THE IMPORTANCE OF RED RIVER IN THE
HISTORY OF THE SOUTHWEST

THESIS

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By

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PREFACE

It has been ten years or more since I first stood on a bluff overlooking Red River and followed its course into the West so far that its many meanders were lost to my sight, and only a wide red scar remained to penetrate the valley. Since that time I have observed the river many times, and with each observation have been keenly interested in its geographic changes. I welcomed an opportunity to make a study of Red River.

The Indians first made their homes in the fertile valley lands along the river. They fished, rowed their canoes upon its waters, and cut willows from its banks to build their wigwams. The French and Spanish were engaged in continuous rivalry over the possession of the fertile valley lands along the river, and they built forts and posts in order to check each other's advance. Exploring parties began their excursions into the Red River country even before the American purchase of Louisiana, and the river was fated historically to become involved in a series of boundary disputes extending from the time of the earliest settlement until the present day. The rugged pioneer took advantage of the opportunities offered him, and early forts and posts were replaced by thriving towns and cities. Instead of rafts and ferries, steel bridges span the river, and huge dams and reservoirs retain its waters.
My interest has deepened with the knowledge derived from this study, and I believe that Red River is destined to play an even more important part in the history of the Southwest.
CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHY AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RED RIVER

Red River has demanded more attention and has needed more exploration, possibly, than any other river in Texas. Not only has it been explored in order to determine its general location, but it has also been the basis for numerous boundary disputes.

Sometimes the river, when drained by drought and by irrigation, is hardly a river at all, but only a wide strip of white sand baking and glaring in the sun. It is an impressive stream only in times of flood, and then it becomes a red torrent, often a mile in width, lifting an angry crest of sand-waves, devouring its own low banks, earth, trees, and all, as though in a furious effort to carry away the whole country and dump it into the sea.

Red River is the southernmost of the large tributaries of the Mississippi. It takes its origin in the high plains of West Texas in the extreme western part of Deaf Smith County with some of its tributaries originating in northeastern New Mexico in Curry and Quay Counties. The river flows southeast across the high plains for a distance of 539 miles, serves as a boundary line between Texas and Oklahoma. After

1 Grant Foreman, "River Navigation in the Early Southwest," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XV (1928-1929), 49.
passing the northeast corner of Texas, Red River flows south-
east to Fulton, in southwestern Arkansas, there it turns south
to Shreveport, Louisiana and thence makes its way in a south-
easterly direction through Louisiana to the bank of the Miss-
issippi. Here it discharges partly into the Mississippi and
partly into the Atchafalaya Bayou which in turn empties into
the Gulf of Mexico.²

The elevation at its source is 4,500 feet, and the en-
tire length from the source to the Mississippi is 1,360 miles.³
The river's drainage basin has an area of at least 90,000
square miles, and its discharge reaches from 3,500 cubic feet
to 18,000 cubic feet per second.⁴

The principal tributaries are the Salt and North Forks
of the Red River and the Wichita, Sulphur, and Peaso. The
South Fork was considered the main channel by the Supreme
Court in 1896, when it awarded Greer County to Oklahoma.⁵ The
Comanche Indians called this fork of the river the "Ke-che-a-
qui-ho-no" or Prairie Dog Town River because of the immense
number of prairie dogs inhabiting the plains along the streams.⁶

²University of Texas Bulletin, No. 2327, July 15, p. 27.
³Texas Almanac, 1936, p. 183.
⁴D. C. McMurtrie, "First Texas Newspaper," Southwestern
Historical Association Quarterly, XXXVI (1932-1933), 42.
⁵Texas Almanac, 1936, p. 183.
⁶Grant Foreman, Adventures on Red River, p. 30.
The country bordering both sides of the South Fork near its headwaters in Deaf Smith County has been cut up by numerous deep gorges. These deep cuts or canyons extend from the chain of mural escarpments that terminate in the high plains to the river, and in many of them are small streams of water which issue from the springs in the rocky sides of the gorge.  

Finally the gorge narrows down to a channel of only about twenty feet, shut in by high sandstone cliffs rising to the height of approximately eight hundred feet upon each side, and gradually closed in until they are only a few yards apart leaving but a narrow channel at the base from which emerges the principal branch of Red River. This spring bursts out from its cavernous reservoir, and leaping down over the huge masses of rocks below, forms the Palo Duro Canyon. The summit of the escarpment over the head of the spring spreads out in one uninterrupted desert to the base of the mountains east of the Rio Grande.

The river runs for a distance of about sixty-five miles through this defile, and then emerges from the canyon and spreads out over a broad sandy bed and flows for about five hundred miles through a semi-arid plain.

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7 Foreman, Adventures on Red River, p. 85.
8 Ibid., pp. 89-92.
9 R. G. Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XVI, 138.
In general, timber is very sparse all along the upper forks of Red River. Aridity of soil and of the atmosphere, combined with the comparatively high and constant winds, constitute the main factors in the extreme conditions which preclude the growth of timber. Exceptions to the general rule are to be found in moist draws, along creek channels, and along most of the river's course in locations where soil and moisture are abundant. Even in such localities, however, trees are stunted and thinly scattered. From the head of the river to just below the 100th meridian the trees are nothing more than dwarfed shrubs. Down the river from that point the timber is less and less confined to the broken and hilly sections of the country, and the shrubs increase in size until they reach the stature of full grown trees in the vicinity of Denison. From there on down the stream the trees get larger and denser until they form a heavy forest in the lower courses of the river.

The two most important tributaries flowing into the main channel are Salt Fork and Mulberry Creek, both of which, when flowing, carry water which has a peculiar taste communicated by ingredients that they receive in flowing over a gypsum formation which extends across the country for some

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10 University of Texas Bulletin, No 2327, p. 28.

11 R. B. Marcy, Exploration of the Red River of Louisiana, p. 83.
four or five hundred miles in the region of the Staked Plains.

The source of the North Fork of Red River is about thirty-five miles from the Canadian in Carson County near the town of White Deer. The Comanche Indians called this fork of Red River Mobetia Hono, meaning "Walnut River." The North Fork has many tributaries running into it from the northern part of Oklahoma and western Texas. The water, although not entirely free from salts, can be used in case of great extremity.

About two miles above Devil's Canyon in Wilbarger County, the North and South Forks of the River meet. The river bed increases in width to a mile or more, and is bordered on either side by rolling sand hills. In this part of the river there are two or more channels even in relatively low water stages. The channel increases in depth and width and in quantity and permanency of water from the headwaters to the mouth of the river; however in time of drought, it may be forded at any place, so that a person may pass along the bed. During high water, the quicksands

12 Foreman, Adventures on Red River, p. 149.

13 Ibid., p. 38.

14 University of Texas Bulletin, No. 2327, p. 28.

15 R. G. Thwaites, Early Western Travels, VIII, 328.
in the bed of the stream become loose and unstable, and make it hazardous to attempt a crossing with animals.

Bordering the channel, in places on both sides and elsewhere wholly on one side, are strips of land known as the sand flat or sand bed of the river. Owing to the force of the currents these flats are almost bare of vegetation, and due to the character of the sand, considerable irregularities in elevation exist in this area. The sand in places is thrown into low elevations, and elsewhere whipped out forming deep depressions. The actual elevation of the sand flat above water level in the river channel at average low stage of the river, is as a rule from one to three feet. The sand flat being elevated but little above the water level of the river channel is overflowed with each successive rise in the river. During intervals between floods parts of this flat may become more or less covered with vegetation, particularly weeds and some grasses, and in some places young willow, cottonwoods and salt cedars. At flood stage such growth may be in part or entirely swept away leaving the sand again bare.

If the vegetation on these flats remain long enough, unmolested by high winds or water, they retain debris and soil carried by the winds and cause islands to be formed.

16 Foreman, Adventures on Red River, p. 147.
17 University of Texas Bulletin, No. 2327, p. 29-30.
within the river bed. Vegetation have been an important agency in reclaiming the sand flat and transferring it into more permanent land.

Bordering the sand flat and rising above it from one to twenty-five or thirty feet is the land of the river valley, normally covered by vegetation. Within this area of land the principal land forms to be noted are first the low valley lands rising not more than a few feet above the level of the sand flat; the sand dunes which rise from a few feet to twenty or twenty-five feet above the level of the sand flat; and fans formed by the wash of lateral streams entering from the adjacent bluffs.

The river valley increases in width progressively from its headwaters towards its mouth, and the sand flat which accompanies the channel on the other hand is reduced in width from the upper stretches of the river towards the gulf, finding its maximum width opposite Hardeman, Wilbarger, and Wichita counties.

The appearance of the country changes somewhat with the intersection of the Cross Timbers. This extensive belt of woodland lies immediately west of the Grande Prairie,

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18 Ibid., p. 32.
19 Marcy, op. cit., p. 85.
20 University of Texas Bulletin, No. 2327, p. 32.
21 Ibid., p. 30.
extending in varying widths from the Red River in the vicinity of Ringgold in northwestern Montague County to Burnet and Llano counties on the south. This Cross Timber seems to form a boundary-line dividing the arid prairies and the great agricultural district. The soil is more productive along the river valley, and vegetation grows more abundantly along the river bank. Such trees as elm, oak, pecan, and cottonwood thrive in the valleys along the principal streams. Instead of a sand flat bordering the river, the valleys are covered with grasses, vines, and weeds, or else, they are planted to agricultural crops.

After leaving the Texas border near Texarkana, Red River enters a country covered with forest, trees of gigantic dimensions, growing upon an alluvial soil of the most permanent fertility. These lands afford the planter the most bountiful returns of all the products suited to the latitude. On entering this section of the river the borders contract, and the water, for a greater portion of the year, washes both banks, at a high stage carrying away the loose alluvium from one side and depositing it upon the other in such a manner as to produce constant changes in the channel and to render navigation difficult. Here deposits of silt and fallen trees form huge rafts in the river between Shreveport and Alexandria.

22 Texas Almanac, 1936, p. 168.
23 Foreman, op. cit., p. 12.
24 Ibid., 134-135.
25 Ibid., 135.
In its course through Louisiana the river has built up a flood plain with silt deposits more rapidly than its tributaries with the result that numerous lakes and bayous have been formed on either side of the River.

For seven months of the year Red River is navigable for small draught boats from its junction with the Mississippi to Shreveport, Louisiana, a distance of three hundred fifty miles, and in periods of high water they can go as far up as Fulton, Arkansas, possibly, Texarkana, Texas. The upper portions of this river present little or no facilities for navigation.

In the wet season the lower part of the Red River is lost in an extensive lake covering the Louisiana bottom lands from the Mississippi westward for about one hundred miles. The only portion of the low land which is at all suitable for cultivation is a narrow strip on each bank, commencing a little above the mouth of Black River, and enlarging upward, but even here the settler is not secure, as uncommon floods of the river sometimes lay the whole area under water. These floods often produce very serious consequences to the planters.

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27. Ibid.
29. Ibid., XVII, 61.
by destroying their crops and leaving a heavy deposit of white sand over the surface of the land, rendering it thenceforth barren and worthless. Some of these swamps and low lands, unmolested by man, become a paradise for birds and reptiles.

The Ouchita or Black River comes from the north, about twenty-four miles from Bayou Natchitoches; its water is clear and limpid when contrasted with that of Red River. The French called it the Black River on account of the dark appearance, due to depth, over-shadowing forests, and a black sandy bottom. Black River is a swift stream about twenty feet deep, and is bordered on either side by dense vegetation, trees and vines. It is approximately one hundred yards wide at its mouth where it joins the Red at a point thirty miles above the junction of the Red with the Mississippi.

The forests of the lower section of Red River differ little from those of the Mississippi and Arkansas. White gum, cottonwood, pecan, locust, white oak, mulberry, sycamore, hackberry and cypress thrive in the bottom lands bordering the swamps, while the low and scattered hills are covered with pine, intermixed with a small proportion of oak and hickory.

32 Francois Martin, *The History of Louisiana*, p. 28.
33 Thwaites, *op. cit.*, XVII, 62.
Red River takes its name from the color of its water, which is in time of floods a bright red, and retains that color throughout the year. There can be no doubt that the coloring matter on which this tinge depends is derived from the red sandstone of the soil formation which the water comes in contact with as it flows from the high plains toward the Mississippi.

The age of Red River as a drainage system is indicated by the depth and width of the channel or valley that it has cut into the formations over which it flows. The valley of the river lies one hundred feet or more below the adjacent uplands. In width it varies from one or two to several miles. The history of development of the river valley is recorded in the alluvial deposits remaining as terraces, that it has built up in and at the sides of the valley. Remnants of these alluvial deposits of a much earlier date, have been left at the sides of the river channel. The oldest of these terraces are those which now lie at or near the top of the present river bluff, and record a time when the river was working at a level of between seventy and one hundred feet above its present level. At successively lower levels are other terraces recording later stages in the down-cutting of the river channel and the development of the river.


35 *University of Texas Bulletin*, No. 2327, p. 28.
36 valley. Timber growth has been used as a basis in making some estimates as to the approximate age of the valley lands.

In its long course, Red River and its tributaries encounter wide diversity of climatic conditions as well as varying formations through which it has cut its channel. The series of formations which the river cut through include the Tertiary formations of the high plains of Texas, the cut-cropping edges of the Triassic sandstone, the red beds of the Permian System, some of the upper Pennsylvanian formations, the Cretaceous series of northeastern Texas, and the Tertiary and alluvial deposits of Louisiana.

One of the first peculiarities noticed on a survey of the topography of this extensive district of country, is the general uniformity of its surface. With the exception of the Wichita range no extensive chains of mountains diversify the perspective, and but few elevated hills rise up to relieve the monotony of the prospect. Another distinguishing feature of Red River is, that the country on its upper waters differs in every respect from that in the vicinity of its mouth. The valley is found to comprise two great geographical sections, each having physical characteristics entirely distinct from the other.

36 Ibid., p. 29.
37 Ibid., p. 56.
38 Ibid., p. 28.
In spite of the marked differences in the climate and topography of the Red River Valley, approximately one million people make it their home.
CHAPTER II

SPANISH AND FRENCH ERA

The Red River Valley with its varied vegetation and animal life has always been a desirable region for occupation by man. Remnants of the Mound Builders have been found in the valleys of eastern Oklahoma along the Red, Arkansas, and Illinois rivers, indicating that the valley was settled back beyond the time of which our histories make mention. 1

In this territory along the Red River a greater number of tribes of American Indians have lived, possibly, than in any similar area in the United States. At the time of the earliest European explorations two Indian groups occupied the greater part of the Red River Valley; the Athapascan in the western part, and the Caddoan in the eastern part. In addition to these tribes the territory of Siouian tribes reached the river at some points, and the Comanches, a Shoshonean tribe, reached the territory in the last part of the seventeenth century.2

These various tribes differed greatly among themselves in their customs, manners, and ways of living. Some of the tribes mixed readily, intermarried, hunted and traded together,

1J. B. Thoburn and M. H. Wright, Oklahoma, pp. 15-17.
2Ibid., p. 22.
while other tribes waged war upon each other continuously. The Tonika Indian tribe, located at the mouth of the Red River at the time of the occupation of Louisiana, did not mix with other tribes. They were loyal in their relations with the French, but were treacherous with other tribes and with the English.

On the north bank of the Red River in Louisiana and Arkansas were the Quapaw, of the Siouan tribe. In 1818 they ceded their territory in northern Louisiana to the United States in exchange for a reservation on the Arkansas and Washita rivers in the state of Arkansas. They did not remain here very long, however, because in 1824, by the treaty of Harrington's Landing, this land was sold to the United States, and the Quapaws were sent to the Caddo reservation on the lower Red River. Here they found the climate unsuited to their mode of living, and they were removed in 1833 to a reservation west of the Missouri.

Southwest of the Quapaws, and occupying most of the territory along both banks of the lower Red River were the three great confederacies of the Caddoan tribes, the Hasinai, the Caddo, and the Wichita. The Hasinai were located chiefly in the watershed of the Sabine and Angeline Rivers but extended eastward into the Red River Valley. This group consisting of


4 Ibid., p. 544.
the Nacogdoches, Nebedache, Nasoni, and Nadaco were more nearly civilized, and they occupied the same territory throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They were essentially an agricultural people, and raised bountiful crops of melons, maize, beans, squash, and sunflowers, the seed of which they made into meal. Their food also consisted of meat, berries, and nuts. These tribes were good providers, and preserved enough meat during the hunting season to furnish themselves with food during times of drought or famine. They lived in conical, communal grass lodges, cleared and fertilized their land for farming, and traded peaceably among other tribes. Although the efforts of the Spanish to convert them to Christianity failed, these Indians were friendly toward both the Spanish and the French, whose post at Natchitoches they saved from the Natchez.

The Caddoan confederacy occupied both banks of the Red River from the town of Natchitoches to above the great bend of the Red River in southeastern Oklahoma. Made up of the Caddo proper, the Petit Caddo, the upper and lower Natchitoches, the Adaes, the Yatasi, the Nasonites, and the Natchoas, this confederacy was similar to the Hasinai in culture and language. Pottery making, weaving, and skin dressing were practiced by these tribes, and they claimed to have

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5 H. E. Bolton, Athanase de Mezieres, I, 22.

6 J. A. Morfi, History of Texas, I, 82-83.
learned to hunt, fish and make houses from the goddess Zacado. In 1835, the portion of this tribe living in Louisiana ceded their land to the United States and joined their kindred in Texas.

The third great Caddoan confederacy, including the Wichitas, were situated on the upper Red, Brazos, and Trinity Rivers. The two more important tribes, the Taovayas and Wichitas, were located on the upper Red, the Wichita, and upper Brazos Rivers, with the Towacani, the Yacanis, and the Kichai settled to the southeast of them on the Brazos and Trinity.

These tribes lived in villages near which they cultivated corn, pumpkins, beans, peas, melons, and tobacco. They had no ploughs or other agricultural implements, with the exception of a small hoe, with which they prepared the ground for the reception of the seed; yet the prolific soil gave them bountiful returns. One village of the Wichita Indians was described as follows:

The village of the Wichitas had forty-two lodges, each containing two families of about ten persons. These lodges are made by erecting a framework of poles placed in a circle in the ground, with the tops united in an oval form, and bound together with numerous withes or wattles, the whole nicely thatched with grass; and when completed, it makes a very commodious and comfortable domicile. The interior arrangements are such that every person has a bunk raised from the ground and covered with buffalo-hides.

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7 Ibid., I, 88.
8 Fortier, op. cit., I, 543.
9 Bolton, op. cit., I, 23.
forming a couch which is far from being uncomfortable. When seated around their fires in the center of the lodges, they have an air of domestic happiness which I did not expect to find.

This village was the center of the Wichita Nation and was situated on the beautiful valley land near Red River.

The women of these Caddoan tribes were unusually capable and ambitious. They tanned, sewed and painted skins, planted and cultivated the crops, built the houses, collected and cut the firewood, reared the children, and provided daily food, while the men devoted themselves exclusively to the chase and to war. These tribes were allied closely with their kindred tribes against the Apaches and Osages.

After 1777, a village of the Panis-Mahas or Avaes Indians was located near the Caddoan tribes on the south bank of the Red River. They had come there from Missouri and had located between the Taovayas and Caddoes since they were on friendly terms with these tribes and their languages and customs were similar.

