of 1860 gives the total number of cattle in Texas at that time as 8,584,678. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Agriculture, p. 148. Census figures are very unreliable, however, when applied to an industry of this nature.

4. In 1866 round steak retailed in New York at 20 to 25 cents a pound, sirloin at 25 to 35, and rib roast at 28 to 30 cents. On the live stock market of eastern cities cattle brought as high as \$10.00 per hundred weight, this price being refused on the Albany market December 21, 1866, for a choice lot of Illinois steers. (*New York Times*, December 22, 1866). Also *New York Tribune*, June 23, 1866.

5. Monthly reports of U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, 1867, pp. 108-109.



Out of this condition grew the so-called "northern drive." The Texas soldiers from the Confederate armies mostly reached home in the summer of 1865, too late to attempt to drive their cattle to market that year. In the spring of 1866, however, large herds were collected preparatory to starting north as soon as spring was sufficiently advanced to make the venture practicable. Most of these herds belonged to Texas ranchmen who were themselves driving them to market, though in some cases northern men came to Texas and purchased herds to drive up the trail.<sup>6</sup>

The start was usually made late in March or early in April. The usual route followed by these earliest drovers was north from central Texas passing just west of Fort Worth, and on past Denton and Sherman to Red River. Beyond that stream the line of travel was north across the Indian Territory past Boggy Depot, thence northeast past Fort Gibson to the Kansas line near Baxter Springs.

Just how many cattle were started north from Texas in the spring and summer of 1866 is uncertain, but estimates made a few years later place the number at 260,000 head.<sup>7</sup> The drive proved on the whole disastrous in the extreme. Immuned as the Texans were to privation and hardship and accustomed as they were to handling cattle, few had at this time much experience in driving herds for long distances on the trail. Accounts left by some of these early drovers are little better than one long wail of trouble and misery. Rain, mud, swollen rivers, stampedes, hunger, and dissatisfied men are but a few of the difficulties of which they complained before Red River was reached. Beyond that stream there was added to all these miseries endless annoyance from Indians who demanded payment for grass consumed by the cattle, stampeded herds at night in order to collect money for helping gather them again, and in other ways proved themselves a constant source of worry and vexation.<sup>8</sup> The war had but recently closed and conditions along the border and in the Indian Territory were lawless and unsettled. White thieves and outlaws, together with pilfering Indians, stole horses, mules, and cattle and made it necessary to be watchful at all times.

6. See George C. Duffield's *Diary In Annals of Iowa*, Vol. XIV, No. 4, pp. 243-262 for an account of one of these drives.

7. McCoy, *Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade*, p. 23, or Nimmo, *Range and Ranch Cattle Traffic of the United States*, p. 28.

8. See Duffield's *Diary, Annals of Iowa*, Vol. XIV, No. 4.

When the drovers reached the Kansas or Missouri line they found themselves confronted by fresh difficulties. The settlers along the border of these states had suffered losses from Texas fever when some small herds had been driven up from the south just before the war, and were determined not to risk a repetition of such loss. Armed bands of farmers met the drovers at the border and warned them that they would not be permitted to proceed, at least until cold weather had come to lessen the danger.

The question was complicated by the mysterious and subtle nature of the disease, Texas fever, which the northerners professed to fear. We know now that it is a malady to which southern cattle are immune, but which they carry to northern cattle by means of the fever ticks which drop from their bodies and attach themselves to other animals. The Texans asserted that their cattle were perfectly healthy and that it was absurd that they could bring disease to others. The Kansans declared that absurd or not when Texas cattle came near their own animals the latter sickened and died, though they were forced to admit they did not understand why.

Yet numerous theories were evolved. It was declared that a shrub of Texas wounded the feet of the animals and made sores from which pus exuded to poison the grass. Others asserted that the breath of Texas cattle upon the grass brought disease to other animals, a kind of bovine halitosis which no scruples of delicacy prevented the Kansans mentioning in no uncertain terms. Some felt that cattle ticks might be responsible, but most people ridiculed such a theory.<sup>9</sup>

The northerners did not, however, concern themselves much with theories. It was enough that their cattle had died in the past and might die in the future. They were fixed in their determination to take no chances.

There were conflicts in some cases. Sharp conflicts in which the Texans far from home and the support of their friends and kindred were foredoomed to failure. Drovers were assaulted and beaten, some were killed and in a few cases small herds of animals were shot down and killed to the last animal.<sup>10</sup> Some turned back

9. See *Second Annual Report of Missouri State Board of Agriculture*, pp. 16-18, or *Prairie Farmer*, August 15, 1868, for statements as to these theories of the cause of Texas fever.

10. J. T. Botkin in *Topeka Daily Capitol*, Feb. 6, 1915. See also McCoy, *Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade*.

into the Indian Territory and moved westward until far beyond all agricultural settlements, then turned north and continued until opposite their destination in Iowa or St. Joseph. Some of these succeeded in some measure, but the long drive and heavy losses seldom left them with enough animals to make the venture profitable. Of the 260,000 head of cattle driven north in the summer of 1866 very few reached a profitable market.<sup>11</sup>

The Texas ranchmen were almost in despair, but the following year was to see a solution of their problem. At this time the Kansas Pacific Railway was building west up the valley of the Kaw and had reached the town of Salina. In the spring of 1867 Joseph G. McCoy, a prominent and wealthy cattle feeder of Illinois, came to Kansas City and journeying westward in this railway to Abilene in Dickenson County, decided to establish there a great cattle depot and shipping point.<sup>12</sup>

Abilene was farwest of all agricultural settlements. Here McCoy built a hotel and large shipping pens. He made with the railway a contract by which he was to have a share of the freight receipts from Texas cattle shipped to Kansas City and then sent a rider south to seek out herds on the trail and tell the owners to bring them to Abilene. From Abilene they might be shipped to Kansas City, and thence to Chicago or any other market that seemed desirable.

The advantages of this plan of reaching market were soon apparent. The route followed was far to the west of the old trail to Baxter Springs, and so avoided the wooded and mountainous areas of eastern Oklahoma as well as most of the Indians, and above all the hostile agricultural population of eastern Kansas. Late in the season as the project was started, 35,000 head of cattle were shipped from Abilene in 1867, while the following year or 1868, 75,000 head were brought up the trail. By 1869 the number had risen to 350,000 and in 1871 the best estimates indicate that no less than 600,000 head were driven from Texas to the cow towns of Kansas.<sup>13</sup>

Abilene was only temporarily the great Texas shipping point.

11. Nimmo, *Range and Ranch Cattle Business of the U. S.*, p. 28.

12. McCoy, *Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade*, p. 44.

13. The figures are from Nimmo, *Range and Ranch Cattle Business of the United States*, p. 28.

As the settlers began to come in to take homesteads near it, the cattle trade shifted farther west. New railroads were building and new cow towns sprang up. Among these were Newton, Ellsworth, Wichita, Caldwell, and especially Dodge City. Ogalalla, Nebraska, on the Union Pacific also became an important shipping point.

Most important of all the "cow towns" was Dodge City which for ten years was the greatest cattle market in the world.<sup>14</sup> To it flocked the gamblers, saloon keepers and lawless riff-raff of the underworld to meet and prey upon the Texas cowboys who arrived with their summer's wages in their pockets and a thirst accumulated during the months of toil on the hot and dusty trail.

Dodge City's first jail was a well fifteen feet deep, into which drunks were lowered and left until sober, and ready to leave town. Two grave yards were early established, "Boot Hill" on one side of town where were buried those men who died with their boots on, and another cemetery on the opposite side for those who died peacefully in bed. The latter cemetery remained small, but "Boot Hill" soon came to have a large and constantly growing population.<sup>15</sup>

The first trail drivers who took herds from Texas to the cow towns of Kansas, or the northern Indian agencies to fill beef contracts frequently knew little of the region to be traversed and had little to guide them. Yet no trail boss ever turned back. He merely set his wagon each night with the tongue pointing to the north star and the next morning pushed on with a grim determination to make his ten or fifteen miles that day. In a real sense he "hitched his wagon to a star," and did not shrink from difficulties and dangers.

In time, however, certain well defined trails were established. Prominent among these was the Western Trail crossing Red River at Doan's Store and extending north past Fort Supply to Dodge City. East of this was the famous Chisholm trail following roughly the line of the present Rock Island Railway across Oklahoma. Still farther east was the West Shawnee Trail and beyond that the East Shawnee trail that crossed into Kansas near Baxter Springs.<sup>16</sup>

During the two decades following the Civil War a vast stream

14. See Wright, *Dodge City, the Cowboy Capital*, for an account of this town and its importance as a cattle market.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Charles M. Harger, *Cattle Trails of the Prairies*, *Scribners Magazine*, June, 1892, p. 782.



of Texas cattle poured northward over these trails. The drive to the Kansas cow towns, moreover, frequently became but the first half of a drive from Texas to ranges on the northern plains. The possibilities of that region for ranching became apparent to many men very soon after the close of the war. Some men with small herds established themselves along the line of the newly constructed Union Pacific Railway. Others living near the overland trail established small herds through the purchase of lame and foot sore cattle from emigrants.<sup>17</sup> The development of mining camps in the Rocky mountains brought in men with cattle to furnish beef to the miners while the government made contracts with cattlemen to supply beef to the Indians on northern reservations and large herds were driven up the trail for that purpose. As the buffalo disappeared from the plains, however, leaving large areas of attractive pasture lands without animals to consume the grass, many men began to establish ranches in various parts of Wyoming, Colorado, Dakota and Montana, and these frequently purchased herds in the Kansas cow towns to stock their new ranges. The cattle industry was spreading with marvelous rapidity. It was found that the animals grew fatter and heavier on the Northern Plains than they did in Texas. As a result the mature animals from that state were shipped to market for slaughter, but tens of thousands of younger cattle were sold to northern buyers to stock ranges on the north plains. Eventually the drives came to consist largely of young steers for this purpose.<sup>18</sup> A division of labor was growing up. Texas, because of its low altitude and warm climate came to be regarded as a great breeding ground, while the high plains of the north became a great feeding and maturing ground. Cattle feeders from the corn belt began to purchase western steers for their feed pens. Profits grew and the ranch cattle business grew proportionately.

By the late 70's an interest in the range cattle of the United States had extended itself to Europe. In 1875 Timothy C. Eastman of New York began the shipment of dressed beef to England. Eastman had purchased outright the patent for the new "Bate Process" of refrigeration, by which beef was hung in refrigerator rooms and

17. Baillie-Grohman, *Camp Fires of the Rockies*, pp. 351-353.

18. A record made of 164 trail herds aggregating 384,147 head showed them to consist of yearlings, 124,967. Twos, 116,324; Threes, 66,078; Fours, 48,257; Dry Cows, 30,060; Cows with calves, 2,972. 10th *Census*, Vol. III, p. 21.

kept at a temperature of about 38 degrees Fahrenheit by means of cold air circulated by fans.<sup>19</sup>

The first shipment by Eastman was in October 1875. In that month he sent 36,000 pounds of beef to England to be followed by the same quantity in November, and by 134,000 pounds in December. By April, 1876, his shipments had risen to over a million pounds a month; by September to over two million, and in December to more than three million.<sup>20</sup> Other men in New York as well as some in Philadelphia, took up the business. In 1877 the shipments of dressed beef to Europe, mostly to England, was nearly fifty million pounds. In 1880 this had risen to eighty-four million and in 1881 to a hundred and six million pounds.<sup>21</sup> This trade was accompanied by the annual shipment of many thousand head of live cattle.

As the trade grew, markets for American beef were established in many British cities and as the supply grew in volume the English and Scotch cattle raisers became alarmed as they saw their business threatened by this competition of American meat.

In 1877 the *Scotsman*, a Scotch newspaper devoted largely to the agricultural interests of North Britain, sent to America James McDonald, a prominent writer on its staff, with instructions to investigate the live stock business of the United States, and make reports in the form of a series of articles for publication. These articles described the great ranches of the West, and told in glowing terms of the great profits of the industry which it was stated averaged in most cases as much as 25% annually.<sup>22</sup>

The interest of the British Government was aroused, and in 1880 it dispatched two commissioners to the United States to study and report upon the range cattle industry. The men chosen for this mission were Clare Read and Albert Pell, both members of Parliament. They spent several months in the West and reported that the profits of the range cattle industry ordinarily averaged about 33 1-3% a year.<sup>23</sup>

19. Report of the Commission of Agriculture, 1876, p. 314.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 320.

21. Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture, 1876, p. 320.

22. McDonald, *Food from the Far West*.

23. Read and Pell, *Reports From Commissioners and Inspectors*, 1880, Vol. XVIII, Serial 856.

Canny Scotch and British business men had already seen the possibilities of ranching in America as a field for investment. In 1870 the Scottish American Investment Company had been founded by W. J. Menzies. It financed a number of cattle companies in the Great Plains area including the Wyoming Cattle Ranch Company and Western Ranches Limited. Another great Scottish syndicate formed quite early was the Scottish American Mortgage Company which established the Prairie Cattle Company, one of the largest enterprises in the West.<sup>24</sup>

The articles of McDonald and the report of Read and Pell served to increase greatly the interest of Scotch and English investors in cattle raising in America, and during the next three or four years many companies were formed and a vast stream of Scotch and British capital was poured into the West to promote the range cattle industry. Besides the cattle companies previously mentioned Scottish capital founded numerous other ranch enterprises. Prominent among these were the Matador, the Hansford Land and Cattle Company, the Texas Land and Cattle Company, The Swan Land and Cattle Company, and numerous others.<sup>25</sup>

By 1882 it was asserted that not less than thirty million dollars of English and Scotch capital had been invested in ranching on the western plains.<sup>26</sup> Not a few of the investors came over to give their personal attention to the business, and with them came others from the continent of Europe. Prominent among the latter were the Marquis de Mores, a French nobleman, and Baron von Richthofen, ancestor of the famous German ace. De Mores had married a New York girl and established with his father-in-law's money a ranch near the border of Montana and Dakota where he built and named for his wife the town of Medora. Among the English and the Scotch were the Adairs, Murdo McKenzie, John Clay and a host of others.

Along with the foreigners there came to the western plains an ever increasing swarm of enterprising young men from the eastern part of the United States. Young college men among whom

24. See John Clay, *My Life On the Range, or Richthofen, Cattle Ranching On the Plains of Northh America*, for an account of these enterprises.

25. Richthofen, *Cattle Ranching On the Plains of North America*, p. 55.

26. *Report of Wyoming Stock Growers Association, 1882*, p. 19.

Theodore Roosevelt may be mentioned as a conspicuous example, hastened west to engage in the cattle business.<sup>27</sup>

An enthusiasm for ranching amounting almost to a craze swept over the country. United States senators, representatives, and judges were financially interested in range cattle, as were bankers, lawyers and manufacturers. A machinery was built up for financing the business. Great cattle exchange banks and loan companies were established. The great stream of Texas cattle flowed steadily northward in spite of quarantine regulations and fluctuations in prices, and spread itself over the northern plains until the most remote ranges had been occupied. By the middle 80's the cattle business had reached its zenith and the vast cow country reached from the Rio Grande to the Canadian border, and from the western edge of agricultural settlements to the Rocky Mountains and far beyond.

So came into existence the "cow country." A pastoral empire greater than any of its kind the world had ever seen, on whose broad plains grazed millions of cattle cared for by men whose lives and deeds will be heralded in song and story so long as the American nation shall endure.

Throughout the whole vast region conditions of life and work were somewhat similar, yet the industry rose so rapidly and suffered such a speedy decline that it never became entirely standardized. As a result generalizations are always difficult and are never more than approximately correct. An extremely technical business that was little understood except by those actually engaged in it, myths and misunderstandings with respect to ranching have been all too common.

Democratic as were the men of the cow country, that region nevertheless presented the picture of a curious kind of "American feudalism," in many ways not unlike that of medieval Europe. The great ranchman built his ranch house or headquarters which might be compared to the baronial castle, his cattle roamed over an area larger than that of many a principality of Europe; his bold riders were as numerous as were the men at arms of many a petty German princeling. The brand of X I T, the spur, frying pan,

27. See Herman Hagerdorn, *Roosevelt In the Bad Lands*, for an account of Roosevelt's ranching operations.



or J. A. were more widely known perhaps than were the bleeding heart of the Douglas, the clenched hand and dagger of the Kilpatricks, or the white lion of the Howards. The raids of Indians, or white cattle thieves, strife with fence cutters or episodes like the "Lincoln county war," furnished quite as much excitement as did the forays of the moss troopers along the Scottish border, the live stock associations bore some resemblance to the federations entered into by groups of old world nobles, and while the tilt or tournament did not exist, the rodeo or roping contest furnished a very fair substitute.

Yet with all of these similarities to feudal Europe, there were striking differences. There was little of show, formality or ceremony and complete democracy was the universal rule. Cattle baron, cowpuncher, cook and horse wrangler rode, ate, worked and played together upon terms of absolute equality. Circumstances had made one the boss and the other the "hand" today, but tomorrow or next month or next year the situation might be reversed.

Little has been written about the great leaders of the cow country and yet their influence upon American history has been enormous. They were men of vision and they had the energy and strength of purpose to be willing to endure all manner of privations and dangers in order to make their dreams come true.

As for the cowboy, that most picturesque figure among all the children of the Great West, he has received better, or at least more voluminous treatment at the hands of writers. Yet it must be admitted that much which has been written about the cowboy is untrue. He is sometimes pictured as a sort of modern Sir Galahad, a knight without stain and a champion without reproach, who rode about slaying villains and rescuing damsels in distress. By others he is described as a rough, wild, and lawless creature, crude and uncouth in speech and manner. Both views are equally distorted and incorrect. The cowboy was much like Kipling's "Tommy" who said:

"We ain't no them red 'eroes  
And we ain't no black guards, too,  
But single men in barracks  
Most uncommonly like you."

"Just folks," remarked an old cowboy. "Just common ever day bow-legged humans! That's cowpunchers."

The description fits. The cowboy was after all not unlike any other young man who lived in the open, an active and at times a somewhat hard and adventurous life. For while his work sometimes brought long periods of comparative ease and leisure, it also brought periods of terrific exertion, of hardship and privation, of exposure to cold and rain and the "bright face of danger." Such being the case he learned to take life as it came. Complaints could not change conditions, so why complain? Unconsciously he became a philosopher. He ate thankfully the flaky sour dough biscuit, and juicy beef steak in time of plenty, and tightened his belt with a grin in time of famine.

Happy-go-lucky and full of the joy of living, he sang and whistled at his work and play whether it was a bright morning in spring when he cantered over the green flower spangled prairies to make a friendly visit, or a cold, rainy November night when he must crawl from between his wet blankets at the glad hour of two a. m. and circle slowly around a restless herd until daylight.

Much has been written about cowboy songs, and they were indeed of infinite variety. There was the plaintive, mournful song so commonly regarded as typical like "Bury me not on the lone prairie," and there was the light lilting one as:

"Twas in the fall of '71  
I thought I'd see how cowpunchin' was done,  
The boss said cowpunchin' was only fun  
There wasn't a bit of work to be done  
All you had to do was just to ride  
And go a-drifting with the tide  
The son-of-a-gun, Oh, how he lied  
In seventy one!"

Then there were the songs in which love formed the theme as: "Remember the Red River valley and the Cowboy that's loved

you so true," and frequently a deeply religious note crept in as in this:

"Last night as I lay on the prairie  
Looking up at the stars in the sky  
I wondered if ever a cowboy  
Could go to that sweet bye and bye.  
I wondered if ever a cowboy  
Could go to that sweet bye and bye."

"Someday there will be a grand roundup  
Where cowboys like cattle will stand  
To be cut out by the riders of Judgment  
Who are posted and know every brand.  
To be cut out by the riders of Judgment  
Who are posted and know every brand."

"The road that leads down to perdition  
Is posted and blazed all the way  
But the pathway that leads up to Heaven  
Is narrow and dim so they say."

"Whose fault is it then that so many  
Go out on that wide range and fail  
Who might have honor and plenty  
Had they known of that dim, narrow trail."<sup>28</sup>

Such songs are folk lore, and are typically American. They reveal the very heart and soul of the cowboy. He was light hearted and frivolous at times, and he was often lonely. His reverence for pure womanhood is too well known to require comment. He was religious, too, after a fashion and according to his own way. He lived in the open air in God's big out of doors. He had seen men die with their boots on in most unpleasant fashion, and the thought of death and the world beyond grows strongly familiar when one lives close to it for so many years. This deeply religious nature is expressed in a little poem written by a Texas cowpuncher, which has in it the majesty and beauty of real poetry:

"Oh Lord, I never lived where churches grow  
I like Creation better as it stood

28. John A. Lomax of Texas, has done a great work for the preservation of cowboy folk lore. His two volumes, *Cowboy Songs*, and *Songs of the Ranch and Cattle Trail*, are well known.

That day you finished it so long ago  
 Then looked upon your work and called it good.  
 I know that others find You in the light  
 That's sifted down through tinted window panes,  
 And yet I seem to feel you near to-night  
 In the dim, quiet starlight of the Plains."

The words of but few cowboy rhymes rise to such heights of poetic grandeur as this. Many of them deal with the life and work of the rough riders. Some men formulated tunes as well as words; they improvised, they sang parodies on the then popular songs of the day. Carrying still further the comparison to feudal Europe it may be noted that some men with good voices and a great repertoire of songs became almost famous throughout large sections of the cow country. They were welcomed gladly at every camp and round up wagon because of their ability as entertainers. They were minnesingers of the range, troubadours, wandering minstrels, and their songs were of wide variety. Many were of the type just described; some were ballads dealing with certain individuals that had lived beyond the law, but who had possessed personal qualities much admired by some of these wild riders of the prairies:

"Jesse left a wife  
 To mourn all her life  
 Three children they were brave  
 But a dirty little coward  
 Shot Mr. Howard  
 And laid Jesse James in his grave."

Another almost as well known dealt with the exploits of Sam Bass:

"Sam Bass was born in Indiana  
 It was his native home  
 And at the age of seventeen  
 Young Sam began to roam  
 He first came out to Texas  
 A ranger for to be  
 A kinder hearted fellow  
 You seldom ever see."

Outlaws as they were the heroes of these songs, had many

admirers. Legends not unlike those that cluster about the names of Robin Hood, Rob Roy, and Captain Kidd were associated with them.

Picturesque as was the life of the cow country of the middle eighties, it was doomed to a speedy passing. Its rise had been spectacular but its decline was hardly less spectacular, and certainly was much more tragic. The year of 1885 is the high water mark of the business. During the summer of that year President Cleveland issued a proclamation ordering all cattle to be removed within forty days from the lands of the Cheyenne-Arapaho Indians in what is now Oklahoma.<sup>29</sup> These 210,000 head from this great reservation were thrown upon already over-stocked ranges nearby and the following winter saw heavy losses.<sup>30</sup>

Prices were still high in the spring, however, and the drive north out of Texas was heavy. Tens of thousands of head were moved up the trail and spread out in the most reckless fashion imaginable over the already heavily stocked ranges of Wyoming, Montana and Dakota.

Winter came early and laid his icy hand upon the northern prairies. A terrific blizzard bringing sleet and snow came roaring out of the north and the thermometer went down as though it would never stop. The cattle drifted before the bitter winds into ravines and coulees where they died by thousands. Heavy snows fell and intense cold continued throughout the winter. Hunger maddened cattle gathered along the little streams, and gnawed the bark from the willows as high as they could reach before they at last gave up the struggle, and lay down to die.<sup>31</sup>

Spring came to find every cattle man on the northern plains flat broke. Swan, Sturgis, Kohrs, Granville Stuart, Dickey Brothers, Worshams, the Continental Cattle Company, and a host of others either failed or were in the shakiest possible condition. Theodore Roosevelt quit the cattle business leaving his range thickly strewn with bones.<sup>32</sup>

No such winter had ever before been known in the history of

29. Proclamation of July 23, 1885. 24 Stats. p. 1023.

30. See Wright, *Dodge City, the Cowboy Capital*, p. 313.

31. See John Clay, *My Life On the Range*, pp. 177-178, for an account of the losses of the tragic winter.

32. *Ibid.*

the cow country. Charlie Russel, the cowboy artist, was in charge of a herd of five thousand head belonging to a group of eastern capitalists. Toward spring his employers wrote him a letter asking how the cattle were doing. Russell's painting which he sent as a reply has become famous. It is a picture of a gaunt and lonely old cow in the midst of great snow drifts, standing with drooping head like a bovine peri at the gate of Paradise, and in the corner Russell had written the legend, "The Last of Five Thousand."

Most of the northern ranchmen never recovered from the effects of that frightful winter. Losses of fifty and sixty per cent were common. Eighty and ninety were hardly exceptional. Many lenders who had been financing the industry were panic stricken. In a desperate attempt to pay interest and to liquidate a part of their loans ranchmen poured a stream of lean and unmerchantable cattle into the markets. Prices went down until cattle would hardly be accepted as a gift, especially since the summer of 1887 was very dry and crops throughout the corn belt almost a failure.<sup>33</sup> There was no demand for feeders and the range cattle were too thin for slaughter. A great industry was prostrate and recovery was slow and uncertain.

As a matter of fact the range cattle business never again rose to the heights it had attained in the middle eighties. Its glory had departed forever. The cow country was changing. Trunk lines of railroads heading out from the great markets had penetrated Texas making it possible to ship cattle to market by rail. The great drives began to lessen in volume. A realization that the northern ranges had been over stocked, the competition of the railroads, the stringent quarantine laws of Kansas, and the general depression of the industry all served to check the northern drive.

Pioneer settlers in prairie schooners were moreover drifting westward in large numbers and taking up homesteads in the range cattle area. Their little dugouts and sod houses appeared much like almost over night on the more fertile lands in various parts of the cow country. Thus Indian lands of western Oklahoma were opened to settlement and a great area changed from grazing to crop growing.

33. *Breeder's Gazette*, September 15, 1887, p. 434. In 1882 good Texas cows brought \$5.50 a hundred and above. In 1887 they sold at \$1.90 to \$2.50 and could scarcely be marketed at any price. *Ibid.* September 29, 1887, p. 514.

Brief periods of prosperity came again to the ranching industry at times, but the magnitude of the earlier operations steadily declined. Some of the big ranches began to sub-divide their holdings and sell out lands in tracts to suit the purchaser. Fenced pastures, winter feeding and small scale production became the rule.

The range was shrinking, cattle disappeared from many regions, and farmers armed with hoe and spade sprang up on all sides as though an unseen hand had planted dragon's teeth on every hill and in every valley. Steadily the ranchmen were forced out of the agricultural lands and pushed back into the barren deserts, the hills and mountains, or onto forest reserves and Indian reservations. Here the business still exists though large scale operations are about gone, and the life at its best or worst, depending upon the view point, is only a faded and washed out copy of the life of the earlier days.

The men who once rode the boundless ranges of the Great Plains, or who followed the long herds up the dusty trail are with few exceptions no more. Gone with the things of long ago they have to quote their own language, "passed up the dim, narrow trail to that new range which never fails, and where quarantine regulations do not exist."<sup>34</sup> Gone it is true, but I trust never to be forgotten. For if it is true that,

"You may break, you may shatter  
The vase if you will  
But the scent of the rose  
Will cling to it still."

So it is also true that you may enclose the green prairies and plow up the sweet wild flowers, you may build towns and cities on sites once occupied by the cowboy's dugout and branding pen, but always something of the fragrance of the romance of those early days will cling to the region which the bold range riders once called their own, to remind us of those picturesque days now gone forever.

The period of the range cattle industry constitutes in a sense

34. Minutes of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raiser's Association.

the heroic age of the great West. Those of us who know something of it at first hand look back upon its passing with a tinge of regret. Yet we realize that society is never static, never still. The cowboy has given place to the settler, the city builder, the manufacturer, the merchant, the scholar. The tale of their rise in the West is another story, but there, too, lies romance.



## GRASS FIRES OF THE SOUTHERN PLAINS

J. EVETTS HALEY

Essential to almost every form of animal life of the Great Plains forty years ago were the native grasses, buffalo, mesquite, grama, blue stem, and a few other varieties. At that time few weeds appeared upon the extreme southern portion of the Great Plains—the Llano Estacado—to offer supplemental forage, no feed crops were available, and except for a very scant growth along the breaks, there was no brush for browsing. Grass alone, with scattering water, accounted for the immense herds of buffalo, antelope, and mustangs of the prairies. Grass was the reliance of the cowman who came to the Plains to replace these wilderness animals with longhorned cattle almost as wild. Whether the range he appropriated to his use became destitute of water or grass, the result was the same, the time of its arrival the only difference. Cattle die quickly without water; they die slowly without grass. Some herbivorous animals live without evident water supply. None lives without forage. During drouths, upon the exhaustion of the water holes, the longhorns of South Texas used to live for weeks upon prickly pear. The great mule deer of Sonora may never drink, but live by eating the juicy fruits of the viznaga and the cholla. But upon the Plains no watery cactus grew as food for thirsty animals and more remarkable was the abundance of animal life that required little water. Prairie dogs thrive without it; jack rabbits do well, though drink heartily when water is available; and antelopes sometimes live for months upon nothing but the grass of the high plains.

