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Early Day Tribes in Central Texas

Frank E. Simmons in *McGregor Mirror*

THE COLONIZATION and settlement of the new country by a strong race of people has always been marked by a series, or one continuation, of aggressions. The development of enmities, hatreds between the races occupying the contested territory. Disregarding of the rights of the weak by the strong, and finally wars and dispossession or extermination of the weak by the strong. Primal possession, long periods of established homes and governments, and cultural institutions have seldom been considered by the aggressor. There is not a powerful race extant that is not guilty of part, or all, of the offenses. The settlement of McLennan and

Coryell counties was no exception to the rule. When the white settlers began to encroach on these two counties there were several nations of people established here, notably the Waco Indians, with their capitol village at Waco spring, occupied the adjacent territory west of the Brazos River and a small part of the lower Bosque valleys. The Tonkawas occupied the larger part of Coryell county and a

small part of Bosque county.

The Wacos were gifted with diplomatic ability, for at the time they first appear in history they had formed an alliance with the Tonkawas, the Tehuacanas, and the lesser tribes, the Anadarkos, Toweashas, Ionas and Bedias.

In the 20's of the last century they were engaged in an exhaustive struggle with the Cherokees. Ten years later the whites began to press them from the south, so that in the 30's they deserted their home land and never re-established their homes there again.

The Wacos had begun to develop agriculture, for Capt. Erath says that in 1837 he found corn stalks where they had

their fields, and peach trees were growing where Waco now stands.

They had a superstitious veneration for the waters of the Brazos River, and believed that as long as they drank the water of their spring they would be a prosperous people. They also had a legend that their woods would never be destroyed by tornadoes. They built forts in the form of circular earthworks.

The Tonkawas had

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their home on the Leon River and its tributaries, and also occupied a large part of Bosque county. They were peaceable and consorted with the whites for protection against the Kiowas and Comanche Indians, whom they feared.

They numbered from 400 to 500 warriors. It was the Tonkawa's boast that no white scalp was ever raised by a member of their nation, although they were made to suffer for mischief done by the relentless Comanches and Kiowas.

The old Tonkawa trail which ran a north and south course about four miles east of Gatesville is now known as the McCulloch trail. This people was also

agricultural in a small way. There are many sand fields along the Leon whose archaeological remains suggest that they were cultivated by the Indians.

The remains found in the caves of the Leon and Bosque may have been deposited by this race.

It is said that a strain of the blood of the Wacos and Tonkawas courses the veins of the Bible negroes, who have a large settlement on Middle Bosque above Crawford.

The Tonkawas remained in the country until the early '50's, when they were removed further northwest.

Adventures on the Cattle Trail

A. Collett Sanders, Littlefield, Texas, in Dallas Semi-Weekly News.

I will give a short sketch of my life as trail boss from the '70's up to the end of the trail driving from Texas to the Northern markets.

The first herd I drove was for J. H. Stephens, well known as "Uncle Henry." He had fourteen nephews driving for him one year, and they all called him Uncle Henry, so we did, too. While driving one of his herds I had quite an experience with the Indians. When we got as far as Smoky Hill River in Nebraska we found it out of its banks. As grass was plentiful and time no object, we decided to wait for the river to run down. Before long there were eight or nine herds waiting on the south bank for the river to get low enough to cross. A few miles east of our camp was a small settlement with a little schoolhouse near by. A young lady, one of the settler's daughters, was teaching the school. While we were waiting there, about eighty-five or ninety Indians came along on a hunt, stopped at the schoolhouse and killed and scalped the teacher and two of the children. The Indians did not try to get away, as they knew the Government would do nothing with them, only carry them back to the reservation.

Some of the settlers came out to our camps and told us what had happened. They were greatly distressed over the matter, especially the young lady's father, and wanted to know if we could

aid them in any way. Our men talked the situation over and we decided to go after the Indians. We elected a man by the name of Moore, from Nueces County, as our captain. He sent two men with one of the settlers to follow the Indians and locate their camps. They found them four miles west of the foot of a big sand hill, on the south side of the hill. Moore took four men from each trail camp, making thirty-two cowboys, in all, and also a few of the settlers.

We were well armed—the trail men always were—and we were ready to fight to the utmost, for we were all very much wrought up over the crime which the Indians had just committed. After locating their camps we waited till about 3 o'clock in the morning, then went to the foot of the hill, dismounted and left our horses in care of two of the settlers. We walked to the top of the hill and did not have to wait long before the Indians began to get up and stretch themselves. When they were all sitting up on their beds we turned a volley from our Winchesters on them, and before they had time to recover from their astonishment we fired on them again. They began to run, but we got two more shots at them before they were out of gun reach. Every cowboy had sent a death message, for when the smoke had cleared away we found seventy-five dead and dying

Indians. I do not think I killed any, however, for I was so scared I think I overshot.

Only about fifteen ever showed up at the reservation. The majority never returned. The soldiers were sent out to bury them.