With the end of the Spanish and French era in the region of Red River, large numbers of tribes from the eastern part

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10 Grant Foreman, Adventures on Red River, p. 124.
11 Morfi, op. cit., I, 84-87.
13 Morfi, op. cit., I, 87.
of the United States were forced to find homes along the upper Red River in the territory of the Osages, the Quapaws, and the Caddoan confederacies. Some Delawares, Shawnees, Cherokees, and Choctaws had crossed the Mississippi before 1785. Many of the western Cherokees were placed on a reservation in Arkansas in 1817, but a group under John Bowles came to Texas and settled on upper Red River. In 1828, when the Arkansas Cherokees were forced further westward into Oklahoma, more Cherokees under Tahchee joined those under Bowles. Associated with these Texas Cherokees were most of the remnants of the Caddoan tribes, some Delawares, Shawnees, and Kickapoos. When these tribes were forced out of Texas by President Lamar's anti-Indian policy, most of them found refuge in the Indian Territory in Oklahoma.

The Choctaws exchanged most of their lands in Mississippi for the land in the Indian Territory between the Arkansas, Canadian, and Red Rivers by treaties in 1820 and 1825. Few actually came to the territory, however, until after the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1831. In 1837 the Choctaws sold the Chickasaws equal privileges in this region.

The Cherokees, Choctaws, and Chickasaws, together with

14 Thoburn and Wright, op. cit., VI, 109.
15 Ibid., p. 262-263.
16 Ibid., p. 133-139.
the Creeks and Seminoles were known as the "Civilized Nations," and, in truth, their civilization did not differ too greatly from that of the frontiersmen. Many of these Indians had large farms, and cultivated crops of maize, corn, sorghum, and vegetables. In fact, cotton gins were introduced into the Indian territory by 1836. The more prosperous Indians not only had comfortable homes, but also wore eastern clothing which they had purchased through traders. Less fortunate tribes lived typical outdoor lives.

Further west along Red River from the territory of the Wichitas in the early days and the Chickasaws and Choctaws in later years, was the region of the Apaches. The Apache was the outlaw tribe of the southwest, being an enemy of practically every other tribe. More than fifty tribes considered the Apache their common foe, and during his savage raids he justified their accusations. This tribe of Indians depended almost entirely upon the hunt and upon the returns from their pillaging expeditions for livelihood. The roughness of the country in which they lived and the scarcity of water lessened the danger of attacks upon them, and prevented their practice of

agriculture. Jacob Sadelmeyer described this tribe in 1744 as:

17 Ibid., pp. 241-245.
19 C. C. Rister, The Southwestern Frontier, p. 35.
The Apaches reside in small "rancherias," erected in valleys and on the ridges of mountains. According to some prisoners who have been ransomed, they are exceedingly savage and brutal. They have very little cultivated land because the country supplies them with plenty of spontaneous products. They are cruel to those who fall into their hands and among them are several apostates. They go entirely naked but make incursions on horses of great swiftness which they have stolen from other parts, a skin serving them for a saddle. Of the same skins they make little shoes or boots of one piece, and by these they are traced in their flight.

They begin the attack with shouts at a great distance to strike the enemy with terror. They have not naturally any great share of courage, but the little they can boast of is extravagantly increased on any great success. In war they depend on artifice rather than valor; and being defeated, submit to the most ignominious terms, and keep their treaties no longer than suits their convenience. Their arms are the common bows and arrows of the country. The intention of their incursions is plunder, especially horses, the flesh of these creatures being one of their greatest dainties.

The Lipan-Apache who at first controlled most of the western part of Texas north to the Red River began in 1700 to be pushed back by another formidable tribe, the Comanches, migrants from Wyoming. Early in the eighteenth century, a nine day battle raged between these two tribes on the Río del Fierro, probably the Wichita River, and turned into a disastrous defeat for the Lipan-Apache. The defeated tribe crossed Red River and settled at Apache Gap near the foothills of the Wichita Mountains. Thereafter, until the coming of the Americans, the Comanches ruled the upper branches of the Red River.

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20 Rister, op. cit., p. 34.

21 Ibid.
The Comanche subsisted almost entirely upon the flesh of the buffalo, and were known among the other Indians as "Buffalo-eaters." They were generally found at the heels of the buffalo, migrating with them from place to place upon the vast plains of the West. These animals supplied the Indians with food, clothing, and a covering for their lodges. Instead of having grass-covered houses, as did the tribes on the lower Red, they constructed their lodges of poles and buffalo skins. In addition to meat, the Comanche's diet consisted of a few wild plants and berries which they found on the prairies. They traded to some degree with the whites, exchanging horses and skins for such articles as tobacco, paint, knives, calico, wampum, beads, and whiskey.

The greatest ambitions of the Comanche were to be able to cope successfully with his enemy in war, and to ride and shoot with unfailing ability. He was in the saddle from boyhood to old age, and his favorite horse was his constant companion. It was when mounted that he exhibited himself to the best advantage; here his skill in various maneuvers which he made available in battle, such as throwing himself entirely upon one side of his horse and discharging his arrows with great rapidity toward the opposite side from beneath the

22 George Catlin, North American Indians, II, 72.

animal's neck while he was at full speed, were truly astonishing. Many of the women were equally as expert performers as the men. They rode upon the same saddles and in the same manner, with a leg upon each side of the horse. Captain Marcy relates:

As an example of their skill in horsemanship, two young women of one of the bands of Northern Comanches, while we were encamped near them, upon seeing some antelopes at a distance from their camp, mounted horses, and with lassos in their hands set off at full speed in pursuit of this fleetest inhabitant of the plains. After pursuing them for some distance, and taking all the advantage which their circuitous course permitted, they finally came near them, and, throwing the lasso with unerring precision, secured each animal and brought it back in triumph to the camp. 24

This tribe of Indians permitted no authorities to control them other than those who received the sanction of the masses, and the rule of their leaders was guided by the counsels of their old men, who in many cases curbed the impetuosity of ambitious young warriors. Not until after the coming of the Americans were the activities of the Comanche hindered to any great extent by the white man. Then in 1859 the authorities in Texas forced their removal north of Red River, but the tribe continued to claim Texas as their hunting ground, and hunted and raided in the territory. Following

24 Ibid., p. 156.

the Civil War, in 1867, they were placed, along with the Kiowa and Kiowa-Apache on a reservation in southwestern Oklahoma, between the Red and Washita rivers; however, their depredations continued until 1876 when the last group of hostile Comanches came into Fort Sill and surrendered.

Associated with the Comanches were the Kiowas, a tribe living in the Panhandle of Texas, north of the Red River. This tribe, like the Comanches, were extremely fine horsemen. They depended upon the flesh and skins of the buffalo for food, clothing and shelter, and moved their wigwams from place to place following these animals. Catlin describes them as a finer looking race than the Comanches or Pawnees, being tall, erect, and graceful. They were proud of their long hair, which sometimes nearly reached the ground. The women were capable at basket making, rug weaving, and pottery moulding, and left valuable information concerning dyes, paint-rock and clays. When the Americans began to settle Texas, this tribe gave up their hunting grounds on the western plains and were forced into the Indian Territory in Oklahoma.

Federated with the Kiowas were the Plains Apache, or Kiowa Apache, a small tribe that had come down from the Black

26 Ibid., pp. 75-173.

27 Ibid., pp. 32-33.

28 Catlin, op. cit., II, 84-85.
Hill country of the Dakotas shortly before the end of the eighteenth century. This tribe was similar to the tribes of the Comanches and Kiowas in customs, language, and actions. They lived on the flesh of the buffalo, and used his hide for clothing and shelter. They were a nomadic tribe, stopping where food and water could be found and remaining until the supply was gone. They, too, were expert riders, and drove their stock over the western plains in search of grass and water. The arid locations of their settlements discouraged agriculture, and they were content to join the Kiowas and Comanches in the buffalo hunt. They persistently raided the American settlements in the southwest part of Texas, and their tribe decreased to a small number. Finally the remaining few were removed from Texas with little resistance, and placed on the reservation in Oklahoma.

These various tribes stretching from one end of the Red River Valley to the other, in 1541 first came in contact with the white man, the force that was in years to come to completely subjugate them. Seeking the incalculable wealth of the Indies, Columbus had, in 1492, discovered a New World, and following that event, the Spaniards had conquered and colonized the West Indies. Later Cortez had seized the untold treasure of the Aztecs of Mexico, and it was in an effort to duplicate his exploits that Ponce de Leon and Narvaez had wandered over

29 Thoburn and Wright, op. cit., I, 24-26.
portions of the southern United States. A survivor of the Narvaez expedition, Cabeza de Vaca, reached Mexico with stories of golden cities to be found in the deserts of the southwestern United States, and Antonio de Mendoza, the viceroy of Mexico, determined to add this rich region to his domain.

In 1539, Mendoza commissioned Francisco Vasques de Coronado to prepare to spread the power of Spain and the glory of Christianity into that region. Fray Marcos, with the negro Estevanico, who had been with de Vaca, made a preliminary expedition northward, but the death of Estevanico caused him to turn back with stories of cities that were rich in wealth. The following year Coronado left Mexico in a search for these cities. His exploration covered much of the southwestern part of the United States, and brought the first white men into the Valley of the Red River. "Accompanied by many and very splendid people, together with a great abundance of baggage, necessary provisions and livestock of all kinds" he traveled northward, only to meet disappointment. The Indians of the Pecos hated the Spaniards for their greed and cruelty, and one called El Turco was used as an instrument for revenge. Luring the Spaniards with false tales of fabulously wealthy cities, he was to lead them out on the desert where they would die of thirst and starvation, or become so

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weakened by travel that the Indians could destroy them. In pursuance of this plan El Turco described to Coronado the country of Quivira, where the houses were of pure gold, and where wealth was to be had in abundance.

In 1541, with El Turco as his guide, Coronado went westward into Texas, and across its buffalo-covered plains. Summer came, and with it a scarcity of food and water, yet no sign of Quivira had been found. The Texas Indians encouraged Coronado by assuring him that the country lay to the northward. His exact route is uncertain, but it was in the vicinity of the upper Brazos that Coronado decided to send most of his men back to Mexico, while he plunged ahead to the northeast with only thirty-six men seeking the elusive city. Pichardo declares that he reached the country of the Asinais, but they were possibly a tribe of the Caddoan stock.

Coronado pushed northward across the Red and Arkansas Rivers only to find that El Quivira proved to be the country of the Wichitas in Kansas. Disappointed and humiliated, Coronado executed El Turco, his treacherous guide, and returned to New Mexico by a route that later was followed by the Santa Fe traders. He returned to Mexico in 1542, having lost his reputation and shortly afterwards his job as governor of New Galicia.

\[32\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp.} \ 86-100.\]

\[33\text{Pichardo, op. cit.}, I, 81.\]
A priest, Juan Padilla, who had been with Coronado, returned to Kansas in the hope of Christianizing its Indians, but after a temporary success, he was killed, either by his own guides or by the natives of a neighboring town. His three companions then made their way through Oklahoma and Texas, crossing the valley of Red River, on their way to Mexico.

Shortly after Coronado, in his search for Quivira, had crossed the upper Red River, another expedition arrived on the lower end of the river. The stories told by the Indians to Narvaez and the reports of Cabeza de Vaca led Hernando de Soto to hope to find an "El Dorado" such as Cortez had found in Mexico and Pizarro had found in Peru. De Soto had been with Pizarro in Peru, being one of the most distinguished officers of that famous conqueror. The wealth he acquired there enabled him to purchase the favor of Emperor Charles V, who appointed him Governor of Cuba. Determined to find a country even greater than Peru in the lands to the north of the Gulf of Mexico, he sailed in May, 1539, from Havana to Florida, with an army of approximately six hundred men. From Tampa Bay the expedition searched through Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi, in its quest for a land of gold and jewels; a quest that led many of his men


to a death from disease and hostile Indians. The clothing of his followers were tattered rags; some men even were naked underneath their rusty armor. Scant hope did they have of duplicating the exploits of Pizarro and Cortez. It was this bedraggled army, which at length on May 21, 1541, reached the great river of North America—the Mississippi, either at or below the present city of Memphis. After crossing the river, the expedition explored portions of Arkansas, Missouri, and probably Oklahoma. After wintering in Arkansas, the little group, now less than half of its original number, returned to the Mississippi at the Indian town of Guachoya which Bolton places at the mouth of the Arkansas, but which Maynard places at the mouth of the Red River. It is therefore not certain whether De Soto himself actually reached Red River. Here he became ill, and died, May 21, 1542.

The day before his death, meeting with his officers, De Soto appointed Luis de Moscoso to take his place as leader of the expedition. Moscoso had been second-in-command, though he later was replaced by Gallego. He and the other survivors

40 Ibid., pp. 261-263.
decided to abandon the search, and attempt to reach Mexico and safety. Heading westward, they crossed southern Arkansas or northern Louisiana. Upon reaching the Red River, they were delayed for a week in crossing by its flood waters. They passed through the Caddo villages of east Texas and by October had reached a large river in central Texas, probably the Brazos. The threat of winter was sufficient to cause them to return to the Mississippi, where they spent the winter in building the ships in which they, during the following summer, descended the Mississippi and finally reached Mexico.

During the one hundred forty years that followed Moscoso's departure, the Indians of the Red River country were left undisturbed by visitations from the white man. When the tribes living near the confluence of the Red with the Mississippi saw the boats of La Salle entering the mouth of the Mississippi on March 31, 1682, they were astounded at the strange sight.

Robert Cavelier de la Salle had previously carried on extensive exploits in the Ohio country and on the upper Mississippi, before he made his successful trip down the river to the Gulf. Business demanded his return up the Mississippi, and he left his devoted lieutenant, Tonti, in a fort at Starved Rock in the Illinois country. In Canada he found

41 Bolton, The Spanish Borderlands, pp. 74-77.
42 Fortier, op. cit., II, 46.
his enemies in power, and was forced to go to France in order to get his power restored. With the permission of the king, he prepared an expedition to establish a colony at the mouth of the Mississippi in order to hold the country he had claimed for France. With a fleet of four vessels, the Joly, Aimable, Belle, and St. Francois, commanded by Beaujeu, La Salle set sail for the New World, July 24, 1664. Disaster dogged the expedition almost from the start. The St. Francois with most of the supplies and ammunition was captured by the Spanish. Later the expedition failed to locate the mouth of the Mississippi, and instead landed on the coast of Texas on Matagorda Bay. However, there are rumors that La Salle possibly missed the mouth of the Mississippi by design, his purpose being to give France a foothold on the continent nearer to the important mines of Mexico. Nevertheless, his brother Cavelier wrote that La Salle thought that Galveston Bay was an entrance to the Mississippi, and that the lagoons on the Texas coast were connected with the river.

The landing on the Texas Coast intensified the ill-luck of the expedition. The ship Aimable was wrecked soon after their arrival, possibly through the design of its commander, Aigran, who did not like La Salle. Lost with the boat were

43 Ibid., p. 49.

44 Ricardo, op. cit., I, 152-59.

45 Francis Parkman, La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West, pp. 351-354.
most of the provisions for the colony. Members of the expedi-
tion were dying daily on account of improper diet, and this
added to their discomfort. Explorations in the vicinity soon
showed La Salle that he was far from the Mississippi, and the
gloom settled deeper over the group of ne'er-do-wells and mis-
fits that comprised the majority of the settlers. 46

A fort was built on the Lavaca River and called Fort St.
Louis. According to Father Massenet, a Spaniard, this post
consisted of

... six houses, not very large, built with poles
plastered with mud, and roofed over with buffalo
hides, another larger house where they fattened pigs
and a wooden fort made from a hulk of a vessel which
was wrecked. The fort had one lower room which was
used as a chapel for saying mass. It had three other
lower rooms. Above it had a store over the three
rooms which served as a store-house, and in it we
found about six loads of iron. 47

In the autumn La Salle, leaving Joutel in command of the
fort, explored all of the lower part of Texas; although he
remained away until March, he was still unenlightened as to the
location of the Mississippi. La Salle now planned to get in contact with the Illinois posts if possible and late in
April, a small expedition under his supervision, set out for
the north. But the expedition was ill-fated and they got no
further than the settlements of the Cenis on the Trinity and Neches, when the lack of ammunition forced the eight survivors back to the fort. Disaster had struck here in his absence,

46 Ibid., pp. 359-67.
47 Pichardo, op. cit., I, 145.
and the colony's last boat, the frigate, Bella, had been wrecked with only six of the crew saved.

With only forty-five survivors left of more than one hundred colonists, the necessity for a party reaching Canada in order to get help was now apparent. Early in January, 1687, seventeen men led by La Salle and Joutel, left the fort to begin the fatal journey. Other members of the party were La Salle's nephews, Morangert and Cavelier, his brother, the priest Cavelier, and the friar Douay, Heins, a German buccaneer, Nika, La Salle's Indian servant, Duhaunt, a man of some education, and Liotot, the surgeon, were among the seventeen.

After crossing the Brazos and Trinity Rivers amid much discomfort, the party neared a cache of corn and beans left on the preceding journey. Duhaunt, Liotot, Heins, Leisser, l'Archeveque, Nika, and Saget were detailed to bring it in. Although they found the cache spoiled, they killed two buffalo and Saget was sent to La Salle to get horses to bring the meat to camp. La Salle sent Morangert and De Marle back with Saget, which was unfortunate as Duhaunt and Liotot had a quarrel with the hasty and ill-tempered Morangert, and when the latter in a fit of rage took from them their share of the meat, they, with Heins and l'Archeveque plotted his death. When night came, Morangert, with the faithful Indians, Nika and

49Ibid., pp. 393-397.
Saget, were killed. Leisser took no part in the plot, but had guilty knowledge of it. De Marle was involved against his will.

Their own safety now prompted the conspirators to kill La Salle, whom they already disliked. When the party had not been heard from for two or three days, La Salle, taking Father Douay and two Indians with him, went in search of the absent members. As the searchers approached the scene of the crime, they were assured of misfortune by flying vultures overhead. Then they came upon one of the conspirators, who answered questions curtly and who led La Salle into the prepared ambush. Both Liotot and Duhaut fired, the shot of the latter causing their leader's death an hour later.

Duhaut was now chosen as leader of the party, and he led them first to the villages of the Cenis and then to those of the Assonis. Here dissension among the murderers led to the death of Liotot and Duhaut, and Heins assumed the leadership. He allowed Joutel, Douay, the two Caveliers, Tessier, and Barthelomy to try to make their way back to Canada, furnishing each with a horse, gunpowder, bullets, and merchandise. They passed through the country of the Assonis, and reached

50 Ibid., pp. 400-402.

51 Richardo, op. cit., I, 165.

52 Ibid., pp. 166-167.
the village of the Caddoes on the Red River where they were
given an impressive welcome. From here a journey of two months
brought them to the point on the Arkansas near the Mississippi,
where Tonti had established a post and left Contoure and de
Launay. Guides were secured here and, in September, they
reached Tonti's post in Illinois. La Salle's death was not
disclosed by Cavelier, who, knowing La Salle was bankrupt,
nevertheless drew upon Tonti for four thousand livres in furs.
Tonti, who had previously, in 1686, made a trip down the
Mississippi in an effort to contact La Salle, now prepared
to assist the survivors of La Salle's party in Texas. Late
in 1688 he left Ft. St. Louis of the Illinois with eight men,
and by the last of March was in the country of the Caddoes on
Red River. Learning that Heins and some other Frenchmen were
in a village only eighty leagues distant, he went in search
of them, although all except two of his men declined to go with
him. Upon reaching the village he could not find a trace of
Heins, and the unfriendly attitude of the tribe convinced him
that they had killed these survivors. Lack of ammunition now
forced him back to the Red River. After much difficulty they
at length made their way back to the Arkansas and Illinois
country. The visit of Tonti to the Red River country was


54 Fortier, op. cit., II, 535.

important, for he, as had Joutel and Caveller before him to a lesser extent, had begun a friendship with the Caddo Indians of the lower Red River that would make it difficult for the Spanish to occupy the country.