Strangely enough upon first sight, consideration of the settlement of the entire western range country shows that grass has been more important than water. Where grass is good, men have produced water—produced it through wells and windmills, surface tanks, dams, and reservoirs. Practically every section of good grass land of the Southwest is in use. Much other land is still unappropriated to any use. Since the grass in any country is of such great importance to pastoral life, and since it was the sole reliance of the animal life of the Plains until the last few years, its preservation was of the utmost importance.

Before the days of barbed wire fences cowmen moved west in the face of Indian dangers to have virgin grass; cowboys rode line upon that grass, when other cowmen came to help preserve it; and then men leased, bought, and fenced grass that it might be theirs alone, safe-guarded from trailing cattle and over-grazing of a country too well filled with herds. Ever since men have been riding in the dust of cattle, they have worked for, fought over, and died for grass. Free grass brought trouble, but the grass of the frontier could have been no other way than free. Only with the settlement of the country free range passed and grass came to have monetary value.

When drouths came, the only phenomenon with which man could not cope in his fight for grass, he tried hard to break the caprices of nature and produce precipitation. Professor James P. Espy, nearly a hundred years ago, claimed that rain "could be produced artificially by heating the atmosphere with long-continued fires."<sup>1</sup> Not over fifteen years ago tons of dynamite were being exploded in portions of the Southwest in an effort to produce rain. In my own memory of the great drouth of a little over a decade ago, I recall that the Methodists of West Texas were praying for rain. Perhaps the faith of all was vindicated. Rains came, after everybody was bankrupt. But all this endeavor was occasioned because of great desire for grass. Laying aside the natural phenomena upon which its growth is dependent, the greatest struggle cowmen of broad prairie and plain country have had has been the protection of grass from sweeping fires.

Modern literary tendencies have added to current superstitions in regard to prairie fires, have exaggerated their dangers, have misinterpreted their causes and results, and have given little conception of what a grass fire really is.

Undoubtedly since men began traversing the grass-grown Plains, carrying fire or its implements with them, there have been grass fires. For the Plains Indians such fires have been producers of rain, an offensive weapon of war, and a defensive measure. Prairie fires terrorized many early western explorers, were a curse to the Santa Fe traders, the bane of many cowmen. Extensive fires made great scopes of country uninhabitable for animals and some-

1. Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, XX, 116-117.

times impassable for men who depended upon horse flesh. But of all western men, those who lived from the grass of the Plains suffered greatest from the ravages of fire. Perhaps nowhere were their troubles worse than upon the Staked Plains of Texas.

Grass fires were set in many ways. Indians deliberately set the grass upon occasion. In the day of early western exploration and the Santa Fe Trail, carelessness accounted for loss of much grass. Trail outfits, and cowboys riding the range, often committed an act of carelessness and allowed a fire to start. Lightning set many fires, though sometimes the rains that accompanied it extinguished them. Sometimes matches dropped in the grass were pecked at by birds and ignited to start a conflagration. Besides these causes, maliciousness accounts for many more fires.

Indians effectively used prairie fires in their wars. Sometimes they concentrated game, burned off their enemies ranges, or invoked the gods of rain by burning grass. The Comanches often resorted to the latter worship in times of need. Dot Babb captive of the tribe for several years, recalls seeing them burn big stretches of the Panhandle country north of the Canadian in 1866 and 1867. But in the Panhandle the Indians did not use fire to concentrate game, as game was everywhere.<sup>2</sup>

During March, 1854, Captain John Pope, upon a reconnaissance of a southern route for the first Pacific railroad, camped just above the junction of the Delaware and the Pecos rivers in southeastern New Mexico. There he observed how Indians placed grass fires to offensive use. On March 9, he wrote:

“This day we . . . became aware of the vicinity of the Indians. About sundown we perceived the prairie on fire about two miles from camp, up the river; the wind blowing from the northeast, and directly towards us. As the grass and weeds were dry, and the wind strong, the flames rushed onward with great rapidity. Instant and prompt measures were taken against this appalling danger. The prairie was fired round the camp from the river to the creek. We were thus in a triangle, the *Pecos* and *Delaware* being the sides—the belt of the Prairie we had

2. T. A. Babb to J. Evetts Haley, April 8, 1929.

burned, the base . . . . This was an act of the Indians, as we could clearly see the plain fired in many different directions at the same time. The fire swept on round the camp, and crossing the creek some hundred yards above us, and seizing the dry grass on the right bank, illuminated the whole plain during the night. Happily, our energetic proceedings defeated the designs of the Apaches. On the the first intimation of danger, the animals and the stock were driven into camp—the former tied to the wagons, the latter well guarded.<sup>3</sup>

In 1841 the Texan-Santa Fe Expedition, while crossing the Panhandle, carelessly let out a fire which came near resulting disastrously for the entire party. George Wilkins Kendall, the faithful chronicler of that expedition of woe, wrote vividly of what happened. At the time of the outbreak of the fire, the wagons of the expedition were camped upon the rim of a Panhandle canyon, while a party of the men, Kendall among them, had gone down into the canyon after water. Upon hearing a loud report from the direction of their camp those in the canyon, fearing an Indian attack, hurried back toward camp. Kendall described what had happened.

As we neared the camping-ground it became evident that the prairie was on fire in all directions. When within a mile of the steep bluff, which cut off the prairie above the valley, the bright flames were seen flashing among the dry cedars, and a dense black smoke, rising above all, gave a painful sublimity to the scene . . . . Before we could reach the base of the high and rugged bluff the flames were dashing down its sides with frightful rapidity, leaping and flashing across the gullies and around the hideous cliffs, and roaring in the deep, yawning chasms with the wild and appalling noise of a tornado. As the flames would strike the dry tops of the cedars, reports, resembling those of a musket, would be heard; a strange accompaniment to the wild roar of the devouring element.

If the scene had been grand previous to the going down of the sun, its magnificence was increased tenfold as night

3. John Pope, "Report of Exploration of Route for the Pacific Railway, 1854," (War Department), 61.

in vain attempted to throw its dark mantle over the earth. The light from . . . miles and miles, of inflammable and blazing cedars, illuminated earth and sky with a radiance even more lustrous and dazzling than that of the noon-day sun. Ever and anon, as one of our comrades would approach the brow of the high bluff above us, he appeared not like an inhabitant of this earth. A lurid and most unnatural glow, reflected upon his countenance from the valley of burning cedars, seemed to render still more haggard and toilsome his burned and blackened features.<sup>4</sup>

As in the case of the Texan-Santa Fe Expedition, most grass fires were and are the result of carelessness. Inexperienced cooks along the Santa Fe Trail let out many fires. Josiah Gregg, noted historian of the Santa Fe Trade, tells how his cook let out a fire in western Oklahoma. In 1839 Gregg, taking advantage of an early start upon the trail from Fort Smith, Arkansas, made possible by earlier grass, camped one evening in what is now western Oklahoma. One of the cooks kindled his fire upon the tall grass of the valley in which they stopped, and it spread at once (Gregg said) with wonderful rapidity, and a brisk wind, springing up at the time, the flames were carried over the valley, in spite of every effort we could make to check them. Fortunately for us, the fire had broken out to the leeward of our wagons, and therefore occasioned us no damage; but the accident itself was a forcible illustration of the danger that might be incurred by pitching camp in the midst of dry grass, and the advantages that might be taken by hostile savages in such a locality.<sup>5</sup>

While observing that the dangers from fires are often exaggerated, Gregg wrote that "the worst evil to be apprehended with those bound for Santa Fe is from the explosion of gunpowder, as a keg or two of twenty-five pounds each, is usually to be found in every wagon."<sup>6</sup>

Trail outfits, composed of men experienced in range lore,

4. George Wilkins Kendall, *The Texan Santa Fe Expedition*, (New York, 1844) 177-182.

5. *Thaites*, XX, 116.

6. *Ibid.*, 205-206.

sometimes unavoidably, sometimes carelessly, let their camp fires set the grass.

Other causes contributed to many fires. When barbed wire was enclosing most of the ranges of Texas in the early eighties, and the struggle for free grass was at its bitter height, grass was burned in retaliation for alleged grievances held against the fence men. In 1884 Texas finally passed a law making the burning of grass a felony.<sup>7</sup> But most grass burning offenses upon Texas ranges were matters for settlement outside court.

When Ira Aten, ex-Texas Ranger, was brought to the Excarbada Division of the XIT Ranch to fight the cattle rustlers of eastern New Mexico and the western Panhandle, he put into effect a vigorous system of frontier law. Men rode the western XIT fence line, which followed the New Mexico boundary, with Winchesters upon their saddles and sixshooters upon their belts, taking a shot at anyone seen upon the fence without evident good business. Texas men told Aten that the thieves would burn him out if he did not quit fighting them too viciously.

I told them that I could not help it if they did (said Aten), but if I caught one doing it, I was going to kill him if it was the last thing I did.

One time in the winter of '96 I saw a fire start about the center of the ranch, and I made for it. It was about thirty miles from the Excarbada. The instructions were for everybody to leave what he was doing when a fire started and go to it. We fought this fire all that night. We rested at the Trujillo camp and then went across to Endee ten miles from there, kind of looking for whoever set the fire. As we came back between sundown and night, I saw two men ride off into a little "draw." I did not pay much attention to them, as I thought they were riders looking for cattle. I rode on a little ways, and then saw the fire boil up from the Trujillo Bull Pasture, where these two men had gone. We fought that fire all that night and got in to the ranch about morning. Some of the boys had seen and recognized two men in the pasture.

7. Gammel's, *Laws of Texas*, IX, 598.

I strapped on my gun and said to myself, "right here is where Brown gets killed." The rustlers knew that the Company would fire me if they could keep me burned out, and I knew that I had to stop the devilment if I held my job, and I made up my mind to kill this man. He went armed all the time and I knew there was a chance of him getting me. But that is the way you want a man if you are going to kill him—you want him armed. I set out after him. His friends suspected what I was going to do, so Brown left and went to Cripple Creek, Colorado, and did not come back for five years.<sup>8</sup>

Aten had moved to California, a thousand miles away, before Brown returned to the Panhandle. "That," said Aten, "was the last time my range was set afire maliciously."<sup>9</sup>

As they rode the range the cowboys sometimes dropped a match or a cigarette stub to start a fire. The XIT Ranch lost so much grass that some of its foremen ordered their cowboys to smoke only when they were around mills or other waterings, where all the grass had been eaten and tramped away. Cowboys did not observe this rule faithfully, but it caused them to be more careful. Ira Aten, working upon the theory that for every fire there was a cause, says that nine times out of ten he could trail a fire to the man who set it.<sup>10</sup>

When the grass had cured and had become dry during the winter there was danger of fires. When the drouths came and dried the grass prematurely, there was danger during the summer, spring, or until the country began to "green up." Prairie fires, once started before a brisk wind, traveled rapidly, spread over much country, and were extremely difficult to check. The most dangerous period was during the fall and winter, but what is said to have been the most destructive prairie fire to have swept the South Plains came in the month of June, 1879. It originated on the Z-L Ranch in Crosby County, where there was considerable "shinery." Hundreds of wild hogs ranged this dwarf oak country, prolific and hardy upon the acorns that grew there. Hank Smith, the first settler in the South Plains region, described this fire and the hogs.

8. Ira Aten to J. Evetts Haley, February 26, 1928.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

One day a cowboy decided he would set fire to the shineries and run them out. He did it all right, but it is to be hoped that no one else will ever try to drive wild hogs out of a shinary country with fire. The fire got away and started on a wild rampage in a northeasterly direction. No one has ever learned for certain which way the hogs went. The fire swept the country now occupied by Crosbyton, Emma, Ralls, Lorenzo, and spreading as it went sped across the Blanco (canyon) moving before a terrific wind from the southwest. At that time there was practically no cattle in the country, and few people to care where the fire went or what it did. Crossing the Blanco on it went into the Quitaque, Boggy Creek, North and South Pease river and Tule Canyon country, while before it fled and swarmed countless thousands of antelope, turkeys, hundreds of deer and a sprinkling of cattle and horses. The fire swept thousands of square miles of country to the south and southwest, north and northeast of Mount Blanco. All through the country at that time, especially along the streams, were hundreds of magnificent groves of fine timber, particularly cottonwood and hackberry . . . This fire killed the timber and in effect literally wiped it out.<sup>11</sup>

Settlement of the Plains country with farmers was well under way when the next largest fire of that section dealt perhaps the heaviest destruction in the history of the country. This fire started about the first of November, 1898, was supposed to have resulted from somebody's throwing a lighted cigar into high, dry grass. Starting about noon near Eagle Springs, in Hale County, it moved east before a very high wind. Before night a change of the wind to the north switched the course of the fire and it swept south. Thus the fire burned south over a course just as long as the distance it had travelled from west to east, burned a great scope of country embracing more than four counties in area, and burned itself out only when it struck the Yellow House Canyon.

All other sections of the southern Plains suffered losses. Fires destroyed much of the XIT range from year to year. The north

11. *The Crosbyton Review*, February 29, 1912.



end of that ranch, lying against the Panhandle of Oklahoma, was stocked during the summer of 1885 with 22,000 cattle. During the fall a fire broke out in the Arkansas River country of western Kansas, swept south before strong winds, jumped the Cimarron River near the 101 Ranch, and roared south through No Man's Land toward Texas. The Cimarron cowboys fought the fire along its sides. With a chuck wagon they worked into Texas but did not extinguish the fire until after it had burned most of the Beaver Country. They always fought hardest during the very early morning hours, while dew was falling. During the middle of the day the fire burned more rapidly, and cowboys rested a little and killed more beeves for drags. Finally this fire broke across into the North Plains of Texas and swept south toward the Canadian.<sup>12</sup>

It crossed into the Panhandle just west of Buffalo Springs, the northern division of the Capitol Freehold Land and Investment Company, Limited. Mac Huffman, cowboy at the ranch, described attempts to save their grass.

George Collins was the range boss. He was badly excited when he saw the fire coming and sent riders out to bring in men. We left the ranch and went eighteen or twenty miles to a point a little south of where Texline is now. We rode up to the fire at night. It was burning through the blue stem grass, three feet or more high in the Perico Draw. The flames looked like they were going sixty feet high. Collins told us to look out for cow paths or some other advantage to fight the fire along. We fought the fire along its east side all that night and went in to Buffalo Springs about ten o'clock the next day. After dinner we hooked up a wagon and Hugh Perry drove it full of men farther north to the Corrumpa and we fought the remainder of the day and all that night. But all the grass we saved was about two miles square in the Dallam County Pasture. We lost all of the Middlewater Country as the fire did not stop until it got into the Canadian Breaks.<sup>13</sup>

The XIT alone must have lost near a million acres of grass

12. Olive K. Dixon, *The Life of Billy Dixon*, 137.

13. M. Huffman to J. E. H., November 30, 1927.

in this one fire. Collins threw 4,000 head of his cattle across the line into New Mexico to drift far and wide before the severe blizzards of the winter that followed. He threw the remaining 18,000 head south to the unburned country along the Canadian. By the next summer losses had depleted the original herd of 22,000 to 16,813 head.<sup>14</sup>

Frank Yearwood and his Spring Lake cowboys fought a prairie fire upon that division of the XIT in 1887 until a snowstorm put it out. Lightning weirdly played over the Plains during the storm. A "sort of a preacher" in the crowd prayed and sang during intervals of rest, while the boys "cussed" and swore loudly that they would "rather be anybody's yellow dog in an ash hopper," than a waddie out working for the Syndicate at \$30 a month." This fire traveled sixteen and one-half miles in about two hours. Finally it struck the sage grass in the sand country of the western Panhandle, flames shot high into the air, where the wind caught their tips and hurled them back to the ground to set fire to the grass as much as sixteen feet ahead of the burning portions. Finally the snow stopped the fire. The weather was bitter cold and the cowboys, completely lost, attempted to re-set the fire to keep from freezing to death, but the snowstorm was too heavy.<sup>15</sup>

One of the worst prairie fires of the western Panhandle broke out in the LFD country of New Mexico late in November, 1894. A west wind sent it racing toward the Spring Lake ranges. For a week before it reached the state line, as diverse winds slowed its progress, smoke hung over the Texas plains like the heavy haze of Indian Summer. Every night Syndicate cowboys saw its red glow rise and fall like the distant aurora of the northern lights. Checked here and there by fighting cowboys, it broke forth afresh and crossed into the Syndicate range where the Running Water "Draw" is cut by the New Mexico line to the south of Farwell, Texas. Pres. Abbott, a Spring Lake cowboy, was hauling a load of pipe to a well-driller's camp on Frio "Draw" when the advance tongues of flame came through, striking the Syndicate on a twenty-mile front. He turned one of the mules he was driving loose, jumped upon the other bareback, and rode into the Running Water Camp. He

14. J. Evetts Haley, *The XIT Ranch of Texas*, 86.

15. J. Frank Yearwood to J. E. H., December 9, 1927.

met Fred Finnicum, the camp man, coming in from his ride, and together they fought the fire all night. About daylight they met the riders from Blackwater and Red Tower Camps. After getting a bite to eat, they rode down Running Water "Draw" and fought fire along the Blackwater Pasture fence in an attempt to save the grass there. Cattle, in passing back and forth along the fence, had beaten out "cow trails" running east and west. The fire was burning from west to east, but fires spread to either side, ever widening the path of flame. Using these cow trails as fire guards, the cowboys fought to prevent the fire from spreading south.

Mac Huffman, then foreman at Spring Lake, with two of his "windmillers" joined the original four about the middle of the afternoon. By evening they had worked eastward almost to Red Tower, and the camp man went in, cooked, and brought out to the others some very bad biscuits and bacon. A brisk wind blew up and for a time no attempt was made to fight the advancing flames. Eleven men were fighting the fire along its southern edge when it crossed the east line of the Syndicate's range. They turned and rode back to Red Tower, where Jack Bradford had one "hot roll" made up of a tarp and three "suggans." At one o'clock in the morning the eleven men spread these "suggans" and their saddle blankets upon the floor of the camp, and had their first sleep in forty-two hours.

About three o'clock someone got up and looked out to the west. The wind had changed to the north and the fire had broken across into the Blackwater pasture behind them and was burning south. After a little coffee, bacon, and bread they set out again. They fought for the remainder of the night, all day, and until two o'clock next morning. Three of the boys dropped into Spring Lake for a little sleep and the others stayed with the fire. At daylight these three returned to the blistering work. The fire reached the Sand Hill Country in southern Lamb County that day, and about four o'clock in the afternoon was extinguished. The first two cowboys who began fighting the fire had been working almost continuously for three nights and almost four days. The first night they did not lie down, the second they slept two hours, and the third three. Rawhide could not have been tougher.

All rode to Spring Lake the fourth night and went to bed to

sleep until early daylight. Mac Huffman "rustled" them out and sent cowboys in every direction to scout out the country for dead cattle and to see if there was any unburned grass. Along Blackwater "Draw" smoking ash heaps showed where haystacks had been, and mile after mile of black land stretched to the north and to the south with not a spear of grass left. Cattle had drifted to the waterings, where the grass was tramped away, and very few had been burned to death.

That afternoon sweating horses brought riders into Spring Lake from every direction at a "long lope." Their reports showed that Syndicate land almost twenty by sixty miles, from the Canadian breaks to the Sand Hills, had been burned clean of grass. The next morning Joe Anderson, mounted upon a gray horse called Dash, rode out of the corral and before the short fall of day was done rode into Amarillo, a distance of eighty-five miles, to report to Manager Boyce. Boyce was in Ft. Worth when the fire started. His son, Al Boyce, had seen it and wired him. He came in on the train soon after Anderson reached Amarillo. Anderson met the train, reported, and Boyce went on to Channing that night. Montgomery, foreman of the Ojo Bravo, and some of his cowboys were giving all their attention to the mazes of the Old Virginia reel at a town dance. Boyce went to the dance and told Montgomery to forget the Old Dominion, take his outfit, and strike south to meet the cattle which would be heading north from Spring Lake. As the evening stars swung past the meridian, the outfit, with unfulfilled social obligations, rode south toward Torrey's Peak on the Canadian.

Boyce sent instructions back to Spring Lake by Anderson for all cattle to be placed upon the trail for the Canadian. There was dire necessity for hurry. With every available man in the saddle and the "windmiller" as cook, the wagon left Spring Lake upon the first morning of December. The first roundup was thrown together on Frio "Draw," seven miles east of the site of Friona Town. Not counting calves, 4,300 head of cattle were counted out to Montgomery. He swung his wagon around and without loss of time was upon the trail for the unburned breaks, declaring he would not stop his outfit that night nor the next day until he had the herd upon water.

Huffman rounded up the west half of the Capitol pasture the

next day and placed 4,500 head "above calves" upon the trail. In spite of "played out" horses and a snowstorm to face, he placed this big herd, far too big for easy driving, upon the Canadian at the mouth of Skunk Arroyo with the loss of but fifteen calves which broke back from the herd, and which the horses were too weak to "head off."<sup>16</sup>

Seldom did prairie fires result in loss of life. Experienced western men worked their way to one side of the advance path of flame, the lead fire, outran it to a nearby lake, to barren ground, or to short grass country, or back fired to give a zone of safety. Charles Goodnight says that he does not know of a plainsman who has lost his life as the direct result of a grass fire. A mule skinner named Bill Elkins, while freighting a load of corn from Amarillo across the western Panhandle to the 7D Ranch in 1896, laid back upon his sacks of grain and slept while his six-horse team walked on down the road. A prairie fire blew into his horses and he whirled them to run before it. The fire caught him, one horse dropped dead in the harness and the others were singed to the skin, but Bill escaped from his burning sacks of grain.<sup>17</sup>

J. Wes Dalton, a ranchman south of where Idalou now stands, went out in a buckboard in company with two other men to fight the big South Plains fire of 1898. It was passing north of Dalton's ranch burning in an easterly direction. They began fighting the fire along the south edge. When the wind suddenly veered to the north, making a lead fire out of the entire south side, Dalton and his companions found themselves directly in its path. Instead of forcing through to burned ground, they turned and ran their horses before it. Just as their team was giving out and the heat was pressing upon them, they came to a spot of short grass and the fire went around them.<sup>18</sup>

Jim Clark, range manager of the JA's left that ranch and went to Old Mexico in 1907. A prairie fire broke out on his range there and he was burned to death in an attempt to fight it. However, it is thought that the Mexicans helped the fire surround him by setting the grass in other places.<sup>19</sup>

16. Haley, *The XIT Ranch of Texas*, 171-175.

17. *Ibid.*, 171.

18. John D. McDermett to J. E. H., April 28, 1929.

19. Jim P. Wilson to J. E. H., February 4, 1929.

Grass fires resulted in some loss of cattle in a country of high grass, but since cattle naturally dropped into any trails they struck after being placed upon the move, and since most all trails eventually led to water, tanks, creeks, or lakes, where the grass was tramped and eaten away, cattle usually escaped fires by stopping at these places.

About 1893, when a big fire swept the tall grass country of the eastern Panhandle, thirty big steers were burned. If cattle would turn into a fire and attempt to go through it to the burned side, very few would be lost. But they always run before fires until they are exhausted and fall in the path of the flames, or are finally caught against some obstruction.<sup>20</sup>

The LE Ranch, along the Canadian in the high grass country, lost a number of steers in the fire of 1885.<sup>21</sup> About the same time grass fires were stampeding the mustangs and cattle of the North Plains of Texas over the big drift fence that was built from the eastern Panhandle into New Mexico on the west. Wherever bunches of either horses or cattle hit this fence with a fire behind them, they flattened it out and left work for the fence builders.<sup>22</sup> The XIT's lost few cattle in the big fire of 1894, but a fire to the north of the Canadian in the high sage grass of the Middle Water Division took a toll of 200 head of cattle.<sup>23</sup> More small calves were lost in fires than cattle of any other age. Calves, left by their mothers while they go to water, remain lying in the grass until their mothers return. Lacking parental guidance small calves have no idea what to do when a fire approaches.

Even though losses in cattle were sometimes of a serious nature, losses in sheep were much greater. The same fire that came near catching Dalton and his men caught a sheep herd five miles directly north of Ralls. The herd of 4,000 head, owned by J. B. Posey of Floydada, was in care of a Mexican herder and a shepherd dog. When the herder saw the fire coming he threw his sheep into one of the dry plains lakes, devoid of vegetation, and made tracks for his camp. The fire roared like a cyclone and scared the sheep out. The flames split around the lake and caught them as they

20. T. D. Hobart to J. E. H., February 13, 1929.

21. Huffman, as cited.

22. John Arnot to J. E. H., April 8, 1929.

23. B. P. Abott to J. E. H., June 19, 1927.

came out on the opposite side. They jammed together so closely when the fire hit them that they smothered the burning grass beneath their feet. The fire split again, raced around the running sheep, burned to the edge of the herd around its "flanks," along the "swing," and closed the gap again beyond the leaders. The sheep in the lead, 1,400 of the 4,000, were left practically untouched and were the only ones saved, as the fire quickly burned off and left them.

About 1,500 head died in a pile. When cowboys reached the herd soon after the flames had passed on, many of the sheep were running around with their wool on fire. The boys began catching them and rubbing the fire out. The ears of many sheep were burned off, eyes burned out, and hoofs baked so severely that the toes came off.<sup>24</sup>

The rate of speed of prairie fires varies with the speed of the wind, the dryness and the length of the grass, and its thickness upon the ground. When grass was dry, high, and of unbroken turf, a high wind might carry a fire at the rate of more than twenty miles an hour,<sup>25</sup> or in some cases as fast as an ordinary cow horse could run.<sup>26</sup> In 1898 R. B. Smith of Crosbyton saw a fire break out on T. M. Montgomery's ranch. In accord with the practice of the West, he rode to help. Just as he came to Montgomery's pasture, around which a sixty foot fire guard had been plowed, a high north-east wind sent a storm of burning cow chips rolling across the guard, and set the grass immediately in front of Smith. He whirled the good fast horse he was riding and headed southwest for a lake he had passed a mile back. He claims he hit his horse down the hind leg almost every jump, and when he got to the lake and pulled up amid dense, boiling white smoke, the fire was passing around the lake on either side.<sup>27</sup>

The severe South Plains fire of 1898, already mentioned, traveled very rapidly. It started west of Hale Center and was north of the site of Crosbyton in about three hours. John McDermett then lived with his father ten miles north of Crosbyton and just

24. R. B. Smith to J. E. H., February 17, 1929; John D. McDermett, as cited; Crosbyton Review, February 29, 1912.

25. McConnell, *Five Years a Cavalryman*, 46-47.

26. T. D. Hobart, as cited.

27. R. B. Smith, as cited.

south of Blanco Canon. Nearly four miles west of their ranch was the Emma-Mount Blanco-Dickens mail road, intersecting the course of the fire. The McDermetts saw the fire coming, got on their horses, and rode hard for the mail road, intending to back-fire along the road and turn the fire. After riding three miles west they had to pass through a fence. When the gate was being opened they saw that the fire was near the road. Before they had time to get the gate closed, the fire jumped the road. Swinging their horses around, they started in a run back to their own ranch. As they rode up to their own line, around which a sixty foot fire guard had been plowed and burned, they met Van Leonard, a nearby ranchman, coming to help. He came up at a run, jumped from his horse, broke the neck of a bottle of kerosene he was carrying, against a fence post, thrust the end of his maguey rope into it, set it on fire, jumped back upon his horse, and trailing the blazing rope behind him, started to burn along the west side of the fire guard, with the hope that the back-fire thus formed would burn into the wind, meet the coming fire, and burn it out. He had time to set fire to no more than a hundred yards of grass before the lead fire broke over the guard ahead of him and never stopped until it reached the cap-rock, far to the east. This fire advanced over three<sup>28</sup> miles, faster than cow ponies could run that distance.

When the wind was high, grass fires rarely advanced upon a solid front miles in width, but pushed forward as wedges, driven fiercely and swiftly into the grass country. These wedges of flame moved much more rapidly and were much more dangerous than the side fires, those flames that spread to either side. Rarely was an attempt made to fight the lead fires, as the heat was so great as to quickly kill a man. Cowboys, upon reaching a fire, went to the point of its beginning, and fought along the side fires, which burned more slowly as they worked wider and wider against the force of the wind. Always they fought with the wind to their back, advancing with the fire, putting out every fragment of flame. If the lead fire were advancing very slowly, two strings of men might finally squeeze the fire down to a very narrow strip and then extinguish the advance flames. When grass was high and dry and the wind strong, few fires were put out until they reached a natural obstruction such as a creek, a river, or barren hills.

