EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE CONCHO COUNTRY

THESIS

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PREFACE

For the past seventeen years I have lived and taught school in the Concho Country. The region has always appealed to me, not only because of its interesting present, but also because of its romantic and fascinating past. I have listened, with interest, to the stories told about it by the old-time cowboys, by the old settlers, and by some of the old Fort Concho soldiers themselves. As a result of this experience, I have wanted to go into its past more carefully and search for more facts regarding the region, its first inhabitants, and its early history in general. Living in a particular region over a period of years will naturally stimulate one to want to know more about its history, and I have welcomed and enjoyed the opportunity to make a study of the Concho Country. I have more or less arbitrarily confined the study to the time before 1900. By that time the region was still young and raw, although a splendid beginning had been made toward development.

S. T. Allen

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CHAPTER I

EARLY EXPLORERS AND THE INDIANS

No portion of the entire state of Texas has a more interesting history than does that region known as the "Concho Country." While the area does not possess definite boundaries such as one would expect to find enclosing a state or a county, it does have certain natural limitations. It is located on the northern edge of the Edwards Plateau and near the headwaters of the Colorado River of Texas. Generally speaking, the "Concho Country" is that area drained by the Concho Rivers (Middle, North, and South). All or parts of the following counties are included in this region: Tom Green, Concho, Sterling, Coke, Irion, Schleicher, Runnels, Glasscock, and Reagan. San Angelo is the center of this region and from the earliest times has been its most important city. As a result of this fact much of the story will center around this city and the territory contiguous to it.

Some evidences of prehistoric races are still to be found in this country. One of the famous landmarks is the Painted Rocks found about one-half mile from the present city of Paint Rock, the county seat of Concho County.

J. M. Franks, an old-time Indian fighter and West Texas

pioneer who saw these rocks many years ago, made the following comment on these mysterious marks:

These rocks or ledge of rocks are on the north side of the Concho River about 150 yards from the river. The ledge runs east and west about one-fourth of a mile and parallel to the river. The rocks show that the paintings have been done for many years, with some kind of red paint and was undoubtedly done by some tribe of Indians. There are hieroglyphics of various kinds, some buffalo heads and horns, and some, I imagine, were for some kind of animals, one or two Catholic crosses and one or two designs that resemble terrapins more than anything else. No one knows how long they have been there; I have heard of them ever since I can remember. This is a noted landmark.

This spot is widely known not only over West Texas but also over a large part of the nation. It is visited each year by many tourists from many parts of the country. No one seems to be able to offer a satisfactory explanation as to when the marks were placed there or how they have maintained their original color and shape. It is quite possible that the Catholic crosses referred to were placed there at a later date than the original markings.

Other evidences of Indians are found upon rocks on the various prairies and tablelands. On Dove Creek in the Knickerbocker sector, are found many holes cut in solid rock and ground to precision. Each hole is about large enough to hold a peck of grain or a couple of gallons of water. These were probably constructed for the purpose of grinding corn or for water containers. Ten or twelve miles southwest of

1J. M. Franks, Seventy Years in Texas, p. 52.

Knickerbocker near the head of Dove Creek are still to be seen some fifty or more of these rock-hewn basins.

Many of the hills in this region are solid rock and on the tops of some of them are found rocks which appear to have been heated. Some Indian graves have also been found. Twin Mountains, which lie about six or seven miles west of San Angelo, are also very noted landmarks. It is said they were used by the Indians as signal points.

At the time the first white men entered this region the most important Indian tribe which inhabited this Concho Country was the Jumano, a tribe whose origin is not definitely known.² It was probably a tribe related to the Wichitas and of Caddodochan stock. They seemed to have ranged from the Rio Grande to beyond the Red River. This tribe was first seen by Cabeza de Vaca in 1536 in the vicinity of the junction of the Conchos River of Mexico with the Rio Grande, a place known as La Junta, and not far from the present town of Presidio, Texas.³

Coronado encountered some of the Jumano tribes on the High Plains about 1541. Espejo in 1552 and Soso in 1590 were on the Pecos River, and it is possible that the Indians of the Concho region had heard of the Spaniards by that time,

²Frederick Webb Hodge, <u>A Handbook of American Indians</u>, I, 636.