The Spanish, who had for one hundred forty years neglected the territory to which the explorations of Coronado and De Soto had given them a claim, now began to feel a renewed interest in this unexplored tract. The discovery in 1688, of Jean Gery in Coahuila, a deserter from Fort St. Louis, caused the viceroy to send Alonzo de Leon in search of the French settlement. When de Leon reached the fort he found it in ruins, with only two survivors left to tell of its misfortunes. On hearing his report, the viceroy realized the importance of the country, and again sent de Leon in 1690, to locate a mission and a fort in the territory of the Texas Indians. The following year Domingo Teran, governor of Coahuila and Texas, with fifty soldiers and twenty-one priests, undertook an expedition into Texas in order to establish missions among the Texas and Caddo Indians. Teran proved inefficient as a leader, however, and it took him three months to reach the mission San Francisco in the Texas territory. Proceeding northward he reconnoitered the country of the Caddoes, on Red River, which he discovered to be navigable. His soldiers began to annoy the Indians, and,

56 Bolton, Athanase de Mezieres, I, 43.
57 Morfi, op. cit., I, 137-139.
in spite of the protests of the priests, the outrages continued. This trouble irritated Teran, who was disappointed in not finding riches; he left the colony, leaving only eleven soldiers and fifteen priests in East Texas. Two years later, 1693, the remainder of this settlement in East Texas returned to Mexico, as a food shortage was aggravated by fear of the Indians, who had been antagonized by the soldiers.

The sacrifices and hardships of LaSalle, Joutel, Tonti, and others had not been entirely forgotten by the French in the meanwhile, and at length La Salle's dreams came true, largely through the efforts of the Le Moyne brothers, Iberville and Bienville. Having secured the support of the Minister of the Marines, Count de Pontchartrain, Iberville was given command of an expedition of two hundred settlers and a company of marines to hold the mouth of the Mississippi. Leaving France in September, 1698, they arrived on the river the following March and a settlement was made near Biloxi. Iberville, having to return to France, Bienville employed himself by exploring the forks of the Mississippi and the bayous in that vicinity. On one of these excursions he met an English ship, but convinced its captain that the Mississippi was further to the west. Upon Iberville's return a temporary post was established on the river in order to keep out any other English that might be interested in the territory.

58 Ibid., pp. 152-155.

The French continued their policy of friendship with the Indian tribes, and with this in view, exploring parties were sent up the Mississippi and its tributaries. Bienville, accompanied by Louis de Saint-Denis, twenty-two Canadians, and seven Indians left in March to explore the Red River Valley. They reached the territory of the Yatasi on the Red River in northwestern Louisiana where they were told that they were two days journey from the Caddoes. Some Caddo tribesmen, visiting among the Yatasi, informed them that there was a Spanish settlement five days journey from their village. Instead of seeking this settlement, however, the party returned home to Mobile, being gone only a little more than a month.

Later in the year, having been directed to proceed westward and observe the Spanish closely, Saint-Denis ascended the Red River from its mouth to the country of the Natchitoches, from here he continued up the river another five hundred leagues to the land of the Caddoes, who informed him that they had seen no Spaniards for two years.

From 1702 to 1705 Saint-Denis was in command of the post on the Mississippi, but upon its abandonment, he settled in Biloxi until Lamothe Cadillac arrived in Louisiana in 1713 to be its governor. Cadillac, an appointee of Crozat, who had

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60 R. C. Clark, "Louis Juchereau de Saint-Denis," Texas State Historical Ass'n Quarterly, VI, 4.

61 Ibid., pp. 5-6.

62 L. G. Bugbee, "The Real St. Denis," Texas Historical Ass'n Quarterly, I (1897-1898), 267-68.
been granted a monopoly by opening trade with Mexico from Louisiana trade, attempted to increase the value of that monopoly by opening trade with Mexico from Louisiana. After an expedition to Vera Cruz had failed, Cadillac decided to try an overland expedition, and he appointed Saint-Denis to lead the expedition to the Red River and through the country to its southwest. Accompanied by many of the Natchitoches Indians, he proceeded up the Red River through the territory of the Tonicas to a village of the Natchitoches on an island in the Red River near the present site of Natchitoches. Here in the fall of 1713, he left part of his company to establish a post, and with twelve Frenchmen and a few Indians he left Red River and began his westward march to the Rio Grande and Mexico in 1714. A twenty day march brought him to the country of the Tejas Indians, who asked him to have the Spaniards to return Father Hidalgo to them as a missionary. Despite an attack by the Apaches, whom he completely routed, Saint-Denis and his three remaining French companions reached the Mexican post of San Juan Bautista on the Rio Grande in August.

He now attempted to establish trade relations with the Spanish here, showing his commission from Cadillac to buy grain and cattle from the missions, in East Texas, which, he declared, he thought still in existence. The captain at the post, although he treated the French with great courtesy, lacked the necessary

63 Morfi, op. cit., I, 167-171.
authority to trade with them, and sent a messenger to the
governor of the province, who immediately sent the news of
the French in Mexico to the viceroy, who in order to be bet-
ter informed asked that Saint-Denis be sent to him. 64

In his interviews with the viceroy Saint-Denis cleverly
emphasized the affection of the Indians for the Spaniards.
The viceroy decided to re-establish the missions in East Texas,
not so much for missionary purposes, but rather to prevent the
encroachments of the French. An expedition consisting of nine
priests, twenty-two soldiers, and settlers and traders suffi-
cient to raise the party to sixty-five persons were assembled,
and placed under the command of Domingo Ramon. Among the
priests were Father Hidalgo who had labored among the Tejas
Indians at the old mission San Francisco, and Father Margil,
who was destined to wield a wide influence among the Indians
in the days to come. Saint-Denis accepted an offer to become
chief guide for the expedition, apparently believing that
trade with the Spaniards would be easier and more profitable
on the Red and Sabine Rivers than it would be on the Rio Grande.
This desire for profitable trading seems to have been the rea-
son why he led the Spaniards back to the Red and Sabine Rivers,
thereby turning Texas into a Spanish rather than a French prov-
ince. 65

64 Morfi, op. cit., I, 171.
65 Clark, op. cit., VI, 15-20.
Arriving in East Texas, Ramon, Father Margil and the rest of the expedition were warmly greeted by the Indians. Six missions were established, the last, San Miguel de los Adaes, being only seven leagues from the French post of Natchitoches, which was visited by Ramon. Shortly thereafter, Saint-Denis was arrested for illicit trade, and sent to Mexico for trial. Escaping from prison he returned to Louisiana, where he was made captain of the Natchitoches post, a position he held for many years.

By 1718 the French and Spanish were at war; the French at Natchitoches in 1719 under the leadership of Saint-Denis and Bernard de La Harpe, drove the Spanish back from Adaes, Aes, and the other eastern missions to San Antonio. Then in order to extend their operation further inland, and to establish better relations with the Indians, it was decided to establish a fort on the south bank of the Red River further inland. This fort was established by La Harpe, about five hundred miles up the Red River near the site of Spanish Fort in Montague County. Later depots were established among the Petit Caddo and the Yatasi, and these establishments, together with Saint-Denis' influence gave the French almost undisputed domination over the Caddoes. Whether La Harpe's post was built in the country of the Nassonites, or further west in the territory of the Wichitas, it is certain that he brought

68 Morﬁ, op. cit., I, 165-189.
the French in contact with that tribe for the first time. While in the Wassenite village he sent Du Rivage ahead to reconnoiter the country, and seventy leagues up the river he met a war party of Kichae, Yowan, and Tonkawa coming back from war with the Apache. Passing over to the valley of the Canadian, La Harpe contacted many tribes, leading to an active trade between French and Indians. When Parilla in 1759 sought to punish the Taovayos in Montague County for their part in the attack on the San Saba mission, the Indians flew a French flag, and the Spanish charged that French traders were present to direct the defense of the Indian force.

In the years between La Harpe's expedition and the cession of Louisiana to Spain, a number of expeditions usually trading or missionary, and by both Spanish and French, visited the valley. Probably the most important of these was that of the Mallet brothers, who left Illinois in 1739, ascended the Missouri and Platte, they turned southward, and made their way to Santa Fe. On their return journey, they divided their party, and half descended the Arkansas and half the Red River. Whether or not they actually descended the Red River, their reports encouraged the French traders to enter the country of the Comanche and even New Mexico itself. Therefore, French traders reaching Santa Fe in 1749 were not allowed to return.

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68 Thoburn and Wright, op. cit., I, 41-42.
to Canada or Louisiana to encourage other traders, but were sent into the interior of Mexico. The party of Jean Chapuis reached Santa Fe two years later, and as a result of their attempts to open trade, were imprisoned in Mexico City.

The Spanish did not give the French an altogether undisputed possession of Red River region.

The Treaty of Fontainebleau in 1763 had given Spain all the French possessions west of the Mississippi, so that the tribes whose hostility had previously been only an irritating border incident, became more important now that they were inside Spanish territory. Having settled upon a policy of appeasement, the Spanish authorities in 1769 appointed Athanase de Mezieres, the son-in-law of Saint-Denis, lieutenant-governor of the Natchitoches. As a Frenchman and a relative of Saint-Denis, Mezieres naturally had considerable influence among the tribes that, although hostile to Spain, had always been friendly to France. In the fall of 1770, he began his work of winning these tribes for Spain. Visiting first the Caddoes on the Red River he went through the lands of the Adaees, Yatasi, and Petit, and conferred with the chiefs of the Tao-vayas, Tawakonis, Yscanis, and Kichais, and received from them promises that they would go to San Antonio and make peace with the Spanish.

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69 Bolton, Athanase de Mezieres, I, 58-60.
70 Ibid., pp. 92-93.
The success of this expedition led him to make another the following year in order to cement more closely their friendship to Spain. He passed through the villages of the Kichais, the Yscanis, and Tawakonis on the Trinity and Brazos, and communicated with the Taovayas on the Red. From the Brazos, he cut through the rough country below the Brazos, due south to San Antonio.

In 1778, when the Spanish were planning an attack on the Apaches, Mezieres made another expedition to the Tonkawas and Taovayas. Leaving San Antonio, he went by way of the new settlement of Bucareli on the Trinity through the villages of the Kichais, and Tonkawas to the Tawakoni settlements on the Brazos. He continued northward along the western edges of the Cross Timbers to Taovayas on the Red River, after which he returned to Bucareli. The following year he again visited the tribes in order to proclaim the good-will of the Spanish and to prevent a breach between the Tonkawas and Tawakonis. Leaving Natchitoches, he passed through deserted Adaes and Ais villages to Nacogdoches, newly established by Gil y Barbo. From there he went to Bucareli and the villages of the Kichais and Tawahonis.

The cession of Louisiana to Spain not only necessitated Mezieres' peace-making efforts, but also called for the opening

71 Ibid., pp. 95-96.
of routes from there to Santa Fe. Another Frenchman, Pedro Vial, was given this task, and in 1786 he left San Antonio with one companion. Going north, he passed through the valleys of the Colorado and the Brazos until he reached the settlement of the Taovayas in Montague County. From here he ascended the Red and Canadian Rivers toward Santa Fe. As this party had not traveled the most desired route, Hoza Mares was sent in 1787 to map a better route from Santa Fe. He followed a course a little south of Vial's but passed by the Taovaya town from which he cut south to San Antonio. On his return he sought a more direct route and went northwest until he struck the headwaters of the Red River, from which point he followed his old trail westward to Santa Fe. Soon after Mares' return in 1788 Vial was commissioned to select a suitable route from Santa Fe to Natchitoches, with a return trip by San Antonio. Leaving Santa Fe he crossed the Pecos valley and went eastward to the remains of La Harpe's settlement on Red River. From here he went to Natchitoches, from where he began his return journey by way of San Antonio. Going northward he reached a Wichita village near Palo Pinto, from which he took a northwest course to Santa Fe.

Pedro Vial was a hardy frontier character, who was trading among the Indians of the Upper Brazos and Red Rivers as late as 1803, when the United States purchased Louisiana, and added their efforts to the task of exploring and colonizing.

72 J. C. McConnell, West Texas Frontier, I, 7-9.
the Red River Valley. Although the French traders and trappers, and Spanish soldiers and missionaries had covered most of the valley, only one post, Natchitoches, existed in Red River Valley when the Americans came to occupy the frontier post. Adaes and La Harpe's outpost had long since passed out of existence, thus leaving the valley an almost virgin territory when the first Americans arrived.
CHAPTER III

EARLY AMERICAN EXPLORATIONS ALONG RED RIVER

The Spanish and French explorers had come and gone. No permanent settlement other than Natchitoches had been made, and with the exception of a few stray hunters and traders such as Pedro Vial, the Indians had most of the Red River Valley to themselves. The Treaty of Paris of 1763 brought to the shores of the Mississippi another race, a home loving, town building people, who established permanent settlements within a few years after their first pioneers explored a region. These English people, or American people after 1783, proved far more dangerous for Spanish authority than the French had ever been.

They began their excursions into the Red River country even before the American purchase of Louisiana, for the inhabitants of Kentucky and Tennessee, despite the reluctance of the Spanish officials, now used New Orleans as a port. Consequently, American business men were to be found there, and among them in 1790, was Philip Nolan, a protege of General James Wilkinson, with whose family he was possibly reared.

Much of Nolan's life is open to debate; however, many of the details of his four expeditions into Texas are known. He ventured into Mexico in 1791 on his first trading expedition,

and before he had a knowledge of his loss, he was cheated out of most of his goods. He lived for a time among the Indians, but in 1794 he returned to Louisiana. On this first venture into Mexico he began the capture of wild horses, an occupation that was to be his chief trade for the remainder of his life. On a second expedition into Texas, lasting from 1794 to 1796, Nolan brought back two hundred and fifty horses to the United States, despite the Spanish laws prohibiting trade between the countries. Before he began his third expedition, he obtained instruction in the use of surveying instruments from Andrew Elliott, and during his third expedition he had these instruments with him, and a commission from Governor Gayoso of Louisiana to map northern Texas. His close association with General Wilkinson, which after Nolan's death led to the charge that he was scouting the country for Wilkinson preparatory to an invasion of Mexico, aroused the suspicions of the Spanish authorities. 2

Gayoso, doubting Nolan's motives, wrote to the governor of Texas to cause the arrest of this person whose knowledge of the Spanish provinces, he felt, might some day be used to the injury of her interests. The opportune death of the Texas governor, leaving official mail unopened for a short period, allowed Nolan to return to the United States as usual bringing three thousand horses with him. 3

2Ibid., pp. 543-544.

3Daniel Clark, Jr., "Concerning Philip Nolan," Texas Historical Association Quarterly, VII (1903-1904), 311-312.
Despite the fact that he knew he no longer enjoyed immunity from Spanish interference, Nolan, in October, 1800, set out on another hunting and trading expedition into Texas. Leaving Natchez with about fifteen Americans, including Ellis P. Bean, five Spaniards, and a Negro, they proceeded to the Washita. Before reaching this stream, however, they encountered a squad of fifty well-armed Spanish cavalrymen, who had been sent to stop this expedition. They allowed Nolan to pass, probably not desiring a skirmish with even that small force. Pushing forward, Nolan's party reached the Red River. They found it a turbid, swollen stream, and after crossing it on rafts, while swimming their horses, the expedition continued its march in the direction of the Trinity. After crossing the Trinity they advanced to the Brazos. Here, they established a camp, and captured three hundred horses. Their provisions ran low, and with no buffalo or small game to hunt, they lived on horse meat and roots for several weeks. A visit from a tribe of Comanches led the party to visit its chief on the south fork of the Red River. After a stay of a month, they returned to their old camp on the Brazos, to find disaster awaiting them. A force of one hundred fifty Spaniards under Musquiz sent out by Salcedo from Chihuahua, surrounded the camp during the night before March 22, 1801. At daybreak they opened fire on the little expedition, and

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after Nolan was killed, the remainder of his men surrendered.

The high tide of American exploration in the Red River Valley came a few years later, following the American purchase of Louisiana in 1803. While Lewis and Clark and Zebulon Pike were carrying on explorations that were almost continental in scope, another group, working under definite instructions drawn up by President Jefferson himself, explored the valleys of the Red and Washita Rivers almost wholly in the state of Louisiana. The leaders in this group who hardly went past the frontier line, were John Sibley, William Dunbar, George Hunter, and Thomas Freeman.

John Sibley, first a surgeon's mate at Natchitoches and later Indian agent for the Orleans Territory, traveled extensively along the settled portions of the Red River in 1803 and 1804, and by his reports to Jefferson on these travels he managed to keep in the good graces of the President. His account of the territory was not scientific, but rather casual. He described the chief affluents of the Red River, not always from personal observation, but he gave a true description of the river system, including its soil, and products. In his description of the various elements in the population he showed that the foreign groups were more progressive than were the

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5 H. E. Bolton and E. C. Barker, With the Makers of Texas, pp. 67-75.

native. Sibley found Natchitoches to be a miserable settlement with less than a half dozen notable buildings, and in a worse economic condition than it suffered in 1762. In his report made in the spring of 1805 on the thirty Indian tribes under his jurisdiction, Sibley estimated their fighting strength at twenty-eight hundred men, not including the Comanches nor the Cances on the coast. He reported that the majority of these tribes had been friendly to the French, and that, on the whole, the Americans had the advantage in the competition with the Spaniards to secure them as allies. The following year when the Sparks-Freeman-Curtis expedition was on the Red River above Natchitoches, Sibley brought them word that the Spanish troops from Nacogdoches were marching to meet them.

Jefferson with the zeal of a scientist wanted a thorough survey of all the lands purchased from France, and he planned for a number of expeditions to determine their expense. Among these was one of the Red and Arkansas Rivers to be directed by William Dunbar, aided by Dr. George Hunter, an eminent chemist. The plans for an extended expedition along both the Red and

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8 Ibid., pp. 161-162.


Arkansas Rivers fell through, because of troubles with the Indians and the opposition of the Spanish in Texas. The route was changed, directing the expedition up the Red River only to its junction with the Washita, and up that river to its source. With a party consisting of twelve soldiers, a sergeant, and a Negro servant, Dunbar and Hunter left Saint Catherine's Landing on the Mississippi on October 16, 1804. The following day they arrived at the mouth of the Red, and by the nineteenth were on the lower stretches of the Washita, sometimes called the Black River. On the twenty-third they were on the Washita proper, the exploration of which was the chief task of the expedition. They found a few settlers of highly varied types along the river, consisting of Spanish and French Creoles, and American, German, and Irish frontiersmen. The majority of these lived near Miro, the Washita post, which was commanded by Lieutenant Bowmar. In all there were a total of five hundred settlers in the vicinity, but Dunbar prophesied an influx of population.

Progress up the river was slow because of the large size

11 Ibid., p. 156.
12 William Dunbar, Purchase and Exploration of Louisiana, pp. 8-19.
13 Cox, "Louisiana-Texas Frontier," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XVII (1913-1914), 149.
14 Dunbar, op. cit., pp. 40-44.
of the boat, the obstructions in the river, and the laziness of the soldiers. At length they passed out of the country of the Spanish moss, and reached the Arkansas portion of the river. Proceeding onward, they passed the Caddo Trace leading from the Red River to the Arkansas, and arrived at the head of navigation on the Wichita. Here they left the river, and went overland nine miles to Hot Springs. The expedition spent a month here making observations of the surrounding country. The return trip to Saint Catherine's Landing occupied only a month, as the rains and snow had caused the river to rise, facilitating their descent.