28. John D. McDermett, as cited.



Back-firing to check grass fires has long been resorted to. Frontiersmen back-fired around their houses, wagons, or camps as a fire advanced upon them, and fought the back-fire off until it had encircled and isolated the spot to be protected. When there was nothing upon the Staked Plains to protect except grass, to start a wide back-fire to cover the path of a prairie fire without means of controlling it, was but to add to already abundant trouble. Successful use of back-fires in saving grass depended upon some advantage along which to set the back-fire, as a cow trail, a furrow, a fire guard, a creek, or an arroyo. Such an advantage, of necessity, had to intersect the course of the fire. While the fire was still a few miles distant, a cowboy would soak his rope in some kerosene, if it were to be had, set the rope on fire and trail it behind his horse, thus firing the grass just to the windward of the fire guard. Men on the ground with saddle blankets and slickers watched to see that it did not jump over the guard and race away with the wind. As soon as some little space had been burned, making it unlikely that the grass to the leeward would ignite, the fighters moved on down the fire guarding against its breaking over in other places. The back-fire was thus forced to burn slowly into the wind until the other fire met it and both burned out. But not until settlement of the country, when roads were<sup>29</sup> cutting the sod into convenient fire guards and fields were turning the plains into checker boards, could back-fires be used to greatest advantage. And then, when the remedy was available the ill was almost gone.

The most effective way of fighting grass fires under all conditions was by the use of drags. When a bunch of cowboys arrived at a fire, one roped a yearling or a two-year-old, another shot it or cut its throat, and one side was quickly skinned from belly to back. The head was cut off so as not to be in the way and ropes were tied to a front and hind leg. With the skinned side downward and with ropes on their saddle horns, two cowboys dragged this along the line of the fire, one riding to either side of the blaze. The loose hide flopped out behind and helped extinguish the flames.

The horsemen gauged their speed by how fast the cowboys on foot were able to follow the drag, beating out with wet tow sacks, saddle blankets, or slickers, fragments of fire left after the drag

<sup>29</sup> R. B. Smith, as cited; John D. McDermett, as cited; Fred Scott to J. E. H., April 7, 1929.

had passed over. Often the horses went in a trot, the boys working on the ground in reliefs. The horse pulling from the burned side was changed every twenty or thirty minutes, perhaps more often in fighting a very hot fire, else the hot ground baked his hoofs. Failure to promptly change an XIT horse because he was so good at working in a fire—a strong, energetic, dependable horse—resulted in all his hoofs coming off. Other good horses were similarly ruined by losing one or more hoofs.<sup>30</sup>

Substantially in this way the famous "beef drag" of the cow country was made and operated. Sometimes old cows were killed, the hide taken off with much meat adhering to it, and this, with the flesh side down, formed the drag.<sup>31</sup> Sometimes beeves were killed, the heads cut off, and the carcass cut into half without being skinned, and these made into two drags. In a few cases drags were drawn at a lope, boys riding behind to slap out fragments without dismounting. After one of these drags had been used all night the meat was fairly well barbecued, and when hungry cowboys stopped to rest they would sometimes cut into the carcass and find the meat "pretty good eating."<sup>32</sup> Meals were few when grass was burning and meat was a necessity to these men who fought the flames. There was no harder, hotter, or more trying work done on the western ranges than fighting burning grass.

Among ranchemen there was a tacit agreement that the first beef found near a fire would be killed, no matter to whom it belonged.

As beef became more valuable and fires more frequent because of the carelessness of the first farming settlers, some large ranches provided drags to be kept at every camp. In the late nineties the XIT had chain drags made. They very effectively cut the fire away from the grass, but did not smother it out. They resembled large fish nets of heavy chains. Green beef hides spread over these drags were best to smother out the fragments of fire, and sometimes beeves were killed for this purpose. Other drags were improvised.<sup>33</sup> Posts thrown into wagon sheets tied up at the corners have served as drags. Sometimes a heavy cotton "suggan" was<sup>34</sup> placed in a

30. Haley, *The XIT Ranch of Texas*, 176.

31. Fred Scott, as cited.

32. R. C. Burns to J. E. H., February 25, 1929.

33. Ira Aten, as cited.

34. C. F. Vincent to J. E. H., June 26, 1927.

tarp, several buckets of water thrown in upon it the tarp tied at the ends, and this, dragged by the horn of the saddle, served effectively. The tarps held the water, and in spite of the heat would sometimes stay wet for several miles.<sup>35</sup>

Finally the value of fire guards was realized and most big outfits began plowing guards as precautionary measures. Sometimes ranches subdivided their pastures by guards in addition to the ones placed around their ranges. Charles Goodnight followed this precaution on the J. A., and the XIT and other outfits adopted it. Guards were made by plowing two strips of land two or three furrows wide, and from twenty to sixty or even a hundred feet apart, around the country to be guarded. When the grass became dry in the fall, the cowboys chose a day when there was no wind and burned the grass from between the furrows. One trailed a kerosene soaked rope behind his horse and jogged along between the furrows setting the grass on fire. Others watched to see that the flames did not break over.

The XIT began plowing guards in 1885, the first year cattle were placed upon its range. Within a year over a thousand miles of guards, one hundred feet wide, had been plowed upon the ranch.<sup>36</sup> In 1887, 705 miles of guards were plowed at a cost of \$1,077.60. Much money was spent in the aggregate.<sup>37</sup>

In the eighties and nineties the IOA, the L X, the 2 Buckle, and many other Plains outfits used guards extensively.<sup>38</sup> They are still in use in portions of West Texas.<sup>39</sup>

But in spite of back-fires, fire guards, drags, and every other precautionary resource of the ranchman, grass fires continued to take too heavy toll of pasturage for many years after the beginning of settlement. It took the cowboys of the Tule Division of the J A outfit fifteen days to work their range. In 1889 settlers were moving in around Tulia and Kress who knew nothing of the dangers of grass fires nor the difficulty of their control. When they arrived at their claims with a load of lumber from Amarillo, they piled

35. Fred Scott, as cited.

36. Mss., "Report of the General Manager of the XIT Ranch to John V. Farwell, November, 1886," p. 20.

37. *Ibid.*, 1887, "Inventory 5."

38. Haley, *The XIT Ranch of Texas*, 175; C. Goodnight to J. E. H., March 15, Nineteen Hundred Twenty-nine.

39. Mss., "Letter Book, 2 Buckle Ranch;" John Arnot, as cited; R. C. Burns, as cited.

it upon the ground and prepared to burn the grass around it for safety. Very often the fire immediately went beyond their control, and twelve days out of the fifteen that the Tule cowboys were "working" their range that year, they had to turn their round-ups loose and go fight fires.<sup>40</sup>

While guards were the most effective protection, they by no means made a range immune to fire. Cowchips detracted much from the efficiency of any guard. When burning cow chips are caught in a wind they are often blown from the ground and roll along on their edges like a tin plate, carrying fire far from the burning grass, setting other grass, and destroying houses and barns. In the nineties a fire burned within a mile of Old Emma in Crosby County. Several houses and sheds were burned in the town when fragments of "prairie coal" blew in from the fire and lodged in shingles or underneath floors. The fire was over a mile from the business houses, but chips, blowing upon edge, rolled until they lodged beneath the floors of Old Emma's mercantile establishments. The town-people swarmed out in an attempt to intersect these rolling bits of fire.<sup>41</sup> Tumble weeds, coming with the settlement of the country, added to the hazards. When caught in the great suction caused by grass burning before a high wind, they sometimes shot into the air fifty feet high, sailed on as balls of fire for a hundred yards before coming to earth again, and kindling the grass far beyond the lead fire.

But with many roads, with fields, with over-grazing, with greater precautions, serious grass fires today have been reduced to a minimum. Many fires start but few do great damage, and the number has steadily decreased since the days of open range, since the time when men first began paying for grass. But they have not entirely disappeared. The Midland Country recently reported a fire that burned near a hundred sections of grass. There, where comparatively little grass has yet been plowed under, the high school dismisses its boys to help fight big fires. Nothing less serious could shake the standardized procedure from its rut. The city of Midland keeps heavy brooms on hand and it quickly becomes a woman's town when the grass begins to burn.

40. Fred Scott, as cited.

41. R. B. Smith, as cited.

## THE COMANCHE RESERVATION IN TEXAS

BY RUPERT N. RICHARDSON

On the Clear Fork of the Brazos, about twenty miles north of Albany, Texas, may be seen the crumbling ruins of Old Camp Cooper, a Federal outpost of the late fifties. One of the buildings has been kept in repair and even yet serves as a residence; the very building which, of course, tradition has fixed as the headquarters of Robert E. Lee when he was in command of that post. The old post is often mentioned by writers of frontier history, but the reason for its location at that point is apt to be forgotten. In May, 1855, the Comanche Indian reservation was established, the agency of which was located about two and one-half miles down the river from the point where the post was located about eight months later. The observer of our own times can find nothing of the remains of this agency but a few foundation stones, some cedar posts or pickets and a depression in the ground which seems to mark the site of an old cellar. However, the Indian home established here is a matter of more than local historical interest for it represented the first efforts of the United States Government to apply the reservation system to nomadic Indians of the plains. The purpose of this paper is to give a review of this experiment and to take some notice of its significance in the frontier history of this region.

The reservation system had recently been tried with the Indians in California and was reported to be working successfully.<sup>1</sup> The plan was to confine the Indians within a comparatively small area and give them every advantage possible in the way of schooling and instruction by paid agents and employees of the Government. It was expected that at first the Indian Department would be obliged to sustain them almost wholly but that after a few years they could be made largely self supporting. In adopting this policy to solve the Comanche problem in Texas the United

1. Lena Clara Koch, "The Federal Indian Policy In Texas, 1845-1860," in the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXIX, 98.

Miss Koch's chapter, entitled "The Reservation System and Its Results," contains much information on both the Comanche and the Brazos reservations. The Brazos reservation was established for the sedentary Indians of Texas about fifty miles to the east.

States Government failed to take into consideration many difficulties peculiar to the Texas Indian situation as well as the inherent characteristics of the plains tribes not found in the Indians of other regions.

### *Establishing the Reservation*

The question of a permanent home for the Indians of Texas was often raised during the decade following annexation; but the problem was difficult to solve, especially since the state maintained that neither the Indians nor the United States had any property rights in the Texas public domain. Under the terms of annexation the state had shifted to the Federal Government the responsibility of managing the Indians but had retained her public lands. Thus, the savages were regarded as tenants at will and in its effort to keep them pacified the United States Indian service had to contend with the steady encroachment of the settlers.

Naturally the misery and poverty of the savages increased from year to year and the problem of restraining them grew proportionately greater. The following words are given as those of Ka-tem-e-see, a Southern Comanche chief:

Over this vast country, where for centuries our ancestors roamed in undisputed possession, free and happy, what have we left? The game, our main dependence, is killed and driven off, and we are forced into the most sterile and barren portions of it to starve. We see nothing but extermination left us, and we await the result with stolid indifference. Give us a country we can call our own, where we may bury our people in quiet.<sup>2</sup>

East of the Comanches, along the valleys of the upper Brazos and Trinity rivers, were Caddo, Anadarko, Kichai, Haini, Tawakoni and other Indians whose condition was quite as desperate as that of the Comanches. Finally after one or more "location" bills had failed, the Legislature of Texas by an act of February 6, 1854, authorized the Federal Government to select not more than twelve leagues of land to be used for Indian reservations.<sup>3</sup> Captain Ran-

2. Horace Capron, United States Indian Agent in Texas, to Howard, September 30, 1858. Ms., in the University of Texas Library, photostat copies of papers in the United States Indian Office.

3. H. P. N. Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, III, 1495-1496.

dolph B. Marcy of the United States Army, and Robert S. Neighbors, representing the Indian Department, were appointed to locate and survey the reservations and, after an extensive reconnaissance two tracts, one of four leagues on the Clear Fork of the Brazos and the other of eight leagues on the main Brazos were located. The site of the Clear Fork or Comanche reservation is on the line of Shackelford and Throckmorton counties and that of the Brazos reservation, used by the sedentary tribes, is in Young county.

Thus did the Indian Department prepare to confine more than a thousand nomadic savages on a reserve of a little more than eighteen thousand acres. Today this land is the home of a few stock farmers and ranchmen and probably not as many as fifty people live on it. Compared with the vast stretches the Comanches has considered as their home this was indeed a parsimonious grant; but the state contended that the Indian problem should be entirely a Federal burden, the cession was regarded as a gift, and Texas was not in a liberal humor. Yet, since the cardinal idea underlying the reservation system was not simply to feed and care for the Indians but to teach them to become self sustaining, it is strange that the Federal Government undertook the project at such an obvious disadvantage. It was to be expected that a nomadic people would take more interest in stock-raising than in farming; but herds could not be maintained on so small a tract and white men soon came and laid claim to the adjoining range. Furthermore, only a small part of the reservation lands were arable. Naturally the wild Comanches were loathe to accept such a cramped environment.

However, some of the Indians were in such desperate straits that they awaited with eagerness the establishing of the reservation. Chief Ka-tem-e-see went far out into the prairies to meet Marcy and Neighbors on their return from the reconnaissance in order to assure them that his followers were ready and anxious to occupy the home they were expecting. Also, it may be observed in passing, that the chief was not at all reticent in talking Comanche politics and describing the different factions that prevailed among the Penatekas (Honey-eaters), or Southern Comanche bands. But soon Chief Sanaco appeared before the commission to inform them

that Ka-tem-e-see was an imposter and that he, Sanaco, was the real head of the Comanches.<sup>4</sup> Years of warfare with white men and savages and the struggle for existence incident to this confusion had demoralized the savages and weakened their tribal organization. There was not, in fact, any head chief and there had not been for several years. But these jealousies added substantially to the many difficulties the United States was destined to encounter in its efforts to point these people towards peace and civilization. Pride and independence were virtues these Indians no longer could boast of. Even Ka-tem-e-see begged of the commission corn and meat from their private stock of goods.

When Agent Neighbors returned in November, 1854, to establish the reservation, he found on the Clear Fork large parties of Wacoos, Caddoes, Tawakonies and other smaller bands together with "the whole Southern band" of Comanches, the number of the latter being, according to his estimate, between one thousand and twelve hundred souls. Another council was held and the Indians urged that the Government hurry the preparations for the reservation since they were in a starving condition.<sup>5</sup> But notwithstanding the general eagerness on the part of the Indians about two-thirds of them were not located on the reservation at the time and perhaps half of them never accepted life there because of an unfortunate circumstance which must be charged largely to a blunder of the United States military forces. While some of chief Sanaco's people were at Fort Chadburne, about sixty miles to the southwest, on a friendly trading expedition, they were told by a certain Leyendecker, an Indian trader, that the white people were making plans to attack them and kill them all. "If you want anything more," said Leyendecker to the Indians, "trade quickly, mount your horses, go to Sanaco's camp, and tell him the white people are collecting together to kill him and his people, I see it on this paper; tell him if he wishes to live to go north as quickly as possible—do not eat, sleep or rest, until you give him this talk from his friend."<sup>6</sup>

4. R. B. Marcy, *Thirty Years of Army Life On the Border*, (New York, 1866) p. 204. See also W. B. Parker, *Notes Taken Through Unexplored Texas, 1854* (Philadelphia, 1856) p. 130.

5. *Neighbors to Manypenny*, Commissioner of Indians Affairs, January 8, 1855. Ms. University of Texas, photostat copy.

6. *Hill to Neighbors*, August 31, 1855, gives an account of these happenings of January preceding. Thirty-fourth Congress, First Session, Sen. Doc. No. 1, Part 1, 502.



On the very day that the chief received this message he had been out with an army officer and a citizen in an effort to help them locate some horses which the Indians were accused of stealing. Whatever may have been his sins of the past the chief was then trying to preserve peace and control his people. But when this message came the Indian did not wait to investigate. The savage in him asserted itself. The information had come from a friend and, the fact is, it contained a great measure of truth! Orders for such a campaign had actually been received at Fort Chadburne and a few weeks later the expedition left under the command of Captain Calhoun. The orders called for a campaign against all Comanches, Northern and Southern alike, wherever they might be found. It is true that the officer did not propose actually to go on the reservation and attack the Indians there, but all Comanches met with outside of that vicinity were to be chastised.<sup>7</sup> The whole affair illustrates perfectly the lamentable lack of cooperation between the military and Indian forces so often in evidence along the frontier. It was unfortunate indeed that of all the times the army might have sent an expedition to punish the savages they chose to go at this critical time. News on the frontier was carried with the swiftness of a breeze and this report set the Indians wild. Sanaco fled with several hundred of his people and the sensible Ka-tem-e-see found it difficult to hold his own followers and prevent their joining in the stampede.

As soon as a measure of quiet was restored runners were sent to induce the renegades to return; but the band had scattered and only a few of these Comanches were ever reached and persuaded to return. Because of this confusion the Comanches were first located on the Brazos reservation, but they were taken to their home on the Clear Fork about the first of May, 1855. By June 10, they numbered 249 with others reported to be coming in.<sup>8</sup>

### *Rivalry of the Chiefs; the Wild Bands*

Thus the Comanche reservation was inaugurated by a stam-

7. Hill to Neighbors, January 11, 1855. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy. The affair produced quite a tilt between the army officers and the Indian agents. The army men never did deny the broad scope of the order they were to act under, but they did contend that the troops were not the cause of the run-away since the Indians fled long before the troops arrived in their vicinity.

8. Neighbors to Manypenny, June 10, 1855. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy.

pede. If Neighbor's estimate of a thousand or twelve hundred souls be accepted as the approximate population of the Southern Comanches, it is evident that not more than a fourth of these Indians were at the reservation when it was established. The two most influential chiefs, Buffalo Hump, a chronic disturber, and Sanaco, destined to become quite as great a rogue, were still at large. Other Indians came in at different times, so that on one occasion there were 557 souls; but 350 or 400 would represent a fair average for the whole period.<sup>9</sup> Evidently many Indians came and left very much at will, in spite of the efforts of the agents to hold them.

It would have been much better if the renegades had stayed away altogether, for their chiefs were jealous of Ka-tem-e-see and frequently connived to supersede him. During the winter of 1855-1856, Sanaco came in, gave up some horses his people had stolen in the country west of San Antonio, and returned to the prairies to bring in his band. He brought in his people according to promise, but soon left because as he alleged, troops were arriving at Camp Cooper and he felt that this would mean that his braves could get whiskey. However, he must have known that his men could get whiskey while running at large even more easily than at the reservation. A more plausible reason for his leaving is that given by the agent, John R. Baylor, namely, that he found he could not supersede his rival, Ka-tem-e-see. His band became even more lawless and was charged with a number of robberies and murders. Once, in jocular mood, the chief sent word by an Indian runner that he would bring his people in if Major Neighbors would furnish him and his people with all the whiskey they could drink. And they would stay, he said, as long as the whiskey lasted!

Buffalo Hump was even more troublesome than Sanaco. He would come in and make many promises stating that he had reformed and was determined to live the life of a good, honest Indian henceforth. But, if the spirit was willing the flesh was weak in the case of Buffalo Hump; and as soon as the agent had made him presents in consideration for his profession of good intentions he would steal away to the prairies to plunder and rob and live

9. The different reports of the agents show numbers as follows: January 1, 1856, 450; September 8, 1856, 557; September, 1857, 424; January 17, 1858, 381; September 16, 1858, 371; October 30, 1858, 341; July, 1859, 382.

in his old savage way. Then, when his blankets were worn out and game became scarce and stealing unprofitable he would return to repeat the process.<sup>10</sup> On one occasion this chief almost started a war between the Comanches and the Indians on the Brazos reservation. With Ka-tem-e-see and about seventy-five warriors he went to that reservation and approached the Anadarko village in a threatening manner. The women and children of this and neighboring villages fled and panic seized the entire Indian community. Fortunately the veteran Anadarko chief, Jose Maria, was looking for trouble, had his men armed and prepared for action and informed the intruders that he was ready either for "fight" or "talk." The Comanches chose to talk and through the efforts of the Brazos agent, S. P. Ross, and his interpreter, Jim Shaw, violence was avoided. When called upon to explain their extraordinary conduct, the Comanches, evidently much embarrassed at the turn the affair had taken, said that all was well, they were satisfied, but they wished to ask just one question: "Were the Caddoes going to continue to act as guides for the troops?"

This question explains the whole affair. No doubt Buffalo Hump, using the milder Ka-tem-e-see as a tool, had hoped to frighten the smaller bands into discontinuing the valuable aid they had been rendering the troops as scouts and guides. It may be that Buffalo Hump himself had suffered because of the skill and faithfulness of these scouts. It is certain that in the years that followed the wiley old renegade was much annoyed by these scouts for as a leader of the wild Comanche bands he was often trailed and surprised by these very Indians. Although these Comanches were wards of the Government and living off of its bounty their sympathy for their wild marauding kinsmen was stronger than that for any agent or soldier and they resented the fact that these more civilized Indians were taking such an active part in the interest of law and order.

In addition to these run-away Southern Comanches other wild Indians made the work of the agents difficult and caused the life of the reservation Indians to be haunted by many fears. There were several distinct Comanche bands that had never had any inti-

10. See Anna Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist*, page 315, for a letter from M. Leeper, once Comanche agent in Texas, to Elias Rector, December 12, 1861. In this letter Leeper gives a short biography of Buffalo Hump and pronounces an anathema to his memory.

mate relations with the Penatekas or Southern bands. Along Red River and the Canadian were the Tanimas, Nokonies and Kotsotekas, to the north were the Yamarikas and in the plains region were the fierce Kwaharies. Associated with these northern bands were the Kiowas, fierce and powerful. Parties from these different bands frequently visited the reservation, coming as friends or lurking near as enemies as best suited their purposes. Naturally the going and coming of these wild kinsmen and their occasional presence at or near the reservation made it very difficult for the agents to control their wards. Furthermore, in their raids against the Texas settlements and the North Mexican states these parties often passed near the reservation. This, according to Agent Leeper, was done both to steal additional horses from the reserve Indians and to direct the attention of the pursuers to those Indians in order that they might be charged to the innocent while the guilty made their escape. Indeed the Indians of the reservation frequently suffered severe losses of horses at the hands of these marauders.<sup>11</sup> During the last years of the reservation there developed an estrangement between its inhabitants and their wild kinsmen and at times the wards felt that their lives were insecure, although the agency was near by and the military post but two miles away. In May, 1858, Ka-tem-e-see took his boys out of school in order to keep them near him and better protect them from the wrath of the marauders of the north. By this time the chief had lost his enthusiasm for the wild Indians and on one occasion said that he did not care if the troops killed them all.<sup>12</sup>

On at least one occasion a lawless visitor came near causing a general revolt. One Santa Anna, a notoriously bad Indian, came and put up in Ka-tem-e-see's cabin. Since this was the only cabin on the reservation perhaps the insolent fellow felt that lodging accommodations were poor enough and he proposed to take the best. It was even rumored that he planned to supersede Ka-tem-e-see and make himself chief of the reservation. The chief ordered this Indian and his companion, a Nokoni Comanche, to leave; but they informed him that they were resting from their arduous journey and did not propose to leave until it suited their conven-

11. Leeper's Report, December 31, 1857. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy.

12. J. Shirley, employee at Barnard's trading house at the reservation, to C. E. Barnard, May 6, 1858. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy. Also, Leeper to Neighbors, February 5, 1858, *Ibid.*

ience. When this was reported to Agent Leeper he called on the detail of troops stationed at Camp Cooper (only twenty men) to come at once. The lieutenant, Van Camp, came at once and surrounded the building. But to his chagrin and alarm, fifty or sixty warriors, armed with bows and guns, together with about thirty women and boys, armed with sticks and clubs, closed in around the cabin and took the side of the visitors so positively that Van Camp saw that a fight was ahead if he forced the issue. He ordered his men to prepare for action and a battle would have followed but for the fact that he discovered that his men had but one round of ammunition. They had used up nearly all their ammunition the day before in target practice. Thus, since it was impossible to apply force, all that was left for the lieutenant to do was to use persuasion. An agreement was patched up whereby the intruders were permitted to leave and this they did at once.

On the following day the Indians who had taken an active part in protecting the visitors came to Leeper and explained that they had offered resistance to the troops because they thought when they saw the soldiers approaching that all Indians on the reservation were going to be attacked and slain and they were determined to die fighting. Obviously they thought no such thing. Their bad faith in the whole matter was made more in evidence by their telling Leeper that they expected him to say that their "talk" was "good." In case he should not assent and say that their "talk" was "good" they would kill him and his family and leave the reservation.<sup>13</sup>

Naturally the army officers and the Indian agents as well were sorely vexed with the Indians because of this affair. About all that can be said in defense of the savages is that they regarded the intruders as visitors and felt that to abandon them to the soldiers while they were guests at the reservation would be treachery. Some of the older men and women tearfully begged Ka-tem-e-see not to force the issue, just let the man escape and he would not bother them any more.

#### *Inadequate Protection*

The lack of proper protection by the troops was largely the

13. Leeper to Neighbors, August 31, 1858. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy.

cause of the fear and uncertainty that clouded the lives of the reservation wards. During most of the year 1855 there were no troops closer than Fort Belknap, about fifty miles away, and none but infantry there. However, early in January, 1856, Camp Cooper was established on the reservation and for a time the Indians enjoyed a sense of security.<sup>14</sup> But after a few months, ill feeling developed between the army officers and the Indian agents, each side charging that the other would not cooperate. Both the army and the Indian records are well supplied with documents containing charges, denials and counter charges, but it would not be expedient or profitable to follow the quarrel in detail. No doubt the agents were prone to do much complaining and fault finding while the army men responded with a patronizing attitude and cynical remarks about the "beef eating" policy of the Indian department. Once Captain Stoneman at Camp Cooper took it upon himself to count the Indians or to attempt to count them and, according to the agent, almost caused a panic by proceeding without the assent and knowledge of the agents. The Indians were ever shy in the presence of soldiers and army officers. Naturally Leeper and Nighbors regarded Stoneman's conduct as an insult for it implied that their reports were not correct and that supplies were being fraudently drawn. Most of the army officers naturally sided with their fellow officer and the breach widened.<sup>15</sup>

In the spring of 1858, the army forces decided to remove Camp Cooper from its old location near the agency and Indian camps to a point some six or eight miles away from the agency. Leeper intimated that this was for the purpose of locating the post near a ranch owned by Captain Givens of the Second Dragoons.<sup>16</sup> However, it seems more plausible to conclude that the change was made as an act of spite and in retaliation against the charges made by the agents that the soldiers were not properly disciplined and were spending too much time among the Indians. When the agent protested at this move, complaining that he and his wards were left in a defenseless condition, the department commander of the

14. Baylor's report, September 12, 1856, Thirty-fourth Congress, Third Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 1, 728. See also, George F. Price, *Across the Continent with the Fifth Cavalry*, (New York, 1885), p. 4.

15. George Stoneman, Captain Second Cavalry, Camp Cooper, to Neighbors, September 5, 1857. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy. Also, Leeper to Neighbors, December 5, 1857, *Ibid.*

16. Leeper to Neighbors, March 29, 1858. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy.

army advised him that if he felt insecure he could move the agency to a point nearer the new site. Thus for a while no troops were stationed nearer than eight miles from the agency. Now, when the troops moved out of Old Camp Cooper the Indians moved in and stored their grain and hay there. But soon a detachment of troops was ordered back to the old post and the Indians had to move out.<sup>17</sup> It seems that thereafter some troops were stationed continuously at the old post, but later the agent complained that the force consisted of but fifteen or twenty men—not enough to be of much aid in an emergency. During the crisis in June, 1859, when the frontier citizens were threatening to attack the reservation, an adequate cavalry force was stationed there and maintained until the Indians were removed.<sup>18</sup> However, it must be said that during much of the four years of the reservation's history the United States Army did not give the protection which even its limited means might have permitted.

### *Problems of the Agents*

The vexations incident to controlling, teaching and starting on the road towards a civilized existence several hundred nomadic savages just taken from the prairies and confined to a reservation of a few square miles were too numerous to be adequately described. Sometimes the conduct and practices of the savages were enough to have exhausted the patience of a saint and that they were dealt with so successfully is a credit to the white men in charge.

Savage lawlessness and lack of self restraint naturally provoked clashes between individuals of a tribe where freedom of action had so recently been limited by this new environment. In a fit of anger one of the head men stabbed his wife and her brothers vowed to avenge her wrong. The husband's friends came to his side and a general fight seemed dangerously near. But, much to the surprise and relief of the agent, the guilty Indian came to him in a penitent mood and offered to receive any punishment that might be imposed. The agent left the matter to the other chiefs and quite naturally nothing was done. The woman recovered and her brothers apparently became reconciled.<sup>19</sup>

17. T. T. Hawkins, special agent to investigate conditions on the reservation, to Charles E. Mix, October 30, 1858. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy.