³Herbert E. Bolton, "The Jumano Indians in Texas, 1650-1771," <u>The Texas State Historical Association Quarterly</u>, XV (July, 1911), 66.

although it is probable that none of them actually set foot in the region prior to the seventeenth century.

The first white men to visit the Concho Country seem to have been Roman Catholic priests from the Spanish settlements in New Mexico.

In 1629 and again in 1632, Father Juan de Salas visited the Indians on this stream and worked among them.⁴ According to Father Salas they were found on a river about two hundred leagues southwest of Santa Fe. This river was known as the Noeces (or Nueces) on whose banks there was found an abundance of nuts.⁵ This stream has been identified as the Concho branch of the Colorado River of Texas.⁶ It is therefore definitely known that by 1629 the Spaniards had made contact with the Jumano Indians established in the vicinity of the present city of San Angelo. It is possible that other Spaniards visited these tribes following the expeditions of Salas, but the details are not positively known.

In 1650 another expedition entered the Concho Country. This one was directed by Captains Hernando Martin and Diego de Castillo, who were endeavoring to explore the Nueces River

⁴Paul J. Foik (editor), <u>Our Catholic Heritage in Texas</u>, I, 203-204; Herbert E. Bolton, <u>Spanish Explorations in the</u> <u>Southwest</u>, p. 313; Hubert Howe Bancroft, <u>Works</u>, XV, 384.

⁵Foik, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., I, 203.

⁶Herbert E. Bolton, "Jumano Indians in Texas, 1650-1771," <u>The Texas State Historical Association Quarterly</u>, XV (July, 1911), 73.

(present Concho of Texas) and the surrounding country.⁷ Setting out from Santa Fe, they followed a different route from that of previous <u>entradas</u> for a distance of about six hundred miles and reached the "river of nuts" where the Jumanos lived. They remained in this vicinity for six months.⁸ They took from the river, later called the Concho, a quantity of shells, which after being burned, yielded pearls.⁹ These pearls were later found to be not of the finest variety, yet they were pearls and were sufficient to stimulate the viceroy to send other expeditions in their quest. The Jumanos were friendly and furnished the Spaniards with ample food.

The two captains traveled down the Concho to the east for a distance of 150 miles, inclining to the south through the lands of the Cuitaoes, Escanjaques, and Aijados, coming to the border of the Tejas.¹⁰

When Martin and Castillo arrived at Santa Fe, the pearls which they had found created a sensation. These pearls were sent to the viceroy, who was especially proud of them because the California pearls, just at this time, were proving a disappointment. He at once ordered another expedition to the

⁷Anna E. Hughes, <u>The Beginnings of Spanish Settlement in</u> the <u>El Paso District</u>, p. 298.

⁸H. E. Bolton, "Spanish Occupation of Texas," <u>The Texas</u> <u>State Historical Quarterly</u>, XV (July, 1912), 10; Foik, <u>op</u>.

⁹The Spanish word for shell is <u>concha</u> and is undoubtedly the origin of the word <u>Concho</u>.

¹⁰Bolton, "Spanish Occupation of Texas," The <u>Texas</u> <u>State Historical Quarterly</u>, XV (July, 1912), 10.

Nueces (Concho) River region. Nothing came of the pearl trade, however, as the jewels found were of little value, but trading in pecans and buffalo skins did develop.

The next expedition to the land of the Conchos was led by one Diego de Guadalajara in 1654. He began his march from Santa Fe with thirty soldiers and about two hundred friendly, Christian Indians. He followed about the same route as Martin and Castillo and arrived in the Concho Country without difficulty. He attempted to explore the country to the east of the Colorado, but he was halted by the warring Cuitaos, Escanjaques, and Aijados.¹¹

At least one other Spanish expedition to this region occurred in the latter part of the seventeenth century. It was that of Father Nicolas Lopez and Don Juan Dominguez Mendoza in 1684.¹²

Several expeditions had been sent in search of the Jumanos and the Tejas during the preceding fifty years. Due to constant requests of the Jumanos for a return of the missionaries, as well as a burning desire on the part of the Spanish Fathers to Christianize the Indians and to exploit

11Foik, II, op.cit., pp. 206-207; Bolton, "Spanish Occupation of Texas," Texas Historical Quarterly, XV (July, 1912), 10; Bancroft, Works, XV, 384.