Trouble with the Spaniards on the frontier held up the proposed exploration of the Red River for two years. Dunbar's difficulty with baggage had led to the cancellation of the exploration along the Arkansas having only the ascent and descent of Red River to be carried out. Thomas Freeman, the official head of the expedition, was the surveyor of the party, Dr. Peter Curtis was the botanist, and Captain Richard Sparks was in command of the twenty soldiers accompanying them. Leaving Saint Catherine's Landing, near Natchez,

16 Dunbar, op. cit., 92-152.
17 Cox, "Exploration of the Louisiana Frontier," American Historical Ass'n Reports, p. 159.
18 Ibid., pp. 160-169.
the party, on May 3, 1806, entered the Red River which they hoped to ascend to the country of the Pawnees. Reaching Natchitoches on the nineteenth, they were delayed here for some time due to reports of possible Spanish opposition. In order to be ready to meet this opposition, they increased their number to thirty-seven men plus the officers and continued their advance. On June 7 they were overtaken near the village of Natchitoches by an agent of Dr. Sibley, who warned them that Spanish troops had left Nacogdoches designing the interception of the expedition.

The party, nevertheless, pushed forward, and at a distance of one hundred two miles above Natchitoches, they left the bed of the Red River, turning out into one of the bayous, whose courses connect the principal channel with the lakes, pools, and marshes that lay along the river. This detour was necessary in order to avoid the Great Raft of the Red River, an accumulation of driftwood that extended for a hundred miles up the river. The march around this obstruction delayed the party fourteen days. After they returned to the river they paused at a village of the Coshattas, where a Caddo chief sent information that three hundred Spanish dragoons were near his village, thirty miles to the west, intending to turn the Americans back. The expedition stopped at the Caddo village to

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19 Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XVIII, 68-68.

20 Ibid., pp. 67-71.
replenish their supplies and to strengthen their friendship with the Indians.

Freeman and his party continued up the river 162 miles to the mouth of the Little River, near the former site of a French post among the Caddoes. Here they learned from the Indians that a Spanish army of one thousand men had entered their village and cut down the American flag. The exploring party continued forward against the advice of the Indians, and two days later encountered a superior Spanish force with whom they engaged in conversation concerning their advance. After a short debate Freeman and his men consented to return down the river.

Shortly before the return of Freeman's expedition, Zebulon Pike departed on another one, with the same general purpose in view: the exploration of the sources of the Arkansas and Red Rivers. This expedition, however, was not sent out by Jefferson, but by a military excursion ordered by General James Wilkerson. In a letter to Jefferson he explained

... that, under a verbal commission from you... generally to explore the borders of the Territory of Louisiana. I did project the expeditions of Capt. Z. M. Pike... He was also instructed by me, to ascertain the extent, direction and navigableness of the Arkansas and Red Rivers, which discharge their waters into the Mississippi.24

21 Ibid.
22 Ibid., XVII, 71-76.
23 W. L. Moore, Greer County Question, p. 19.
Wilkinson's orders to Pike confirm this letter. Portions of them read:

...interview with the Comanches will probably lead you to the Head Branches of the Arkansas and Red Rivers you may find yourself approximated to the settlements of New Mexico, and therefore it will be necessary you should move with great circumspection, to keep clear of any Hunting or reconnoitring Parties from that Province. ... It is an object of much interest with the Executive, to ascertain the Direction, extent, and navigation of the Arkansas and Red Rivers; ... and should circumstances conspire to favor the enterprise, that you may detach a party with a few Osage Indians to descend the Arkansaw, under the orders of Lt. Wilkinson or Sergt. Ballenger, properly instructed, and equipt, to take the courses and distances, to remark on the soil, Timber, etc., and to note the tributary streams. This Party will after reaching our Post on the Arkansaw, descend to Fort Adams, and there wait further orders; and you, yourself, may descend the Red River accompanied by a party of the most respectable Comanches to the Post of Hatchitoches and there receive further orders from me.

In view of the strained relations with Spain, Wilkinson has been suspected of sending Pike purposely into territory where he would be seized by the Spanish, and thereby, perhaps, acquire information that would be useful in an attack on the Spanish provinces.

Pike's party left Saint Louis, July 15, 1806, his route being by boat up the Missouri and Osage Rivers to the village of some Indians he had been detailed to escort. Taking then to horseback, he went southward to the source of the Osage, and from there proceeded northwestward through Oklahoma, crossing the Verdigris and Kansas Rivers. After crossing Kansas,
he reached the Republican River in Nebraska, before he again struck southward, ultimately reaching the Arkansas near the ninety-ninth meridian. Pushing up the Arkansas to a point near Denver, he crossed the mountains to the Platte, and explored the sources of the Arkansas, but failed to find those of the Red. Pushing southward with a portion of his men, Pike reached a tributary on the upper Rio Grande which he mistook for the Red. Here he was intercepted by the Spanish and was taken, first, to Santa Fe, and then to Chihuahua. From here he returned to San Antonio by way of Natchitoches on the Red River, July 1, 1807.

He had failed in his purpose to explore the Red River, but he did gather some valuable information concerning the location of its upper course. Both his information and maps were erroneous in part. In placing the sources of the Red at thirty-three degrees north latitude and one hundred four degrees thirty minutes west longitude, he confused it with the Colorado River of Texas. His map shows the Red River rising near Santa Fe.

In addition to the government sponsored expeditions up the Red River, there was a personal excursion by Henry Kerr,

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27J. B. McMaster, History of the People of the United States, III, 144-45.
28Moore, op. cit., p. 20.
29Ibid., pp. 20-22.
who, accompanied by a negro, left New Orleans, September 1, 1809. Kerr decided to explore the country bordering along Red River, an area which topographical engineers had failed to reach. He proceeded without interruption, far out on the frontier hundreds of miles from the nearest settlement. Here he found an agent of the Hudson Bay Fur Company and decided to abandon his intended exploration and join his friend in the fur trade.

The government in 1819 resumed its task of exploring the southern tributaries of the Mississippi, with Major Stephen Long being commissioned "to go to the source of the River Platte and thence by way of the Arkansas and Red Rivers to the Mississippi." His party left Pittsburg on a small steamboat in April, 1819, and after descending the Ohio, proceeded up the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers to Fort Lisa, near the junction of the Missouri and Platte, where winter quarters were established. In the following June, Long with twenty-one scientists, hunters, and soldiers, and a limited amount of scientific instruments, set out westward on horseback. They followed the Platte to the Rockies where they turned southward continuing until they arrived at the Arkansas. The entire party descended this river for a hundred miles, then Long decided to divide the expedition and send one portion under

30 McConnell, op. cit., p. 12.

31 E. W. Gilbert, Exploration of Western America, p. 59.
Captain Bell down the Arkansas, while he and the rest of the 32 men went southward to locate and follow the Red River.

False advice from some Indians led Long to make an unfortunate error as he explains in his report:

... On separating from Captain Bell, the detachment under my direction proceeded southwardly in view of the mountains about one hundred and fifty miles, and arrived at a creek, having a southwardly course, which we took to be a tributary to Red River. Having traveled down its valley about two hundred miles, we fell in with a party of Indians of the nation Kaskaia, or Bad-hearts, who gave us to understand that the stream along which we were traveling was Red River. We accordingly continued our march down the river several hundred miles further; when to our dismay, we discovered that it was the Canadian of the Arkansas, instead of Red River, that we had been exploring.

Due to the nearness of winter, and the shoeless condition of the horses, Long decided to continue on the Canadian, rather than to return and search for the Red. On reaching Belle Point on the Arkansas, his party crossed overland to Cape Girardeau 34 on the Mississippi, arriving October 10, 1819.

The expedition had failed completely in its instructions to explore the Red River. And only on one occasion did a portion of the expedition go through a part of its water-shed, this being a side trip to Hot Springs, Arkansas and the upper valley of the Washita made by James, Swift, and Kearney of 35 the party.

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33 Ibid., p. 100.
34 Ibid., pp. 100-101.
In the meantime other explorations had been taking place in the Southwest that were to give a better knowledge of the upper Red River Valley. In 1802 James Pursley began a trip to Santa Fe that required three years. In 1804, La Lande, going by way of the Platte, also reached Santa Fe. These early excursions laid the basis for the trade between Santa Fe and Missouri, the usual route following going from Independence to the great Bend of the Arkansas, thence to the Cimarron, the headwaters of the Canadian, Pecos, and on into Santa Fe. Although this was the usual route, variations of it were sometimes made by parties seeking shorter routes.

In 1840, Josiah Gregg, a trader with several previous trips to his credit, decided to seek a shorter and perhaps, better route to the south of the Canadian River. With a caravan of twenty-eight wagons, two small cannons, and forty-seven men, including a Comanche guide, Gregg set out from San Miguel, near Santa Fe on March 1. The expedition ascended the Llano Estacado on the twelfth of March, passing near the North Fork and False Wichita, branches of Red River. On March 12, they reached the Canadian. Gregg followed the course of this river to the Cross Timbers, keeping largely to high ground between it and the False Wichita. Upon reaching the Cross Timbers, the caravan crossed the Canadian, and soon reached the usual trail of the Santa Fe traders.

37 Josiah Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, pp. 305-17.
Gregg's description of the Red River is short. He reported that it rose in the Llano Estacado and not in the mountains as previously supposed, and acquired its brackishness in its upper branches from evaporation in low seasons, and not from a mountain source. He found it unfit for navigation, especially above the mouth of the False Wichita. Varying in width from fifty to five hundred yards, it generally had low banks with a shallow channel, which was a factor in the drying up of the stream in time of drought.

The year before Gregg's caravan made its trip, another trading party consisting of Mexicans, chiefly, accompanied by Dr. H. Connelly, passed through the Red River country, while attempting to establish a direct route between Chihuahua and Missouri. The following year they returned to Chihuahua, again crossing the Red River, north of the upper Brazos. Settlers were now coming into the district, and Connelly praised the hospitable treatment accorded the Mexican members of the party by the settlers.

In 1841 the upper Red River was explored, probably for the first time by Americans, if citizens of the Republic of Texas can be called such, by the members of the ill-fated Santa Fe Expedition. This expedition, one of President Lamar's blunders, came as a result of reports from a few American

38 Ibid., pp. 345-51.
39 Ibid., pp. 351-352.
residents of Santa Fe who declared that citizens of New Mexico were tired of Mexican rule and would be glad to give their allegiance to the Republic of Texas. Lamar, who had in 1839, considered a military expedition to New Mexico, upon hearing of the dissatisfaction of the people attempted to get authorization from the Texas Congress for an expedition to Santa Fe. Failing in this, he, on his own initiative, called for volunteers for such an expedition, appointing Hugh McLeod commander, and sending Major George Howard to New Orleans to purchase supplies. While in New Orleans, Howard met George W. Kendall, who, joining the expedition, became its historian.

The party of two hundred and seventy soldiers and fifty traders and tourists, assembled on Brushy Creek near Austin. They were delayed a few days in getting additional supplies. The Santa Fe expedition started almost a month late, and the first few weeks were spent in crossing the Brazos valley. Continuing northward they struck the Wichita River, and believing it to be the Red, they followed it for several days until they found the headwaters of the Brazos only a few miles below them. Upon the discovery of the error, a detachment was sent northward to locate the Red River, which they found seventy-five miles


42 Bolton and Barker, op. cit., pp. 236-37.
north of the camp. The expedition followed the Red River to its source, then crossed to the Canadian near the Truxillas. Kendall fails to mention any large streams running into the Red River; therefore it is uncertain which branch he ascended. Like Gregg, he reported that the Red River rose in the Rocky Mountains. Marcy, during his expedition a few years later, however, came to the conclusion that the Santa Fe Expedition had been on the Wichita all the way to the Llano Estacado and never on the Red River at all.

Upon reaching the village of Anton Chico on the Pecos, the expedition was surrounded by a superior Mexican force. Following their surrender they were taken as prisoners on foot to Mexico City, where they were kept for seven months.

Having failed in the attempt to gain control of Santa Fe or to open trade with Mexico the Texas government now planned to prohibit the trade of that town with the United States, for, they declared, the wagon trains were crossing Texas Territory. Therefore President Houston authorized Major Jacob Snively to gather a volunteer force to stop this commerce as a means of retaliation against Mexico. This force was to be

43 Christian, op. cit., XXIV, 100-105.
44 Moore, op. cit., pp. 31-32.
45 Grant Foreman, Adventures on Red River, p. 95.
maintained without expense to the government; property of Mexican citizens was to be seized, and the spoils were to be divided equally between the government and the members of Snively's company.

The expedition was organized at "Old Georgetown" in Grayson County, six miles south of the Red River. Leaving here, April 21, 1843, they followed the south bank of the Red River, crossing the Wichita and Pease Rivers, and arrived at last at the confluence of the two forks of the Red River. Crossing the South Fork, and with the North Fork on their right, they went northwestward for fifty or sixty miles. The North Fork being crossed near the one hundredth meridian, they pushed on to the point where the Santa Fe Trail crossed the Arkansas River. After defeating some Mexican soldiers, they went into camp to await the Santa Fe traders. These, unfortunately for the Snively company, were protected by a detachment of United States troops under Captain Cooke, who disarmed them. This led to a dispute between Texas and the United States, regarding the boundary between the two countries.

Since no member of Snively's party placed an account of its work in print for the benefit of geographers, its accomplishments have been generally neglected. Captain Marcy,


49Binkley, op. cit., XXII, 270-271.
the next explorer to visit this section, believed that he was
the first white man to visit the South Fork, or Prairie Dog
Town River, although only nine years had elapsed since
Snively had crossed it.

Marcy's first trip into the upper Red River Valley oc-
curred as a result of the discovery of gold in California. A
band of emigrants to that territory gathered at Fort Smith
in 1849, and Captain Marcy was detailed to act as their es-
cort. Surveying a route for a proposed railway to the Paci-
fic as they went, the party went westward first along the
divide between the Canadian and Washita Rivers, and later along
the divide between the Red and Canadian Rivers. Before they
reached the source of the latter, the party turned and headed
for Santa Fe by way of the Pecos. After escorting the emi-
grants down the Rio Grande as far as Dona Ana, Marcy returned
to Fort Smith.

As other emigrant bands followed the trail that Marcy
had blazed, the Indians, resenting the intrusion, became trouble-
some. In order to protect these emigrants, and also the east-
ern Indians who had been moved into the Indian Territory, from
hostile Indians, Marcy was sent in 1850 to establish a new
post south of the California Road. Although located at first

51 Grant Foreman, Adventure on Red River, p. vi.
near what is now Byars, Oklahoma, the following year the fort was moved to a point near the junction of Wild Horse Creek and the Washita River, where it became known as Fort Arbuckle.

Later in 1851 Marcy escorted General Belknap on a tour along the California Road he had laid out, preparatory to the establishment of a chain of forts along it. After leaving Fort Arbuckle, the explorers went through what is now Jefferson County, Oklahoma, and crossed the Red River just above the mouth of the Little Wichita. Crossing Clay County, the party reached the headwaters of the Brazos, and near the crossing of that stream by the California Road, the site for the future Fort Belknap was chosen.

In 1852 Marcy together with George McClellan was ordered to explore the Red River from Cache Creek to its sources. Leaving Ft. Belknap on May 2, Marcy and his company followed the Fort Arbuckle road up the Little Wichita valley to the Red River, then went up it to the mouth of the Big Wichita, which Marcy thought would be navigable for small steamers. After a short delay the expedition reached Cache Creek, May 13, 1852. Traveling on the north bank of the river they passed Otter Creek, and on May 29, reached the one hundredth meridian as erroneously calculated by Captain McClellan.

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54 Ibid., pp. viii-x.
55 Ibid., pp. 3-16.
Six miles above this location was the junction of the two forks of the Red River. Proceeding to the northwest Marcy reached the North Fork of the river on June 1, and continued to follow this Fork to its source in the Llano Estacado. From here he took a side excursion to the Canadian, but returning, proceeded southward to the South Fork. After crossing this Fork and passing through the prairie dog town country, he reached the escarpment. Marcy and a part of his party followed the river's course westward through the Llano Estacado to its source above the Palo Duro Canyon. On returning to the rest of the company, the expedition left for the lower river and Fort Arbuckle.

This expedition proved what the members of Snively's expedition already had pointed out, that the Red River had two principal forks. This fact caused many outstanding boundary differences during the next few decades. Settlers were pressing hard on the explorers' heels in this fertile Red River Valley, and even as Gregg, Snively, and Marcy explored its upper reaches, pioneer farmers and cattlemen were coming in from the lower valley and other parts of the United States to create settlements even beyond the central portions of its valley. Some of these have now passed out of existence but others are continuing today to enjoy the prosperity that nature intended for the Red River Valley.

56 Ibid., pp. 16-22.
57 Ibid., p. 35.
CHAPTER IV

SETTLEMENTS AND EARLY TRADE ON RED RIVER

Early in the history of the Red River Valley there was a spirited rivalry between the French and Spanish as to which nation should occupy the fertile valley lands bordering the river.

The hunting grounds to the north abounded in furs and wild game, and gave the French trappers ample justification for their decision to erect forts along Red River in order to reserve these lands for themselves. The Spaniards, even though they failed in their quests for vast wealth, continued to search among the Indian tribes of the western plains, and to question any possibility of gaining riches. They too, realized the value of building forts in order to strengthen their claims to the land which they had explored, and as a result of this rivalry, a number of settlements grew up along Red River from the High Plains of West Texas to the swampy lowlands of Louisiana.

One of the earliest of these settlements was based on the fur trade. Natchitoches was settled originally by Indians before 1700, then it served as exploration grounds for the French; it became a small frontier mission, about 1700, and in 1714 was established by the French as a trading post. 1

1Germaine Portre-Bobinski, Natchitoches, p. 19.
About the close of the seventeenth century the Spaniards established a post at Adaes on the east side of the Sabine, and as a result of this settlement, Governor Cadillac sent Saint-Denis to establish a French post at some point on the Red River.

Saint-Denis left a few settlers at Natchitoches, but it was not until 1717, that a permanent fort was erected there. At the time of its foundation the post was frequently referred to as "Mission St. Jean-Baptiste," which name may be due to the fact that it had no resident priest.

This fort was a square palisade, where a little garrison was kept as a barrier against the Spaniards. During the French and Spanish domination Natchitoches was an important trading post. The Spaniards from west of the Sabine would come with pack mules heavily laden with peltries, dried buffalo tongues, silver from the Mexican mines, etc., to exchange for dry-goods and other necessities.

In 1824, Isaac Wright began running a steamboat between Natchitoches and the settlements further down the river and this added to the town as a commercial center. Its general

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5 Ibid.
location permitted river transportation of Spanish, Indian, and French goods at a cheap rate which favored traffic.

Not only was Natchitoches founded for commercial reasons, but also as a border town, in order that the inhabitants might gain the friendship of Indian tribes. These native savages were needed as guides; the maze of waterways was so intricate that the white man could not find his way unaided. Natchitoches was also built as a trading post to secure much needed cattle from the Spaniards as well as to watch the Spanish mines more closely. The Post was established with the expectation that it would become the center of an agricultural district, which in turn would be a natural source of food supplies and of agricultural and commercial products.

The town is located in the parish of Natchitoches approximately one hundred seventy-five miles from the point where the Red River flows into the Mississippi. The soil in this region was generally good and yielded abundantly. The favorable climate provided a growing season of nearly eight months. In this rich and productive section, cotton was the chief export crop, though corn, hay, oats, peas, sugar-cane and sorghum,

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6Potre-Bobinski, op. cit., p. 17.
7Ibid., p. 18.
8Ibid.
sweet and Irish potatoes were all produced, and Natchitoches tobacco was widely known. Such timber as pine, oak, gum, cottonwood, elm, cypress, willow, magnolia, hickory, walnut, and maple thrived along the river and in the bottom lands. Game abounded in the forests, and in all the streams were to be found various species of fish. With the establishment of Shreveport and the advent of railroads some of the trade was deflected from Natchitoches, but being located in one of the richest sections of Louisiana, the town continued to prosper.