18. *Neighbors to Greenwood*, June 10, 1859. Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, Sen. Exec. Doc. No. 2, p. 636.

19. *Baylor to Neighbors*, June 8, 1856. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy.

The health of the Indians was not always good. Veneral diseases were virulent and common and there was not sufficient medicines and doctors. Typhoid pneumonia is mentioned among the diseases reported by the doctor who occasionally attended the patients.<sup>20</sup>

The reservation farmer had his troubles also. The Indians would turn their horses into the corn field, or turn them loose where it was evident that they would get in the field. They would pull melons no larger than an egg and were want to consume all their corn before it had grown to good roasting-ears. In the spring of the second year they refused for some time to plant their crops until they had been given presents, but finally the agent persuaded them to go to work without the presents.

Sometimes there was violence unto death. A chief engaged in intrigue with another man's wife and, according to custom, the injured man demanded that the chief compensate him to the amount of a horse. When the chief refused or hesitated to do this he was slain at once by the sons of the injured man. Then the father and his sons together with their women and children fled from the reservation and were not overtaken, although a scouting party followed them for a hundred and fifty miles.<sup>21</sup>

And yet, notwithstanding these evidences of savage crudeness, it must be said that at least some of the Indians were making progress toward a more civilized existence. Under the direction of the reservation farmer they worked and occasionally made fairly good crops, but the amount of land in cultivation was small. In 1857, they made but fifty bushels of wheat off of the twenty acres sown and 500 bushels of corn was produced on the remainder of their land in cultivation. For awhile the Indians were prone to rely too much on their prisoners to do the work but after these were freed and returned to their people in Mexico that abuse was corrected. In 1858, the reserve farmer reported a better yield. In the spring of that year he had divided the community fields into six divisions in order that each of the prominent clans might have a parcel of ground suited to its numbers. He thought that they would have made enough grain (principally corn) that year to

20. J. Shirley, bill for medical services, March 29, 1858. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy. Neighbors to Manypenny, March 7, 1856. *Ibid.*

21. Leeper to Neighbors, April 9, 1858, *Ibid.*



do them but for the fact that the fear of the white frontiersmen and wild Indians forced them to keep up their horses and feed them much of the time.<sup>22</sup> This partial elimination of the communist system had a wholesome effect, but it would have been impossible to carry it much farther because of the scarcity of arable land. A division of land so that each family head would have had a parcel separate and apart from the others would have become utterly impossible after a generation or two. Thus the cramped conditions on the small reservation would have acted as a barrier to progress even if the Indians had been permitted to remain there.

Many of the citizens of Texas complained that the reservation Indians were treacherous and dangerous and yet some of those persons living near the reserve vouched for the honesty of the Indians and stated that they regarded them as friends rather than enemies.<sup>23</sup> The settlement and development of the country in the vicinity of the reservation indicates that the white people generally had confidence in the peaceful disposition of the savages. It is significant that the most serious complaints did not come from those persons living near the reservation but from settlements a hundred or more miles away.

Some of the children made good progress in school. In 1858, it was reported that ten boys were in school and in a later account they were reported to be learning remarkably fast. Thomas T. Hawkins, special agent, who was sent to investigate the reservation in 1858, wrote of the Comanches:

I regard them as superior in natural sense and intelligence to any of our full blooded native tribes—and I have seen many specimens in Washington, in the west and upon my journey hither.<sup>24</sup>

At times the Indians manifested some disposition to exercise tribal government sufficient to restrain unruly members. Once when a certain Indian, named Jack Porter, and two or three fol-

22. Neighbor's report. September 16, 1857. Thirty-fifth Congress, First Session, Sen. Exec. Doc. No. 11, Vol. II. Also, Neighbors to Manypenny, May 14, 1856, and H. P. Jones, reservation farmer to M. Leeper, October 29, 1858, University of Texas photostat copies.

23. Thomas Lambshead (a citizen) to Manypenny, May 1, 1856. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy. Also, Hawkins to Mix, October 30, 1858, *Ibid.*

24. Hawkins to Mix, October 30, 1858. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy.

lowers returned from a raid to Mexico with twelve stolen horses, a council of chiefs was called to consider the matter and the culprits were informed that if they repeated the act they would all be shot.<sup>25</sup> However, it must be said that the exercise of authority generally stopped with admonition and an influential warrior had little to fear from a council composed of his fellow warriors. Chief Ka-tem-e-see was given the use of a cabin and was paid thirty dollars per month to act as head chief. From all accounts he took his position quite seriously and worked faithfully to lead his people aright. In one report it is stated that several females had recently deserted the reservation because of punishment he had inflicted upon them. Apparently the braves were dealt with more tactfully.

### *Breaking Up the Reservation*

Naturally the people of Texas had expected that the establishment of the reservations whereby the Indians were given the opportunity to maintain a comfortable existence under government supervision would improve frontier Indian conditions. But this hope proved to be in vain. The various bands of Southern Comanches who refused to settle, together with parties of their northern kinsmen and the Lipans and small parties of other tribes continued to harass the settlements to such an extent as to call forth protests from many sources. Conditions not only did not improve but, according to the accounts of that day, grew worse from year to year, especially after 1856.

From the very beginning, and for good reasons, some of the frontier citizens had come to regard the reservations as a source of trouble. It is true that the agents did their best to control their Indians and they certainly never tolerated theft when they could prevent it. However, with Indians coming and going in such promiscuous fashion it was utterly impossible for the agents to know just what their wards were doing. Although some of the frontiersmen made allegations to the contrary, there is overwhelming evidence to the effect that ranchmen who came to hunt their lost or stolen stock were extended every aid and courtesy by the agents and Ka-tem-e-see. They rarely ever found their property there,

<sup>25</sup> Neighbor's report, September 16, 1858, Thirty-fifth Congress, Second Session, Sen. Exec. Doc. No. 1, Vol. I, p. 524.

but when they did it was readily given up.<sup>26</sup> But no agent, however tactful, could long avoid a clash with the frontiersmen on this point. They naturally gave little consideration to the rights of the Indians, expected the word of any white man to be accepted over the denial of any number of Indians, and misunderstandings and disputes over property soon arose. The agents all the while stoutly maintained that their Indians were innocent and, although we may have some doubts to their contentions, they were certainly sincere. Likewise the frontiersmen were just as sincere in laying much of their trouble to the wards of the agents and as affairs progressed each side became more determined and emphatic. When the citizens failed to find their stock at the reservation they concluded that the marauders had left the reservation, had stolen the horses from the settlements, and then had made their way to join their wild friends to the north; and the large number of desertions from the reservation evidenced by the census returns furnish considerable foundation for this point of view.

During the latter part of 1857, petitions signed by Texas citizens were sent to the Secretary of the Interior asking that Neighbors be removed from office. These persons alleged that the reserve Indians had been stealing horses all along although Neighbors kept denying it. They charged that at different times they had found their stolen horses on the reservation, that the superintendent had refused to give them up and that there was no means left for them whereby they could secure their property. Other complaints were made, one being that signed by twenty-seven men addressed to Agent Leeper informing him that they would not henceforth honor his passports to Indians but that they proposed to attack any and all Indians found off of the reservation except where they were accompanied by responsible white persons. Their reasons for this threat appears to have been the report they had received that certain Indians whom they had pursued had since made threats against them. Furthermore, they would have Leeper inform the Indians that if there should be "a man killed on this river and there is the least proof that it was done by the Indians from the reserve

26. On this mooted point see J. B. (Buck) Barry to Hawkins, November 8, 1858. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy. Barry, who in his *Reminiscences* (Manuscript, University of Texas Archives), bitterly assails the reservation Indians, said in this letter of 1858, that Major Neighbors treated him in a "clever and gentlemanly manner" in the matter of his efforts to recover stolen horses.

... We will attack the reserve with a sufficient force to *break it up* regardless of consequences.<sup>27</sup>

In January, 1858, a select committee of the state senate criticized severely the United States Indian policy in the state, referring to the fact that only a fraction of the Comanche Indians were located on the reservation and that friendly Indians were in the habit of passing and repassing into the settlements. Thus, they contended, wild Indians were mistaken for friendly ones and the white people were thus placed at the mercy of marauding bands. In addition to their recommendations for better military protection the committee stated that the agents should not permit the Indians to leave the reservations.<sup>28</sup>

If these charges should be accepted at their face value they would represent within themselves rather convincing proof against the reservation Indians, but the records show that the whole issue was so completely shot through with bias and personal animosity that one is unable to know what to accept or reject. Reference has already been made to the ill feeling that prevailed between Robert S. Neighbors, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Texas, and some of the army officers. Furthermore, John R. Baylor, who seems to have been dismissed from the Indian service through Neighbor's influence, led in much of the agitation.

But regardless of the merits or injustice of the charges brought against the reservation Indians feeling against them became so widespread and bitter that in February, 1858, Neighbors asked that special instructions be given the military to protect the reserve Indians from attacks by citizens. In May he made a trip to Washington to place the matter before the officials there, alleging that the soldiers could not be depended upon to protect the Indians because of the indifference of their officers.<sup>29</sup> In October, the sheriff of Young county, armed with a writ issued by the county court, set forth from Belknap with a posse of about forty citizens to arrest

27. W. G. Preston and others to M. Leeper, February 1, 1858. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy. John R. Baylor, Comanche agent until he was dismissed in May, 1857, is among the signers of this letter to Leeper.

28. "Report of Select Committee on Indian Affairs," *State Gazette*, Austin, March 27, 1858. George B. Erath, Henry E. McCulloch, Forbes Brittin, J. W. Throckmorton, and E. B. Scarborough composed the committee.

29. Neighbors to Mix, written at Washington, D. C., May 18, 1858. Neighbors complained that Major Paul, at Fort Belknap, Captain Stoneman at Camp Cooper, and Captain Givens, who owned a ranch about six miles from the reservation, had opposed him all along and had tried to incite the citizens against the Indians.

a reservation Indian charged with committing an attack on a young man named Johnson some months before. On hearing of the approach of the party Neighbors called on Captain Palmer at Camp Cooper for an escort, advanced with the escort and met the sheriff's party some distance from the reservation and finally persuaded the party to give up their purpose. Whether the sheriff desisted because of the law in the case or by fear of the United States soldiers was a matter of doubt in the minds of observers.<sup>30</sup>

The complaints against the agents and the reservation Indians led to the sending of a special agent to investigate the administration of affairs. This agent, Thomas T. Hawkins, stayed at Camp Cooper for five weeks and every opportunity was given the complainants to make their appearance and testify as to their charges; but few of them did so and nothing of consequence was submitted. Hawkins' report commended the agents and the administration of both reservations very highly. The critics alleged that the investigation was *ex parte* and that it was intended from the beginning to "whitewash" the record of the Indian administration in Texas; but we should have more sympathy with them if they had gone through with their part of the program and submitted whatever evidence they had.

Perhaps the strongest testimony in favor of the Comanches is that of John S. Ford and E. N. Burlison of the Ranger forces. They came with their command to the vicinity of the reservation in the spring of 1858 when they and their officers were practically unanimous in the belief that the reservation Indians were committing depredations. These men were seasoned frontiersmen, had the frontiersmen's natural hatred and distrust of all Indians and were determined to secure evidence against the savages that could not be refuted. However, although they stayed for some time and sent out many scouts they found nothing whatever to confirm their suspicions. Ford states in his affidavit that when they found that they could not secure any evidence against the Indians Captain Allison Nelson, one of the foremost critics of Neighbors, suggested to him that it would be very easy to make a trail leading into the reservation, but Ford would not hear to this. Nelson reported that the people in the vicinity of the reservation did not want it broken up and it was decided to abandon the idea. Ford quoted Nelson as

30. See the letter of a correspondent to the *New York Herald*, November 15, 1858.

stating that Neighbors had always escaped from the attacks of his enemies, but that men were after him "now" who were going to get his job.<sup>31</sup>

Naturally so much excitement and ill will inspired cruelty. In May, 1858, an inoffensive old Comanche was slain by a party of white men who wanted to get his horses and took advantage of the fact that he was away from the reservation without an escort or pass.<sup>32</sup> Late in December, a little party of friendly Indians from the Brazos reservation, known as Choctaw Tom's party, were attacked in their camp at night near Palo Pinto, whither they had gone by the consent of their agent and where they were regarded by the people of the immediate community as friendly and dependable. In fact, Choctaw Tom, the leader of the party, had returned to the reservation, but some of his people had remained near Palo Pinto in order to accept an invitation of some citizens of the community to stay a little longer and hunt bear with them.<sup>33</sup> The party that attacked the Indians was composed of citizens of Erath and neighboring counties further down the Brazos valley. They alleged that these Indians had been committing depredations but there is very little foundation for this contention.

The killing of these Indians created general excitement along the frontier because of the fear that their tribesmen would retaliate. The men who made the unwarranted attack on Choctaw Tom's party were never arrested although the governor by special proclamation called for their arrest. The grand jury of Palo Pinto county refused to indict the men but instead, indicted Jose Maria, the Anadarko chief, for horse stealing and in their report stated that the reservations were nuisances and that the people ought to take up arms against the Indians.<sup>34</sup> "Gatherings" of frontiersmen began to take place and many white men who had up to this time maintained a neutral or indifferent attitude began to join in the clamor against the savages. No doubt many of these men felt that the party from

31. Affidavit of John S. Ford and E. N. Bursleson, November 22, 1858. University of Texas photostat copy.

32. Shirley to Barnard, May 6, 1858; Evans to Leeper, May 2, 1858. Ms. University of Texas photostat copies.

33. J. J. Sturm, farmer at the Brazos agency, to Ross, December 28, 1858. Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, Sen. Exec. Doc. No. 2, Vol. I, p. 588. See also, the statement of Daniel Thornton, Peter Garland and others who attacked the Indians, made at Palo Pinto, January 4, 1859, *Ibid.*, p. 606.

34. A copy of the report of the Grand Jury may be found in the Runnels Papers, Texas State Archives.

Erath county had made a mistake in attacking the peaceful Indians, but they believed that the kinsmen of these Indians as well as the Comanches would retaliate and that there could be no peace on the frontier until both reservations were broken up. The agitators took advantage of this state of mind and never lost an opportunity to appeal to the fears and prejudices of the frontier people. It must not be understood that these men were "the very worst frontier characters" as the Indians agents sometimes charged. Among their leaders were John R. Baylor, former Indian agent; Peter Garland, of Erath county; R. W. Pollard, of Palo Pinto county; J. B. (Buck) Barry, of Bosque county, all prominent citizens in their communities and highly regarded by most of their neighbors. The years of bitter struggle with the Indians had hardened the hearts of the frontier people. As one of the more conservative of them has written in his memoirs, the frontier people were "always crazed at the sight of Indians and determined to kill,"<sup>35</sup> and when the safety of their families was involved they were wont to act first and investigate afterwards.

However, notwithstanding these "gatherings" of frontiersmen with all their fear and frenzy no drastic action was taken during the winter of 1858-1859, which is to be accounted for in part, at least, by the firm attitude maintained by the army officers who were guarding the reservations. The immediate objective of these threatening movements had been the "lower" or Brazos reservation. This was not because the white men regarded these Indians as the more culpable but rather because they felt that both the Brazos and Comanche reservations must be broken up and the Brazos Indians being the more numerous and powerful were regarded as the chief obstacle to be overcome.

Long before this crisis came the agents had felt that the Indians should be moved from Texas and as early as the summer of 1857 Neighbors had recommended that they be taken to the Indian Territory.<sup>36</sup> But the authorities in Washington did not give any consideration to the proposal and it was dropped for the time. Then came the demonstrations against the Indians during the winter and spring of 1859, and Neighbors again insisted that if the Indians

35. "Memoirs of George B. Erath," in the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXVII, 15.

36. Neighbors to Mix, August 5, 1857. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy.

were not removed they would be driven away by the mad settlers. The government at Washington was slow to appreciate the gravity of the situation and the agents became frantic in their effort to secure authority to do what they knew was essential to save their wards from destruction. Finally, on March 30, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs wrote that the Indians would be moved in the fall or winter following. But this announcement did not satisfy the white people and Neighbors continued his efforts to secure authority to remove his wards at once.<sup>37</sup> Neighbors said that he and his associates had "stood their ground" so far, but that they wanted their superiors to share with them the responsibility for determining what should be done when the next crisis came, as it certainly would come. A little later came a resolution signed by a hundred and fifty men demanding that Neighbors and the resident agents, Ross and Leeper, resign.<sup>38</sup>

The situation was already critical enough when an army officer by an imprudent act provoked a disturbance that removed the last ray of hope for peace on the frontier until the Indians were removed. A Brazos reservation Indian named Fox, had been killed by a party of Jack county rangers in brutal fashion. This officer led a party of reservation Indians in search of Fox's slayers and caused great consternation by escorting them into the town of Jacksboro one night. This incident gave the radical party an excellent torch and they now set the whole frontier aflame with excitement.<sup>39</sup> The citizens at once organized themselves into "ranger companies" and surrounded both reservations, threatening the Indians and their agents day and night and preventing the savages from gathering up their stock.<sup>40</sup> On May 23, John R. Baylor at the head of about 250 men came onto the Brazos reservation; but the soldiers stood their ground and the citizens withdrew, not however, until they had picked a fight with some of the Indians. The Indians pursued them for some distance and considerable fighting took place.<sup>41</sup> The settlers declared that they would raise a thousand men and take

37. Mix to Neighbors, March 30, 1859. Thirtieth Congress, First Session, Sen. Doc. No. 2, p. 631. Neighbors to Mix, April 11, 1859. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy.

38. "Resolutions," April 25, 1859. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy.

39. J. R. Worrall of Jacksboro, June 1, 1859, to the Editor, *The Dallas Herald*, June 15, 1859.

40. Neighbors to Mix, May 12, 1859, and Ross to Neighbors, May 12, 1859. Ms. University of Texas photostat copies.

41. Report of Captain J. B. Plummer, of the United States Army. Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, Sen. Exec. Doc. No. 2, p. 644.



both reservations by storm. But sufficient forces were not forthcoming and the "Army of Defense," as the frontiersmen had called themselves, disbanded for a time. Their fury was allayed somewhat by the act of the governor in appointing a board of commissioners to visit the camp of the citizens and endeavor to work out a peaceful method of attaining their ends. The commission visited the frontier communities, heard the complaints of the angry citizens and in their report of findings quite naturally declared the Indians guilty of the offenses charged.<sup>42</sup> But Baylor and other frontier leaders kept up the agitation and, in order to prevent another gathering, G. B. Erath, one of the governor's commissioners, called out a special force of one hundred militiamen from McLellan and Bell counties in order to assure the citizens that the Indians were being watched.<sup>43</sup> However, from all accounts it seems that the frontiersmen did not propose to leave to others the matter of watching the Indians and during the last few weeks preceding the removal the Indians of both reservations were harassed on every hand and dared not leave their agencies to gather up their animals, many of which were out on the range. On one occasion a fight occurred near the Comanche reservation in which both the Indians and citizens suffered some injuries.

Authority for the immediate removal of the Indians was finally granted on June 11 and on July 31, the Indians from both reservations, escorted by United States soldiers started on their journey to the valley of the Washita in Indian Territory.

The census made at the time the journey was begun showed that 1112 Indians left the Brazos reservation and 384 Comanches left the upper reservation. It was estimated that the Comanches took away with them live stock worth \$9,550, and that they lost, or were forced to leave behind, live stock worth in the aggregate of \$14,922.50.<sup>44</sup> The cost of both reservations to the United States Government had ranged between \$61,655.25, for 1857, and

42. Report of John Henry Brown, G. B. Erath, J. M. Steiner, J. M. Smith and Richard Coke, to Governor Runnels, Waco, June 27, 1859. Thirty-sixth Congress, Second Session, Sen. Exec. Doc. No. 2, pp. 665-671.

43. Erath to Ross and Neighbors, June 20, 1859. Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session Sen. Exec. Doc. No. 2, p. 663.

44. Neighbors' Memorandum, no date. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy.

\$91,707.50, for 1856.<sup>45</sup> Probably about one-third of these sums were expended on the Comanches. During the last year preceding the establishment of the reservations the United States had spent \$129,820 on the Texas Indians.

A sequel to the bitter controversy over the removal of the Indians was the killing of Robert S. Neighbors on the streets of Belknap by a man he scarcely knew, if, indeed he had ever seen him before or knew the man had aught against him. Neighbors had seen the Indians safely located in the Leased District in Indian Territory, had turned them over to their agent there, and was returning home to make his final report to the Indian Office. He stopped at Belknap on matters of business and was killed as he was preparing to proceed on his way to his home in San Antonio.<sup>46</sup>

Perhaps in their zeal to protect their wards from the wrath of the white people Neighbors and his associates were blind to the faults of the savages but their courage and devotion to duty in protecting the Indians against what they regarded as the prejudice and avarice of the white men is one of the finest examples of public service to be found in the annals of the American frontier. They were confronted with great odds with their former friends and neighbors aligned against them. At times they had to fight almost single handed, but they stood at their post and were never lacking in either physical or moral courage.

Thus ended the Texas reservation experiment. It may well be doubted that even without the hostile attitude of the white frontiersmen the Comanche reservation could have been made successful. Many of the Southern Comanches never did live on the reserve and of those who came there large numbers refused to remain. The experience of the agents was prophetic of the difficulties the Federal Government was destined to have two decades later when the plan was tried for all the nomadic tribes of the plains under circumstances far more favorable. As long as vast stretches of uninhabited prairies and herds of fat deer, antelope and buffaloes invited them

45. Clara Lena Koch, "The Federal Indian Policy In Texas," in the *Quarterly*, XXIX, 110.

46. Leeper to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 15, 1859. Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, Sen. Exec. Doc. No. 2, p. 701. On their return from Indian Territory, Neighbors and Leeper, who were traveling together, were attacked by wild Indians and Leeper was seriously wounded.

the savages were loathe to accept the monotonous life of farming on the reservation. The old and decrepit might gladly stay but the spirited young warriors would hie away taking with them when they could their families and friends. But the record made by these reservation Comanches proved that the nomadic tribes were amenable to progress and the equals intellectually of their more sedate kinsmen of the progressive agricultural tribes.

## IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT IN WEST TEXAS

BY W. C. HOLDEN

Although the passing of the frontier across western Texas was a part of the great westward movement extending from the Rio Grande to Canada, there were two things which tended to make the Texas movement distinct and separate from that of the remainder of the Great Plains region of the United States. In the first place, Texas, on entering the Union, retained her public lands. This fact wielded a silent influence upon every settler who became a land owner. When he purchased a piece of land, his negotiations were with the state instead of with the central government. When he made his annual payments on his land he paid the state. When he paid interest, he remitted to the state. When he "proved-up" on his wilderness homestead, he did so to the state. When a dispute arose, during that period of the settlement of West Texas which corresponds to the territorial stage of other states, he carried on his litigation in a state court. When he felt the need of a law, during the same period, he petitioned the state legislature. When federal frontier defense against Indians became inadequate, and it usually was inadequate, he petitioned the governor for military aid. In short, the eyes of the original settler were turned to Austin instead of to Washington as was the case in the settlement of the rest of the public domain of the United States.

The influence of this fact is still evident. Perhaps, there is not to be found in any state, with the exception of the original thirteen, so much expression of state pride and patriotism as in Texas. In the second place, the advance of the Texas frontier was separated from the major westward movement by the Indian Territory. When the United States Government moved the southern semi-civilized Indian tribes west of the Mississippi river in 1834, the reservation policy was inaugurated. The Indian Territory was destined to reach from the western boundary of Arkansas into that region known as the "Great American Desert." Henceforth the western migration was forced to flow in two directions. The major part of the movement went north of the Indian country along the valleys of the Arkansas, the Platte and the Missouri while a very considerable minor movement extended south of

the designated Indian region into West Texas. The Texas prong of the advance constituted a problem somewhat different from that of the northern. It was more completely isolated, and its position was more precarious. The settlers there found Indians to the right of them, in Indian Territory, to the left of them across the Rio Grande in Mexico, and in front of them in the wild tribes of the plains.

Since the days when Stephen F. Austin first advertised for settlers for his Texas grant the cheapness of Texas lands had been a foremost thought in the minds of thousands of land hungry Americans in the older parts of the United States. Under the Mexican regime a man might become the owner of a league of excellent land for a mere song. Such an attraction caused enough people to migrate to Texas within a period of twelve or thirteen years to carry out a successful revolution. One of the first acts of Congress under the Republic was to enact a law providing that any immigrant who was the head of a family might acquire from the state 1,280 acres, or two sections, of land by paying the fees of office and surveying. Any unmarried man might obtain 640 acres upon the same terms. A steady procession of land seekers came to Texas during the ten years of the Republic. Many more would have come had peace with Mexico been assured. Mexico was still in an ugly mood and occasionally let out a muffled threat to reconquer her lost province. Then came annexation and the Mexican War which tended to check immigration from 1846 to 1848. With Texas securely a part of the United States, the lure of its cheap land in 1849 was second only to that of gold in California. More than 5,000 "movers" Texas bound, crossed the Arkansas river at Little Rock during November of that year. Of 315 wagons crossing at one ferry alone 214 were going to Texas.<sup>1</sup>

The frontier settlements at the time extended roughly from Cook county on the Red river to Fredericksburg and thence to Corpus Christi, running just west of San Antonio. Once started, the never ending column of immigration moved steadily westward for the next ten years. Throughout November and December of

1. *Northern Standard*, March 2, 1850.

each year the covered wagons on the main roads were seldom out of sight of each other.<sup>2</sup>

In 1860 the extreme frontier line of settlement extended roughly from Henrietta in Clay county, to Fort Griffin in Shackelford county, to Kerrville in Kerr county and thence to Del Rio in Val Verde county.<sup>3</sup> Immigration practically ceased during the Civil War. It began again to some extent in 1866, but the new comers did not settle near the frontier. There was still plenty of cheap land to be had in the Grand Prairie and Black Prairie regions of Central Texas,<sup>4</sup> and the immigrants preferred to pay a higher price for it than to take their chances in the country exposed to Indian depredations. Although many people who fled from their homes west of the Western Cross Timbers in 1866 and 1867 had returned in 1868 and 1869, the census of 1870 shows that the extreme frontier was considerably farther east in 1870 than in 1860. The population of all the counties west of the Western Cross Timbers was decidedly less in 1870 than in 1860.<sup>5</sup> The frontier settlements advanced slowly, but steadily in the face of Indian depredations, and by 1875, they had reached the line of federal military posts.<sup>6</sup> After the decisive Indian campaigns in 1875, immigration increased tremendously. The movement for the next twenty-five years reached, and even exceeded, that of the 50's. People came in wagons, on horseback, and, after 1881, by train.<sup>7</sup> They came as individuals, as families and as colonies.

It was estimated that over 400,000 people immigrated to Texas during the year 1876.<sup>8</sup> Of this number, 212,000 were brought in

2. On November 2, 1850, the *Northern Standard* observed: "For the last two weeks scarcely a day has passed that a dozen or more mover's wagons have not passed through our town. Most of the immigrants here seem to be well prepared to meet the hardship, expense and inconvenience attending the establishment of new homes in the wilderness."

On December 6, 1851, the same newspaper said: "Day after day it comes increasing. Whenever we step to the doors or south windows of our office, looking out over the square, we see trains of wagons halted, until supplies are purchased and inquiries made about the country and the roads. . . . Upon the southern line of travel through the state, as we hear, there is the same ceaseless stream, ever moving westward. . . ."

On November 11, 1854, the *Standard* stated: "The town is almost daily filled with wagons of immigrants from Tennessee, Kentucky and Alabama."

Again on December 11, 1858, the same newspaper commented: "Immigration exceeds everything we have ever seen. At least fifty wagons per day pass through Clarksville."

3. See map, p.

4. See Simonds, *Geography of Texas*, p. 16.

5. See maps pp. ——. Also, Appendix I, p.

6. See p.

7. *Frontier Echo*, March 17, 1876.

8. *Frontier Echo*, March 2, 1877.

by the Iron Mountain and the Texas and Pacific railroads.<sup>9</sup> The *Frontier Echo* stated that at least half of the total number of immigrants for that year came from states north of Arkansas and Tennessee.<sup>10</sup> These newcomers settled in practically every part of the state east of the 100th meridian, but the region most densely settled by them included Cooke, Montague, Clay, Wise, Jack, Young, Archer, Stephens, Erath, Comanche, Brown and Mills counties. A contemporary writing of the rapid settlement of Jack county, said:

“Passing to the Northwest we found farm homes thick where fifteen months ago one might travel half a day and see no human habitation. Ten Mile Prairie, situated in the north part of this county, has a new farm house on nearly every quarter section. The inhabitants are mostly of the kind who come to stay; and realizing the fact that industry begets wealth, they have gone to work in earnest, and with good results.”