On another trip while working for Uncle Henry Stephens we boys got hungry for fresh meat. As we were going through the Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, the second day after we had crossed Red River we saw a herd of buffalo. Two of my men cut out a 2-year-old heifer, one roped her by the head, the other by the heels and strung her out, while a third man cut her throat. I do not believe the modern cowboy could pull off a stunt like that.

In 1885 I went to Oldham County in the Panhandle and drove for the L. S. Cattle Company from Tascosa to Montana. On my last drive for these people the ranch foreman, J. E. McAllister, sent with me a young man from Illinois who had come to Texas to learn trail work. We reached Cimarron River in No Man's Land and camped in the valley. Just after we had finished our supper and saddled the night horses it began to rain and we all had to go to the herd and stay through the night, but my new recruit did not show up. The next morning I asked him why he did not go with us. He said he could not find one of his socks, so he crawled in the mess wagon with the cock to wait till daylight to find it. After that we all called him "Socks."

When we reached the Arkansas River it was up but we put the cattle in and they were swimming fine until my right hand pointer stopped to make a cigarette and they got to milling on a sand bar in the middle of the river. I had already crossed to the north side, but seeing them milling, I swam back and roped a cow and dragged her out by the horn of the saddle. Then all the cattle followed her to the north bank. About the time I landed and turned my cow loose I heard some one crying for help. I looked and saw it was Socks. He had in some way got loose from his horse and was about to drown. I threw him a rope. He grabbed at it but missed it. I threw him the rope again and he caught

it and held on until I pulled him out. We rolled him on the grass till we got the water out of him. Always after that, when we came to a swollen stream, we had to make a raft to carry him over.

I worked one year for Tom Moore of Llano County and one year for George W. Littlefield of Gonzales County. From 1887 to the end of the trail driving I drove for the Worsham Cattle Company, known as the R-2 outfit. I drove five herds for them. All the cattlemen for whom I ever worked are now dead and many of the foremen.

I was born in Lavaca County, Texas, and reared in Gonzales County. My father, J. L. Sanders, settled in Lavaca County in 1848, after he came out of the Mexican War. I have passed my three score and ten milepost and am still hale and hearty. Sometimes I sigh for the old cattle trail days.

Two Good Books.

Frontier Times acknowledges with thanks receipt of two books, "A Trooper With Custer," and "Fighting Red Cloud's Warriors," both written in pleasing style by that well known and popular historian, E. A. Brininstool, of Los Angeles, California. These books were recently published by Hunter-Trader-Trapper of Columbus, Ohio, and sell for only \$1.00 per volume. We have read a number of versions of Custer's engagement with the Sioux, in which his troop was massacred to a man, but Mr. Brininstool gives clearer facts, obtained from most authentic sources, and tells of it in the most thrilling style we have yet encountered. In "Fighting Red Cloud's Warriors" he is equally as well versed as to facts and describes in minute detail the wily maneuvers of that noted chieftain. We think so much of these two books that we are going to give our readers an opportunity to secure either or both of them in a clubbing offer with Frontier Times. Just send in your subscription to this magazine, accompanied by a check for \$2.25, and we will send you either volume and send you Frontier Times for a year. Or if you want both "Fighting Red Cloud's Warriors," and "A Trooper With Custer," with Frontier Times for a year, send us \$3.00. We will send either book alone for one dollar.

Fort Concho in 1870

*As Described by Assistant Surgeon W. M. Notson, of the United States Army.
Written While He Was Stationed There.*

Ft. Concho is the center of a line of posts extending from El Paso on the Rio Grande, to the northeastern border of Texas on the Red River. Beginning from the west, the garrisoned positions are Fort Bliss, Quitman, Davis, Stockton, Concho, Griffin, and Richardson. It also geographically, but without as direct a road connection as with the one just named, forms one of the southern chain to the mouth of the Rio Grande.

Fort Concho is situated at the junction of the North Concho and Main Concho Rivers, immediately west of their point of confluence, the North Concho flowing nearly a southeasterly direction, and the Main Concho very nearly east, continuing that course until its junction with the Colorado River. Brief as has been its existence, the foundation of the first building having been laid in January 1868, and between that date and its abandonment in 1888, it almost lost its identity on account of its multiplicity of names. Originally called Camp Hatch by the first garrison of five companies of the Fourth Cavalry, it was changed by request of the distinguished officer by that name of that regiment, to Camp Kelly in honor of another officer of the same regiment. The Quartermaster's Department called it Fort Griffin until an order came from District Headquarters fixed its final appellation of Fort Concho.

On March 1st, 1870, the buildings of the post were, in order of their construction, a commissary and quartermaster store-house, hospital, five officers' quarters, a magazine and two barracks, all built of light colored sandstone.