Another early settlement made on Red River in the Louisiana region was the old town of Alexandria. This town was founded in 1807, by Alexandria Fulton, who was the first merchant there. Alexandria occupied a beautiful site on the right bank of the Red River in the northeastern part of Rapides parish, eighty feet above the level of the sea. The first settlers in this region devoted almost their entire attention to cattle raising, and cattle were exported by the thousands. There were also numerous cotton plantations in the fertile valleys along the river, and navigation on Red River exercised a tremendous influence upon the trade carried on by Alexandria and near-by river towns. As early as 1825, there were seven steamboats plying Red River to Natchitoches; they made a total of thirty-six voyages during the year.

10Fortier, op. cit., II, 207.
11Ibid., pp. 206-208.
12Ibid., p. 349.
Rapides parish of which Alexandria was the parish seat lay in the western long leaf pine district. On the flats and hills stretching in every direction from the river, were some of the most valuable long pine forests in North America; hence lumbering was one of the great industries of the parish.

Tobacco was one of the well known products, and market gardening, small stock, poultry, and dairying were all conducted on an extensive scale, to satisfy the demands of the northern, eastern and southern markets.

The soil in the pine districts and uplands was light but reasonably good and productive, while the bottom land of the Red River Valley had the greatest cotton and cane producing soil in the world. Cotton and cane were the great staple products, but corn, oats, potatoes and rice were raised in paying quantities.

Shreveport, the capitol of Caddo parish, is situated on the west bank of the Red River, in the southeastern part of the parish. It was started as a town in 1835, when a large force of raft removers had their headquarters at the place. Captain Henry H. Shreve was the man appointed to carry on the work of removing the Great Raft which was completed five years later. When the few settlers organized they called themselves

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14 Fortier, op. cit., II, 350.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 Lippincott, Pronouncing Gazetteer, p. 1701.
the "Shreve Town Company" in honor of Captain Shreve. Three years later the town of Shreveport organized, received its charter, and elected its first mayor. There was but a handful of pioneers in the town at this time, but it was a good place to land a boat, and quickly became a trading post. Settlers began to come in and by the outbreak of the Civil War it had attained a population of three thousand. The first Shreveport court house became the Confederate capitol of Louisiana in 1863, and three sessions of the Legislature were held there. The city was located in one of the most fertile valleys of the state, and was the center of a large stretch of country with great possibilities. Within easy reach were fine hardwoods, several thousand square miles of longleaf pine, the richest cotton, corn, and forage lands to be found anywhere.

As early as 1820, and up to 1856, Red River was the only channel of trade and communication between Shreveport and New Orleans, and Shreveport, being located at the head of navigation for large boats, handled nearly all the traffic of Northern Texas, southwestern Arkansas, and the southern Indian territory.


19 Fortier, op. cit., II, 449.

20 J. G. Ewing, Know Louisiana, p. 22.

21 Fortier, op. cit., II, 449.

During the first thirty years of the city's life the growth was slow, as the census report of 1870 shows an increase of only 1,700 over that of 1860. With the advent of the railroads much of the river traffic was lost, but with the growth of the new settlements and the abundance of the products of the Red River Valley, river navigation revived, and Shreveport became the third largest inland cotton market in the United States.

Coushatta, the parish seat of Red River parish, is located on the east bank of the Red River in the central part of the parish. This location was formerly known as Coushatta Chute, but the name was changed to Coushatta when it became the seat of government in 1871. The town was incorporated on April 22, 1872, and proved to be in one of the richest agricultural districts of the state. The region around Coushatta was of unsurpassed fertility, and new land produced from fifteen hundred to twenty five hundred pounds of seed cotton to the acre. Cotton was the great export product; sugar-cane, alfalfa, oats, hay, potatoes, and peas all yielded good returns, and fruit of every description grew abundantly.

23 Fortier, op. cit., II, 449.
24 Lippincott, Pronouncing Gazetteer, p. 475.
26 Ibid., II, 359.
Stock was raised on a large scale on the uplands, and cattle, hogs and sheep were exported in large numbers. Steamboats running regularly between Shreveport and New Orleans afforded a ready sale for cotton, livestock, and lumber.

The little town of Fulton, Arkansas, is located on Red River in the corner of Hempstead county, of which it is the county seat. Fulton is slightly northeast of Texarkana, and most of the town is situated on the east side of Red River. During the early days Fulton was one of the principal entry ports into Arkansas, and was a trading center for freighting wagons from Arkansas and Tennessee.

Several military posts of importance were established along the Red River in the Oklahoma territory for the purpose of protection of the frontier border.

A post known as Cantonement Towson was begun in May, 1824, on the banks of Gates Creek, about seven miles from Red River and near the mouth of the Kiamichi. This post, named in honor of General Nathan Towson, was intended to be a center of government influence and offensive and defensive force among the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians. The buildings of this post

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28 L. P. Brockett, Our Western Empire, p. 65.

29 F. L. Olmstead, A Journey Through Texas, p. 68.

and the barracks were of logs, and were enclosed by a log-walled stockade. While at first the post tended to improve the conditions among the Indians, the results were not as lasting as the Government had decided that they might be. In addition to the occasional raids of the most distant Indians, the white residents of the Fort Towson region were constantly harassed by the depredations of the Shawnee tribes, Delawares, and Kickapoos who were living along the Red River at that time. The garrison was too small to be feared by those hostile Indians, and finally in 1829, the Government decided to abandon the post. In June of this year, despite the protests of the settlers, the troops were loaded on four flat boats and sent down the river to Fort Jessup. As soon as the troops had gone, people in the neighborhood set fire to the barracks and burned all the buildings with the exception of a few small cabins.

The following year saw the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek and active preparations for the immediate removal of the Choctaws to the West. With the arrival of the Choctaws in their new country, a new post was established in 1831, six miles northeast of old Fort Towson, at first called Camp Phoenix,

31 J. B. Thoburn and M. H. Wright, Oklahoma--State and People, I, 65.

32 W. B. Morrison, op. cit., p. 50.

33 Grant Foreman, Pioneer Days in the Early Southwest, p. 51.
although by 1831 it was again officially designated as Cantonment Towson.

This site was well selected for all purposes. It lay on a beautiful open stretch of prairie above Gates Creek, about a half-mile north and east of the present town of Fort Towson. The fort occupied a rectangle containing about a square mile of acreage. The north side of the grounds rested on the bluffs of Gates Creek, which was almost one hundred fifty feet below. The open side of the rectangle faced toward the southeast. Probably none of the early posts had a more attractive and healthful natural situation.

All the work done in connection with the erection of this post was thorough and substantial. There was an abundance of fine limestone, suitable for building purposes, in the cliffs near-by. Three buildings, comprising the officers' quarters, extended along the edge of the hill on the north side of the rectangle. These each had three-foot stone foundations and were built of logs—a story and a half in height, with openings and covered porches facing south. Four other buildings were erected along each wing on the east and west, respectively facing each other, but extending towards the south. As the ground sloped to the south, the foundations of the last of

34 Thoburn and Wright, op. cit., I, 66.

35 Morrison, op. cit., p. 51.

36 Ibid.
these buildings were about nine feet high, which conditions afforded two ample basements; the other buildings were all of one story. The first two buildings on each wing, nearest to the officers' quarters, were used for sub-officers' barracks, quartermaster's office, amusement parlor, and schoolroom. The last two buildings were used as barracks for common soldiers—three tiers of bunks along each wall and racks for their guns, while the kitchen and dining rooms were located in the basement. One striking feature of each of these buildings was the great stone chimney, with a fireplace nine feet high, four feet deep, and six feet from the stone floor to the arch. It is said that a whole steer could be roasted in one of these fireplaces and still have room for the baking and boiling.

All the buildings were painted white. Gravel walks, lined by rows of shade trees, extended in front of the buildings used as a parade ground. Two hundred fifty feet farther south from the last barracks building on the east tier was the hospital. Outside of the rectangle to the east, the stables, shops, and gardens were situated; on the west side were the sutler's building and the dairy and poultry yards. About three hundred yards still farther west was the cemetery, always an important but melancholy feature of every important military post.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., p. 52.
Besides being a military post, Fort Towson was a base of supplies for the surrounding country, and freight was carried from Natchitoches to Fort Towson at a cost of five or six dollars a barrel, and required a passage of at least fifty days.

Just two days before the Fort was abandoned in 1854 a storm swept over that section of the country, blowing the roofs from several of the buildings at Fort Towson, uprooting trees, and doing other damage. After the garrison was transferred to Fort Arbuckle, the remaining buildings were placed in the charge of Indian agents to be used for the purpose of Indian administration. A few years later a fire broke out that destroyed all the buildings except the hospital and one of the barracks; the Government then withdrew from Fort Towson completely, never using the buildings for any purpose, military or civil after this time.

About a mile west of Fort Towson a little town sprang up called Doaksville. It took its name from the trading station which two brothers named Doak first established on Red River near the mouth of the Kiamichi. Doaksville became the trading center, the site of the Indian Agency, and from 1850 to 1860, the capital of the Choctaw Nation.


40 Morris on, op. cit., p. 55.

This town was one of the five posts for issuing the Chickasaw emigrants supplies until they could adjust themselves to their new location. Here in 1837 the Choctaws and Chickasaws entered into a joint treaty with the United States, by which the Chickasaws acquired homes within the Choctaw Territory and promptly removed to Oklahoma.

Fort Washita was established as a bulwark against any disturbances that might arise from Texas, as well as to defend this section from the hostile Indians of the western portion of the Territory of Oklahoma. The Fort was located on the uplands above Washita River, in the extreme northwest corner of what is now Bryan County and about fifteen miles from the Texas border where the Washita makes its junction with the Red. The site of the Fort was selected by General Zachary Taylor in 1842, and he later gave the post its name. The selection was a convenient one, and there has been no record found of epidemics of sickness at Washita so frequently mentioned in connection with posts in the West. The great well, which was dug by the founders of the post, still furnishes an abundance of fine water.

42 Foreman, Indian Removal, p. 221.
43 Morrisson, op. cit., p. 56.
45 Morrison, op. cit., pp. 81-82.
The barracks and other buildings at the fort were well constructed, most of them from the shell-rock quarried from the near-by hills. The general plan of Fort Washita was similar to that of other forts of the period. The original buildings were grouped about a large rectangular parade ground that sloped gently toward the east. The first barracks was constructed on the west side of the parade grounds and just on the edge of the prairie. The building was two stories in height, with a balcony extending all around the second story. The roof of the building sloped down at such an angle as to cover the porches; two wide stairways led to the ground on the east, and two on the west.

On the right side of the rectangle, facing toward the east, another large barrack stood, so that in its prime Fort Washita could house quite a large number of men. On the east side of the rectangle and facing the original building, a number of small cottages were erected for the use of the officers. To the south a short distance stood the commissary and bakery, both vital units in the equipment of any fort. To the north of the main barracks and along the west line of the rectangle were a number of other buildings including a hotel and hospital.

After the Mexican War, and especially after gold had been discovered in California, Fort Washita became a busy place.

46 Ibid., p. 89.
One of the approved routes to the golden west followed the Marcy Trail through the post down the Washita River to its mouth to the ferry on Red River at Preston's. 47

Fort Washita was occupied by the Confederates throughout the War, and during the earlier part of the struggle, different companies of Texas cavalry seem to have been located there. 48

Across the small creek that passed near the Fort on its way to the Washita, there grew up a little town, known at different times as Hatsboro or Rugglesville. Here many of the employees about the post, as well as some of the soldiers who were married and desired to have their families near them, had their homes. 49

In the summer of 1858, a detachment of the Second Cavalry under the command of Major Earl Van Dorn, was sent to the Indian Territory to watch the movements of the hostile Comanches. When Van Dorn's forces crossed the Red River in September of that year, their first occupation was to select a good site for a camp. The place chosen was on the lower reaches of Otter Creek, on its west bank, at the mouth of a gorge where that stream comes out of the Wichita Mountains. Thus the camp had the mountains to protect it from the wintry

47 Ibid., p. 83.
48 Ibid., p. 87.
49 Ibid., p. 83.
winds. No earthworks or other fortifications were constructed, but log and turf walls were built up about the tents when winter came on. The location was attractive and well chosen, and the plains toward the north teemed with big game. The camp was named in honor of Charles Radziminski, a lieutenant in the Second Cavalry until his death which had occurred just one month before this camp was established.

It was not until April of the next year that the weather conditions permitted the resumption of operations against the hostile Comanches and Kiowas, who spent the winter in the river valleys to the north. In a surprise battle fought on Crooked Creek, some two hundred miles from Radziminski, forty-nine Comanches were killed, and quite a number were made prisoners. Major Van Dorn, in his report, said of the Comanches that they "fought without asking or giving quarter until there was not one left to bend a bow." After this battle Indian trouble quieted down, and Camp Radziminski was finally abandoned on December 6, 1859, and the site was never occupied again save by an occasional party of scouts or hunters.

In 1844, the Choctaws decided to found an academy in the western portion of their territory and invited Ramsey D. Potts, a Baptist missionary who had been laboring for some years near the mouth of the Kiamichi, to take charge of it. The school

50 Ibid., p. 105.

was named in honor of William Armstrong, superintendent of Indian affairs for the Western Territory, who was very popular with the Choctaws. The location was near Caddo Creek, in what is now Bryan County about three miles northeast of the town of Bokchito.

The main building of Armstrong academy was of brick, substantially constructed, large, and handsome in appearance. Smaller buildings, store houses and sheds occupied the background. In the year 1857, it was reported that the eighty acres of land cultivated by the school, produced two thousand bushels of corn, sufficient vegetables to accommodate the demands of the school, and ample livestock to provide meat throughout the year.

The school was abandoned at the opening of the Civil War. During the War, Armstrong became one of the principal hospital camps for the Southern forces in the Indian Territory, and the wounded and sick were carried there from points as far distant as Fort Smith. Two hundred fifty of these unfortunate died at Armstrong Academy and were buried in a neglected cemetery a few hundred yards across a little creek to the west of the school building. It is said that the burials were conducted carelessly, and the graves were so shallow that in many cases the bodies were dug up and devoured by dogs.

52 Ibid., p. 133.
53 Ibid., pp. 133-134.
54 Ibid., p. 134.
During the latter years of the War, refugees from the Southern Cherokees and Creeks camped along Caddo Creek and Blue River, not far from the Academy, and a while after the War, the meetings of the Choctaw Council were regularly held at Armstrong. Afterwards the institution was operated as a boarding school under the auspices of the Southern Presbyterian Church, but in recent years it was used by the Department of Indian Affairs as an orphan school for Choctaw boys until 1921, when the principal buildings were destroyed by fire.

There were several early settlements on the Red River located on the Texas side, one of these being at Preston Bend. Preston was a busy as well as thrifty little settlement on the south side of the Red River northwest of the present Denison, Texas. Located near a ferry across the river, it was the outgrowth of the large amount of emigration passing that way to Texas and California. In 1851 and 1852 a depot for military supplies was maintained at Preston in connection with the construction of new posts on Marcy's route through Texas. The settlement consisted of several stores, a blacksmith shop, a few roughly built store houses, and the log cabins in which the proprietors lived. The Great Southwest Trail crossed

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55 Ibid., p. 135.
56 Foreman, Adventures on Red River, p. 11.
57 Morrison, op. cit., p. 84.
Red River at this bend, going south to the center of the state, and countless herds of cattle crossed Red River at Preston on their way to northern markets.

The land around Preston was fertile and produced fine cotton, grain, and vegetables. Cotton was carried down Red River on light draught boats. During the season, at a time when the river was at a low stage, a steamer drawing three and a half feet water had no difficulty in ascending as high as Preston. When the shrill whistle of the river boats sounded along the route, people rushed to the landing where business was transacted at the utmost speed; fear of falling of the river and grounding of the boat was ever present. Each year many boats laden with supplies came up to this point and returned to Shreveport carrying many hundreds of bales of cotton, grain, hides, and other products of the country.

Several railway companies from points in Missouri and Kansas headed towards Texas through the Indian country. The Katy got the lead, and without even a charter to build in Texas, on the afternoon of December 24, 1872, the first passenger train pulled into Denison over the Missouri, Kansas and Texas railway line.

58 Lucas and Hall, op. cit., p. 13.
59 Foreman, Adventures on Red River, p. 147.
60 Lucas and Hall, op. cit., p. 91.
61 H. Tone, "Red River City," Historic Denison, (February 15, 1929) p. 3.
The legislative session recognized the necessity for immediate action when the St. Louis and Southwestern Railroad from the north entered Texas by spanning the Red River. It granted municipal authority at the point where the railway had concluded to establish its first Texas headquarters.

The city of Denison was legally created by legislative enactment on February 8, 1873 in Austin, and by common consent was christened "Red River City." Already the name was known through a dozen states before the site had been chosen.

On the morning of September 23, 1872, the lots of "Red River City" began to sell, and on that day thirty-one were disposed of at an average cost of $155 each. Perhaps fifty men gathered upon the town site along the little rise which now marks the southeast corner of Forest Park, and erected booths, tents and temporary box houses in which to commence business.

The rough pine lumber of which the first houses were constructed had to be hauled from the eastern prairies, 120 miles away, or from Atoka, the terminus of the railway, half as far in another direction. The appearance of a load of lumber in town was a signal for a general rush, and before the bewildered teamster could more than name his price it was taken, and "he left cursing his luck that he did not charge a dollar more."

63 Ibid.

64 T. Tone, "Red River City," Historic Denison, (February 15, 1929), 3.
The little saw mills within a circuit of fifteen miles were besieged with customers night and day, who stood ready to quarrel for the possession of each individual board as it fell from the log.

Soon tents and wagons were succeeded by houses, benches and dry goods boxes by chairs, and blankets by mattresses, sheets, and pillows. What had at first seemed isolated buildings, erected apparently without order or design, developed into regularly defined and well filled streets, while residences began to appear among the trees and dot the surrounding fields. Each day saw some new building completed and some new stock opened to the public.

Law and order were enforced at the point of a gun, and Denison, during the early seventies, was known to have more bad men than any other frontier city on account of the new railway connections and great transportation depots for western distribution.

The announcement that the name of the town had been changed to "Denison" was received with many misgivings. It was argued that "Red River City" was known all over the whole country and its future assured, while "Denison" was altogether

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65 Ibid.


67 Sholl, op. cit., (January 1, 1929), 4.
unknown; however, the decision was definite, and the thriving little town has continued as "Denison" up to the present time.

Spanish Fort, one of the first known settlements in Texas, was situated in the fertile region of Spanish Bend about twelve miles northeast of Nocona, and within a mile of Red River in northeast Montague County. This site is historically famous for many reasons. First, many years before the first Europeans came to America, certain natural advantages and conditions of location invited its settlement by the stone age people who lived there when the Spaniards first came. Second, Spanish Fort was visited by the Coronado expedition in 1541, and was the local point of his Texas work. Third, this point was probably visited by the De Soto expedition a year after Coronado had passed that way. The vicinity was probably the westernmost post of the Indian traders in the 1700's, who left innumerable relics of their occupations, such as iron implements and weapons. It was here the first decisive battle in Texas history was fought, when and where the French drilled and commanded Indians in prepared stockades, resisted, routed, and destroyed the Spanish primitive expedition from the San Saba missions, and thus ended the northward advance of the Spanish Missions.

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68 Ibid., p. 1.

in Texas. It is also claimed that this place or a site not far west of it was the place where the hopelessly lost Santa Fe expedition of 1842 crossed Red River.

When the first American settlers found their way to the West Texas frontier, they soon discovered the ruins of this old fort standing on the south bank of Red River. Since Texas was formerly under the sovereignty of Spain, these ruins were supposed to be of Spanish origin, and as a natural consequence, they became known as "Old Spanish Fort." It has been proved, however, that the ruins were not of Spanish origin, since they were established by the French nearly one hundred forty years previous to the organization of Montague County.