This description is fairly representative of what was taking place from Montague county to Mason county. Between June, 1876, and June, 1877, almost five million acres of land were taken up under the land laws of the state. Towards the close of the year, 1877, the *Frontier Echo*, in a jubilant mood, commented:

“We will be compelled to annex Mexico and Indian Territory in order to obtain elbow room. All these things are in the near future for Texas unless this immigration question is squelched.”

So rapid had been the settlement that the governor issued proclamations during the first months of 1878 declaring several counties on a line with Jack county to be no longer frontier counties and forbidding the carrying of weapons therein.<sup>11</sup> In the spring of 1878 the military post at Jacksboro was abandoned. Within a period of eighteen months the frontier settlements had advanced from thirty to fifty miles along the entire northwestern part of the state. From the middle of 1878 to the close of 1879 the immigrants found a halting place in the tier of counties extending from Wichita county to Coleman county.

9. *Ibid.*, March 16, 1877.

10. *Ibid.*, May 4, 1877.

11. *Frontier Echo*, December 14, 1877.

In March, 1878, a party of farmers from Pennsylvania purchased 54,400 acres of land in Throckmorton county. The new town of Williamsburg was established, and before the close of the year the colony numbered more than four hundred.<sup>12</sup> About the same time a colony of four hundred German families arrived in Baylor county from the vicinity of Indianapolis. They bought 100,000 acres of land at \$1.50 an acre and paid cash for it. The lot of these Germans during the first few years after their arrival was better than that of the average settler. They brought with them sufficient tools and capital to run them until a crop could be made.<sup>13</sup>

It is interesting to notice the effect of the coming of the actual settlers upon the few buffalo trading posts and cow towns which had grown up far in advance of the general frontier of settlements. They began to take on new life with the coming of the small settlers. The town of Fort Griffin in Shackelford county had developed from a trading post established there after the military post was located in 1868. During the period of the buffalo slaughter it became the chief supply station for the hunters. Before the slaughter had ceased the new Dodge Cattle Trail, passing through Fort Griffin, had been established, and Fort Griffin became an important supply station for the cattle outfits going up the trail. With the influx of settlers into Shackelford county in 1878, it seemed that the future of the town was assured. Not so, however, for the failure to secure a railroad three years later caused the town to decline in favor of its rival, Albany, fifteen miles south. The population of Albany, already for several years the county seat of Shackelford county, had been exceedingly small. After 1878 its future began to be more promising. The same was true of Belle Plains, the county seat of Callahan county. The town was established in the winter of 1877-'78. By the summer, 1879, it had a number of stone business houses and a Methodist college.<sup>14</sup> Buffalo Gap in Taylor county felt the quickening of life in 1878. The town had grown from a buffalo camp established in 1876. When the county was organized, in 1877, it became the county seat. From 1877 to 1881 the town was an important supply center for the cattle range. Snyder's origin was much like that of Buffalo Gap. A buffalo supply camp in 1876 and 1877, it took the name of Hide Town in 1878, which

12. *Ibid.*, March 8, 1878.

13. *Ibid.*, March 15, 1878.

14. *Frontier Echo*, August 23, 1879.



shortly was changed to Snyder.<sup>15</sup> Tascosa, on the Canadian river in the heart of the free range cattle country, and 300 miles beyond the line of settlements, was established in 1876. For years it was a trading point on the cattle trail which led through the Panhandle into Colorado, sometimes known as the Goodnight Trail. Afterwards, the town became the county seat of Oldham county.<sup>16</sup> Mobeetie, afterwards the county seat of Wheeler county, had its beginning in 1876 as a buffalo supply camp. It soon became a trading point for cattlemen, and its history as a cow town was not unlike that of Fort Griffin and Tascosa.

The several frontier towns mentioned above managed to survive, after a fashion, the coming of the settlers, the railroads, and the establishment of rival towns. With the exception of Albany, none of them were as large in 1925 as they were in 1879. There was another buffalo town, Reynolds City in Stonewall county. It was established in 1876 and enjoyed a remarkable boom for two years, and then disappeared as quickly as it had started. At one time it had four general stores, a dozen saloons, a Chinese laundry, a hotel and a livery stable. The townsmen pointed with pride to its remarkably large graveyard and at the same time boasted of the healthful climate.

In the fall of 1877, Hank Smith, a typical and energetic frontiersman from the vicinity of Fort Griffin, trekked more than a hundred miles beyond the line of military posts, and settled in Blanco Canyon in Crosby county. The next year, Paris Cox, a Quaker from Indiana, visited the Blanco Canyon region in company with a party of Buffalo hunters.<sup>17</sup> In the autumn of 1879 a colony of Quakers from Ohio and Indiana, under the leadership of Cox, purchased eighty-two sections of land in Lubbock and Crosby counties. Within this tract of land the town of Marietta was estab-

15. The name was in honor of W. H. (Pete) Snyder who established a mercantile store there in 1878.

16. The first decade of Tascosa's history, like that of Fort Griffin, was the history of the typical frontier cow town or mining town. Tascosa achieved a national fame as the result of a cemetery known as Boot Hill. It contained the graves of twenty-seven men, all of whom had died suddenly with their boots on. This cemetery came into existence at the same time as another famous Boot Hill at Dodge City.

17. Cox Letters, McMurry College Library, Abilene, Texas, J. W. Hunt to C. V. Hall, January, 1922.

lished.<sup>18</sup> The colony continued to grow until at one time it numbered two hundred persons.<sup>19</sup>

With the rapid advance of the settlements after 1876, the cattle industry was forced to give way with equal celerity. The movement went on in a leap-frog manner. In 1876 and 1877 cattlemen from Parker and Jack counties were busy moving their herds from that vicinity to Stonewall, Haskell and Knox counties. In 1878 and 1879 cattlemen from Palo Pinto and Stephens counties were looking for locations at the heads of the Double Mountain, Pease, and Wichita rivers.<sup>20</sup>

Immigration took a slightly unusual turn in Baylor county in the spring and summer of 1879. Traces of copper had been previously found there. When the line of settlements reached the county, the mining prospects induced a considerable number of immigrants to go there who might have gone to other vicinities. The county seat, Seymour, was founded in June, 1879, and six months later, it had fifteen business houses with six more under construction.<sup>21</sup>

Late summer, 1879, found the tide of immigrants beginning to trickle into Wilbarger, Knox, Haskell, Jones, Taylor and Runnels counties. The country to the east was by no means thoroughly settled, and there were isolated, widely scattered settlers to the west. By actual count, forty-seven wagons passed through Fort Griffin during one week in August, 1879.<sup>22</sup> Most of them were going to Haskell, Jones and Taylor counties.

Until 1880, the settlements on the northwest frontier advanced, on the whole, fairly evenly. In that year something happened to disturb the usual trend of things. The building of the Texas and Pacific railroad caused a long finger or prong of settlements to push out along the route of the road in Taylor, Nolan, Mitchell and Howard counties. The railroad overtook the line of settlements in the eastern edge of Taylor county. Abilene was laid out in the fall of 1880, and within a few months was a "tent city" with more

18. The town was named in honor of the wife of Paris Cox, whose Christian name was Mary.

19. In 1887 the Quakers established the Central Plains Academy with junior college rank. The colony continued to operate as such until 1891, when the organization was abandoned. Some of the Quakers went to other states, while some scattered out among other new and growing settlements in the Plains region.

20. *Fort Griffin Echo*, August 2, 1879.

21. *Fort Griffin Echo*, November 29, 1879.

22. *Fort Griffin Echo*, August 16, 1879.

than two thousand people. Sweetwater, Colorado and Big Spring came into existence within a year. After the arrival of the railroad, more than half the people who occupied the adjacent lands came by train.

In February, 1881, excitement over immigration began in a new place. Up to that time, El Paso had stood on the Mexican border, almost isolated in so far as her relations with the settlements of Texas and New Mexico were concerned. Her population had long consisted of "only Mexicans, old Texans, and a few hardy adventurers from other states."<sup>23</sup> About the middle of February, the Southern Pacific railroad entered the town from California. For weeks the trains were crowded with passengers from the Pacific coast, all eager to get to Texas and secure a location. Before the end of the month, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe reached the town from the north. The effect of the coming of the two railroads was the introduction of a rough, mixed and energetic population. Within a short time El Paso began to throw off the lethargy of an isolated Mexican village, and had taken on the aspect of a growing American town.<sup>24</sup>

The building of the Texas and Pacific caused the northwest line of settlements between 1880 and 1885 to take the form of a vast semi-circle extending from Hardeman to Midland counties by way of Haskell, Jones and Fisher counties. The settlement of the counties along the route of the railroad was at the expense of those lying north and south of the road. The farming frontier did not advance more than forty miles west of Throckmorton and Seymour during the five years, while it advanced 175 miles west of Baird.<sup>25</sup> The settlements in Crosby county remained isolated about the center of the semi-circle, almost due north of Big Spring and due west of Seymour. Editor Robson of the *Albany Echo* made a trip from Albany to Yellow House Canyon, Lubbock county, back in the summer of 1883 and passed by one house on the way. The intervening country at the time was strictly a cattle region, and the house he passed was a ranch home.<sup>26</sup> Some eighty miles south of the route Robson traveled, and almost south of Crosby county was a

23. *Ibid.*, February 26, 1881.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Throckmorton, Seymour and Baird are approximately in a line north and south.

26. *Albany Echo*, June 2, 1883.

young city with almost 5,000 people, with cosmopolitan airs, scores of saloons, rollicking dance halls, and a street railroad. Colorado City was the trading center of the cattle country for a hundred miles to the south and for more than 200 miles to the north and northwest.<sup>27</sup> Haskell, county seat of Haskell county, was not founded until the winter of 1884-'85.

The influx of immigration from 1879 to 1885 had been fairly constant and normal, but in the late summer and fall of 1885 it took on unusual proportions. The good crops and general prosperity of the state set many of the people of the states north and east agog. The ferrymen along Red River worked overtime transporting covered wagons "whose tongues were pointing west."<sup>28</sup> Sad times were ahead for their occupants. A West Texas drouth was setting in. Just one year later many of the same wagons with their forlorn occupants crossed the same river again. This time their tongues were pointing east.

The new comers were optimistic enough in the fall of 1885. They continued to arrive until the spring of 1886. Not all of them were going on to the extreme frontier. Many were settling on the vacant lands in the counties considered already "settled." For instance, the line of settlement had definitely passed Callahan county during 1880. At that time the county had a population of 3,000. In February, 1886, the county had 10,000 people.<sup>29</sup> Regardless of where the people settled, they soon felt the pinch of the dry weather. The drouth of 1886 gave the settlement of West Texas a backset from which it did not recover for several years.

Fortunate indeed was the town of Ballinger in her timely origin. The Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe, extending a branch line from Coleman Junction, reached the Colorado river in Runnels county in February, 1886. A town site was laid out by the railroad company on land previously purchased. A public lot sale was held, and the town started off with a boom. By the middle of March, more than a thousand people were living on land which a month before had been a cattle pasture.<sup>30</sup> Had the railroad arrived two months later, the establishment of the town would have been de-

27. *Ibid.*, July 21, 1883.

28. *Taylor County News*, November 6, 1885.

29. *Taylor County News*, February 26, 1886.

30. *Ballinger Bulletin*, July 9, 1886.

layed, no doubt, two years or longer. The building of the railroad into Runnels county stimulated immigration into that entire region until late spring, 1886.

By midsummer the drouth conditions had become acute. People were soon leaving the country by hundreds. The roads were full of covered wagons going east. Many of the wagons were conspicuous for the inscriptions crudely written upon the wagon sheets. One said, "In God we trusted; went west and got busted." Another, with more sentiment, had, "Last fall came from Rackin Sack, got sorry and now go rackin back"—a rather dry and cynical thrust at Fate. The drouth was broken in the late spring of 1887. By midsummer, many of the drouth refugees were returning. During the summer, fall and winter a constant line of wagons loaded with household "plunder" and children were daily passing through Abilene going west.<sup>31</sup>

A prong of settlements into the unsettled northwest began in 1887. The Fort Worth and Denver railroad started building northwest beyond the line of settlements in January of that year. By April, 1888, the road had been completed through Childress, Donley, Armstrong, Potter, Hartley and Dallam counties to Texline. The towns of Childress, Clarendon, Amarillo and Dalhart sprang into existence, or, if already existent, took on new life. Soon farms began to checkerboard the country adjacent to the railroad as far to the northwest as Amarillo. The building of the Fort Worth and Denver caused the North Plains to be settled approximately twenty years before the South Plains.<sup>32</sup>

A considerable change in the direction immigration was taking, became manifest about 1889. Prior to that year, perhaps as many as nine-tenths of the immigrants had been diverted towards the northwest. Throughout the year, 1888, the most of them went to the North Plains, but the next year interest began to shift to the southwest. The *San Antonio Express* predicted as early as 1883 that the southwest would have to wait for the major part of the northwest to become settled before that region could expect to make much headway. Some progress had been made, however. The Southern Pacific railroad was extended west from San Antonio to

31. *Taylor County News*, January 7, 1888.

32. *Taylor County News*, September 14, 1888.

Del Rio in 1882 and 1883. The building of the road stimulated some immigration along its route in Medina and Uvalde counties. The rise of Hondo, a new railroad town, replaced the old German town of Castroville as county seat of Medina county.

The population of the region west of a line drawn from Lampasas, Lampasas county, by Castroville, Medina county, to Corpus Christi, Nueces county, made a slow but consistent growth from 1850 to 1870, and after 1870, a faster growth. Gillespie county, for instance, had a population of 1,240 in 1850. The German colony at Fredericksburg had been established in 1846. In 1860 the county had 2,736 persons; in 1870, 3,568; in 1880, 5,228; in 1890, 7,056; and in 1900, 8,229. Uvalde county had 506 people in 1860; 851 in 1870; 2,541 in 1880; 3,804 in 1890; and 4,647 in 1900.<sup>33</sup> By 1880, all southwest Texas was fairly well settled, so far as the arid nature of the country would permit, as far west as the 100th meridian. The building of the San Antonio and Aransas Pass railroad from San Antonio to Kerrville in 1886 had some influence on the number of immigrants settling along its route. The population of Kerr county doubled between 1886 and 1890.

As the frontier of the small settlers pushed on in the southwest, the arid nature of the country in Kinney and Edwards counties in the tier of counties adjoining the Pecos river on the east, and in all of the counties west of the Pecos caused that entire region to remain sparsely populated. With the exception of some small irrigated districts along the Pecos river and at Fort Stockton, agriculture made but little progress in that section. The line of movement in the southwest took a northwesternly direction. Beginning about 1860 with a line extending from Bandera to San Saba counties, the settlements advanced by 1870 into Kimble, Menard and Concho counties, and a few venturesome spirits were already pushing into the Concho region.

A ranchman by the name of R. F. Tankersley had settled on the South Concho in 1864. The next year another, G. W. DeLong, made his headquarters at Lipan Springs in the same vicinity. When Fort Concho was established in 1868, less hardy souls had the courage to move their herds to the neighborhood of the lower Con-

33. Federal Census, 1900.

chos where protection could be had within a day's ride. By 1874, the Concho country was deemed sufficiently populated to warrant the organization of a county. The legislature, March 13, 1874, accordingly created Tom Green county from a region which had previously been a part of Bexar territory. The southern boundary of the new county extended from the northwest corner of Menard county to the Pecos river, and the northern boundary extended from the northwest corner of Runnels county to the Pecos. The county contained 12,500 square miles, an area larger than the state of Maryland, from which have since been carved thirteen counties.<sup>34</sup>

At the time of the organization of the county its qualified voters numbered 160. There were but two towns in the entire area. Ben Ficklin at the stage stand of the El Paso Mail Company, was located on the South Concho river five miles south of Fort Concho, and San Angelo—Santa Angela as it was originally called—on the Middle Concho, just across the river from the fort. Both places aspired to be the county seat. Ben Ficklin had the stage line, the drivers, the large force of men necessary to operate such an enterprise, and the postoffice. San Angelo had the fort, the soldiers, the payroll, and the larger array of saloons. The race waxed exceedingly warm. Tactics were adopted very similar to those used in Kansas during the days of its territorial organization. Ben Ficklin imported the clerk of the Federal District Court at El Paso, paid his expenses for a month while he quietly naturalized sixty-five Mexicans, voted them *en masse* on election day, and got the county seat, much to San Angelo's chagrin. An angry Fate seems to have decreed that Ben Ficklin should pay for her perfidy, however, for in August, 1882, the town was almost completely washed away. Sixty-five people lost their lives—the number of Mexicans naturalized seven years before. The county seat was moved to San Angelo, because there was nothing else to do.

The removal of the Indian menace in 1875 had some effect in stimulating immigration into the Concho country, although not nearly so much as in the northwestern part of the state. The population of Tom Green county, which was less than a thousand in 1875, more than tripled during the next five years. In 1880 it was

34. The original Tom Green County has been divided into the counties of Coke, Sterling, Glasscock, Midland, Ector, Winkler, Loving, Irion, Reagan, Upton, Crane and Ward.

3,615, of which 645 were negroes. It was not until the best available lands in the northwest had been taken up, about 1890, that immigrants began to give serious attention to the Concho region. By 1900, the territory which had originally been included in Tom Green county had a population of 11,350 and twelve counties had been cut from it.<sup>35</sup>

By 1890, every part of West Texas had been settled, either densely or sparsely, the greater part of it sparsely. The choicest lands had been taken, but there was still plenty of room. Immigrants continued to come and fill in the gaps. The movement was unusual in 1892-1893. Nearly every train from the North and East throughout the early part of 1892 was loaded with immigrants and home-seekers.<sup>36</sup> The same was true just a year later. The *Dallas News* reported that in one day during the first week of January, 1893, more than 500 immigrants passed through Fort Worth, some on the train, some in wagons, going northwest and southwest.<sup>37</sup> And so it continued until, by 1890, the intensive settlement had gone as far in the southwest as the arid nature of the country would permit; had reached the foot of the South Plains; and had made enormous inroads into the North Central Plains. According to the Federal Census, which can never be accurate in a new and rapidly developing country, West Texas had increased from a population of 4,142 in 1850 to 755,260 in 1900.

One naturally wonders the source of all the immigration to West Texas, an area three times the size of all New England. An analysis of their origin shows that the great majority of them were either directly or indirectly, from the older states. It was a very common thing for a family to come to Texas, settle in East Texas or Central Texas for a while, and then move on to the frontier where cheap land on long time payments at a low rate of interest could be had. Judging from contemporary newspaper reports, it appears that more immigrants came from Arkansas than elsewhere; after Arkansas, in the order named, they came from Louisiana, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Missouri, Kentucky, Kansas, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Wisconsin and the Carolinas. It is noticeable that immigrants from north of the Ohio

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

36. *Taylor County News*, January 15, 1892.

37. *Ibid.*, January 6, 1895.



river had a tendency to come in colonies. More than a dozen colonies differing in size from twenty to four hundred families each, came from that region.

Prior to the building of the first railroads into the western part of the state in 1871, the greater part of the immigration from other states came by three main highways. Immigrants from the lower South, as a rule, came by way of Shreveport, Marshall, Dallas, Fort Worth, and thence to their destination. The Texas and Pacific railroad later followed this route. Immigrants from Tennessee, Kentucky and north of the Ohio river, if they traveled overland, came by way of Memphis, Little Rock, Hot Springs and Texarkana, from which place the route divided. One road led southwest to Dallas and Fort Worth; the other, west by Clarksville to Jacksboro.<sup>38</sup> With the building of improved roads in the first quarter of the century, the route from Memphis to Dallas, with some minor changes, became the Bankhead Highway. During the 70's the Iron Mountain railroad was built, closely paralleling the wagon highway, and connecting with the Texas and Pacific at Texarkana. Immigrants from Kansas, Missouri and Iowa, as a general thing, followed the old Butterfield Overland Mail<sup>39</sup> route. The road led by Fort Smith, Arkansas, through the southeast corner of what was then Indian Territory, crossed Red river near Denison, and thence to Jacksboro or Fort Worth.<sup>40</sup> The Missouri, Kansas and Texas railroad paralleled this route during the 70's, but ran some distance to the west.

The hardships which the overland immigrants suffered while en route to their new homes were legion. They invariably traveled during the coldest season of the year. They could not leave the old states until they had disposed of their crops, if they were fortunate enough to have any, and had settled their affairs there. Then it was necessary to make the trip to Texas, purchase land, build some kind of shelter to live under, and plow enough new sod land for a crop. To miss a crop or lose one would be distasteful. The great bulk of the moving came between November and February. Nearly all of the immigrants were on the road for weeks, many of them for months. Northers and blizzards often caught them in a

38. *Northern Standard*, December 6, 1851.

39. The Butterfield Overland Mail was established in 1858 and ran from St. Louis to San Francisco. It was abandoned in 1860.

40. *Frontier Echo*, January 26, 1877.

poor condition to stand the rigors of cold weather. A family of four was caught in a blizzard a few miles from Clarendon in 1894. They were found a few days later by a passerby, frozen to death.<sup>41</sup> The roads were not improved and there were few bridges. High water might delay one for days or weeks. A snow or a cold, driving rain might force an encampment under the most miserable and disagreeable circumstances. Not infrequently sickness developed in the immigrant's family. After railroads were built, perhaps a majority of the people came on the train, but the hardships of those moving in wagons remained about the same.

One of the outstanding characteristics of the whole immigration movement was the attitude which the early settlers had toward inducing other people to come and settle in their respective vicinities. As long as the country was strictly a cattle region, the cattleman looked with decided misgivings upon any attempt to induce farmers to come into the cattle domain. When he was forced to retire, sullenly and against his will, his successor's attitude toward immigration was the reverse. No sooner had sufficient people arrived to organize a county, than they began to take steps to encourage other people to come. They wanted neighbors, they craved the things which are made possible by community life, such as social affairs, schools and churches, and they realized that land values would increase in direct proportion to the density of population. So they turned their attention to the business of promoting immigration with great zeal. Mass meetings were called. The response was spontaneous and enthusiastic. The methods used by these mass meetings were very similar to those used by chambers of commerce today, but the personnel was different. The town merchants attended the mass meetings to be sure, and furnished most of the leadership; but the great majority of those present were farmers who wore heavy shoes and long suspenders, who seldom shaved their sandy beards, and who chewed strong tobacco. The local mass meetings invariably formulated some kind of a permanent organization to carry on propaganda and entice immigrants. The permanent organizations took different names in different counties. Ballinger had the Board of Immigration; Abilene, the Progressive Com-

41. *Taylor County News*, February 2, 1894.

mittee; Brownwood, the Bureau of Immigration; Albany, the Immigration Society, and so it went.<sup>42</sup>

Soon the need of a state organization was felt. There was nothing new in the idea. While the state was under the Reconstruction Constitution, 1868 to 1876, a state bureau of immigration was maintained; but the whole affair was abolished by the Constitution of 1876.<sup>43</sup> This meant that in the future state wide action would have to be by private enterprise. In the fall of 1887 the *Fort Worth Gazette* and the *Dallas News* sponsored a state immigration convention composed of delegates elected by county mass meetings.<sup>44</sup> The response was enthusiastic, and the meeting took place in December. The convention voted to organize a permanent committee on which each senatorial district would have a member. Each senatorial district in turn was divided into county organizations. The local units were to work through the state committee, and were to be at liberty to launch any local plans they desired. To meet the expense of carrying on state wide propaganda to entice immigration, the convention asked each senatorial district to raise \$600 for the use of the state committee. The district committeeman apportioned the amount among the various counties. The West Texas counties cheerfully paid their pro rata share the first year. When called upon for a second year's subscription, their enthusiasm took a decided slump.

The state immigration committee had done fairly good work with the means at its disposal. Much typical boosting propaganda had been sent out. It served as an agency to receive and answer inquiries of prospective immigrants outside the state. It religiously and periodically sent to the various counties circulars containing the names and addresses of all persons making inquiries. It also published the same names in the *Galveston News* and in the *Fort Worth Gazette*. In all, the state committee did about all that could have been expected of it. Yet West Texas soon cooled toward it. The real reason was not far to seek. The state immigration committee was working in the interest of all the state. West Texas wanted immigration for West Texas.

42. *Taylor County News*, January 25, 1887; *Ballinger Ledger*, May 20, 1887; *Albany News*, December 15, 1887.

43. *Frontier Echo*, April 21, 1876.

44. *Albany News*, December 15, 1887.

The *Anson Western* sounded the first discordant note. Why invest \$50 in the state immigration bureau, when that amount of money spent in the county would pay for 10,000 circulars strictly advertising Jones county?<sup>45</sup> The note hit a popular response. In three weeks practically every newspaper in the surrounding region re-echoed the *Anson Western's* sentiments. That was the last year of the state immigration committee's existence.

Regional immigration associations fared better. The Southwestern Immigration Association was formed in May, 1883, at San Antonio.<sup>46</sup> It continued to function for more than ten years. The *Taylor County News* began to agitate for a West Texas association in December, 1887. Three years passed by, and there were still no active steps taken towards the formation of a regional organization. The apparent lethargy was not due to lack of interest and enthusiasm on the part of the people. They had both, and an abundance to spare. They preferred to work as local units. A West Texas convention was finally called at Abilene in January, 1891.<sup>47</sup> The organization functioned vigorously for two months, and then was heard of no more.

In September, 1889, the people of the eastern part of the state organized the East Texas Immigration Bureau. For once, West Texas was not jealous of something East Texas had done. The *Taylor County News* made the laconic comment:

"This will help West Texas, for fully half of the newcomers who may be induced to settle in East Texas will buy out and turn loose those who wish to come west."

The most successful of all the regional organizations was the Pecan, Colorado, Concho Immigration Association. It was comprised of the counties of San Saba, Brown, Coleman, Runnels, Coke, Tom Green, Glasscock, Irion, Menard, Concho and McCulloch. The association was organized in the summer of 1890 and remained a going concern throughout the 90's. The central body, in the form of a board of directors, had the moral and financial support of active county organizations. Pamphlets were printed galore and broadcasted through the northern and eastern states. Agents were

45. *Ballinger Leader*, September 20, 1889.

46. *Albany Star*, June 1, 1888.

47. *Taylor County News*, January 9, 1891.

sent to the points where the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad entered the state for the purpose of intercepting visitors and immigrants and piloting them to the Pecan, Colorado, Concho country. Exhibition cars of native products were assembled from time to time and sent to state and national fairs and exhibitions. It would be difficult to place an estimate upon the achievements of the association, but the Federal Census shows that the population of its constituency increased from 37,885 in 1890 to 52,890 in 1900.<sup>48</sup>

Aside from the activities of the Pecan, Colorado, Concho Association, the cause of promoting immigration in West Texas during the 90's was left almost entirely to the local and county organizations. They continued to function in an efficacious manner up to the close of the decade. Mass meetings retained their old popularity. County subscriptions, sometimes reaching into the four digits, were raised annually. How much good these local efforts did would be hard to say. They at least gave the earlier settlers something to do while they were waiting for the county to become thickly populated and for land values to rise.

The railroads leading into West Texas became exceedingly active in promoting immigration during the decade beginning in 1889. The Texas and Pacific, the Fort Worth and Denver, the Santa Fe, the Fort Worth and Rio Grande, and the Cotton Belt tried to outdo each other. All of them had immigration agents who spent all their time and a considerable part of the companies' earnings in making surveys, gathering statistics, publishing pamphlets with beautifully colored illustrations, elaborating on the wonderful potential possibilities of the county, getting up excursions from various points in the United States, arranging exhibitions, and doing scores of other things to entice well meaning immigrants into the transportation area of their respective railroads. Whole train loads of prospectors were hauled, at one-third to one-half fares, from Denver, Memphis and other points in the Mississippi Valley.<sup>49</sup> Exhibition trains, loaded with Texas exhibits, were sent through the northern and eastern states in 1891 and in 1898.<sup>50</sup> The effects

48. *Ballinger Leader*, August 8, 1890; *Ballinger Banner*, June 25, 1890; September 12, 1890; August 6, 1894.

49. *Ballinger Leader*, November 1, 1889; May 23, 1890; *Taylor County News*, January 16, 1891; July 22, 1898.

50. *Ballinger Banner-Leader*, September 3, 1891; *Taylor County News*, August 14, 1891; November 11, 1898.

of the railroad propaganda are not to be underestimated. The railroads, by virtue of their capital, organization, and extensive operations, held strategic places which enabled them to be a powerful factor in arousing an interest on the part of prospective settlers in West Texas.