¹²Foik, <u>op. cit.</u>, II, 312-330; Edward W. Huesinger, Early <u>Explorations and Mission Establishments in Texas</u>, p. 20; Bolton, "Spanish Occupation of Texas," <u>Texas State Historical</u> <u>Association Quarterly</u>, XVI(July, 1912), 10.

the wealth of the region, the governor of New Mexico consented to the request for the expedition.

Lopez and Mendoza went down the Mexico side of the Rio Grande from San Lorenzo in the region just below El Paso and crossed into Texas, having traveled some 250 miles. The route followed was roughly through what is now Presidio and Brewster Counties to where the present city of Alpine, Texas, is located, from there to about where Fort Stockton is, thence down the Middle Concho to the present site of San Angelo.¹³

Upon coming to the headwaters of what was likely the Middle Concho, Mendoza, who left a detailed account of the expedition, spoke of it as a river that gushed from a rock which was called the "Place of Dogs." This name, declared Mendoza, was very appropriate because dogs lived in the water here and were very vicious, often attacking and killing buffalo that came there to drink.¹⁴ It was here that Mendoza noted the first pecan trees. He found oak trees so large that cart wheels could be made from them. He noted many wild hens in this region and said they made much noise at dawn. He also noted clam shells (probably mussel shells) in

¹³Foik, <u>op. cit.</u>, II, 313-323. An excellent map may be found at the end of the volume showing route of expedition. ¹⁴These "dogs" may have been wolves. Bolton, <u>Spanish</u> <u>Explorations in the Southwest</u>, p. 334 note.

the Concho River as well as many buffaloes along its banks. 15

Mendoza followed the course of the Middle Concho until he reached a river which he called the San Pedro. This was very likely the Main Concho. He identified this stream as the one visited by Guadalajara on his expedition to the Concho River region in 1654.¹⁶ He had accompanied Guadalajara on his expedition to the Concho River region in that year. Mendoza went farther along the Concho until he came to its juncture with the Colorado, a larger river which he called the San Clemente.¹⁷ He found in this region many wild plums, and woods filled with game. Buffaloes were so numerous that it was impossible to count them. The chiefs of sixteen different tribes were with him by this time, and a great horde of Indians gathered around his camp.

Much attention was given to religious matters. Mass was celebrated every day and hundreds of Indians were baptized. A two-story building was constructed which was called "San Clemente." This undoubtedly was the first mission in the Concho Country and one of the very first ones in all Texas. A marker has recently been placed on the site of this mission in the extreme southeastern portion of Runnels County

¹⁵Foik, op. cit., II, 323.

¹⁶Edward W. Heusinger, <u>Early Explorations and Mission</u> <u>Establishments in Texas</u>, p. 16.

17 Foik, op. cit., II, 325; Bolton, Spanish Explorations in the Southwest, p. 317.

near the junction of the Concho and Colorado Rivers, some twenty miles from the city of Ballinger.18

Lopez and Mendoza remained in camp near "San Clemente" for six weeks and must have made a very favorable impression upon the Indians. "Father Lopez had a portable chapel with an organ, and Gregorian music and songs were chanted to the In all probability this was the first mechanical Indians." musical instrument ever to be used not only in the Concho Country but in all Texas. 19 One of the soldiers of the expedition was bitten by a poisonous snake, and "by the time four creeds could be said, poison had coursed through his body." One of the padres washed the wound with the essence of some herbs and administered other treatment. In a few days the patient was well. Mendoza reported that during his stay at this camp his soldiers killed 4,030 buffaloes, packing and curing the hides.²⁰ That was an average of one hundred per day and is probably an indication of both the number of Indians who had to be fed and the abundance of buffalces in the region.²¹

After remaining in camp at the junction of the Colorado and Concho for almost a month and a half, Mendoza decided

F. of	¹⁸ Texas Almanac, 1941-1942, p. 87; Pat M. Neff, Walter Woodul, and L. W. Kemp, <u>Monuments Erected</u> by the <u>State</u> <u>Texas</u> , p. 145.
	19 _{Amarillo Sunday News-Globe} , August 14, 1938, Sec. C, p. 26
	²⁰ Bolton, <u>Spanish Explorations in the Southwest</u> , p. 317.
	²¹ <u>Ibid</u> ., p. 339.

to return to New Mexico and report to the governor, but not before promising the natives that he would return and establish missions among them. Traveling toward the Rio Grande, he arrived on July 18, 1684, at San Lorenzo, going from there to the Presidio del Paso del Norte.