In 1719, Bernardo de La Harpe, with a body of troops, ascended Red River to the villages of the Caddoes and established a military post on the right bank of the river, about four hundred miles above Natchitoches. The French formed a small settlement, built a mill, in the vicinity of the old post, cultivated wheat, corn, tobacco, and vegetables, and enjoyed a considerable trade with the Indians. The post was abandoned in 1762, when France ceded the Louisiana Territory to Spain.

According to the report of Parilla, who visited this post one hundred years before it was discovered by Captain Morris

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70 Ibid.
72 Ibid., p. 20.
in 1859, the walls of this old fort consisted of six high, oval-shaped structures, surrounded by a stockade and ditch. The roadway leading to this fort was similarly protected. The fortifications themselves appeared to be covered with straw. They were splendidly located in an open space, surrounded with good water close at hand. Near the fort were well-fenced fields in which crops of melons, maize, beans, and vegetables were grown. The numerous Indian articles, French made iron weapons and utensils, bits of broken pottery, etc., which have been collected around the old fort, plainly indicate a thriving trade between the early French settlers and the various tribes of Indians who lived along the upper Red River. "Old Red River Station" played an important part in the early history of Northern Texas. This little town sprang up around the office of the Hide and Animal Inspector which was placed near the crossing on Red River in the year 1872. There were times when tens of thousands of cattle were herded at this point on the river while the cowmen were waiting for an opportunity to push them across the river. The Hide and Animal Inspector assisted in restoring stray cattle to their rightful owners by cutting out all animals without a "road-brand," and either holding them until they were called for, or by selling them and forwarding the money to the owner.

73 Ibid., p. 17.
74 R. T. Hill, op. cit., p. 25.
Sometimes the officer would receive letters from an individual two hundred miles away describing cattle, and authorizing their sale or providing for their return.

Red River Station consisted of a few log buildings which were used as forts during the Civil War when soldiers were stationed here. In 1875, this little log town was destroyed by a cyclone, but it was rebuilt shortly afterwards, and its trade continued to increase with the advance of the cattle industry. After the first railroad passed through Nocona, the flourishing trade at Red River Station began to decrease. Shipping took the place of the big cattle drives, and the old trails and crossings were no longer necessary. Finally, about 1882, the office of Hide and Animal Inspector was discontinued at Red River Station, and this section was practically abandoned.

Coffee's Trading House was first established on the Oklahoma side of the Red River near the upper Cross Timbers and perhaps not many miles from the mouth of the Washita. Before 1843 Coffee also had a trading house, commonly known as Coffee's Second Trading House, located on the Oklahoma side of Red River, perhaps not a great distance from the present town of Hollis. Coffee's Third Trading House was on the Texas side of Red River, and not many miles from the Washita. Colonel

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75 Ibid., p. 139.
76 "Brief History of Montague County," The Nocona News, (November 25, 1938) 2.
77 McConnell, op. cit., p. 39.
Coffee was prominent in the affairs of Texas, a noted Indian trader, and a true friend to the frontiersmen with whom he was associated. His home was rather spacious and luxurious for that day, and he and Mrs. Coffee became famous for their hospitality, numbering among their acquaintances many officers of the United States Army stationed at the frontier forts.

Coffee's three trading posts established along Red River were built of logs, two of which were surrounded by a strong heavy picket fence planted in the ground, about fifteen feet high. These posts were supplied the necessary supplies of frontier life, and Colonel Coffee made every effort to supply the demands of his customers.

Small parties of Indians of the Kiowa, Wichita, Tonkawa, Caddo, and Delaware tribes came frequently to the posts for trading purposes. Their stock in trade consisted of furs of all kinds, dressed buffalo robes, dressed deer skins, dried buffalo tongues, beeswax, and some would have Mexican silver money. In exchange they would take red and blue blankets, strips of blue cloth, bright colored gingham handkerchiefs, iron for lance and arrow heads, glass beads, heavy brass wire, which they twisted around the left wrist as protection from the recoil of bowstrings, red and yellow ochre for face paint, bright colored calico, and wampum beads. These beads were from two to four inches long and were highly esteemed. They always wanted whisky and fire arms, and although the government

78Lucas and Hall, op. cit., p. 57.
forbade the sale of these items to Indians, they usually man-
aged to get them indirectly. The land around these posts
was fertile, and the settlers were able to live comfortably
from the returns of their land with a little help from the
trading posts.

One of the most important posts along the upper Red River
was that at Doan's Crossing located on the Texas side of the
river in the present county of Wilbarger. John Doan estab-
lished this post in April, 1878, as a necessary trading post
to carry on trade with settlers in the surrounding country,
and to accommodate cattlemen crossing Red River at this point.
In 1879, one thousand cattle passed over the Dodge City Trail
and crossed the river at Doan's on their way to northern mar-
kets.

The main building in the trading post was Doan's store.
This was a large adobe building which served as a store and
family residence. The Doans did a thriving business and
thought nothing of selling bacon and flour in car load lots.
Besides these two main articles the merchandise consisted of
other groceries, ammunition, clothing, blankets, etc. The
post office was established here in 1879. Surrounding the
store were the few log cabins of the settlers, and beyond
these were the cattle pens and storehouses.

79 Ibid., p. 33.
80 Texas Almanac, 1936, p. 261.
81 J. M. Hunter and G. W. Saunders, The Trail Drivers of
Texas, p. 39.
Since Red River was not navigable, supplies were brought to these outposts by wagon freighters who had regular routes and scheduled dates.

Still another important settlement on Red River was located at the mouth of Beaver Creek near the present site of Ryan, Oklahoma. This post known as "Chisholm's Place" became a kind of clearing house for prisoners captured by Indians in Texas. The Indians brought those whom they cared to dispose of, especially negroes, and sold them to Chisholm; collected a ransom, in the case of white children, or a goodly reward for the return of stolen negroes. Jesse Chisholm, a Cherokee half-breed, was well known and well liked by both the Indians and the white people, and he made many trading expeditions through the southwest, carrying his goods in wagons. He continued to live and trade at "Chisholm's Place" until the time of the Civil War.

Other settlements along Red River of importance were Jonesboro, Colbert's Ferry, and Fort Elliot. Jonesboro, one of the first settlements in northeast Texas, was located in the present Red River County due north of Clarksville on Red River, opposite the mouth of the Kiamichi. This settlement was established by Clayborne Wright in September in 1816. He shipped his family and possessions on the keel boat "Pioneer"

82 Morrison, op. cit., p. 77.
83 Lucas and Hall, op. cit., p. 19.
from Smith county, Tennessee, and with the aid of numerous Indian guides, finally reached the point where Jonesboro now stands. At this place his boat sank, and Wright and his family built a cabin. A few days later five more families came down the river and settled in the vicinity. For a few years the settlement barely existed; however, John Hart, trapper, trader, and Indian fighter, led a fur trapping party to this location in 1822, and established a store and fur-trading house. Almost immediately a thriving little settlement sprang up, and a steady fur trade was engaged in between Jonesboro and New Orleans. Trappers brought their canoes filled with pelts down the Washita and Red to Jonesboro where a ready market transferred them to New Orleans. From Jonesboro, the pioneers pushed farther west and settled in what is now Lamar and Fannin counties.

Frank Colbert, a member of the Chickasaw tribe, having moved from the northern part of Mississippi in 1846, accompanied his family to the West and purchased a tribal right from a member of the Indian tribe on the north bank of Red River. Here he engaged in farming and stock raising. Within a short time he had accumulated considerable wealth, and had bought eight hundred acres of the fertile bottom lands along Red River. As the result of his efforts the little town of Colbert sprang up eight miles northeast of Denison.

84 Lucas and Hall, op. cit., pp. 20-25.
near Preston Bend, Texas. From this point Colbert ran a ferry boat across Red River to a point where it came in contact with the old Butterfield Route. Colbert's Ferry became one of the most important points on the upper part of Red River, and until railroads become numerous, it was the main point of communication between Texas and Oklahoma.

Fort Elliot was established February 3, 1875, on the North Fork of the Red River. It was the last and most northerm of the army camps to demand any attention. The company was later moved to a point in Wheeler County, about twenty-seven miles from the Oklahoma line where the entire project was abandoned in 1890.

As the pioneers pushed forward, countless other settlements sprang up along Red River. The fertile valley lands provided homes for many, and promised good returns. The early towns and forts gradually decreased in importance unless they were able to hold their place among the more modern settlements of trade and invention. After the withdrawal of the Indians from the plains, no forts or stockades were needed as points of protection, and the towns grew with the population.

85 H. Tone, "Red River City," Historical Denison, (February 15, 1929) 1.

86 McConnell, op. cit., I, 83.
CHAPTER V

RED RIVER AS A BOUNDARY

The entire New World from its earliest settlement has suffered from a plague of indefinite boundaries. European rulers lacking accurate surveys, and often using maps based on an explorer's memory, have made grants that conflicted with those previously made. Peace treaties have been signed, consigning territories to which the ceding nation had only the most shadowy of claims. Later in the early nineteenth century as national governments were being set up in both North and South America, lack of knowledge of the interior of the continent led to the placing of boundaries in regions that had yet to feel an explorer's foot. As a result in the English colonies of North America there was constant quarrelling among the various colonies as to the extent of their territorial grants, and, later, in South America, some of the republics even took up arms to settle their boundary claims.

One of the outstanding physiographical features of the Southwest, and located on the edge of regions where both Spanish and French hoped to acquire wealth through gold or furs, the Red River was fated historically to become involved in a series of boundary disputes extending from the time of earliest settlement until the present day. It is doubtful
if any other line of demarcation in North America has been the subject of such constant debate.

The expeditions of De Soto and Coronado in 1541-2 had given Spain a claim to the valley of the Red River, together with the rest of southern and southwestern United States; but such a claim was shadowy and hazy at the best, since nothing was done concerning the region for nearly one hundred fifty years.

In the meantime Spain's almost mythical claim to authority in the region had been challenged by another European power, France. When Rene Robert Cavelier de la Salle, one of the outstanding French explorers, reached the mouth of the Mississippi, he followed the custom then prevalent among explorers, and attempted to give France title to a far greater expanse of territory than he had actually visited. In a pompous ceremony described by Jacques Metairie, a notary of Frontenac, who was a member of the expedition, La Salle claimed a large part of the North American continent for King Louis XIV of France.

At about the 27th degree of elevation from the pole a column and cross were prepared, and on the column were painted the arms of France... La Salle, standing near it said in a loud voice:

'In the name of the most high, mighty, invincible, and victorious Prince, Louis the Great, by the Grace of God, King of France and of Navarre, fourteenth of that name, I this ninth day of April, in virtue of the commission of his

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1Clarence Wharton, Texas Under Many Flags, I, 4-7.
majesty, . . . have taken and do now take, in the name of his majesty, . . . possession of this country of Louisiana, the seas, harbors, towns, villages, mines, minerals, fisheries, streams and rivers, within the extent of the said Louisiana, from the mouth of the great river . . . Mississippi, and the rivers which discharge themselves thereinto.²

Thus the valley of the Red River, as a tributary of the Mississippi was claimed for France. La Salle's later settlement and exploration in Texas, south of the Red River country, added to France's claim to the section, as did Tonti's attempted rescue expedition. Tonti who had been left on the Illinois River, upon hearing of his captain's desperate situation, attempted to reach him, but was forced back after reaching the vicinity of the Red River because of spring floods and the desertion of his men.

Aroused by the intrusion of the French upon their claim, the Spanish under Massent, de Leon, and Teran made an abortive settlement on the Neches River in East Texas, but the failure of the mission, and the absence of the French in the Gulf Coast area during the next few years caused it to be soon abandoned.

But the absence of the French was only temporary. In 1699 under the leadership of Iberville they returned to the mouth of the Mississippi and to the Gulf Coast, establishing

²Alcee Fortier, Louisiana, II, 48.
³Albert Phelps, Louisiana, p. 20.
Biloxi, Mobile, and other settlements. In 1712 King Louis XIV granted to Antoine Crozat a monopoly of trading privilege in the colony and Lamothe Cadillac was sent as governor to Louisiana the following year. Under orders from Cadillac, Louis Juchereau de Saint-Denis in 1713 or 1714 was sent into the Natchitoches country on the lower Red River in order to prevent its rumored occupation by the Spanish, and to establish, if possible, an overland route to Mexico. When he arrived in the Natchitoches area, he could discover nothing concerning the reported Spanish expeditions, and, leaving a part of his men to make a settlement, he pushed on into Texas. This colony at Natchitoches is the oldest town in Louisiana and is four years older than New Orleans.

Alarmed by Saint-Denis' expedition across Texas, the Spaniards in Mexico decided to re-establish the missions in East Texas in order to keep the French out of the province, and farther away from the riches of Mexico. Probably believing the Spaniards would be easier to trade with on the Sabine than on the Rio Grande, Saint-Denis offered his services as guide to the Spanish expedition sent out by Viceroy Linares under Captain Domingo Ramon and Father Hidalgo. This group established five missions in East Texas, and

5 Phelps, op. cit., p. 54.

6 Fortier, op. cit., II, 411.

7 Wharton, op. cit., I, 39-43.
one, San Miguel de Linares, in Louisiana, only fifteen miles from the French post at Natchitoches. Located with this mission was the presidio, or military post of Adeas.

Life did not remain peaceful for the two nationalities located on the indefinite boundary of the Red River. In 1719 a hostile demonstration by the French was enough to send the few priests and soldiers in the East Texas missions scurrying to San Antonio and safety. A little later the French attempted to revive their claim to the Texas coast that they had inherited from La Salle. In 1720, six men were landed about 130 leagues west of the Mississippi, and abandoned to their fate. The following year La Harpe attempted to make a settlement on Matagorda Bay, but due to the hostility of the Indians his attempt failed. While the French never abandoned their claim to Texas, they never succeeded in establishing a post west of the Sabine River.

In 1721, Aguayo became Spanish governor of Texas, and re-established the missions in East Texas, after sending Domingo Ramon to the coast to investigate a reported French settlement there. Adeas, re-located one-half league closer to

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8Texas Almanac, 1933, p. 74.

9Wharton, op. cit., I, 48.

Natchitoches, was the Spanish capital of Texas, with the governors of the province residing there.

From 1722 to 1762 French traders carried on their activities among the Indians on both sides of the Red River, and in the country to the northwest. The Spanish would perhaps have attempted to prevent the trade, but the popularity of the French traders with the Indians combined with the illicit profit made in the trade by many of the Spanish officials themselves was enough to prevent serious trial at stopping the unlawful commerce. Barbe-Marbois points out that during this period there was no settlement of boundaries, for the Spanish feared they might have to make concessions, and the French did not desire to put an exact limit on their possible future growth. However, in 1736, Governor Sandoval of Texas and the French authorities tentatively fixed the boundary between the two provinces at the Arroyo Hondo, a branch of the Red River extending southward between Adeas and Natchitoches.

The Treaty of Utrecht of 1713 that had placed cousins

11 Wharton, op. cit., I, 45-46.
12 Ibid., pp. 99-100.
13 Phelps, Louisiana, p. 67.
14 Texas Almanac, 1933, p. 87.
upon the thrones of Spain and France, contributed to the comparative good-will existing between the possessions of the two countries after that date, but the rival territorial ambitions of the English and French ultimately brought disaster upon the latter. In the French and Indian War of 1754-60 French post after French post fell into the hands of the English, until little except Louisiana was retained by the mother country. Unable to defend even this region, in October, 1761, the French begged Spanish aid to prevent it from falling into the hands of the English. In 1762 Spain entered the war on the side of France only to lose Havana and the Floridas. While the former city was returned to Spain by the Treaty of Paris of 1763, she was still discontented over her territorial losses. In order to compensate Spain and at the same time prevent Louisiana from falling into the hands of the British, France, by the Treaty of Fontainbleau, ceded to Spain "the country known by the name of Louisiana, as well as New Orleans and the island on which that city is situated." Louis XV of France did this because of "the pure effect of the generosity of his heart, and on account of the affection and friendship" of Charles III of Spain. The northern and western limits of Louisiana remained undefined.

15Phelps, op. cit., pp. 100-102.
17Phelps, op. cit., p. 102.
There was no French menace beyond the indefinite Red River border, as the territory on both sides of it were now Spanish. Hence, in 1773, Ablas and all missions and forts in East Texas were abandoned, with most of the inhabitants retiring to San Antonio. A few families from Ablas, however, under the leadership of Gil y Barbo remained in East Texas, and, in 1779, established the town of Nacogdoches near the site of one of the old missions. The town was to become especially important after 1800, when the territory of Louisiana was returned to France by Spain. Napoleon, wanting Louisiana perhaps as a base for conquest in the western hemisphere, in 1800 forced Spain to retrocede the territory to France in exchange for some territory that was to be annexed to the Italian duchy of Parma. This secret Treaty of San Idelfonso provided in its third article that the king of Spain should retrocede to France "the colony or province of Louisiana, with the same extent that it now has in the hands of Spain and other states." As the extent of Louisiana had not been defined by the Treaty of Fontainebleau, it would seem that the boundaries had purposely been left vague; perhaps there is truth in the charge that Napoleon was looking forward to French Louisiana extending to the Rio Grande and

18 Texas Almanac, 1933, p. 75.

19 Fortier, op. cit., II, 549.
to include the Pacific Northwest. It is certain that there
was no definite boundary between French and Spanish terri-
tory.

Whatever Napoleon's purpose may have been in bringing
about the return of Louisiana, he soon found that the slave
revolt in Santo Domingo combined with the English control of
the sea made French possession insecure—hence his willing-
ness to sell the territory to the United States in 1803.

With possession of the province went the question of its
northern and western boundaries. The treaty was extremely
indefinite; it quoted article 3 of the Treaty of San Idel-
fonso, and ceded "said territory" to the United States.

The United States was far from certain as to the location
of her new western boundary. Livingston, the American min-
ister to France questioned the French government concerning
the boundaries. The reply was "I do not know, construe it
your own way. You have made a noble bargain, make the most
of it." In addition, in referring to the treaty, Napoleon
himself admitted its lack of definiteness, declaring, "If
an obscurity did not already exist, it would perhaps be good
to put one there." The Americans took this cynical advice

20 Phelps, op. cit., p. 164.
21 Fortier, op. cit., p. 100.
22 Wharton, op. cit., I, 113.
23 J. E. Pichardo, Treatise on the Limits of Louisiana
and Texas, I, 12.
on the frontier as expediency demanded but failed to do so on the Sabine--Red frontier.

Although the Spanish had at first denounced the sale of Louisiana to the United States as a breach of trust, in 1804 their government instructed Yrujo, its minister in Washington, to renounce this declaration, and work instead toward restricting Louisiana to the narrowest bounds possible, hoping to secure the Mississippi and Red Rivers as boundaries except at Natchitoches. Later, Casa Calvo, the Spanish boundary commissioner in Louisiana was prepared to show that according to the most accurate map available, that of Joseph de Evia, the boundary was reckoned from a point between the mouths of the Calcasieu and Mermento Rivers due north to the vicinity of Natchitoches and the Red River, thence northward to the Missouri. Salcedo, the Spanish governor of Louisiana, had also carried on an investigation, and claimed that French and Spanish engineers had fixed a line beginning near Natchitoches, running due south to the sea, and following the Red River to its source. Spanish officials still remaining in Louisiana did all they could to foment discontent as well as to give Texas authorities information concerning American exploration expeditions. This added to the diplomatic strain with Spain caused by the purchase of Louisiana and the American claim to the Floridas and Texas. Prospects of war led to the

strengthening of defenses by both sides in the region of the Sabine and Red Rivers. Captain Turner was sent to Natchitoches to watch the border, and the Spanish established posts at Bayou Pierre and Nana, east of the Sabine, in addition to Adaes. It was understood that several hundred troops had arrived in East Texas from San Antonio and Monterrey under the command of General Cordero.