The peak in the matter of promoting immigration came in the opening of the Spring Palace at Fort Worth in 1890. A company was organized in 1889 to erect buildings and arrange annual exhibits of Texas products of a mineral, agricultural and horticultural nature. West Texas counties responded energetically, and for the next several years tried to monopolize the whole show. Throughout the 90's the Spring Palace occupied a place in character and importance similar to that of the Dallas Fair today. Excursion trains were conducted over the various railroads leading to Fort Worth, and reduced rates were available from all points in the United States. The Spring Palace was later replaced as an annual attraction by the Fat Stock Show.<sup>51</sup>

The West Texas newspapers became crusaders *par excellence* in the cause of immigration. Local editors never tired of singing the praises of their respective vicinities. Several editors set aside one-eighth of the space in their newspapers for the express purpose of boosting the country and attracting immigrants.<sup>52</sup> Even then, they did not get to say all they wanted to. The result was that a surplus of unpublished propaganda accumulated and the editors were forced to get out special boom editions periodically. These editions would sometimes contain as many as sixteen pages, fifteen of which would be devoted to booming the country.<sup>53</sup> They boosted the crops, the climate, the water, the people, the wind, the grass, the minerals, the potential resources, and everything else in sight. Often the editor's ingenuity exceeded his veracity. The *Taylor County News*, for instance, got out a special edition in the summer of 1898. Various local scenes were illustrated with pictures. One depicted the end of Lytle dam at highwater. It was a reproduction of a scene showing seven children playing in the sand at the sea side, with high waves, pavillion and sea gulls. Another gave a glimpse of Lytle Park at Abilene, a boulevard, huge trees,

51. *Ballinger Leader*, January 25, 1889; May 5, 1890; May 23, 1890; *Albany News*, February 28, 1889.

52. *Taylor County News*, January 27, 1898.

53. *Ballinger Leader*, March 8, 1889.

a parkway, sidewalks, lamp posts, men in silk hats, and victorias, the like of which had never been known within hundreds of miles of Abilene.

One newspaper carried in its columns, week after week, for several months nineteen reasons why people should come and settle in its particular locality. It began by saying "the climate is perfect," and ended by saying "the growth of vegetation is so rapid that in two years the home is surrounded by a growth of trees and shrubs which would require five years to grow in a colder climate." Another newspaper carried for months a similar article listing "nine classes of persons who come to West Texas;" and it seemed that none were omitted. Still another editor, so accustomed to the use of immigration terms, headed the weekly list of births: *Our New Immigrants*. Oh, they had the fever!

Nor was that all. Every conceivable device possible was resorted to to disseminate the propaganda in other states. All local readers were urged to send to the editor names and addresses of prospective immigrants. Hundreds of extra copies of the newspaper were printed each week for the purpose of being sent *gratis* to such persons. Thousands of extra copies of the special boom issues were printed. Several of the larger newspapers at their own expense sent agents through the North and East to distribute literature and to arouse an interest in migrating to the "land of opportunity." Such efforts as were put forth with so much diligence by the newspapers of West Texas could not fail to have considerable effect in stimulating the immigration to that region.<sup>54</sup>

The Federal government opened for settlement a district in Oklahoma Territory containing 12,000 homesteads of 160 acres each at high noon on April 22, 1889. More than 100,000 "sooners" were lined up on the boundary of the Territory when the signal was given. In the grand rush that followed, there were hair raising races, a mad scramble, violence, intimidation, favoritism by the soldiers of the United States Army, and disappointment for seven out of every eight who started. All of this seemed a bit of irony to many immigration promoters in Texas, who had been begging and almost hiring immigrants to come to Texas. There were hundreds

54. Ballinger Leader, March 8, 1889; Taylor County News, July 22, 1898; Mason News, March 8, 1890.

of thousands of acres of land, practically as good as the Oklahoma land and could be had at as cheap a price and on better terms in the Panhandle of Texas.<sup>55</sup>

Towards the close of the decade, ending in 1900, the people of West Texas began to take a more sober view of the whole question of immigration. Many of them began to realize that in the most frenzied period of immigration and settlement many foolish and unnecessary things had been done to lure the all important settler. The *Taylor County News* sadly pointed out that "if Abilene had saved the money she spent on immigration fakes, she could have purchased sufficient land to settle 500 families on 160 acres each," and then added with a sigh that "the *News* can not afford to spend so much money during the coming year as we have in the past."<sup>56</sup> The editor was unconsciously expressing a widespread sentiment. The immigration fever was passing.

55. *Taylor County News*, May 3, 1889.

56. *Taylor County News*, December 12, 1897.



## Transportation, Supplies, and Quarters for the West Texas Frontier Under the Federal Military System 1848-1861

BY LEONORA BARRETT

By the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, proclaimed July 4, 1848, the United States acquired the Southwestern territory.<sup>1</sup> Naturally this, added to the discovery of gold in California, and the shifting of the population of western Texas necessitated the opening of roads to the west.<sup>2</sup> There was necessity of establishing protection over the newly acquired lands, and supplies were to pass through Texas to New Mexico. As the Rio Grande was navigable for only a short distance, there was need for opening wagon roads to El Paso del Norte and New Mexico. The year 1849 was noted for four of these expeditions. The first went under instructions of General Worth and left San Antonio, February 13, 1849, for the purpose of surveying a wagon road. Lieutenants W. F. Smith and W. N. C. Whiting of the Engineers conducted the party. Their escort consisted of nine men well trained in frontier life with Richard Howard as guide for the party. They left Fredericksburg on February 21. As they advanced, the engineers concluded that a military road could be built with little work. On arriving at the place, they found very little left of the old Spanish Fort at San Saba, from which point the party set out on March 2. That night they saw the last water stream for three full days; thus they were without a drop of water for men or animals until reaching the Pecos River. On March 17 they came upon about two hundred mounted Apaches. This was quite dangerous for the party of fifteen with provisions for only two days. Gomez was their leader and they were on return from a big plundering expedition into Mexico. The men learned that Gomez was held off from attack only because the chiefs, Cigarrito and Chimonera, had refused to fight. Indians stole their

1. Malloy: *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements* (2 vols. Washington, 1910), I, 1107-1110.

2. For a good selection of maps for the study of military posts and transportation, see Thirty-second Congress, First Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 1, map opposite p. 304; Thirty-third Congress, Second Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 72, Part II, map 1; Thirty-fourth Congress, First Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 96, first of the book; Thirty-fifth Congress, First Session, Senate Exec. Doc., serial 922, map 7, Thirty-fifth Congress, Second Session, House Exec. Docs., serial 1001, map 9; Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 52, back of book.

papers while they were away at council. Near Presidio they found Mr. Leaton with eight or ten Americans in his employment succeeding in farming with their guns on their backs. The engineers insisted that the establishment of military roads would result in settlement and these in turn would be a defense for military life. Recently Mexicans had abandoned three presidios along the Rio Grande. They recommended that infantry posts be established for depot and refuge, but cavalry was indispensable on the frontier. The party reached El Paso del Norte on April 12, and found the city with about five thousand population. Just south was Isleta, the remnant of an old Aztec tribe. They started on the return April 19, with the party almost twice the size it was in going out. They followed the Rio Grande for about one hundred miles; later they crossed the San Pedro River and then the valley of Las Moras. They arrived in San Antonio, after being gone one hundred and four days.<sup>3</sup> *The San Antonio Texan* reported that they had surveyed an excellent wagon road.

Public meetings of citizens sanctioned a movement to open such road. In the spring of 1849 Robert S. Neighbors, the Indian agent, got the consent of General Worth to make a similar trip, and John S. Ford accompanied him. They used mules for the trip; the party passed near the spots where Belton and Waco were later built. They went further north than Lieutenant Whiting had gone, but near El Paso del Norte the routes were the same. On the return they met two parties of emigrants for California. Robert S. Neighbors recommended that a railroad be built on or near the thirty-second parallel. This trip proved that the country from San Antonio to El Paso del Norte was not a desert.<sup>4</sup>

The third and fourth trips were at the direction of Brigadier General Harney; but Captain J. E. Johnston of the Topographical Engineers planned them. He took the route, recommended by Lieutenant Whiting of the earlier trip, for the purpose of conducting the Third Infantry. R. A. Howard and twenty laborers accompanied and Captain King's Company was to escort the party in going out, but on the return they were to escort Captain S. G. French, who had left his encampment on the Leona River, June 1,

3. Thirty-first Congress, first Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 1, part I, 281-298; Thirty-first Congress, first Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 64, map opposite p. 250.

4. Ford: *Memoirs*, Ms., 503-504, 523-525, University of Texas Library.

1849, to carry supplies to El Paso del Norte. S. G. French passed through San Elizario and found a garrison of two hundred stationed at El Paso del Norte.<sup>5</sup> On June 13, 1849, Captain J. E. Johnston passed the point where the Wool road crossed the Rio Frio and completed the trip on September 8. The southern route was six hundred and seventy-three miles from San Antonio, while the northern route, traversed by Robert S. Neighbors, was six hundred and forty-six. Work on the San Pedro would shorten the latter about the same. They placed the two companies of the Third Infantry in two positions—one nineteen miles and the other thirty-seven miles south of the intersection of the thirty-second parallel with the Rio Grande. They found the two Indian trails into Mexico—one crossing the Rio Grande about eighty miles below Presidio del Norte and the other, the southern road, at Las Moras. From a study of the situation, Captain Johnston recommended that infantry be provided with the rifle for a distance and the revolver for a close fight.<sup>6</sup>

The other party, planned by Captain Johnston, left San Antonio, June 14, 1849, by the way of Fredericksburg for examining a northern route. Lieutenant Frances T. Bryan of the Topographical Engineers led the party. They arrived at El Paso del Norte, July 29, 1849.<sup>7</sup> These efforts at getting a road were not in vain, for Lieutenant Mechlin returned from El Paso del Norte to Austin in May of 1850 in twenty-seven days. He reported that the roads were in a good condition but there were many signs of Indian depredations. Major W. S. Henry of the Third Infantry, in a party of eighteen left El Paso del Norte on August 26, and arrived in Austin on September 13. They had three wagons and one ambulance. They also reported the road to be in a good condition.<sup>8</sup>

There was a reconnaissance from Fort Smith, Arkansas, that furnished much information in regard to Texas. In Captain R. B. Marcy's party, there were twenty-seven officers and enlisted men from Company F of the First Dragoons and fifty-two officers and enlisted men of the Fifth Infantry. They left Fort Smith on April

5. Thirty-first Congress, Second Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 1, part II, 802-816; Thirty-first Congress, First Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 64, pp. 25-26.

6. Thirty-first Congress, First Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 64, pp. 25-28, map opposite p. 250.

7. *Ibid.*, 14, 23, map opposite p. 250.

8. *Texas State Gazette*, June 1, 1850, p. 316; September 28, 1850, p. 41.

5, 1849, with the expectation of opening a road to Santa Fe; but they returned from El Paso through northwest Texas and reached the Red River about Fort Preston. Thus was the opening of the famous Marcy trail.<sup>9</sup>

In 1850 the policy of exploring expeditions continued. The problem of the quartermaster in San Antonio was to get supplies to El Paso del Norte and New Mexico. On March 11, 1850, Captain Love with twelve men from Ringgold Barracks, almost opposite Camargo, Mexico, started the exploring of the Rio Grande in the boat, "Major Babbitt." His orders were that the party was to go as far as possible in it. The boat, fifty feet long, was able to go nine hundred and sixty-seven miles above Brazos Santiago. They carried the boat around Brook's Falls and went forty-seven miles further to Babbitt's Falls. Thus they were able to approach within one hundred and fifty miles of El Paso del Norte. Captain Love returned to San Antonio on August 11, 1850. The steamboats were able to go to Kingsbury's Falls one hundred and sixty-nine miles above Laredo; but could go no further. He recommended removing this obstruction so they could go much further. Keel boats and trains of mule-teams supplied the garrisons at Laredo and Eagle Pass. The transportation to El Paso del Norte and Santa Fe was from Lavaca on the Texas coast.<sup>10</sup> The distance of the former was eight hundred and fifty miles. He found there were no American or Mexican settlers beyond Fort Duncan at Eagle Pass until the arrival at Presidio, where there was a garrison of two hundred men and a town of two thousand. Beyond Presidio reports were afloat that herds of blacktail deer, two thousand in number, could be seen.<sup>11</sup>

In 1851 because of rains and bad roads, it took almost one month to transfer supplies from Indianola to San Antonio. By May 7 the last train left the depot at San Antonio for the posts. In sending the train to El Paso del Norte, the quartermaster provided an escort of fifty men, who drove eight beeves. There were more

9. Thirty-first Congress, First Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 64, pp. 171, 173, 220 ff., map opposite p. 250.

10. This was only temporary. In May, 1851, contractors carried supplies from San Antonio to El Paso del Norte. See Thirty-second Congress, First Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 2, part I, 227-228.

11. Thirty-first Congress, Second Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 1, Part II, 324-329.

than one hundred and fifty wagons and one thousand animals in the train. It took forty-nine days to make the trip.<sup>12</sup>

The heavy expense of the Quartermaster's Department was due to paying for transporting troops, supplies for the march, ordinary clothing, subsistence, and all supplies moving with the troops.<sup>13</sup> In the fiscal year, 1850 to 1851, the quartermaster spent \$27,735.70 for horses and mules for Texas. The government trains carried most of the provisions; for, in this fiscal year, seven hundred and fifty-two government mule wagons left San Antonio, while only ninety-two contract ox-wagons left. The former transported company officers' baggage, subsistence, quartermasters' stores, medical, ordnance, and other stores to the military posts; the latter usually transported public supplies (chiefly forage). In this year the cost for transporting by means other than government wagons was \$393,249.01. In addition to the contract price, the quartermaster paid subsistence for the teamsters and herdsmen, going and returning from any post, and furnished a military escort. The estimate of the whole expenses in carrying provisions to New Mexico was \$22.00 per one hundred pounds. Forage issued from the San Antonio depot for the year was \$87,509.70.<sup>14</sup>

The quartermaster would put advertisements in the newspaper to secure applications for contracting and transporting supplies. At 12 o'clock, August 1, 1857, at the Chief of Quartermaster's Office at San Antonio, a designated person was to open the bids of those applying to transport goods from 1858 to 1860 for all forts in Texas and New Mexico.<sup>15</sup>

An illustration of a contract into which the quartermaster entered is: Major D. H. Vinton, a. m., entered into a contract with George T. Howard on April 15, 1859, for transporting supplies in the order of being received from all the military stores which would be delivered to him from January 1, 1860, to December 31, 1860. He made a bond of \$50,000. The rates were: From Indianola to San Antonio, \$1.25 per one hundred pounds; from San Antonio to Forts Inge, Duncan, and Clarke, \$1.10 per one hundred

12. Thirty-second Congress, First Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 2, Part I, Vol. II, 227-228, 230.

13. Thirty-fifth Congress, Second Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 1, Part II, 795.

14. Thirty-second Congress, First Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 2, Part I, 221, 254-255, 259, 263-268.

15. *Texas State Gazette*, May 2, 1857.

pounds per one hundred miles; from San Antonio to Camp Hudson, Fort Lancaster, and Camp Stockton, \$1.50 per one hundred pounds per one hundred miles; from San Antonio to Forts Davis, Quitman, Bliss, and Fillmore, \$1.70 per one hundred pounds per one hundred miles; from San Antonio to Camp Verde, and to points not over one hundred twenty miles from San Antonio, \$1.06 per one hundred pounds per one hundred miles; from San Antonio to Fort McKavett, at \$1.75 per one hundred pounds for the whole distance; from San Antonio to Fort Chadbourne, at \$2.75 per one hundred pounds for the whole distance; from San Antonio to Fort Belknap, at \$4.50 per one hundred pounds for the whole distance; from San Antonio to posts in the vicinity of the route to Fort Belknap as follows: not exceeding one hundred and twenty miles, at the Camp Verde rates; over this to two hundred and not exceeding three hundred miles at the Fort Chadbourne rates; beyond Fort Belknap and within eight hundred miles of San Antonio, \$1.40 per hundred miles.<sup>16</sup>

The rates for delivering goods to Forts Bliss, McKavett, Chadbourne, and Belknap were the same in 1860 as they had been in 1855.<sup>17</sup> The distance from Indianola to San Antonio was one hundred and thirty miles, and from San Antonio to El Paso del Norte six hundred and seventy-three. Thus the rate from San Antonio to El Paso del Norte was approximately \$13.70 per one hundred pounds in both 1855 and 1860. This compared well with the rate of \$13.50 in 1851.<sup>18</sup> The Quartermaster General declared that in some places of the west supplies were 300 per cent to 500 per cent more than in the Atlantic states.

The Surgeon General reported that each year there were heavy losses and damages in transmitting medicines and surgical instruments to the various posts.<sup>19</sup>

Evidently the chief contracts entered into by the subsistence department were for beef.<sup>20</sup>

General Brooke planned to reduce the expense of subsistence by having the soldiers plant crops where the cost per ton ran over

16. Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 22, p. 7.

17. Thirty-fourth Congress, First Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 7, p. 11.

18. Thirty-second Congress, First Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 2, Part I, 264-265.

19. Thirty-fourth Congress, First Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 1, Part II, Vol. II, 175.

20. Thirty-fifth Congress, First Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 58, pp. 38-39.

\$10.00.<sup>21</sup> He hoped to get the Indians to do some work by paying them in produce.<sup>22</sup>

The desert in the west caused much trouble in getting troops and supplies to the west. In 1857 John B. Floyd, Secretary of War, detailed Captain John Pope of the Topographical Engineers to drill an artesian well on the Pecos River. The different departments at San Antonio were to furnish supplies and men for the expedition. There were to be seventy-five enlisted men and two subalterns of infantry and twenty-five enlisted men and one subaltern of cavalry. The winter was so severe that it was necessary to send as many as possible of the horses to Fort Clarke for the winter. In the summer of 1858 some of his men went out on an exploring expedition and found immense springs on the Llano Estacado about halfway between the Pecos River and Mustang Springs. He estimated that the water supply would enable the shortening of the route eighty-five miles; another advantage was that they were on the direct route of the semi-weekly mails to California. In a few weeks he recommended that they cease boring because of limited finances.<sup>23</sup>

As to over-coming the problem of the Llano Estacado, the minds of people were not at rest. On March 3, 1851, Jefferson Davis of Mississippi proposed an amendment, providing for the importation of camels, to the army appropriation bill. It caused laughter; but he insisted that they would be an advantage because of their adaptability to desert regions.<sup>24</sup> In 1855 an item of the army appropriation bill provided for this purpose. In the spring of 1856, thirty or thirty-five of these landed at Indianola. Camp Verde became headquarters for the camels. Soon forty others landed and went there.<sup>25</sup>

In 1859 there were plans for twenty-four camels to be turned over to Lieutenant Edward L. Hartz, Conductor Ramsay, and six drivers for testing their adaptability for carrying military supplies. The quartermaster was to furnish mules for the camel drivers.

21. Thirty-second Congress, First Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 2, Part I, 218.

22. *Ibid.*, 164.

23. Thirty-fifth Congress, Second Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 1, Part II, Vol. II, 590-593, 598-599, 605.

24. Congressional Globe, March 3, 1851, pp. 826-827.

25. Lubbock: *Six Decades in Texas*, edited by C. W. Raines (Austin, 1900), 238, Congressional Globe and Appendix, 1854-1855, p. 426.

Lieutenant Hartz kept a diary of the trip. They were able to carry from three hundred to six hundred pounds, their greatest trouble being with the packs. They seemed to go over the rocky places with more ease than the mules and horses; but would often arrive at the destination considerably later than the command. On good roads they were able to travel about three and one-half miles per hour and could travel at night almost as well as in daytime. They would appear in a fine condition even though water was carried by them for the party and, sad to say, none was for themselves. When the party got without water on the third day, men, mules, and horses were almost famished; but the camels viewed the water somewhat indifferently. The slippery banks of the creeks were a nuisance in securing passage by the camels. The party went by Camp Hudson, Fort Davis, and Camp Stockton. At Fort Davis each received a burden of nearly six hundred pounds, including four hundred gallons of water and rations for fifty-three men. Company C of the Eighth Infantry joined the party between Fort Davis and Camp Stockton. Once the camels went about five days without water. In rough places it was necessary for horses and mules to be led by the rider while the camels would carry their burdens.<sup>26</sup>

In 1860 Lieutenant W. H. Echols received orders to make a reconnaissance with camels and use the same instructions as Lieutenant Hartz had used the preceding year. Second Lieutenant J. H. Holman and ten privates of Company I of First Infantry and one Corporal and ten privates of Company A of the Eighth Infantry composed the escort. The former was to join Lieutenant Holman in San Antonio and the latter would join the party at Camp Hudson. The party was to use twenty camels from Camp Verde and fifteen mules. The reconnaissance was between the El Paso road and the Rio Grande from Fort Davis to Fort Stockton. They left San Antonio, June 11, 1860, and, after being reenforced at Camp Hudson, left for Fort Davis. Near Los Chiros was the best sight found for a military post. By August 2 the mules were lame and some of the camels were almost unable to walk because of tender feet and sore backs. They left one camel and two mules at Fort Stockton.<sup>27</sup>

26. Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 2, Part II, 422-423.

27. Thirty-sixth Congress, Second Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 1, Part II, 33 ff.



There were two events of national importance that concerned the development of Texas. Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, ordered the survey of a railroad route to the Pacific. Captain John Pope surveyed the part through Texas from the Red River to the Rio Grande. On October 17, 1854, he gave the report of his trip. He passed Fort Belknap and Fort Chadbourne and went on to El Paso. He recommended placing the road further north than Fort Chadbourne. Lieutenant Kenner Garrard, Second Lieutenant L. H. Marshall, and C. L. Taplin had assisted him.<sup>28</sup>

The other event of importance to Texas was the opening of the Southern Overland Mail Route. John Butterfield and others got the contract, March 3, 1857, the first run being made on October 9, 1858. The contract provided for semi-weekly service. The route was by Fort Belknap, Clear Fork Station, Fort Phantom Hill, and Fort Chadbourne. The Concord coaches would carry five or six passengers. Frequently army officers went back and forth by this route. The road was not much more than a trail. One passenger said the coach overturned three times near Fort Belknap. One stretch of land in Texas in the Llano Estacado was eighty miles without water. Later they changed the route between the Pecos and El Paso, thus making the trip by Camp Stockton. The Comanches stole two hundred and twenty-three horses and mules from the company in 1858 and 1859; they stole eighty of them, while being driven to restock the stations. In order to avoid the Comanches, the route was two hundred miles south of Marcy's trail, which it was supposed to follow; but instead the company used the military road from Fort Belknap to Fort Chadbourne.<sup>29</sup>

At headquarters at Corpus Christi, 1853 to 1855, and at San Antonio at other times, there was much interest. The people looked to headquarters for provisions, subsistence, pay, and everything. In 1854 there were four paymaster districts in Texas.

Major Albert Sidney Johnston accepted the position as a paymaster in the army, December 2, 1849. The position was without authority or command, but the duties were arduous and dangerous.

28. John Pope, "The Part From Red River to Rio Grande," in *Thirty-third Congress, Second Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 91, Vol. II, Part I, prefaces*, 22, 61-75.

29. Richardson: "Some Details of the Southern Overland Mail," in *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, (Austin, 1925), XXIX.

It was the summer of 1850 before he took up duties. His district included the troops between the Trinity and Colorado rivers. It was necessary to go to New Orleans for funds, which often amounted to \$40,000. He would go from New Orleans to Galveston by steamer, Galveston to Houston by steamboat, and Houston to Austin by stage. At first he was to pay troops every four months at Forts Croghan, Gates, Graham, and Belknap and Austin; his journey was five hundred miles. He would place the gold and silver in an iron chest, which was always at his feet, from New Orleans to Austin. In 1851 it was necessary to make three trips to New Orleans for funds to pay volunteers in the service from 1848 to 1849. In 1852 he stopped going to New Orleans as he was able to sell drafts in Austin. From time to time the district changed. In 1852 it included Forts Graham, Worth, Belknap, and Phantom Hill. The trip was seven hundred and thirty miles and required thirty-five days. When it included Forts Chadbourne, McKavett, and Belknap, the trip was six hundred and ninety-five miles. In 1854 he had to make payment every two months and thus his annual traveling was 4,200 miles. Those accompanying Major Johnston were a clerk, negro driver, and negro cook. They went in a covered ambulance, drawn by four mules. The escort was from four to twelve dragoons, as much precaution from Indians was necessary. His ambulance became a wreck when Major Wood was using it on a return from Fort Phantom Hill. Major Johnston described the journey in his district: "This six times repeated during the year makes up an amount of travel, sleeping on the ground, privation, and exposure to heat and cold, not imagined by the framers of the law, nor encountered by a private soldier in time of war or peace, for it must be remembered that the country traversed is uninhabited. . . ." In 1854 he wrote his daughter that they would start at 5 o'clock and would travel from twenty to thirty miles daily. He saw many beauties of nature and reported coal around Fort Belknap. People requested Major Johnston to perform all errands like buying horses, guns, boots, ribbon, paying taxes, and carrying watches for adjustment. People from other states got his advice as to land purchases. He happened to the misfortune of having more than \$3,000 stolen by his negro driver. Major Johnston replaced the money. March 3, 1855, Major Johnston rejoiced at being named

as commander of the Second Cavalry to be organized for service in Texas.<sup>30</sup>

Military protection in Texas had one difficulty not existing in other states. When Texas entered the Union, she held her public lands and the United States held none except that bought for certain purposes. The Quartermaster General, Thomas S. Jesup, recommended to Congress, December 1, 1855, that an appropriation be set aside for selecting sites for posts. He also recommended that officers be prohibited from erecting any but buildings of the most temporary character on lands other than those owned and that they reserve the right of removing all buildings at the time of abandoning the post.<sup>31</sup>

Generally they located the posts far in advance of settlement without any knowledge of the title to the lands, which probably could have been bought by individuals for twenty-five cents an acre. Settlements brought an increase in the rents.<sup>32</sup> When owners could prove the title to the land, they received rent even for the time of contested ownership. March 10, 1860, the Quartermaster General recommended that \$12,798.66 be appropriated for such rent and the privilege of cutting wood and timber at Forts Belknap, Merrill, and Graham, and Camp Hudson.<sup>33</sup> The Senate failed to pass an amendment to the army appropriation bill for covering this. They did not question the justice of the claims; but had already agreed to postpone private claims because of the lack of time. The wording of the amendment was such that it was in the nature of a private claim.<sup>34</sup>

In time Congress appropriated \$100,000 to be applied for purchasing sites during the fiscal year, 1854 to 1855. Later that body appropriated \$50,000 more. All of this money remained in

30. Johnston: *The Life of Albert Sidney Johnston*, (New York, 1906), 169-179; 184-185.

31. Thirty-fourth Congress, First Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 1, Part II, 8, 22-23. Representative Coburn, in a speech in Congress, January 11, 1873, said that the laws of Texas permit purchasing sites for certain purposes except in unorganized counties and the federal law of May 1, 1820, permits purchases, providing it is done by a special law making the appropriation. See *Congressional Globe*, January 11, 1873, p. 506.

32. Forty-second Congress, Second Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 1, Part II, 140-141.

33. Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, House Mis. Doc. No. 46, p. 2.

34. *Congressional Globe*, June 9, 1860, p. 2795.

the treasury till the Civil War.<sup>35</sup> As the War Department was unable to find satisfactory sites, they failed to apply the money.<sup>36</sup>

A. K. Craig, Colonel of Ordnance, recommended to Congress, October 28, 1851, that a permanent arsenal be established in Texas at or near Austin to replace the temporary depot at San Antonio.<sup>37</sup> Somewhat tardily Congress appropriated \$230,157.00 for the purchase of sites for arsenals in Texas and other western states and territories.<sup>38</sup> The City of San Antonio offered the land for an arsenal on condition that the Legislature pass a law permitting a building.<sup>39</sup> Congress accepted this; but, because it did not prove satisfactory, returned it to the city of San Antonio in 1860.<sup>40</sup> The State of Texas ceded fifteen and ninety-two one-hundredths acres in the lower part of San Antonio between the Menard road and the San Antonio River. The land had formerly belonged to P. H. Bell and G. P. Devine. The cession was on condition that the State of Texas retain civil and judicial jurisdiction over it.<sup>41</sup> Jefferson Davis of Mississippi introduced an amendment to increase the appropriation for the Texas arsenal from \$15,000 to \$21,000. He stated that San Antonio was selected because of the dryness of the climate. They had not been able until recently to get the title clear.<sup>42</sup> The House accepted the increase in the appropriation.<sup>43</sup> The following year the appropriation was \$43,000.<sup>44</sup> They failed to commence the arsenal earlier because of waiting to try to get a better location, as they considered their location to be rather inconveniently situated.<sup>45</sup> They finally built on the lot ceded by the State of Texas.<sup>46</sup>

35. Thirty-fourth Congress, First Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 9, p. 5; Thirty-fourth Congress, Third Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 23, p. 7; Thirty-fifth Congress, First Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 46, p. 6; Thirty-fifth Congress, Second Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 19, p. 5; Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 21, p. 5; Thirty-sixth Congress, Second Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 34, page 4.