The enthusiasm of the Jumano Indians for Christianity was certainly due in part to the beautiful but fantastic legend about "The Woman in Blue." When the Indians requested that missionaries be sent to them, they declared that a woman dressed in blue had suggested that they do so. They declared that a young and beautiful woman had come down from the hills and had spoken to each tribe in its own language.22 More than half a century later the memory of the saintly visitor lingered in the mind of the Tejas chief who told Father Massanet how his people, too, had seen the "Lady in Blue." It was not until 1630 that the "Woman in Blue" story was fully explained. In that year Father Alsonso de Benavides visited Spain and told the story as related by the Jumanos. He went to the town of Agreda on the border of Aragon and Castile and there met Mother Maria de Jesus, who declared she had been with the Indians and knew many of them by name. She claimed the Lord took her on one occasion, while praying for the welfare of these souls, and while she was in "ecstatic contemplation," placed her among the Indians of what is now

²²Foik, op. cit., I, 196.

Southwestern United States. From 1621 to 1631 she is said to have visited these Indians as many as five hundred times. The Venerable Mother de Jesus was born on April 2, 1602, in the small but ancient Villa de Agreda, in old Castile. She was one of eleven children, of whom only four attained maturity. She was baptized in the famous church of Santa Maria de Magana, on April 11, 1602. At the age of twelve she informed her parents of her desire to enter a convent where she was trained for a life of religious service.

Since the Jumanos lived in the Concho region, we can see, in our imagination, this fantastic "Lady in Blue" as she walked the hills and valleys of Concholand, teaching and guiding the Jumanos.

After Mendoza returned to El Paso from San Clemente in 1684, he busied himself with plans for the establishment of a permanent mission among the Jumano Indians of the Concho region, but there is no evidence that he succeeded. In fact, it is not at all clear what took place in the Concho Country for the next century and a half. Records are extremely meager until the end of the Spanish regime. It is fairly certain that traders, missionaries, hunters, and explorers entered the region from time to time, but few details are positively known.

The most important changes that took place concerned the Indians who occupied the area. Mendoza reported that

in 1684 hostile Apache Indians stole some horses from the Jumanos and occasionally engaged them in battle.23

It seems that the Apaches, that is, the Lipan Apaches or Texas Apaches, began pressing down into Texas from the North and Northwest about this time. They were being pushed on by the Comanches, a powerful mountain tribe of Shoshone stock.²⁴ The Apaches, stronger than the Jumanos, but weaker than the Comanches, were compelled to encroach upon the one while yielding to the other. Some thirty years later, that is, by 1716, the Jumanos and the Lipan Apaches had become allies against their common and stronger foes, the Comanches.²⁵

In 1723 near Wichita Falls, or more exactly near Henrietta, Clay County, there occurred a terrible and decisive nine-day battle between the Apaches and their allies and the Comanches. The Apaches were defeated and were compelled to yield ground from the Rio Grande to the Gulf, and among other regions, the Apaches occupied the Concho Country. By 1733 the remnants of the Jumanos were called Apaches Jumanes and soon after that the name virtually disappeared.²⁶ There seems to be little doubt that by 1750 the Apaches had absorbed the Jumanos and occupied their lands on the Pecos, upper Guadalupe, San Saba, Concho, and Colorado Rivers.

²³Bolton, Spanish Explorations in the Southwest, p. 335.
²⁴Hodge, op. cit., I, 327.

²⁵Bolton, "The Jumano Indians of Texas," <u>Texas State His-</u> torical Association Quarterly, XV (July, 1911), 71-81.

²⁶<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 82.