Major Porter at Natchitoches received orders from Secretary of War to prevent the Spanish occupying American territory on the east side of the Sabine. Pursuant to carrying out these orders the small Spanish garrison at Adaes was forced, without bloodshed, back across the Sabine by fifty men under Captain Turner. When news of the removal reached the Spanish generals, Herrera and Cordero, they left Nacogdoches with a force of more than 1300 men, and, in spite of warning from Colonel Cushing in Natchitoches, crossed the Sabine about August 1, 1806. General Wilkinson of the United States army, after considerable delay, at length took command, and demanded that the Spanish cross to the west bank of the Sabine. Herrera slowly withdrew, and, on October 22, took up his position on the west bank of the Sabine. From the American camp on the east bank of the Sabine, Wilkinson sent his aide-de-camp, Burling, to the Spanish authorities, suggesting that the Spanish remain behind the Sabine, and the Americans behind the Arroyo Hondo and Red River, with a "neutral...


ground" between. This arrangement was agreed upon, and Wilkin-
son returned to New Orleans.

While this was occurring, and as this territory became "No
Man's Land" of outlaws and renegades, the United States was mak-
ing an effort through diplomatic channels to secure a definite
boundary. While Pinckney and Monroe were instructed to secure
the Rio Grande as a boundary if possible, during the fifteen
years of negotiations that followed, proposals were made sug-
gestng almost every large stream in Texas as a possible boun-
dary. The American representatives in their argument for
the extreme western boundary used as evidence the de Lisle map
of 1707, the Lopez map of 1763, the memoirs of de Champigny and
de Vergennes, and du Fratz's Histoire de la Louisiana. They
failed to convince the Spaniards, and Bowdoin and Armstrong car-
rried on equally fruitless negotiations until 1808 when Napoleon
took over the government of Spain, suspending the transactions
until after Waterloo.

Following the downfall of Napoleon, negotiations concern-
ing the boundary were again resumed between James Monroe, sec-
cretry of state for the United States, and Don Luis de Onis, the
Spanish minister to the United States. De Onis suggested that
the United States relinquish her claims west of the Mississippi
River as a preliminary to Spanish cession of her territory east

28 Wilkinson, op. cit., pp. 11-12.
29 Marshall, op. cit., pp. 36-37.
of that river. Monroe was offering to cede the land between the Colorado and Rio Grande for the Floridas.

Monroe's advancement to the presidency paved the way for the appointment of John Quincy Adams as secretary of state, who carried on the negotiations. In response to Adams' suggestion of the Colorado, De Onis suggested the Arroyo Hondo as a boundary until it flowed into the Red River. Following a temporary break in the proceedings, De Onis made a similar proposal, following which Adams offered the Spanish a proposition making the Sabine, the Red, the Snow Mountains and the forty-first parallel the boundary. In detail, Adams' offer suggested a boundary

... beginning at the mouth of the river Sabine, on the Gulf of Mexico, following the course of said river to the thirty-second degree of latitude; the eastern bank and all the islands in said river to belong to the United States, and the western bank to Spain; thence, due north, to the northernmost part of the thirty-third degree of north latitude, and until it strikes the Rio Roxo, or Red River, thence, following the course of the said river to its source, touching the chain of the Snow Mountains in latitude thirty-five degrees twenty-five minutes north, longitude one hundred and six degrees fifteen minutes west, or thereabouts, as marked on Melish's map, thence to the summit of the said mountains, and following the chain of the same to the forty-first parallel of latitude; thence, following the said parallel of latitude forty-one degrees to the South Sea. The northern bank of the said Red River, and all islands therein, to belong to the United States, and the south bank of the same to Spain.

31 Ibid., pp. 50-62.

32 Ibid., pp. 56-58.

After several months of proposals and counter-proposals, largely concerning which meridian should be the boundary north from the Red River, and what parallel should be followed from the Arkansas to the Pacific, De Neuville, the French minister, acted as an intermediary in the discussions. At length an agreement was reached by Adams and De Onis, and the following is a major article of this Adams-Onis treaty:

The boundary line between the countries, west of the Mississippi, shall begin on the Gulf of Mexico, at the mouth of the Sabine River in the sea, continuing north, along the western bank of the river to the 32° of north latitude; thence, by a line due north, to the degree of latitude where it strikes the Rio Rojo of Matchitchches or Red River, then following the course of longitude 100° meridian west from London and 23° west of Washington; then crossing the said Red River, and running thence, by a line due north to the Arkansas River; thence following the course of the southern bank of the Arkansas River to its source in latitude 42° north and thence by that parallel to the South Sea. The whole being as laid down in Melish's Map of the United States published at Philadelphia in 1818.

Although agreed upon in 1819, this treaty was not approved by the Spanish government until 1821. The almost simultaneous proclamation of Mexican independence re-opened the question of the boundary. Efforts made through Joel Poinsett to extend the boundary by purchase to the Rio Grande failed and at length in 1828 a treaty was made re-affirming the limits as set up in the Adams-Onis Treaty.


35 Supreme Court Reports, CLXII, p. 23.

The treaty left much to be settled later, however, and disputes over portions of the boundary it delineated have been constant from the time of its signing almost to the present day. During Jackson's administration, the American government argued for a time that the Neches was the river referred to in the treaty, being larger and more navigable than other streams flowing into Sabine Lake. This version of the treaty caused the interests of the territory of Arkansas and the Republic of Texas to conflict, and the Texas Congress passed a law setting up a Red River district to include the area bounded by the Sulphur Fork of Red River to the Trammel Trace crossing, then following that trace to the Sabine, up that river to its source, from there due north to the Red River, following it back to the beginning at Sulphur Fork. Due to protests from the United States the law was kept inactive until suspended. The organization of Red River County in this territory led to further protests from the United States. Texas in reply, showed that the state of Coahuila and Texas had jurisdiction in that region, and that Mexico had made land grants there without protest from the American government. Moreover, Mexico had at one time a military force at Spanish Bluffs on the Red River, and that citizens of the district had sent delegates to the convention of 1836. The United States, answering claimed that several members of

the Texas Congress had protested against Senator Ellis of Red River County taking his seat, arguing that he was an Arkansan. This protest according to La Branche, the United States charge d'affaires, showed doubt concerning ownership of the territory.

The question of the exact boundary between Texas and the United States was at this time, 1836, subordinated to Texas' hope of annexation. But as her hopes of annexation dimmed, the controversy was renewed. The United States marshal was directed to arrest any Texas surveyors found operating in the territory claimed by Arkansas, and the governor of Arkansas was instructed to support the marshal. Memucan Hunt, the Texas minister to the United States, reported that the United States was delaying the exact delineation, but, in order to lessen the likelihood of trouble, he sent the American officials a copy of the Texas land law, section 39 of which forbade operation of the office in the disputed area near the supposed boundary. While Arkansas passed an act to enforce its authority in the disputed region, it found itself unable to do so, through an inability to find citizens of the area willing to act as officials for Arkansas.

As a result of this dispute, the two nations in 1838 agreed to accept the Adams-Onis Treaty, and provision was made for

38 Ibid., pp. 209-216.
39 Ibid., pp. 216-220.
a commission to locate the precise boundary. After a number of difficulties, work on the location of the boundary was begun in 1840. The question concerning which stream was the Sabine of the Adams-Onis Treaty was settled in favor of Texas. From the Sabine the survey was carried northward through lake, swamp, and forest to the Red River despite much illness and discomfort suffered by the commission. The survey settled the boundary problem in that area, and gave Texas the disputed region. The people of the region became Texans officially, and were granted land as though they were immigrants.

There was no further dispute over the location of the boundary on the lower Red River, but the location of the boundary between Texas and the United States on its upper course was soon to become a matter of controversy. The Adams-Onis Treaty had provided that the boundary line should be the south bank of the Red River to the one hundredth meridian, and north along that line to the Arkansas, according to Melish's map of the United States for 1818. While the treaty provided for a survey of the line, none was made until after the Compromise of 1850. However, during the negotiations of 1836, that led up to the survey of the eastern boundary in 1840, the United States had expressed a desire to survey this line also, but Texas at the time regarded it as an impossibility.

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42 Wilkinson, op. cit., p. 20.
43 Texas Almanac, 1933, p. 88.
44 Marshall, op. cit., pp. 219-221.
The first conflict arising out of the unsettled condition of this boundary occurred in 1843 when a portion of the United States Army assigned to protect the trade to Santa Fe arrested and disarmed the Texans comprising the Snively expedition in the territory later known as Greer County, located between the two forks of the Red River. In answer to a Texas protest, John C. Calhoun, then Secretary of State, wrote Van Zandt, Texas charge d'affaires, "that the place where the Texas force was disarmed was within the territory of the United States." He added, however, that Snively had probably thought he was in Texas territory, and that it would be impossible to tell who was right until an actual survey and demarcation was made of the line. The United States agreed to compensate Texas for the arms seized, but the question of the location of the boundary was left in abeyance.

The joint resolution providing for the annexation of Texas failed to straighten out this boundary question, as no description or limitation was made other than the territory "rightfully belonging to the new state." Thus the boundary problem remained open. More important in its future effect was the Compromise Act of 1850 in which the boundaries were fixed thus:

The State of Texas will agree that her boundary on the north shall commence at the point at which the meridian of one hundred degrees west from Greenwich is intersected by the parallel of thirty-six degrees

45W. L. Moore, The Greer County Question, pp. 34-35.
thirty minutes north latitude, and shall run from
said point due west to the meridian of one hundred
and three degrees west from Greenwich; thence due
south to the thirty second degree of north latitude
to the Rio Bravo del Norte; and thence with the
channel of said river to the Gulf of Mexico.

The State of Texas cedes to the United States
all her claim to territory exterior to the limits
and boundaries which she agreed to establish by the
first article of this agreement.

As no map or survey is mentioned as being the one to de-
termine the one hundredth meridian it was assumed that the
true meridian must be meant.

The year previous to the Compromise, Captain R. B. Marcy
learned from the Indians that the Red River had two main forks,
a fact heretofore not definitely mentioned by any explorer.
Subsequent explorations by Marcy and Captain George B. McClel-
lan in 1852 confirmed this knowledge, although their location
of the 100th meridian was far wrong, placing it six miles east
of the confluence of the forks of the river. A survey made by
Jones and Brown in 1857-58 placed the meridian some fifty miles
west of the junction of the forks, giving rise to the question
of which fork was to be considered the Red River of the Adams-
Onis Treaty. The ownership of a block of land nearly as large
as Connecticut depended on the answer.

In 1858, Congress passed an act providing that a joint
commission be appointed by Texas and the United States to lo-
cate and mark the boundary line around western Texas. Work

46Ibid., p. 37.
47Ibid., pp. 38-44.
was started in 1859, but dissension arose between the two groups, and in 1860 no agreement could be made between Clark for the United States and Russell for Texas. Clark insisted on accepting the one hundredth meridian according to Jones and Brown, while Russell's observations on the location of the meridian did not quite agree with those of Jones and Brown. Moreover, Clark and Russell failed to agree on which fork was the continuation of the main river.

Despite the uncertainty concerning the legality of its claim to the region, Texas made the area into a county in 1860, with the North Fork and South Fork of the Red River and the twenty-third meridian from Washington as boundaries. Texas then set up a county government in the area, established schools, and attached the county to one of its congressional districts.

Not until 1876 was Texas' authority in the region challenged. In that year L. K. Lippincott of the General Land Office in a summary of the dispute sent to Senator Oglesby again raised the claim of the United States to that territory, and the following year J. A. Williamson of the General Land Office again set forth the claim of the United States to the region. At the request of Governor R. B. Hubbard of Texas, Land Commissioner J. Cross of Texas drew up a history of the dispute that stressed Texas claims. Despite the fact that the ownership of the territory was now open to controversy, Congress

48 Ibid., pp. 44-52.

in 1879 placed the county in the Northern Judicial District of Texas, an act Texas interpreted as a recognition of her claims to the region by Congress.

Seeking more definite proof that the United States had given up her claims to the territory, the legislature of Texas, in 1882, sought to arrange a joint commission with the United States to settle the question definitely. Senator Maxey of Texas introduced a bill to the same effect in Congress, but it failed to pass in the House of Representatives. In 1885, more than two years later, a joint resolution made provision for a joint commission with Texas to study the problem. In the meantime, a detachment of the Ninth Cavalry from Fort Sill had expelled settlers from the area.

The commission met at Galveston, Texas, on February 23, 1886, and the hearing of the witnesses began, the explorer Marcy, Hugh F. Young, G. E. Erath and S. Ross being chief among these. After considerable study, Colonel Mansfield of the United States commissioned offered the following resolutions:

1. Resolved, That the Joint Commission should ascertain and mark the point where the true one hundredth meridian of west longitude crosses the Red River.
2. Resolved, That in finding the point where one hundredth of west longitude crosses Red River, if it shall appear that said meridian crosses Red River west of the confluence of what are now known as the North Fork and Prairie Dog Town Fork, then the true boundary should be taken

50 Moore, op. cit., pp. 54-57.
51 Ibid., pp. 58-59.
at that one of those streams which best satisfies the provisions of the treaty of 1819.
3. Resolved, That the Prairie Dog Town Fork is longer than the North Fork.
4. Resolved, That the Prairie Dog Town Fork drains a larger area than the North Fork.
5. Resolved, That the Prairie Dog Town Fork is wider than the North Fork.
6. Resolved, That Prairie Dog Town Fork corresponds more nearly to the Red River, as laid down on the treaty map, than the North Fork.
7. Resolved, That the Prairie Dog Town Fork is the true boundary, and that the monument should be placed at the intersection of the one hundredth meridian with this stream. 52

While the Texas commission accepted the first five resolutions with some reservations, it absolutely rejected the final two. In return the United States Commission rejected all except four of fourteen propositions submitted by the Texas group. 53 Unable to agree the Commission adjourned, July 16, 1886.

At approximately the same time as the adjournment of the boundary commission, a group of Greer County settlers met at Mobetia, in Wheeler County, Texas, and organized a county government for Greer County. Mangum was named as the county seat and provision made for building a jail. Post Offices were set up at Mangum and at Frazier, and, although they were at first listed by the Post Office Department as being in Texas, this was soon changed in the records to read Indian Territory. The hopes of these settlers received another set-back in December,

53Ibid., pp. 165-168.
54Moore, op. cit., pp. 76-77.
1887, when President Cleveland issued a proclamation declaring that the title in and jurisdiction over the disputed territory was vested in the United States. However, the act of Congress of May 2, 1890, which established a temporary government for the Territory of Oklahoma, made a concession in their favor; the act was not to apply to Greer County until the title was legally determined to be in the United States.

Legal action was at once brought by the Attorney-General of the United States in order to settle the affair. In return the State of Texas objected to suit on the grounds that the United States could not in her own courts sue one of her states without its consent. The demurrer was argued on December 9, 1891, and was overruled, thus giving the United States original jurisdiction in the case.

When the case came up at the October 1895 term of the United States Supreme Court the United States laid down the following claims upon which the decision should be based:

(1) That the intention of the two governments, as gathered from the words of the treaty, must control, and that the map to which the contracting parties referred is to be given the same effect as if it had been expressly made a part of the treaty;
(2) But looking at the entire instrument, it is clear that, while the parties took the Melish map, improved to 1818, as a basis for the final settlement of the question of boundary, they contemplated, as shown by the fourth article of the treaty, that the line was subsequently to be fixed with more

56Moore, op. cit., pp. 79-80.
precision by commissioners and surveyors representing the respective countries.

(3) That the reference in the treaty to the 100th meridian was to that meridian astronomically located, and not necessarily to the 100th meridian as located on the Melish map;

(4) That the Melish map located the 100th meridian east of where the true 100th meridian is, when properly delineated.

(5) That the Compromise Act of September, 1850, and the acceptance of its provisions by Texas, together with the action of the two governments, require that, in the determination of the present question of boundary between the United States and Texas, the direction in the treaty, "following the course of the Rio Roto westward to the degree of longitude 100 west from London," must be interpreted as referring to the true 100th meridian, and consequently, the line "westward" must go to that meridian and not stop at the Melish 100th meridian;

(6) That the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River is the continuation, going from east to west, of the Red River of the treaty, and the line, going from east to west, extends up Red River and along the Prairie Dog Town Fork of Red River to the 100th meridian, and not up the North Fork of Red River;

(7) That the act of Congress of February 24, 1879, c. 97, creating the Northern Judicial District of Texas, is to be construed as placing Greer County in that district for judicial purposes only, and not as adding to Texas the territory embraced by that country.

Hence, the attorneys of the United States concluded, Greer County had not been under the jurisdiction of Texas at the time of its admission, or at the time of the opening of the case.

Replying the Texas counsel argued, first, that Greer County was west of the one hundredth meridian of Melish's Map of 1818. Second, the Spanish trail from Natchitoches to Santa Fe went by the North Fork. Third, the people of Texas had gone to considerable expense in setting up an educational system in Greer

57 Supreme Court Reports, CLXII, 1-2.
County. Fourth, Texas had been in possession of the county for more than forty years. Fifth, the North Fork was longer, discharged more water, and imposed its course at and below the junction of the two streams. Moreover, the North Fork had always been known by that title, whereas the South Fork was usually referred to as the Prairie Dog Town River. Sixth, Greer County had been represented in the Texas Legislature since 1860; it was organized as part of a Texas Congressional District; Congress had placed it in the Northern Judicial District of Texas; and it had been considered by the Post Office department as part of Texas until 1888. These points, the counsel for Texas argued, had been recognized by both the public and by state and national officials as showing that Greer County was a part of Texas.

After the arguments and testimonies had been completed, the court decided, first, that the makers of the treaty had intended that the true one hundredth meridian as determined by a survey was meant to mark the boundary, rather than the meridian as shown on Melish's map. Second, the Compromise Act of 1850 meant the true one hundredth meridian. Third, the Prairie Dog Town Fork more nearly met the description of the Rio Roxo as shown by Melish's map. Fourth, the width and length of the Prairie Dog Town Fork, together with its declination on many maps, as confirmed by such explorers as

Captain Marcy, showed it to be the continuation of the main Red River, and therefore, should be considered as the boundary line. Fifth, the United States by its conduct in the smuggling affair and in the creation of the Northern Judicial District of Texas, had not recognized the claim of Texas to the territory, and in a treaty made in 1855 with the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians had included this territory under the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States.

Although the decision of the Supreme Court had definitely made the Prairie Dog Town Fork the boundary to the 100th meridian, the exact location of this meridian was still in doubt. The line drawn by Brown and Jones, and accepted by Clark the following year had never been agreed to by Texas, nor had the United States accepted the meridian as located by H. S. Pritchett for Texas. In 1902 and 1903, A. D. Kidder, having been detailed by the Secretary of the Interior, re-located the 100th meridian on the South Fork at a point 3699.7 feet east of the place designated by Jones and Brown. Later in 1923 the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey located the meridian by the processes of triangulation, and placed it 375.5 feet east of the point as located by Kidder.

As a result of the Kidder survey, John L. Wortham, in 1910, applied to the Texas Land Office for patents to portions

60 Wilkinson, op. cit., pp. 73-75.
of the land between the Jones and Brown survey and the Kidder survey. Litigation having been re-opened, the case was ultimately brought to the United States Supreme Court, which in 1926 ordered a new survey to locate the true meridian. This survey, as completed by Gannett in 1929, placed the meridian 340.28 feet east of the Kidder line. The following year, 1930, the Supreme Court confirmed the survey, and decreed the boundary between Texas and Oklahoma should be according to Gannett's survey.