36. Thirty-fourth Congress, First Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 1, p. 206; Thirty-fifth Congress, Second Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 1, Part II, 829; Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 2, Part II, Vol. II, 653.

37. Thirty-second Congress, First Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 2, Part I, 450.

38. Appendix to Congressional Globe, 1855-1856, p. 75.

39. San Antonio Texan, June 4, 1857.

40. Congressional Globe, June 9, 1860, p. 2795; June 14, 1860, p. 3005.

41. Executive Record, Vol. 277, pp. 350-351, Texas State Library.

42. Congressional Globe, February 26, 1859, pp. 1388-1389.

43. Appendix to Congressional Globe, 1858-1859, p. 363.

44. Appendix to Congressional Globe, 1859, 1860, p. 527.

45. Thirty-fifth Congress, First Session, House Exec. Doc. No. 2, Vol II, Part II, 541.

46. The description in the report of the Colonel of Ordnance corresponds with the description in the deed of cession. See Thirty-sixth Congress, Second Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 1, Part II, Vol. II, 994; Executive Record, Vol. 277, pp. 350-351, Texas State Library.

October 30, 1860, the Colonel of Ordnance reported that the buildings had been constructed. The arsenal office was twenty-five feet by sixty feet. The walls were built complete and the roof sheathed and covered with tin. The laboratory was twenty-five by thirty feet. There had already been filled ninety-nine requisitions for arms and five thousand and eighty-nine small arms had been cleaned.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup>. Thirty-sixth Congress, Second Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 1, Part II, Vol. II, 994.

## SOME ATTITUDES OF WEST TEXAS DELEGATES TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF 1875

By S. S. MCKAY

As a result of the famous Reconstruction Acts, passed by Congress in 1867, the South was placed under control of the radical wing of the Republican party for a period of eight years. In the next several elections of state and county officers ex-Confederates were disfranchised, while the freed negroes were permitted to vote. This situation resulted in a period of destructive misrule, lasting for a decade after the close of the Civil War.

In Texas the coalition of carpetbaggers, scalawags, and negroes wrote the Constitution of 1869 and filled almost all state, district, and county offices with members of the radical Republican party. The new officials were mostly corrupt or were in other respects incapable of good administration. As the former Confederates regained their political rights through various amnesty acts of the Federal Government Texas gradually came again under control of her own people. Beginning in 1872 the Democrats had cast aside district judges by 1875. In the latter years it was determined to write a new constitution and get rid of the last vestige of radical rule—the Constitution of 1869.<sup>1</sup>

There were elected to the Convention 75 Democrats and 15 Republicans, six of the latter being negroes. Forty-one delegates were farmers, twenty-nine were lawyers. Ten delegates had had experience in a Texas constitutional convention, twenty-five had been in state legislative positions, and several others had had experience in public offices of importance. The writer has had the usual difficulty in determining where West Texas began and ended in 1875. The attitudes of twelve delegates, living west of the present Missouri, Kansas & Texas railroad, running from Denison to San Antonio, have been considered. The following men were included: J. W. Barnett, of Parker County; H. G. Bruce, of Johnson; Louis Cardis, of El Paso; G. B. Cooke, of San Saba; A. O. Cooley, of Gillespie; N. H. Darnell, of Tarrant; J. R. Fleming, of

1. McKay, S. S., *Making the Texas Constitution of 1876*, 46.

Comanche; A. C. Graves, of Coryell; H. C. King, of Kendall; T. L. Nugent, of Erath; Jacob Waelder, of Bexar; and W. T. G. Weaver, of Cooke County. All of the twelve men were Democrats.

Since the state government under the radical Republican regime had been characterized by very high taxation and high expenditure the outstanding purpose of the Convention of 1875 was retrenchment. When the Committee on Executive Article submitted its report it suggested reduction of most of the salaries. The Convention ordered further reductions. Judge John H. Reagan, perhaps the most highly respected delegate in the Convention, moved an amendment increasing the salaries of the comptroller, treasurer, and land commissioner from \$2,500 to \$3,000 a year. His amendment was defeated by a vote of 55 to 21, four West Texans voting for the amendment and seven against it.<sup>2</sup>

The Committee on Education was presented with a multitude of resolutions and propositions, ranging all the way from the elaborate and costly school system of the radicals to no public school system at all. Three of the propositions are considered here. Mr. Sansom, of Williamson County, proposed that the state should establish free schools to educate only the orphan children of the state. His proposal was favored by 19 delegates and opposed by 46. West Texas delegates voted three in its favor and seven against it.<sup>3</sup> Senator E. L. Dohoney, of Lamar County, offered an amendment to provide that legislative appropriations should be made to supplement the school fund in such amount as to provide at least four months training each year for children between the ages of nine and fifteen years. His proposal was defeated by a vote of 23 to 51, only two of the western delegates voting favorably.<sup>4</sup> Mr. S. H. Russell, Harrison County Republican, offered the most generous plan for public schools. His amendment suggested a school fund to include one-fourth of the state's general revenue, a poll tax of one dollar on all male inhabitants between the ages of twenty-one and sixty, and a special tax of not less than one-sixth of one per cent on all taxable property of the state. This plan was defeated by a vote of 14 for and 59 against. No West Texas delegate voted in its favor.<sup>5</sup>

2. *Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, 296.*

3. *Ibid.*, 1875, 325.

4. *Ibid.*, 320.

5. *Ibid.*, 519. *State Gazette (Austin), October 29, 1875.*

On final passage the article adopted provided for legislative permission to appropriate not more than one-fourth of the general revenue, and to levy a poll tax of one dollar for the support of the public schools. The disappointment of the state press at the failure to provide a public school system was almost universal. The *Waco Examiner* said that the state could not recover from the disgrace within a century. The *Galveston News* expressed its regret, saying that the Convention, after decreeing universal suffrage, had now also decreed universal ignorance. The *Goliad Guard* was even more emphatic, commenting as follows: "It is our earnest opinion that they have played Hell."<sup>6</sup>

A majority report brought in by Mr. Dohoney from the Committee on Suffrage caused a spirited contest within the Convention. The report proposed to make the payment of a poll tax a prerequisite to voting. Mr. R. B. Rentfro, Republican delegate from Montgomery County, offered a minority report in which he argued that the exercise of suffrage was a *right* and not a *privilege*, that revenue from the tax would be inconsiderable, and that the people were opposed to any restriction on suffrage. On the Convention floor the majority report was defended by Judge Reagan, Senator Dohoney, Colonel Crawford, and others, who argued that it contained a righteous principle in the nature of a compact between the citizen and the state, by which the former contributed to the support of the government which protected him, and that it would operate no more against the blacks than against the whites.

Opponents of the poll tax measure argued that it would be resented by the voters, would make doubtful the adoption of the proposed constitution, would endanger the success of the Democratic party, was intended to reach the negroes, and would restrict the right of suffrage among the poor people. Mr. L. Norvell, of Jasper County, offered a substitute eliminating the poll tax prerequisite, which was passed by a vote of 61 to 20.<sup>7</sup> West Texas delegates voted eight to four in favor of the substitute. The state press was about equally divided upon the poll tax requirement. The papers of the eastern part of the state, where the negro popula-

6. Quoted by *Houston Telegraph*, October 27, 1875.

7. *Journal, Constitutional Convention*, 1875, 308. *Austin Statesman*, October 8, 1875.



tion was centered, favored restriction; but in other parts of the state the proposed restriction attracted little attention.

Another measure which was aimed at "Sambo" was the plan of General J. W. Whitfield, of Lavaca County, concerning the make-up of judicial districts. He proposed that the state should be divided into five districts, each of which was to elect a supreme court judge and five district judges. He said frankly that his proposal was a plea for the black belt, and that if the delegates voted it down they would destroy the hopes of fifteen counties and put them under negro rule. He said he had sympathy for the freed negroes, but delegates knew that they were not competent to elect the judiciary for the state. His amendment was lost by a vote of 38 to 29, West Texas delegates voting five for and five against the proposal.<sup>8</sup>

The western states of this country were in the midst of a campaign to encourage emigration from Europe and the Atlantic coast states of the United States. The Texas Constitution of 1869 had provided for an immigration bureau, and had even permitted appropriations from the state treasury to pay the passage of immigrants to Texas. The retrenchment faction in the Convention had marked the bureau as one of its intended victims, while another strong group felt that the time had not come when state aid to immigration should be given up.

The Committee on Immigration made two reports. The majority suggested that the people "ought not to be taxed for any such purpose" and recommended a constitutional clause prohibiting the legislature from aiding immigration in any way. Mr. Jacob Waelder, San Antonio lawyer, submitted a minority report referring to the changes brought about by foreigners in the region between Austin and San Antonio, which had been converted "from sterility into blooming gardens." He asked for a bureau of Agriculture, Statistics, and Immigration. Mr. Waelder admitted that the radical legislature, Congressmen, governor, supreme court, and the existing bureau had been a failure, and accepted readily an amendment providing that no money should be paid from the treasury to bring immigrants to the state.<sup>9</sup>

8. *Ibid.*, 642. *Galveston News*, November 12, 1875.

9. *State Gazette* (Austin), October 20, 1875.

Mr. H. C. King, of Kendall County, argued that each immigrant brought to the state an average of \$500, or \$1,500 per family, and that during 1874 some 250,000 people had come into Texas, bringing no less than \$125,000,000. The newcomer invested his money in land, became a producer and taxpayer, and to that extent became a benefit to the state and a relief to other taxpayers. Mr. King thought that the great majority of the immigrants had come to Texas because of the publicity given the state's advantages by the existing immigration bureau.<sup>10</sup>

After additional speeches for and against the measure the Waelder substitute providing for an inexpensive bureau was defeated by a vote of 47 to 33. Only two of the twelve West Texas delegates, Waelder and King, had voted to continue state aid to immigration.<sup>11</sup>

Most of the state newspapers condemned the failure to continue state aid to immigration. Major C. S. West, delegate from Austin, was quoted as saying that the failure to continue the support of immigration would cost the constitution not less than 30,000 votes.<sup>12</sup> The *Jefferson Jimplecute*, however, took a selfish eastern attitude and declared that the immigration bureau was unnecessary, had always been so, and that the salaries paid the superintendent and his assistants were wasted. It heartily approved the action of the Convention.<sup>13</sup>

The question of granting land subsidies for railway building threatened to bring a sectional alignment in the Convention. Such a policy had been followed after 1854 until the Constitution of 1869 had forbidden it and substituted money subsidies. The extravagant abuse of the latter policy by the radical Davis administration had increased the bonded debt of the state by several million dollars and caused the people to amend the constitution in 1874 by forbidding money subsidies and permitting land subsidies again.<sup>14</sup>

Mr. J. E. Arnim, of Lavaca County, moved to add a clause to the legislative article which would have forbidden future land

10. *Ibid.*, 1875.

11. *Journal, Constitutional Convention*, 1875, 403.

12. *Houston Telegraph*, November 12, 1875.

13. *Jefferson Jimplecute*, quoted by *Houston Telegraph*, October 28, 1875.

14. McKay, S. S., *Making the Texas Constitution of 1876*, 111.

grants to railroads and other corporations. Judge Reagan and Colonel Charles DeMorse, of Red River County, defended the land subsidy system. They argued that the policy had developed the eastern, northern, and middle sections of the state, and that the West should not be deprived of similar advantages. Colonel John Ford, of Cameron County, said that it was common error to suppose that what was left of the Panhandle and Staked Plains was worthless. He was certain that the land in that section would in time be of great value, while its climate was one of the most salubrious in the world. In justice to the West he asked that the system be retained. Otherwise state division would be agitated.

Mr. King argued that the principle of good faith and public honesty demanded that the system be continued until the West had had a share of its benefits. He said that more than twenty million acres of land had been donated and that 1,400 miles of railroad had been built, only 150 miles of which extended west of the Colorado River. His argument demanding common justice closed with a warning that the passage of the Arnim amendment would bring a division of Texas into two or more states.<sup>15</sup>

The Arnim amendment was withdrawn, but its substance was renewed in a similar proposal by T. L. Nugent, of Erath County. Mr. J. W. Stayton, of Victoria County, then offered an amendment provided that no further land grants should be made by the state to aid in the construction of railroads north of the Colorado River or east of the 99th meridian. In other words he would confine the future land grants to the aid of railroad building in West and South Texas. The Stayton Amendment failed by a vote of 23 to 39. Four West Texans favored and five opposed it.<sup>16</sup> The Nugent plan to cut off all land donations for railroad building failed by a vote of 24 to 40. Five West Texas delegates favored and four opposed the Nugent amendment.<sup>17</sup>

A study of the speeches and votes of the twelve delegates referred to above brings the following conclusion: West Texas furnished no real leader of the Convention, and only two men of more than average ability. Even King and Waelder had little to say,

15. *State Gazette* (Austin), September 30, 1875.

16. *Journal, Constitutional Convention*, 1875, 624.

17. *Ibid.*, 624.

except on railroads and immigration. The delegates who represented the western frontier counties were at no time organized into a group, party, or bloc, and in no instance acted in unison. They were not interested in the efforts of the eastern delegates to limit the political power of the negroes or Republicans by gerrymandering legislative or judicial districts. They even failed or refused to avail themselves of an opportunity to give the West certain distinct advantages in the matter of railroad building. They shared the belief of the other Democratic delegates that all of the work of the Republicans was bad, and also followed the lead of the eastern delegates in assuming that the crying need of the state in 1875 was a policy of rigid retrenchment.

## THE MAKING OF THE CONSTITUTION OF 1875

BY FRED COCKRELL

In 1872 Texas had won her fight for her own choice of government and had elected Coke as Governor, man described by Buck Hughes, a long time Presiding Elder in the North Texas Conference, as the ablest heathen in the State. He succeeded Davis whom Coke described as being as honest a man as the Lord ever let live but surrounded and controlled by the biggest bunch of grafters and thieves ever gathered together in any state.

The question of holding a convention and selecting delegates thereto were submitted to the people at the same time. The result favored the convention and the selection of delegates called together a rather remarkable body of men. The Democrats won 75 seats and the Republicans 15 and among the latter four or five negroes who had been former slaves. On each side were many men who had served in the civil war, a majority on the Confederate side, and many of these had been officers of high rank and Reagan had been Post-master General of the Confederacy. Wright had been a member of the Confederate Congress; Crawford and Wright had been imprisoned at Jefferson as obstructionist to the administration of the Military rule after the close of the war. McLean had been a member of Congress before he came to the Convention and Moore and Kilgore were elected to Congress afterwards. Kilgore kicked open the door of the House and escaped a call on the "Force Bill." Reagan went to the Senate. Ross became Governor and during his time Texas had a most contented and prosperous period and was freer from internal strife and contention than at any other period of her existence. Reagan was by far the ablest man in the Convention. Stayton, Henry of Smith and West afterwards became Judges of the Supreme Court. Weaver, Stewart, Fleming and Cooley, had been or were afterwards District Judges, Fleming being judge of this District, soon after Taylor County was organized.

Holmes, Barnett, Erhard and Whitehead were Doctors. Johnson of Franklin and Graves<sup>1</sup> were ministers of the Gospel. The two

1. He was the father of Major General William S. Graves, who was retired last year on account of injuries received in discharge of duties.

or three resolutions barring ministers from participation in politics died silently in committee rooms. The opposition to ministers came from men then as now who neither contributed to their support financially nor often heard them speak in the fields to which they wished to confine their labors. Certainly it is not only a privilege but a duty as well for ministers to take part in politics. Stockdale had been Lieutenant Governor, Waelder, Erhard, Paule, Arnim were Germans and at that time the sentiment in the Democratic party seemed to be that the German vote had to be placated to be kept in line, so that a German was for a long time given a place on the State Ticket—Commissioner of the Land Office. The Germans were regarded largely against slavery and secession and were certainly anti-prohibition.

Abner, McCabe, Davis of Wharton and Reynolds were negroes. Abner had the reputation of having been a model slave before emancipation and was a quiet dignified man in the Convention. He made a most impressive speech and just one, as I remember. On the wharf proposition Flournoy and Ballinger made fine arguments on opposite sides. When Abner's name was called to vote he asked to be excused on the ground that if the two men who lived in Galveston did not know how the matter should be determined much less could he know.

I was a correspondent for a small town paper, *Sherman Courier*. Leigh Thornton, able and middle aged man, represented the *Galveston News*; and Col. DuPre the *Austin Statesman*. Ivey, Assistant Sergeant at Arms did some reporting for his home paper at Bonham and William Neal Ramey was reputed to be the author of a series of articles in his home paper that were regarded as full and fair and able. At the time I was too young to vote and perhaps also too young to be a reporter. It was for some criticisms of members which caused McCormick to introduce his resolution to exclude reporters. Coke suggested to him that the passage of such a resolution would do much to injure the constitution in the eyes of the people when they came to vote on its adoption. The resolution was never called up.

Among the Republicans in the Convention was John S. Mills and when I first met him in Austin he asked me if I were from

Missouri and I told him I was from Johnson County of that State and he then told me that in 1861 he and my father had a joint discussion on the slavery question at the school house in which he was then teaching in the neighborhood where we lived. Then I recalled that I had gone to that meeting riding behind my father on horseback. In a few days Mills introduced me to a part if not all the negro members and told them that I was an old friend of his and that if they needed any help with their mail he was sure I would gladly assist them and agreeing to that I soon found myself doing a part if not all the writing for some of those members who had not learned the art. Afterwards in a close fight on the matter of assessing all property in the County where situated for taxation two or three of these delegates voted as I requested on a measure in which they felt no great interest. The vote was rather close and their help needed.

There was more work and excitement over this section than any other clause in the Constitution, Judiciary not excepted. Just before the vote was to be taken Col. Asa Holt, who for a long time lived here where his relatives still make their home, had been noticing Ross who had heretofore voted for the clause and spoke to some other members favoring it and told that on the next vote Gen. Ross would change his vote to the other side and that efforts should be made to cover the loss. I was asked to try my hand at getting my negro friends to vote with them and to this the dark skinned members agreed when they had been gotten into the hall by a special messenger. The Republican members though so greatly in the minority and knowing that they were helpless yet showed an interest in the work of the Convention that was altogether commendable and on but few questions did they vote together. They were always against any limitation of the right to vote and always for free school aid of any kind.

Flannagan who afterwards, in Republican National Convention became known as "What are we here for Flanagan," was always polite, agreeable, and took things very coolly. Stillwell H. Russell was a giant physically and a big man mentally and took a very active interest in the convention and never showed any resentment at any of the charges made against him or his party. He was the man accused of having formed an alliance with the Granger element

for political purposes and while it created a great deal of excitement at the time came to be looked upon very generally as a harmless joke. Russell was later United States Marshall and still later a district judge in Oklahoma. Renfro,<sup>2</sup> Cline and Brady were also constant attendants and active workers. Cline was regarded highly as a lawyer.

Dr. Erhard was a rare specimen. It was said that when he was candidate Joel Robertson, his colleague, would be urged as worthy of election because he had captured Santa Anna and, Erhard would declare that he was captured by Santa showing he too was in the war for independence. When Reagan made his report on the old Mexican and Spanish land grants Erhard told him that he was a large owner of such claims and that its passage would hurt him very much. Reagan replied that they had cared for all those who owned such lands and had paid taxes on them. Erhard angrily replied, Taxes! Taxes! Nobody but a fool and poor men pay taxes!

Robeson of Frythe, by revolution was to sign the Constitution first with N. H. Darnell, who was the oldest member of the body and who had been a member of the Convention of 1845, and Bennett Blake who had been a Justice of the Peace and an Alcalde for forty years without a reversed decision were also to sign with the other two named before the Roll was called for balance to sign in alphabetical order. Many members signed after protesting against certain provisions and it was believed by many that members of the Convention like West would not vote for the Constitution at the general election but it is reasonably certain that all the Democrats supported it at the general election when it was ratified by a large majority.

There was a large number of very valuable members who rarely if ever spoke or offered resolutions of any kind but who were always in place in the convention hall or committee room. Such men as Holt, Henry of Limestone, who was the uncle of Lee Henry of this place, Sessions, Blassingame, Cooke of San Saba, Sansom, Blake, Norvell, Wade, Martin of Hunt, Gaither, Ross, German, Lynch, Spikes and Sessions.

2. Renfro was a student in the University of Kentucky with C. U. Connelley and afterwards served in the Texas Legislature with him.



Stockdale I saw at Lexington, Virginia, in 1876, where he was said to be paying court to Miss Lee.

Rip Ford, (J. S.), was reputed as worth more for the protection of the border against Mexicans than a regiment of regular soldiers.

Nugent was a man of splendid ability, clean life and clear conviction and led the Populists in the hardest state fight the Democrat party ever had and the hardest of all fights except the recent presidential contest.

Dohoney was the leader of the prohibition forces which at that time concerned themselves largely with having Local Option clause put in the Constitution. Dr. Mood of Georgetown, made the first speech for the measure at night before the convention.

Waelder, who was a man of good ability and a sound lawyer, but the slowest talking man whom I have ever heard, make a speech in favor of that talk, and voted for this article, and between the sentences of which there was enough time to have driven an ox team. He argued that if any portion of the people had little enough sense to want such a measure as local option he saw no reason why they should not be allowed to have it.

Louis Cardis of El Paso, traveled 731 miles in reaching the Convention and drew \$292.40 as mileage. He reached Austin before the convention opened but his credentials did not get there until September 22. He never made a speech, offered but one resolution, had the reputation of being the dinner and supper bell for that body, always wanting to adjourn promptly on time yet the Journal of the Convention does not show him to be the mover of a single adjournment of any kind.

Goddin of Walker, who was a white Republican, came to Austin and was drunk when he reached the place, did not get to the convention hall until the tenth day of September, the convention having convened on the sixth. On the day he was sworn in he went to his seat and addressed the president as Mr. Pickett, saying, "Mr. Pickett, I want to go home." The president suggested that he file his resignation which he did next morning and later Judge A. T. McKinney a Democrat, of Walker, took his place.

Many of the old time Southerners were opposed to free schools and many others who were not in principle opposed to them yet greatly feared to provide for a system that might cause complications with the Federal Government and result in mixed race schools. Then too the free school system as administered under Davis had been altogether too expensive and was a great failure otherwise so that the office of State School Superintendent was abolished and very meagre provisions made for the system. The teachers, under Davis, had been largely drawn from the North and known as "Carpet Baggers" yet when the last formidable effort was made to pass what was known as the "Force Bill," by the Congress of the United States, it was talked to death by Mathew Quay of Pennsylvania, who had been a school teacher in East Texas and who had won some local animosity not held in common against other such teachers by describing a very common member of the domestic family universally found around the negro cabins as well as in most all places where people lived, by pronouncing the middle letter "o" with the short sound whereas the natives not only gave the middle letter "o" the long sound but often added an "r" after it, following the saying of Senator Vance of North Carolina, that a smart man should be able to spell a word more than one way.

Weaver introduced a resolution providing for female suffrage which was never heard of again as to debating but Russell of Wood, did refer to it by moving that it be expunged and that black lines be drawn around where it had been placed in the Journal—that too died in silence.

A resolution was adopted to authorize a committee to see if a stenographer could be found who could report the proceedings and translate them into round hand and when the stenographer was found and asked ten per day he was not employed.

The suicide of Dr. Taiferro, who had been serving in turn as Chaplain, and the destruction of Indianola by the great storm of that year added tragedy to the work of the convention and caused Rugely to resign, succeeded by Stewart. A house which stood at Indianola in this storm was moved to Galveston and later to Abilene, being known here as the Heck place.

Colonel Flournoy, that able lawyer and devout Catholic, was

perhaps the ablest debater in the body. Crawford, whom Judge McCormick declared to be the best criminal lawyer who had ever appeared in his court, was the most finished orator. Reagan, Wright and Ballinger stood high as debaters and speakers and Stayton was the most solid lawyer as to legal attainments. Johnston of Collin was the most forceful of the non-professional speakers and his answer to Crawford and Wright on the tax clause was by far the most effective as well as sensational speech made during the convention. It was said that Crawford read the *News* through, the paper upside down, while the talks were being made and that Wright went home the next day to remain for most of the session. The mode of delivery, the surroundings and the surprises and boldness of the attack perhaps added greatly to its prominence. Johnson afterwards became widely known as "Ruta Baga" Johnson, due to the speech of Judge Piner when he ran against and defeated him for the senate. Piner presented to the audience a Ruta Baga turnip and declared that it was a very true picture of Johnson, who was a square heavy-set man with a heavy, unshorn, but short beard which gave quite a resemblance to the turnip with its stubby top.

The convention was composed of a set of men who have had no superiors in this state certainly and perhaps no equals in point of ability, integrity, personal and political cleanliness and industry and while the Constitution may not be as good a document as Colonel Flournoy declared in signing that it was the best constitution ever written, yet it has weathered the storms for over a half century while during that time Louisiana has had four conventions.

The anchorage for its stability is found in the homestead and exemption provisions, which are deeply set in the hearts of the people.

The Fort Worth Senatorial District as created by the convention, was bounded on the north by the Red River and on the "west by the grace of God," as Lanham later described the western boundary in his Congressional District.

The first time that Barnett, whom I had known when he lived in Grayson county, addressed the Chair, the President said: The Gentleman from ———, and Barnett promptly responded: From Arkansaw and from that time unofficially that state was duly but

not officially recognized. Barnett afterwards acquired property in this county, and finally moved to Big Spring where he died, leaving a son and son-in-law still there.

I had the pleasure of attending a good many public gatherings and conventions with Barnett and he was always interesting and to me exceedingly useful as I was never able to tell the tunes Yankee Doodle and Dixie apart but Barnett never failed to give the Rebel yell when Dixie was begun so I had a safe musical guide when he was present.

The pages of the Convention were Temple Houston and Lafayette Fizhugh, whose father afterwards was Seargent at Arms of Congress and who wrote home that he was a bigger man in Washington than Old Grant.

More than forty years after the Convention my daughter and I were on a political speaking tour and I was invited by a citizen of Seymour to visit his office and there he told me that he was the son-in-law of Judge Cooke of San Saba, and that he had a brother-in-law whom Judge Cooke had named for me—a long time in coming but still agreeable information.

Judge McKinney and I are the only persons now living who had anything to do with the Convention of 1875.

## THE STORY OF "BLOCK NO. 97"

BY A. C. WILMETH ESQR.

*(In Snyder Signal, June 30, 1923.)*

In the settlement of a country many interesting things occur of small interest at the time, but are history in the making, and should be known by the succeeding generations in order to properly understand the wherefores and the whys of little kinks in the title to the lands. None is more interesting than a survey in Scurry and Borden counties known as Block 97.

In 1873 the Houston and Texas Central Railway Company sent out surveying parties under Capt. Jack Elgin to locate the strip (scrip?) issued to it by the State of Texas. The trip had to be made of course by wagon, from Waco west, and it was late in the spring before the work was commenced, and little if any mail reached the party from the time it entered the field. The surveyors worked portions of Nolan, Coke, Mitchell, Howard, Scurry, Fisher, Stonewall, Kent, Borden and Garza counties. One large survey they termed Block 97, containing 956 sections of land, the larger portion of which lay in Scurry county. While the work was going on in the field the legislature was in session and created what was afterwards known as the eighty-mile reservation; that is, it reserved from location by any other than the Texas and Pacific Railroad all the land lying within forty miles north and south of a certain line. (On which the Texas & Pacific Railway expected to build—Note.) The surveyors knew nothing of this new law. They turned in their field notes, and the land they had surveyed was segregated from the public domain and recognized correct until about 1888 when two employees of the general land office discovered the location had been made after this law had been passed and therefore was void.

At the time of this discovery, under the law, public land could be purchased at fifty cents an acre and yet land in large bodies could be readily cashed for two dollars or more an acre, so Bacon and Graves, the land office employees who discovered the error, resigned and securing the assistance of a group of moneyed men of New York, tendered the state applications and the money for all of the land in Block 97 south of the north reservation line. This

tender was at first refused, but it being re-tendered with threat of suit the then Attorney General Hogg ordered it accepted under protest and notified at the same time that the state would resist the giving of title.