For the first forty years after the establishment of San Antonio the Apaches harassed the Spanish settlers in Central and South Texas, although the Spaniards continued to hope for peace with them in order to Christianize them. About 1750 the Apaches, hard pressed by the Comanches, made peace with the Spanish, not influenced so much by the promise of Christianity as by the hope of military assistance against the Comanches.²⁷

In 1757 a last attempt was made by the Spanish to gather the Indians together for the purpose of Christianizing them.²⁸ In this year the San Saba mission was established.²⁹ It was constructed on the San Saba River not far from the present city of Menard, and near the southern border of the Concho Country. On the other side of the river and only a mile from the mission, the Spaniards built the presidio, San Luis de las Amarillas. The Spaniards wanted the soldiers to be far enough from the mission so as not to interfere with the work of the Fathers, and yet be near enough to afford military protection if it were needed.³⁰ Besides their interest in Christianity and in its establishment among the Indians,

²⁷Bolton, "Missionary Activities Among the Eastern Apaches," <u>Texas State Historical Association Quarterly</u>, XV (January, 1912), 186-188.

²⁸William Edward Dunn, "The Apache Mission on the San Saba," <u>ibid.</u>, XVII (April, 1914), 379-414.

²⁹Fray Juan Augustin Morfi, <u>History of Texas</u>, <u>1673-1779</u>, II, 371.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 371-373.

the Spaniards were also interested in strengthening their frontier line from eastern Texas to New Mexico and thereby guarding the northern provinces against French attacks and encroachments. The Apaches were overjoyed and promised to gather at the mission for religious instruction, but they had asked to have a "workless" mission established. Despite their early eagerness, the Indians soon became disinterested. To add to the discouragement of the leaders, the powerful Comanches from the north, in March, 1858, attacked the mis-The Indians at first made friendly gestures. sion. The priests immediately brought out a supply of tobacco and other articles which they began to distribute among the throng. The bars were let down and the Comanches were let into the mission proper. They soon began to steal and destroy. The Comanches set fire to the stockade, to the one already searched, and to the one occupied and besieged. Captain Parilla sent nine men from the presidio to aid the attacked mission, but two were killed before they reached the place. The mission was destroyed and many of the inhabitants were slaughtered, including some of the Fathers. 31

The presidio was abandoned in 1772, and this was undoubtedly the last attempt of the Spanish to have dealings with the Indians in or near the Concho region. The Comanches were strong and the Apaches yielded, but not before many a

³¹<u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 377-385; Dunn, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 403-409.

skirmish between them as the two tribes met in the course of expeditions seeking buffaloes, mesquite beans, pecans, and prickly pears.

In 1794 the Catholic missions in Texas were ordered secularized, and by 1795 all their Texas missions were abandoned, partly because they were not successful and partly because financially they were not able even to be partly selfsupporting. No more missions were established and the Concho Country along with other regions was neglected until the Anglo-Americans became interested in West Texas some fifty or sixty years later.

The Concho Country had been known to the Spanish some three hundred years by the time Texas became a republic in 1836. Numerous expeditions had passed near or through the region and temporary missions and presidios had been established there, but no permanent settlements were made. The Jumano Indians of the 1600's had been rather friendly and had welcomed the missionaries, but by 1750 the Apaches, less friendly, and less interested in the church, had absorbed the Jumanos, and were in turn forced to yield the land to the more powerful and ferocious Comanches. By the time the Anglo-Americans became interested in the region around San Angelo, the Apaches had moved farther on to the Southwest, and nothing remained of three centuries of Spanish influence but a few place names and some shadowy legends.

CHAPTER II

STRUGGLE WITH THE INDIANS FOR POSSESSION OF THE COUNTRY

It was several years after the Spaniards abandoned West Texas before the Anglo-Americans occupied it. The whole country from the Cross Timbers of Texas to the Rocky Mountains and from the Arkansas River to the Rio Grande was occupied by the Comanches and their allied tribes, of which the Kiowas were the most important.¹ The Apaches were in the Trans-Pecos region of Texas and west of El Paso, but gave very little trouble in the Concho region.

The Comanches were particularly troublesome, however, and met the Anglo-Americans on more equal terms than earlier tribes had. They had access to wild horses and buffaloes and were good horsemen.² Before the end of the struggle they had learned to use firearms and turned them with deadly effect upon the white settlers.

The number of Comanches was probably never as large as the settlers believed. At the height of Comanche power there

¹C. C. Rister, <u>Border Captives</u>, p. 3. 2<u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 12-13. were probably not over 8,000 warriors not over 48,000 including men, women, and children.³

Since the Comanches ranged over an area much larger than the Conche Country alone, the story of the elimination of them in the Conche region must include some battles, campaigns, and treaties that occurred in places other than in the Conche Country itself, for many of these battles and treaties were, to a large extent, responsible for the final extinction of the Red Men in this particular area.