The commissary and quartermaster's store-houses were built upon the same plan, and are of the same dimensions, about 100 feet in length, 30 feet in width, and about the same to the peak of the roof, each building forming one large room with a little closet about 10 feet square walled off for office purposes. The flooring is of large irregular slabs of stone, cemented with ordinary mortar. The wood-work-

rafters, beams, etc. as in all other buildings, is of pecan, a peculiarly intractable variety of our northern hickory, which by its twisting, curling, and shrinking hardly promises a permanence of the symmetry of the buildings in which it is used.

The hospital, built upon the plans issued by the Surgeon General of the Army is by far the handsomest and best finished building in the post. It is plastered throughout and all the partition walls are made of stone. There are two wards with a capacity of twenty-four beds. During the summer of 1869 the Fifteenth and Thirty-fifth regiments of Infantry consolidated near this post, and although their combined numbers would not have exceeded the probable full garrison contemplated for Fort Concho, it was found necessary by the post surgeon to pitch a number of hospital tents. A belvedere has been placed on the main building affording a distant, if not diverse, view of the prairie in every direction. Fire buckets and axes are kept in the several halls of the building, with printed directions for their use in emergency. The surgery is tastefully and conveniently fitted up. Cases requiring isolation and not contagious are taken care of in the upper rooms, but from the narrow and winding stairway communicating with the upper floor, the rooms are scarcely available for that purpose, and the middle upper room not at all so for the uses laid down in the plan. The wards are heated by stoves, all other rooms by open fires. Ventilation and light, thanks to shrinking windows and doors, are abundantly supplied. Soft water was supplied later by cisterns.

The officers' quarters, last in the program of construction, have not been completed at this date, (1870). There are five cottage buildings of stone; four erected for captains' quarters and one for major or lieutenant-colonel. The quarters are built with two rooms facing the parade, separated by a broad hall; in the rear of the west room a

kitchen. The rooms are commodious, about 15 feet square, well lighted. The larger quarters are built upon the same plan, with one additional room in the L, and is about four feet higher. All of the buildings have attics and are heated by open fires. Each kitchen is provided with a pantry.

The men's quarters last in the program of construction, are as yet incomplete. The one facing the left of the parade is composed of three stone buildings; the two upon the front intended to be used as company rooms and dormitories are each about 120 feet long and 25 in width; the third building stands at right angles in rear of the center of these, and was proposed for a mess-room, kitchen and store room. These buildings are all joined under one roof, and called a set of quarters for one company, although at present occupied by two. A wide portico surrounds the two main buildings, but has not yet been floored. An experiment was made to floor the set of quarters with concrete, but it proved a failure. The other set of quarters was started upon the same plan, and except that the wood-work—i. e., fitting in of doors and window sashes—is not so far advanced, and that it has no rear building, is similar to the one described. No permanent outbuildings of any kind are attached to the men's quarters. The Company's stables are merely frames covered with canvas. A new guard-house has just been constructed of heavy pecan plank; it promises to be suitable for the purpose designed. It contains two rooms, one for the guard and one for the confinement of general prisoners, and also three secure cells for the security of the more refractory. A stone corral 200 feet wide by 250 deep, is being enclosed with the intention of accommodating both the stables of the quartermaster and those of the companies.

The original plan of the post was a parallelogram running due east and west, but this plan has been so modified that it now forms nearly three sides. On the north side of the parade ground, and facing the south, are the men's quarters; facing the west the commissary, quartermaster's buildings, and the hospital; facing the north the officer's quarters.

The general appearance of the country in the vicinity of the post is a flat, treeless, dreary prairie. The edges of the two streams are scantily fringed with the pecan and wild plum; straggling growths of mesquite sprinkle the plain. The open nature of the country greatly affects the climate to the comfort or discomfort of the residents. The glare from the scorched and yellow grass during the summer usually produces inflammation of the eye, while the unchecked sweep of the north wind in winter (the well known Texas norther) is felt more keenly by the northern sojourner than the severer winters of his home. During but a small proportion of the winter is it necessary to wear more clothing than ordinarily would be required in November in the latitude of Washington, but the severity of the "norther" is only equaled by the suddenness of its appearance. A fall of more than 30 degrees F. in the thermometer within an hour has happened more than once during the last year. The irregularity and uncertainty of the season precludes any agricultural calculations, for while the annual rainfall may equal that of the most fertile States, the gathering of all the rain into one or two months of the year either drowns or scorches out the crops. After these rains the narrow streams swell to impassibility and the luckless gardener who has trusted to his better chances upon some river-side flat has his labor and investment swept away in an hour. For these reasons no post garden has yet been successful, although an effort is being made about seven miles southwest of the post by a farming company, to cultivate some bottom lands by irrigation. This is to be done by damming one of the tributaries of the Main Concho and bringing the water through a ditch about three-fourths of a mile. The post will undertake to cultivate a garden there, it is understood, this summer. Water cresses are now abundant upon both streams, having been planted by the present medical officer for obvious hygienic reasons.

The question of the supply of water, wholesome and sufficient for the use of the garrison, is one which in any year may be an urgent sanitary question.