Bacon and Graves having everything to win and nothing to lose, to test their claim and to get quick action brought suit against the Jumbo Cattle Company which had several of the sections leased from H. & T. C. Railway Company. This suit was hotly contested, the decision was favorable all the way for the plaintiffs. The victory was short for the Governor, now the former Attorney General Hogg, ordered the attorney, Hon. C. A. Culberson to sue all claimants. The suit was filed in Scurry county and removed to Mitchell county and tried before Hon. Wm. Kennedy, one of the ablest judges of the state. The decision was in favor of the state declaring that all the surveys made after creation of the eighty mile reservation were void. This in effect declared all of the said public land, but denied recovery to Bacon and Graves because this was not the kind of land contemplated in the fifty cent act and further that they, Bacon and Graves, had not complied with the terms of the law. This case was also affirmed by the Supreme Court. This decision also kept the money for the state. The money being thus confiscated caused the legislature to be waited upon by the would-be purchasers and importuned to return the money. The legislature in order to get all questions of title cleared up as to the state required the railway company and Bacon and Graves and the men who advanced the money to execute a release to the state before they were allowed to withdraw their tender money. During all of these years of litigation Block No. 97 was in the limelight for the newspapers and others claimed it was public land subject to entry by the homesteader. One R. R. Lively, owner of a newspaper, known as the "*Coming West*," made it his hobby for years, kept interest at boiling point heat over the possibilities of a man on Block 97. Hundreds flocked to this place of easily gotten homes but most of the land had been leased for long terms to local stockmen and they disputed every attempt to take it from them. This caused many little law suits, generally of forcible entry and detainer. The writer remembers one that is amusing now, not so much when O. L. Slaton, the well known Lubbock banker, and myself were counsel for the ranchmen. The settler was a fine old Presbyterian preacher of the

blue stocking order. We won the suit and persuaded the old gentleman to pay the cost and save issuing a writ of ouster. He agreed and as he paid the bill he said: "You have been very nice in showing me the law and I would like you to do me an additional favor. I have lived Christlike and I would like to die Christlike, and I would like for each of you to stand on opposite sides of me when I die." We agreed.

The settlers were mostly poor and the long continued suits made it hard for the settler to stay, it being unwise to put much improvement on this hazardous title. Finally our Mr. Hogue attempted to mandamus the land commissioner, the state through its attorney general joined issue with plaintiff Hogue, and the plaintiff's attorneys having agreed that the school fund was entitled to so much and that it had not received its proportion and that there was not sufficient land yet left for it to get its portion, the Supreme Court held that the Legislature failing to have it segregated did not leave it subject to entry but that the state must keep the balance as school land.

The Legislature at its next session declared it all school land and gave settlers the prior right to purchase. Most of the settlers accepted and thus ended the long contest lasting something over ten years. Today thousands of people reside upon the block and very few know of the ups and downs of the settlers that preceded them.

THE COMANCHE, KIOWA AND CHEYENNE  
CAMPAIGN IN NORTHWEST TEXAS  
AND MACKENZIE'S FIGHT IN  
THE PALO DURO CANON,  
SEPTEMBER 26, 1874

BY CHARLES A. P. HATFIELD,  
*Colonel United States Army, Retired.*

In the summer of 1874 there was serious outbreaks of Indians on the Fort Sill reservation. More than six hundred warriors of the Comanche, Kiowa and Cheyenne tribes, with their families, became hostile, and left the reservation with all their worldly goods, for the Panhandle.

The Government took prompt steps to suppress the outbreak. Colonel Nelson A. Miles, Fifth Infantry, with a large force was ordered from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; Colonel Price with a command started from New Mexico, and Colonel George P. Buell from Fort Sill, all heading for the Panhandle.

These three commands met with more or less success, but failed to discover the main camp of the Indians or to give them a fatal blow.

Colonel Ranald S. MacKenzie, Fourth Cavalry, at the time of the outbreak, was stationed on the Rio Grande, with headquarters at Fort Clark. On receipt of his orders he moved north with his command through old Forts McKavett and Concho (San Angelo) to the scene of trouble.

When passing through Fort Concho a Mexican halfbreed from New Mexico named Johnson applied to MacKenzie for employment as scout and was accepted. Johnson had been engaged in trading arms and ammunition for buffalo robes with hostile Indians on the headwaters of the Red river in former years and was the only one in the command who knew anything of the geography of the Panhandle. Later on his services proved to be invaluable.

Marching out of Fort Concho, and keeping a northerly course, MacKenzie's command, consisting of seven troops of the Fourth



Cavalry, five companies of the Tenth Infantry and thirty-five Seminole scouts, arrived in Northwestern Texas early in September and established a supply camp on the Catfish Fork of the Brazos river. This camp was one hundred and eighty miles west of Fort Griffin, whence our supplies were hauled by army wagons. After a few days stay at this camp, which was utilized to send out scouting parties to locate the Indians, MacKenzie, leaving part of the infantry to guard the camp, started north again.

We passed by a place of marshes, springs and small running streams called Quits Que, and finally ascended the steep bluffs of the Staked Plains and marched to the West.

The rainy season had come on and there was plenty of water; the swales and buffalo wallows of the plains being full.

MacKenzie, taking with him four troops, A, E, H and L, and the Seminole scouts, moved out ahead, leaving the wagon train and balance of the command to follow his trail.

Late in the afternoon of the twenty-fourth of September we went into the camp at the head of a small draw, which led shortly into a rough, broken canyon, which ran down into the lower Tule Canyon. This camp was five miles east of the horse bones at the crossing of the upper Tule Canyon.

The Mexican, Johnson, had been sent out alone a few days before to find the Indian camp. He had discovered the camp in the Palo Duro Canyon, thirty miles northwest of us, and had returned and made his report only thirty minutes before the full force of Indians made a furious assault on our camp at ten o'clock that night. He knew in the afternoon that the Indians were near, and expecting an attack, had made every preparation to give them a warm reception. The horses, on full lariat, were sidelined and in addition hobbled, to prevent a stampede; the entire command lying on its blankets in skirmish line, on the outside of the horses.

The Indians, following their usual custom, at first attempted to charge through camp, to stampede the horses, but while the charge was made with great determination, it was met with such effective fire that they had to desist from this mode of attack and establish themselves in the breaks about three hundred yards from camp, from where they fired until daylight.

About midnight the wagon train, with the remainder of the command, arrived and went into camp about a mile from us. Strange to say, with thousands of shots fired into camp at short range, there were no casualties among our men. What casualties occurred among the Indians during the night we had no way of telling.

It was a very bright moonlight night, a full moon, and being struck by this I tested the light by bringing from my saddle pocket a sheet of an old *New York Herald* which I found I could read readily.

When daylight came with the Indians still in position, in the broken ground just below camp, MacKenzie came over and ordered Captain P. M. Boehm with Troop E, of which I was second lieutenant, to saddle up and charge the Indians.

Captain Boehm had orders not to go farther than a mile, but in the excitement and to protect a squad of his men, a half mile to the left of us, in fact, he kept up the pursuit about three miles. Of the reason that six hundred Indians fled at top speed from one troop was that they supposed the remainder of the command was following us.

After the swarm of Indians had debouched from the various ravines and deep gullies and started in a perfect skirmish line, nearly a mile in length, across the level plains, with Troop E in column of fours in pursuit and only two hundred and fifty yards in the rear—a picture of the wonderful spectacle was formed in my mind, which more than forty years has failed to efface. The sun, rising in our rear, seemed to light up the entire line of hostiles, in their full dress of gaudy paint and feathers, as they turned in their saddles to fire at us, scurrying across the prairie in rapid flight.

I recollect well saying to myself; now look and take it all in, for with the rapid advance of civilization and settlement on the frontier, the like of this I will never see again. And my prophesy has come very near being true.

Finally the captain called a halt where we could see the Indians hastening to several herds two miles distant to exchange their favor-

ite war ponies for others of everyday use. We had killed one Indian in his flight, a handsome fellow in a gorgeous head dress. We then returned to camp where we found preparations being made to pursue the Indians.

At one o'clock P. M. we left camp with seven troops and the scouts and followed the broad Indian trail leading southwest. We proceeded leisurely, stopping occasionally to graze the horses, for our following the trail was only pretense, since MacKenzie knew that the Indians were trying to draw us away from their camp. As soon as it was dark everything changed. We left the trail and under the guidance of Johnson marched at a good gait directly northwest, at right angles to the trail, for the Palo Duro Canyon.

About four o'clock next morning the twenty-sixth, we came again on to the broad trail of the Indians, scarcely an hour old, the Indians supposing they had eluded us had returned to their camp. Knowing pretty soon that we were quite near the Palo Duro, we came to a halt to await the dawn. At the first crack of day we mounted and moved on. Presently we saw directly on our left the dark winding course of the Canyon Blanco, while in front of us, like a dark blotch on the prairie was the Palo Duro.

We very soon arrived at the head of a well worn trail leading down into the gloomy looking Palo Duro, and dismounting, on account of its steepness, we went running down the trail leading our horses. It happened that Troop E was in the lead which enabled me to observe everything.

After we had gone about one hundred and fifty yards we ran on to an Indian on guard, who instantly discharged his rifle, waved a red blanket and disappeared immediately afterwards in a marvelous manner.

When we arrived where the Indian had been we could see the effect of his signal. As far as the eye could see in the fast coming light, Indians were mounting their ponies and hurrying up the canyon.

The first camp, a cluster of about forty teepees, was directly below us. A stone easily could have been pitched into it, but so far below that the teepees appeared the size of a half dollar, and the ponies were mistaken by some for sheep and by others for chickens.

This first bunch of teepees was at the mouth of the Canyon Blanco, and from there the camp extended two miles up the Palo Duro with intervals between the many small camps scattered along the stream.

After a half hour of tumbling and slipping down the long trail, the head of the column reached the bottom, when the first two troops mounted and started in rapid pursuit. The Indians, though, had a good start of us and were able to take excellent cover up on the rough sides of the canyon.

We finally overhauled them, however, and being joined by the other troops a fairly satisfactory fight ensued.

On account of the alarm given by the Indian sentinel, the squaws managed to escape capture, and only four of their men were killed.

However, the main point was fully accomplished. The Indians had settled down in a snug winter camp, with ample supplies; if these were destroyed they would be helpless when cold weather came and be compelled to return to the reservation and surrender their arms.

All the camps, with the provisions of different kinds, flour and sugar, etc., drawn from the Indian Department, and quantities of dried buffalo meat, were destroyed and burned. In addition about seven hundred of their horses were rounded up and driven up the long trail and back to the head of the Tule Canyon where our wagon train with its infantry escort had arrived and established camp.

On the following morning MacKenzie disposed of the captured ponies, horses and mules. Johnson was allowed to select forty as his prize, and others were given in less proportion to some of the most prominent scouts, and still others were distributed to the troops to replace horses which had succumbed to the hardships of the campaign.

This left about fourteen hundred and fifty to be disposed of and these were taken out and shot. Of course, this seems cruel, but if MacKenzie had tried to keep them, there would have been a stam-

pede probably on some dark night by the Indians, when he would have lost them and probably some of his own cavalry horses besides.

With their horses gone and their teepees and supplies destroyed, the Indians could not face a winter on the plains and shortly began journeying back to the reservation. MacKenzie remained in the country harrying the Indians until he was sure they were returning to Fort Sill, when at the approach of cold weather his command returned to Fort Concho and other posts for the winter.

In the following spring he was ordered to take station at Fort Sill with his regiment where his firm, just and decided course with the several thousand of Indians there was such that there has never been an outbreak or necessity for a campaign in Texas since.

## SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE CATTLE INDUSTRY

BY J. WRIGHT MOOAR

By the time of the close of the years 1878 and 1879 this vast territory, West Texas, for the first time in history was open to occupation. The doom of the buffalo and Indian was now assured and the cowman, ever the forerunner of civilization, occupied the territory with cattle, which from his earliest experience with them proved to be profitable. The buffalo hunters who had freed the country of Indians mostly left for newer fields. Some few stayed and were soon identified in settling and developing the country, which was at this time an open range.

Line riding was adopted to hold cattle on their prescribed ranges in winter, while in the summer the round-up outfits kept them under control. From 1878 to 1879 most of the surplus stock was disposed of by driving to the Kansas markets, and a few were driven to Fort Worth for shipment. The year 1881 was the advent of the Texas and Pacific railroad. It was extended from Fort Worth to El Paso through this section which immediately became the means of bringing in supplies and shipping cattle to market. Towns sprang up along the line such as Abilene, Sweetwater, Colorado, Big Spring and Midland—all became large shipping points. Cattle were driven for more than one hundred and fifty miles in order to be shipped from these points. In one year, 1883, more than 100,000 steers were shipped from Colorado City. More cattle and more people continued to come on account of the railroad. Business continued to be very profitable and by the fall of 1884 all cattle owners realized that the open range was badly overstocked and many shipped out to market more cattle than they had expected to and many herds were driven westward to New Mexico and Arizona. Some herds leaving Texas as late as November for the drive, yet the decrease was not sufficient to avoid a disaster.

In December, 1884, there came an unprecedented snow and low temperature. Grass was completely covered many days, and then came more snow. The cattle of all the range country became very uneasy and started drifting south. Snow and cold made the

line riders' task hard to carry out. While they held on with heroic tenacity from early in the morning until late at night the mass of cattle continued to increase in number and strength for days until finally the lines, one by one, were broken by the pressing multitude of cattle. Often when a line was broken the riders would go south and help the line next to them, but to no avail. Unusual cold and storm took a serious toll from the line riders, who with frosted feet, hands, ears, noses soon became exhausted. In fact the strength of both men and horses were so spent that the lines gave way and millions of cattle passed on to the south many of them, no doubt, to the coast for all the winter of 1884-1885.

In 1885 all the cow outfits worked to their limit in bringing cattle back from the south. But it was only a remnant which they salvaged, for when the fall of 1885 came there were not one third as many cattle on the range as in 1884, and the calf crop was still more depleted. It has been said that the year 1886 was the peak of the open range, but 1884 was the real peak and the bankers who had furnished the cattlemen money did not find out until 1886 how bad the cattlemen were broke and how depleted their herds were. But the year 1886 was the beginning of a new era in the cattle business in the West. New obstacles were presented. The State of Texas decreed no more free grass, no more open range, and the cowman must now buy the land he had formerly leased for his cattle.

This condition necessitated an experiment to buy and lease land, fence, make permanent improvements, houses, corrals, wells, windmills, and large tanks to conserve the flood waters for the cattle. All these improvements were very expensive, but the cowman, ever generous in his expenditures, invested his money in the new experiment, many of them with their last dollar but with faith and hope in the perpetuity of business. But alas, the cow business was doomed to another disappointment and period of disorder, for it was only a few years until hordes of actual and bonafide settlers came like the locusts of Egypt and swarmed over the land, and now the State of Texas and the bonafide settlers treated the cowman worse than the buffalo hunters ever did the Indians.

## THE TRAIL BLAZING PIONEERS OF WEST TEXAS ARE PASSING AWAY

BY R. C. CRANE

The year 1877 was the turning point in the history of West Texas.

The armed outbreak of the Indians into the Panhandle-Plains region in 1874, had by the summer of 1875 been thoroughly quelled by four well equipped little armies of United States soldiers, converging on the war-like Indians; and they had been placed back on their reservations in the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma).

By 1877, the slaughter of the buffalo continuing, their numbers had begun to thin down—there being hundreds of hunters all over northwest Texas; and the cattlemen began to occupy the land previously roamed at will by the buffalo and the wild Indian.

The cattlemen knew that if the buffalo had multiplied and thrived on the grasses of West Texas, that his cattle would do likewise; and some how the cattlemen got the word by grape vine telegraph that West Texas was the place for them. And in 1877 there was such a rush begun by the cattlemen into West Texas, with their herds, only exceeded by the wild rushes into Oklahoma a few years later.

And the promoters of the Texas & Pacific Railway Company who had been compelled to stop at Fort Worth in 1875 for lack of funds, now suddenly found that they could get the money to build the road into West Texas—toward the Pacific coast, for which the State of Texas had granted its predecessor company a charter back in 1853.

This rush of the cattlemen into West Texas with their herds, was so rapid, that by 1880, about sixty counties comprising an area of over 54,000 square miles or a territory larger than the states of South Carolina and West Virginia, and where in 1875 there was hardly a white man or a ranch, hundreds of herds of cattle had been located; and every place in that vast region where there was surface water to be had been preempted by the cattlemen.

Of course there were no fences; and when a cattleman turned



loose his cattle on the range he had no assurance that he would ever see them again. He knew that the Indian had held sway over the country up to that time; and he did not know when he might be expected again with his raids by night, killing and plundering, and driving away his cattle and his horses.

In many instances the cattlemen bought out the water rights and the camp sites of the buffalo hunter as the latter moved on to other fields, and there located his ranch headquarters.

But conditions were hard, and nothing but the blood of the lion hearted pioneer in the cattlemen who came in and possessed the land ever qualified them to remain and help to develop it.

Ferocious wild beasts roamed over the land, killing and eating young colts and calves; it was hundreds of miles to the nearest railroad stations at first, where lumber for houses and supplies had to be had. There were no trees in the region out of which lumber could be sawed for houses, and therefore the lumber must be hauled from such distant points as Cleburne, Austin, San Antonio and Fort Worth; and for the regions of the Panhandle, from Dodge City, Kansas and Trinidad, Colorado.

Quite naturally, at first, lumber was used rather scantily in the first houses to be built, but the style of architecture rather tended toward the "dug out" until the Texas & Pacific Railway pushed through to El Paso in 1882 making it easier to get lumber.

The men who comprised this vanguard of sturdy pioneers who thus occupied West Texas and broadly laid the foundation for its settlement and its present day development were red blooded Americans who were never deterred by danger from going into the wilds of the West. Many of them loved danger and adventure. Many of them had come for the sake of hunting the buffalo, and stayed to make their homes and help develop the country. They made good citizens who stood for law and order.

They builded wiser than they knew; and they are deserving of all praise from succeeding generations who have profited by their privations and their hardships while "taming" the country.

Of course wild game was plentiful—deer, turkey, antelope and bear. But these pioneers are now rapidly passing away.

During the past year several of them were cut out in the round-up and thrown into the big herd on the other side of the river.

The Slaughters were pioneering in the cattle business in the Palo Pinto region before the war between the states, and John B. and W. B. Slaughter were in the rush among the first, with their herds into West Texas. John B. had large ranch interests near Post. But they were recently cut out of the round-up of the living and thrown on the other side of the river.

The Reynolds family was prominent in the cattle business in that region when Fort Griffin was established in 1867, and W. D. Reynolds was among those who branched out further west when the rush into West Texas began, and lived to prosper as West Texas developed. But he has been caught in the round-up and thrown on the other side.

Uncle Kin Elkins, veteran of the war between the States, and Norman Rogers who had been a Texas Ranger and had helped to chase Indians through this region, were pioneering down in Coleman county in 1877 when they learned that there was not a white man in Kent county, and they thereupon quickly preempted that honor.

Uncle Kin was 96 years old when the round-up got him.

Norman was not so old, though as Ranger, Indian chaser, pioneer and sheriff, he compressed many years into about 75 short years.

W. E. Gilliland, the editor of the *Baird Star* for more than forty years belongs to the pioneers of West Texas.

In 1877 while living at the frontier hamlet of Brownwood, he helped to lessen the number of buffalo ranging in a few near-by counties such as Nolan and Taylor. He lived in the West when it was "wild and wooley" and stayed on to see it in possession of all of the trappings of civilization and development—trains whirring, autos scurrying, and airplanes buzzing—and he had his part in their coming.

The Fort Worth banker, G. H. Connell, who was recently caught in the round-up was also a product of the Brownwood region. He

landed in the tent town of Sweetwater in 1880 just a few months ahead of the arrival of the first Texas & Pacific Railway train into that town, bringing his cattle and a stock of goods to sell; and stayed in the West for many years, and had ranch interests out there to the last.

Sam H. Cowan and Judge D. G. Hill were young lawyers who early became imbued with the idea of growing up with the West. From 1882 until his recent passing, Judge Hill made his home at Abilene, where in 1884 he became the first district attorney of the newly created thirty-second judicial district—extending westward to the Pecos river—about 200 miles long and 150 miles wide—a region larger than all of New England.

Sam Cowan followed him in that office a few years later, after the old thirty-second had been materially cut down in size and other needed districts provided for. He made such a good district attorney that the Texas Cattle Raisers Association took him to Fort Worth to aid in protecting their interests against that class which sometimes layed itself liable to the suspicion that it was unlawfully seeking to appropriate to their own use and benefit, cattle and horses which rightfully belong to the pioneering cattlemen of West Texas; and he spent many years of his life in that work.

But these have all gone during the past year; and thus many of the pioneers of other lines as well as of the cattlemen, are being caught in the round-up, and pushed onto the other side of the river, leaving it to the younger generations to continue to build on the foundations which they laid, by their rugged pioneering under the most trying of conditions.

## OLD TIME TRAIL DRIVERS OF TEXAS

BY GEO. W. SAUNDERS

Few people of today realize that the cattle industry, including the Trail Driving Period just after the Civil war gave Texas her real start towards civilization and development. Up until that time, half of Texas and fifteen territories to the northwest was a wilderness inhabited by savages and wild animals. The trail drivers penetrated all these regions with herds after fighting their way to Kansas and establishing a market for Texas cattle, to stock the Northwest and for immediate slaughter. The trail driving period lasted from 1867 to 1895, but the majority of this work was done from 1870 to 1890. There were 10,000,000 cattle and 1,000,000 horses driven to the northern markets during that period and sold, net proceeds of same being \$250,000,000 which was brought back and used in the development of Texas. This attracted the attention of the world. Immigration and capital flooded into our gates.

There were 40,000 cowboys used in this great successful undertaking. Many of them resting in unmarked graves along the different trails. About five or six thousand are still living, scattered all over the United States and foreign countries. Ninety per cent of the trail drivers were Confederate Veterans, many of them sons of the winners of Texas Independence. No other class of men would have braved this hazardous undertaking. Those men helped replace the buffalo with fine stock, the Indian yell with religious songs, and the bow and arrow, tomahawk and lance with farming implements.

It is now thirty-three years since the close of the Trail and sixty-one years since its opening. I helped start the first herds from Texas. I have watched all the changes closely which have been marvelous indeed. The change from an ox team bogged in the mud to Lindbergh's hop to Paris, from pack mules to freight trains, from a rickity buggy to an automobile, and all other lines have advanced in proportion to transportation.

Just think what a change in sixty-one years and the Old Trail Drivers did the most to start the ball rolling. There is now a campaign to raise \$100,000 to build a monument for those old heroes on the small park in front of our municipal auditorium. The model for this monument was fashioned by the nationally known sculptor, Gutzon Borglum, and is now in the Witte museum.

Any one wishing to donate to this worthy cause can send check to president of the Memorial Association, Mrs. R. R. Russel, 304 Brooklyn, San Antonio, Texas.

## BOOK REVIEWS

The XIT Ranch of Texas and the Early Days of the Llano Estacado. By J. Evetts Haley, Field Secretary Panhandle-Plains Historical Society. Chicago, The Lakeside Press, 1929.

The Publication Committee of the West Texas Historical Association takes pleasure in calling the attention of the readers of the *Yearbook* to this work of the secretary of a neighboring regional historical society. In the first three chapters of the book Mr. Haley gives a review of the history of the Llano Estacado country up to the coming of the ranchmen. This part of the work is nothing but a sketch but it supplies some information not heretofore available within a single volume. The explorations of Onate, the adventures of the ciboleros, or Spanish buffalo hunters, the coming of the first Anglo-American explorers, the Indian trade and traders and the advance of Charles Goodnight and other intrepid pioneering ranchmen furnishes an excellent background for the story of the great XIT Ranch.

Then comes the chapter on the "State Capitol and Its Builders" in which we find in considerable detail the narrative of how the state exchanged more than three million acres of land for one of the most magnificent buildings in the world.

But the story, covering three decades and more, of a ranch over two hundred miles in length is the crowning achievement of the book and the thing that will give it a permanent place in the historical literature of the West. The courage and ingenuity of the directors in financing the gigantic undertaking of paying for the land, fencing and improving it and stocking it with cattle makes within itself an interesting story. But the actual operations of the cowmen—the handling of the herds, the long drives up the trail to Montana, wolves, cattle thieves, "bad men," prairie fires, problems of securing water for the cattle and supplies for the men—all are presented in a precise and interesting manner. To one who has read some of that great quantity of so-called literature in which the cowboy is depicted by admiring sentimentalists on the one hand as a knight errant and on the other by prejudiced and uninformed

writers as a heavily armed demon astride a snorting steed it is refreshing indeed to find a narrative of this kind. For Mr. Haley does not attempt to describe the old fashioned cowboy; instead he gives us the account of his daily life both at work and at play in such detail that we naturally frame our own mental image of these frontier citizens so often both praised and maligned.

In the preparation of this work the author had access to the records of the ranch company and the book could not have been written without these. However, Mr. Haley interviewed and corresponded with scores of frontiersmen and the weaving of these charming oral accounts into the pithy content of the contemporary records makes the book both dependable and fascinating. Sixty-four pictures and illustrations enrich and enliven the text.—R. N. R.

## 1929 PROCEEDINGS OF THE WEST TEXAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The West Texas Historical Association met in annual session in the city hall, Abilene, Texas, at ten o'clock, on April 21, 1929, with W. C. Holden of McMurry College presiding during the morning program. At the time the chairman called the house to order approximately one hundred and fifty people were present. Mayor Hayden, in behalf of the City of Abilene, welcomed the visitors and expressed the hope that the organization would grow and prosper. Judge R. C. Crane, president of the association, then replied to the welcome address, briefly outlining the purposes of the organization, and showing concretely how it could serve its purpose by reviewing some early history about Abilene and Taylor county. Before the historical part of the program was given, the Abilene Christian College quartette rendered a number of enjoyable songs. The remainder of the program was as follows: "Some Attitudes of West Texas Delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1875," by S. S. McKay; "The Romance of the Range," by E. E. Dale; and "Educational Experiences of Frontier Days," by J. D. Sandefer. Each of these numbers were interesting and unique. Professor McKay had used the field of his theme for research work toward a Doctor of Philosophy degree, and handled his subject well. Professor Dale at one time was a cowboy and in recent years has become one of the most distinguished educators in the Southwest. His love for the range, however, did not cease with his advancement to scholarly pursuits, as was evidenced in his excellent paper on "The Romance of the Range." President J. D. Sandefer of Simmons University, brought the morning program to a close with a very interesting address on his experiences in the Texas country schools during his boyhood days. Since he had attained rich experiences in this respect, as well as with the modern system of education, his observations were received with appreciation by his listeners.

The business meeting of the association and luncheon was held in the "Moss Room" of the Grace Hotel. In the business meeting the reports of the secretary and treasurer were read and adopted. Then, as president of the association, R. C. Crane, proposed a charter and by-laws for the West Texas Historical Association which



were adopted without reading, the speaker merely outlining the contents of the same. Mrs. Dallas Scarborough proposed the appointment of a committee for the purpose of editing an occasional column in the *Abilene Reporter* concerning items of interest pertaining to the association. This proposal was adopted by the association and she and Mrs. C. C. Ferrell were elected to serve in this capacity.

After the adjournment of the business meeting the association transferred its meeting place back to the city hall. Professor R. N. Richardson of Simmons University, was chairman for the afternoon program. Judge Fred Cockrell gave the first address, speaking on his experiences as a newspaper reporter to the Texas Constitutional Convention of 1875. His remembrances of this notable gathering, in the light of Professor McKay's excellent paper on the same subject, were told in an interesting manner. Professor J. Evetts Haley, secretary of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Society, read one of the most interesting papers of the day on the subject of "Grass Fires On the Southern Plains," portraying in a graphic way the destructive sweep of these terrors of early days. J. Wright Mooar, a celebrated frontiersman, closed the afternoon's session by substituting for President J. W. Hunt of McMurry College, who was called out of the city and could not be present at the meeting. Mr. Mooar read of his experiences as a cattleman during the eighties, pointing out the many hardships and hazards of ranching during these early days.

After adjournment the association took advantage of an invitation of Mr. E. B. Sayles to visit a log cabin that had been moved from the Buffalo Gap country to the Elmwood Drive addition to the city. The cabin was built near Buffalo Gap during the early frontier days where it had stood, all these years, as a lonely reminder of days that were past and gone. In moving it to Abilene for exhibition purposes it was re-equipped with the same furnishings which it had during these early days. The visit to this interesting cabin was enjoyed by those who availed themselves of the opportunity.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

Members of the West Texas Historical Association are urged to preserve files of the **Year Book**. It is the plan of the Publication Committee to make this annual a valuable source of information on West Texas history. For that reason it is suggested that those who have not the four preceding **Year Books** may obtain same for the sum of two dollars each. A limited supply of these publications are now in the hands of the secretary.