One other boundary dispute between Texas and Oklahoma grew out of the Adams-Onis Treaty location of the south bank of the Red River as the line between Spanish and American territory. During the development in 1919 of an important oil and gas field along the banks of the river near Wichita Falls, wells were drilled in the part of the river lying between the channel and the outer southern banks. In an attempt to gain jurisdiction over these wells, Oklahoma filed suit against Texas on the ground that the boundary of Texas under the Adams-Onis Treaty reached only to the high water mark on the south bank.

The Supreme Court in 1921, held the south bank, as it was in 1819, to be the boundary along the entire course of the river where it marked the boundary between the two states. A supplementary decree in 1923 gave more complete directions

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61 Moore, op. cit., pp. 96-100.
for determining the south bank as a preliminary to a survey of the channel. A. A. Stiles and A. D. Kidder were named by the court to relocate the south bank of the river as it was in 1819, and upon its completion in 1927, a line of concrete markers was placed along the newly defined bank. The line surveyed proved to be a victory for Texas.

Thus the Supreme Court of the United States by its decision involving the locations of the south bank of the Red River and the 100th meridian at last definitely placed the boundaries in the Red River valley, boundaries that had been disputed since La Salle had challenged the Spanish claim there and that the Adams-Onis Treaty had failed to draw with certainty. Today, after more than two centuries of conflict and lawsuits, the territorial jurisdiction of each state is peacefully accepted by its neighbors.

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63 Texas Almanac, 1933, p. 88.
CHAPTER VI

RECENT IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS ON RED RIVER

Before the advent of railways and concrete and asphalt highways, the principal avenue of traffic was water. Not only did the tourist and occasional traveller use the seas and rivers for a road, but by far the greater portion of the trade and commerce of the world was carried by the different waterways. The important trading centers of the world were located on bays or streams convenient for shipping, and as new countries were settled, the earliest and most prominent posts and towns were on the banks of waterways.

The length of its stream and the size of its drainage basin made the Red River important, during its early history, as a means of reaching the interior, and of carrying in supplies for settlers. Its value was, however, greatly reduced by an unusual natural phenomenon, the Great Raft of the Red River, which prevented its navigation beyond Natchitoches. This was an accumulation of drift, beginning near Natchitoches parish, and extending for a hundred miles or more up the river. This drift filled the bed of the river from the bottom, sometimes to a depth of thirty feet, and rose three or four feet above the water. Becoming covered with considerable soil, it supported vegetation, even including some small trees. While the water
in some places might be open for a few miles, at other points it would be possible to cross the river without seeing water.

This mass of logs, which had probably been in existence for more than three hundred years, proved to be an effective barrier to even the small boats of the Indians and early explorers. Freeman, who passed around it in 1805, declared that no boat had penetrated it for fifty years. With the coming of the white man and the development of his settlements, the inconvenience caused by the Great Raft naturally multiplied. The obstruction irritated settlers still more when steamboats were introduced on Red River. Beginning in 1825, the legislature of Arkansas asked Congress to take steps to remove the Raft, in order that boats might reach Fort Towson. By 1830 the demands of the people of Arkansas and of the army officials, and the need of getting supplies to the Choctaws arriving in the Indian Territory, had intensified the need of clearing the river.

Because of these needs, Captain Henry M. Shreve, under orders from the War Department, on April 1, 1835, began work on removing the obstruction, using four snagboats and 160 men. During his first year on the job the river was opened for steamboats as far up as the Caddo agency, seventy-one miles above where Shreve had begun work. In 1835 he announced that 130

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1R. G. Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XVII, 69-71.

miles of the Raft had been removed with twenty-three miles more to be destroyed, but it was March 29, 1838 before there was a clear passage for boats. As a result of the opening of this passage, the fertile lands alongside the Raft were almost immediately settled, and cotton plantation began to prosper, for the boats going to and from Fort Towson furnished them transportation to market.

The river was not to be so easily defeated, however, and it began to rebuild the Raft. In two years, eight miles of drift accumulated between Hurrican and Carolina Bluffs, its removal in 1842 by T. T. Williamson costing $100,000. As he was required to keep it cleared for five years, he threw a boom across the river above Carolina Bluffs in an attempt to keep it open, but a steamship captain cut the boom, and again the Raft began to interfere with traffic. In 1850, using another appropriation of $100,000, another attempt was made to make this section of the river navigable. Under the direction of Captain Fuller channels were cut around the head and foot of the Raft, so that the river would flow around it through the lakes and bayous. This proved a failure, and by 1872 the river had rebuilt the Raft to a length of twelve miles. Then under the direction of Howell and Woodrull, two army engineers, the river was cleared by means of explosives.

3 Ibid., pp. 50-53.
Other work was necessary in 1882 and 1890, but a good channel was secured all the way to Shreveport.

Following the decline in river traffic after the introduction of railways into the southwest, interest in the Red River as a navigable stream declined, but interest in its other potentialities mounted, namely, as a source of municipal water supplies, of power, for irrigation, and for recreation, although attention to its navigation did not wholly cease. Prevention of flood damage as a part of present-day conservation programs also contributed to interest in a number of river projects.

In the upper part of the valley, the uncertainty of sufficient rainfall, year in and year out, for agriculture, caused authorities to plan to use the river water for irrigation. Joseph A. Kemp, the father of irrigation in Northwest Texas, and Sam Bellah searched the length of the Wichita River for a proper dam site, at last selecting the spot where Lake Kemp is today. The people of Texas refused in 1899 to authorize bonds for irrigation, however, and Kemp's plans temporarily were failures. As a demonstration, however, Lake Wichita was created in 1900 on Holliday Creek, seven miles west of Wichita Falls. This lake, covering twenty-nine hundred acres and having a capacity of four and one-half billion gallons, was too small to settle the irrigation question, but for many

4 Alcee Fortier, _Louisiana, II_, 360.
years it supplied Wichita Falls with sufficient water, a need that has hampered other towns in western Texas and Oklahoma.

In 1917 the efforts of J. A. Kemp were at last partially rewarded when the people voted to allow the issuance of bonds to finance irrigation projects. The entry of America into the World War caused the project to be shelved for a time, even though Lake Wichita almost disappeared during the drought of 1917-1918. The discovery of oil in the neighborhood occupied the attention of the people of Wichita Falls too greatly for them to be interested in irrigation at the close of the World War, but in 1919 Lake Wichita threatened a shortage, for the population of the city had increased in a few years from five thousand to forty thousand.

Calling a mass-meeting, Kemp laid the groundwork for Water Improvement District No. 1, comprised of Wichita Falls and adjacent territory. A bond issue of $4,500,000 was voted by this district on September 7, 1920; to finance the project. Despite the financial slump of 1921 and the hostility of the landowners to the projects, the district's bonds were at length sold, and the land for the site of the lake bought. Contracts were awarded, and work was begun on the Diversion Dam in February, 1922, which was completed in 1923. Lake Kemp on the Wichita River in Baylor County covers 22,827 acres, while the Diversion Reservoir located also on the Wichita at the corners of Archer, Baylor and Wichita Counties, covers 16,000 acres.

Lake Kemp has a capacity of 600,000 acre-feet. The dam for Diversion Reservoir is 4,139 feet long, and is fifty five feet high. Lake Kemp has a shore line 125 miles long, and has a drainage area of 3,000 square miles. Its dam is 7,200 feet in length and one hundred feet in height. In 1929 there were 35,612 acres being irrigated out of a total of 42,970 irrigable acres.

Although these are by far the largest projects that have been completed in the Red River Valley, several smaller lakes have been built. Among the more important are Lake Paris built in 1922 on Pine Creek in Lamar County to furnish Paris with its water supply, and Lake Pauline, built in 1928 by a utilities company on Wanderer's Creek in Hardeman County. Lake Paris has a storage capacity of 11,011 acre-feet, while Lake Pauline's capacity is 7,000 acre-feet. The latter lake covers 345 acres.

Important as these projects have proved to be to the vicinities in which they were located, they are dwarfed by the Lake Denison project on Red River itself on which work has barely begun. This huge reservoir will cover an estimated 250,000 acres, giving it an area of more than twelve times that of Lake Kemp. It will cover the present site of four

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8 Texas Almanac, 1935, p. 182.
10 Texas Almanac, 1939, p. 144.
11 Ibid., 1936, pp. 183-194.
12 Ibid., 1939, p. 141.
towns, Aylesworth and Woodville, Oklahoma, and Hagerman and Preston, Texas to a depth of 130 feet. Thus it is apparent that while it is not the largest flood control and power dam project undertaken by the United States government, it is by far the largest ever planned in the Southwest.

The history of the project goes back to 1896 when Dr. Alex Acheson of Denison first envisioned the dam as a means of making the river navigable to Denison. He secured support of the project from Morris Sheppard, C. B. Randell and other men prominent in national affairs, and the fight for the Denison Dam went on for forty years. The World War and other events distracted attention from the proposed dam, until at last the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932 gave it a better chance of becoming a realized dream. Due to the influence of Sam Rayburn this project was included in the act of Congress for flood control of June 22, 1936, and on March 18, 1938, Louis Johnson the acting secretary of War presented complete data concerning the project to the Speaker of the House of Representatives. With its complete cost estimated at $53,581,000, the project approved by Congress.


15. R. S. Carver, "Red River Project--A Forty Year Fight," Dallas Morning News (January 9, 1940), 7.

16. Ibid., (January 10, 1940), 2.
Although originally pushed as an aid to navigation, the two chief purposes of the dam are to control flood waters from the upper Red River, thereby benefitting the states of Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, and to generate hydro-electric power. Further indirect benefits to accrue to the regions formerly flooded are:

... Decreased losses due to elimination of evacuation and rehabilitation, together with a lessened disease rate, lessened interferences with transportation and communication facilities, ... increased recreational facilities.17

The project will consist of a rolled earth embankment, outlet works, and a concrete ogee spillway with a concrete-lined discharge channel and a power house. The rolled-earth embankment will be fourteen thousand feet in length and will have a maximum height of 165 feet. This embankment will have a base width of 1,150 feet and a crest width of forty feet. In addition a low saddle three miles north of the dam will require 7,000 feet of dike with a maximum height of fifteen feet. The outlet works, consisting of eight reinforced concrete conduits, with gate towers at the upstream end, and a stilling basin, powerhouse, and tailrace below the downstream ends, will be built within the embankment adjacent to the present river channel on the Texas abutment. In addition a 2,000 foot concrete spillway, ungated and entirely free of any obstruction to the flow of water will be constructed on the Texas abutment.18

18Ibid.
The size of the reservoir created will be tremendous. Having a water capacity of 5,825,000 acre-feet, it will extend eighty miles up Red River to the vicinity of Gainesville, while a northern arm of the lake will extend sixty miles up the Washita to the neighborhood of Ravia, Oklahoma. In addition to covering the four towns already mentioned, the reservoir will result in a considerable relocation of highways, railways, and utilities. The Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad and the St. Louis-San Francisco Railroad will have to construct twenty-eight miles of new track, and at least sixteen miles of new highway will have to be constructed by the State of Oklahoma in addition to the building of a number of bridges. Relocation of the several miles of transmission lines belonging to the Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company, telephone and telegraph lines belonging to the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, and pipe lines of the Standard Gas Company will also be necessary. The majority of the thousands of acres covered by the reservoir is wooded bottom land, but Oklahoma in its suit to block the construction of the dam stressed the 100,000 acres of rich, tillable soil that would be inundated, consequently depriving the state of its revenue thereupon.

Although legal hindrances held up work on the reservoir for some time, work began on the site in 1939 when land was cleared for the dam site by the Schutt Construction Company, and a spur railway line, three miles in length, was built from

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19Ibid.

20"Denison Dam Ruling By High Court Awaited," Ft. Worth Evening Star-Telegram, (December 11, 1939), 8.
the "Katy" Railroad. Other firms were excavating dirt for the conduits, and building temporary bridges for the use of the contractors.

Although 600 members of the army engineering and field units were assigned to the project, all labor and material used on the different jobs will be let in contracts, of which $3,570,640 worth had been approved before the end of January, 1940. Nearly one-half of the total cost, or approximately $24,000,000 will be spent for labor.

Because the magnitude of Lake Denison so overshadows other reservoirs now under construction, little is said concerning them, yet $500,000 will be spent in 1940 on the Lugert-Altus reservoir on the upper Red River in Oklahoma by the Federal government. Private enterprise began work during 1939 on two small lakes for recreational purposes, the McClellan Creek Reservoir in Gray County, and the Umberger Reservoir in Randall. These lakes covered only 185 and 1,208 acres respectively. The town of Mount Pleasant had also begun work on a 168 acre reservoir in Titus County in northeastern Texas.

Surveys have also been made, but no money appropriated for a dam on the Pease River, between Foard and Hardeman Counties.

21 Gray, op. cit., p. 6.
23 "Red River Dam Will Be Aid to Denison," Ft. Worth Evening Star-Telegram, (June 12, 1939) p. 6.
24 Gray, op. cit., p. 6.
25 Texas Almanac, 1939, p. 141.
Plans were made for a reservoir here following a disastrous flood in May, 1935, that destroyed $3,475,000 worth of property along the Pease and Red Rivers below the mouth of the Pease, near Vernon. Plans for the financing of the project through the national relief agencies failed. If the project had gone through, it would have created a lake of 11,000 acres, containing 350,000 acre-feet of water, and would have been used for irrigation as well as flood control.

Another project pending approval is one located on the Little Wichita River in Archer County, which would impound 100,000 acre-feet of water for a municipal water supply as well as for irrigation purposes.

These various reservoirs, either constructed or planned, together with others that will be built in the future but to date have not so much as had their plans drawn will eventually not only transform the physical features, but will do much to change the economic pattern of the valley. Cheap electricity will tend to draw factories to the towns and cities of the territory. Lower rail rates caused by the navigability of the lower Red River to Denison will bring more factories and people to enjoy the great natural resources that Fortune originally placed in Red River Valley. Thus its future should be more prosperous and happy than it has yet been.

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27Texas Almanac, 1939, p. 141.

28Ibid.
CHAPTER VII

RED RIVER AFTER FOUR CENTURIES: SUMMARY

Today the countless herds of buffalo that once roamed the grassy plains of the Southwest are gone. The polished sweep of the farmer's plow has turned their grazing grounds into productive wheat and cotton fields. A few Indians remain of the many hostile tribes which once made the Red River Valley their home, but they no longer are savage, and no longer depend upon their hunting and pillaging expeditions for existence. Their hunting grounds along the valley have been turned into rich agricultural districts inclosed by fences and posted against public interference. Their wigwams, like their pow wows and war dances, are things of the past, but arrow points, and stone knives are sometimes found upon the plains to remind a busy civilization of a race which has gone.

The earliest settlements made in the valley were located on the banks of the river. Ease of transportation was the major factor for such locations, as the pioneer trader found it convenient to use the river as a highway. There were no roads, as yet, and hostile Indian tribes made land travel undesirable and dangerous. In the course of a few years towns sprang up along the river around frontier trading posts and forts which later became supply centers for settlers and
cattle men. These towns carried on a flourishing trade with eastern markets, and were able through navigation and overland wagon freighting to keep the settlers supplied with the necessities of pioneer life.

Early pioneers crossing the plains found that the mesquite grass furnished good pasturage for cattle, and within a few years' time thousands of cattle followed the trails across the plains into the upper Red River Valley where they were pushed across the river on their way to northern markets.

Below Shreveport the Red River was navigable throughout the remainder of its course, and such towns as Natchitoches, Alexandria, and Shreveport remain today as thriving cities which had their beginning during the days of early navigation. Cotton planters found the valley lands bordering the river fertile and productive, and by the time of the removal of the Great Raft in 1825, thousands of bales of cotton were being shipped down the river on flat boats to New Orleans. Lumbering became an important industry all along the lower course of the river.

The pioneers were quick to realize the opportunities which the plain-country afforded, and in a few years' time hundreds of settlements dotted the West. Homes were built, claims were enclosed by barbed wire, and roads were cut across the virgin lands of the valley. With the advent of railroads cities sprang up and many articles such as had never been marketed before became common items of trade.
Today the numerous towns along the Red River have a fairly adequate system of railways and highways, some of which cut across the valley from north to south, while others parallel the river from east to west. In Louisiana the Louisiana and Arkansas and the Texas and Pacific Railroads parallel the river, while the Missouri Pacific, Saint Louis and Southwestern and the Kansas City Southern cross its banks. In western Oklahoma and Texas the Saint Louis Southwestern, and portions of the Missouri-Kansas and Texas and Santa Fe run parallel to its north bank, and the Fort Worth and Denver City, the Texas and Pacific and portions of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas parallel the south bank. Railroads crossing the stream include the Saint Louis and Southwestern; Kansas, Oklahoma and Gulf; Missouri, Kansas and Texas; the Santa Fe; the Wichita Valley, and the Fort Worth and Denver City. These roads have been adequate for the transportation of the valley trade, and have played an important part in the settlement and prosperity of the West.

Federal highways both cross and parallel Red River, furnishing the valley with further outlet for its products, and facilitating trade with all parts of the Union. Trucks haul the cotton, cattle, gasoline, and other products of the valley to markets, while the busses and cars transport the population with great rapidity.

Although chiefly distributing points of varying sizes, the valley towns are becoming manufacturing centers. Almost
every town has its own flour mill, gins, shoe-shops, bottling plants, etc.

Denison, known as the "Gate City of Texas," is among the most important of the upper Red River towns. It had its advent with the coming of the Katy railroad, and since that time it has continued to grow in both population and industry. Among its unusual industries is its cheese and mayonnaise plant of the Kraft-Phenix Cheese Corporation which is one of the largest of its kind in the United States. Another is the Denison Peanut Company, manufacturers of peanut oil, cake and meal, and mixers of high grade poultry and dairy feed. Among its other industries is the W. S. Smith Wood Preserving Company which ships 500 to 600 car loads of creosoted timber products each month. Besides these enterprises, Denison has one of the largest cotton mills in the South, a wholesale garment factory, and cotton seed oil mills.

Nocona is important as a leather manufacturing center. Justin boots and saddles are known for their superior workmanship and durability throughout the entire Southwest.

Still a different type of manufacturing is carried on in Wichita Falls, located in the upper Red River valley. The Bell Fruit Jar Company manufactures from white sand taken from the bed of Red River, fruit jars, bottles, window glass, and lamp chimneys. Besides these products Wichita Falls manufactures ice, brick, tile, cotton seed products, brooms, work clothing, and oil drilling machinery. These towns offer a
variety of manufacturing enterprises, and employ thousands of workers annually in their factories and shops.

On the lower Red River timber is abundant and both Shreveport and Alexandria have creosoting plants, meat packing plants, coffee roasting plants, cotton seed oil mills, sheet window glass factories, and manufacture hardwood flooring, and pine timber.

In addition to some of the industries mentioned, Texarkana is engaged in the manufacture of clay and sulphur products, roofing, asbestos and medicine.

The towns of Hugo, Durant, Frederick, Ardmore, and Altus on the Oklahoma side, and Paris, Sherman, Henrietta, Vernon, Quanah and Childress on the Texas side of Red River are only a few of the more prosperous local trade centers within the valley.

The discovery of important oil fields in the upper Red River Valley in 1919 caused a decided increase in the population of the cities in that area, and created a demand for the manufacture of more drilling equipment and supplies.

For four hundred years the Red River Valley has been the battleground between contending Indian tribes and European races, and for almost three hundred of these years the river has been a disputed boundary line, either between rival nations, or between neighboring states of our country. The river has never been of much importance as a commercial route, yet very few rivers in all the United States have played so
an important and persistent a part in this history of their sections as the Red River has played in the history of the Southwest.
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