One of the earliest conflicts between the Anglo-Americans and the Comanches in the South Plains area was just below the southern border of the Concho region. In 1831 James Bowie. a frontier man and Indian fighter, and about a dozen companions left San Antonio for the San Saba silver mines on the nineteenth of November. They were overtaken by two Comanche Indians and a Mexican who had followed them for some distance. After talking for about an hour with Bowie's men, who presented them gifts, the Indians returned to their party who were waiting at the Llano River. The Indians claimed to be on their way to San Antonio with some stolen horses which they were returning to their owners. They later proved to be scouts of the Comanche Indians who were planning an attack on the Bowie men. Bowie's men continued their journey the next day. Nothing occurred that day or night, but the

³Ibid., p. 11; Leroy R. Hafen and C. C. Rister, Western Americans, p. 299.

next morning they looked down the trail and saw the Comanches coming toward them. There were 164 Indians against eleven Texans.⁴

The Indians surrounded them but later retired to a hill about two hundred yards away while the Texans gathered in a thicket near by. The firing began. The Indians could not see the white men too clearly, but they would "put twenty balls within a space the size of a pocket handkerchief, where they had seen the smoke." Not being able, however, to dislodge the Bowie group from the thicket, they set fire to it. Under cover of the smoke they were able to carry off most of their dead as they fell. The Texans were able to keep the flames from reaching their immediate camp by piling rocks high and wide around it. The fight continued for some time (perhaps twenty-four hours), when the Indians retreated, leaving forty killed and thirty wounded. It was afterwards learned that the Indians had eighty killed and wounded. The Texas men had one man killed and three wounded.5

Although the Indians seemingly were defeated by the white men in the battle just mentioned, it was a well known fact that they were far from being driven from Texas soil.

On January 9, 1840, three of the Comanche chiefs rode into San Antonio and asked for a peace council. They promised to bring in their prisoners, if the white people would do

⁴L. E. Daniell, <u>Texas</u>, <u>the Country and Its Men</u>, pp. 11-18. ⁵<u>Ibid</u>., p. 17.

The Indians were told that there could be no peace likewise. until the last white prisoner had been returned. It was agreed that both sides would exchange prisoners, and on March 19 the Comanches came to San Antonio, but brought only one prisoner, Matilda Lockhart.⁶ The meeting was held in a building which later came to be known as the Council House. Matilda Lockhart told the members of the council that the Indians had planned to bring only one prisoner at a time so they might get a better price. The Indians denied having any more pris-The white councilmen knew better than this and asked oners. the soldiers, who had been placed around the room, to bar the door at once. The Indians were informed that they were prisoners and were to be held until all white prisoners were One Indian made a dash for the door and was stabbed returned. by the doorkeeper. The others drew knives and bows and began The fight raged in both the house and yard, and to fight. thirty-five Indians, two children, and three women were killed in the struggle. Twenty-seven Indians were taken captive. The Texans lost seven killed and eight wounded. From this time forward for nearly forty years the Comanches observed no peace with the white settlers of Texas.

After the Comanches were slaughtered at the Council House

⁶Rupert Norval Richardson, <u>The Comanche Barrier to South</u> <u>Plains Settlement</u>, pp. 108-112; <u>Rister, op. cit., p. 87;</u> <u>W. P. Webb, <u>The Texas Rangers</u>, pp. 55-56; J. W. Wilbarger, <u>Indian Depredations in Texas</u>, pp. 22-25; James T. DeShields, <u>Border Wars of Texas</u>, p. 311.</u>

in San Antonio, they retreated far out on the plains of Texas to plan a revenge. Several months went by; there was a lull and the settlers thought perhaps the Indians had been punished so severely that they were through with the white people; but by August of 1840 those who entertained such ideas were disappointed. In this month a group of Comanches set out for the seacoast. They were determined to impress upon the white settlers of the area that they were in Texas to stay and intended to drive every pale face from the prov-The Comanches were first heard of between Columbus ince. and Gonzales. At Victoria they killed thirteen people. The Comanches struck Linnville, a small port town, on Saturday, August 8. They were discovered about two miles from town and were at first thought to be Mexicans. Upon discovering that they were hostile Indians, the citizens of the town, not possessing any means of defense, retired to the bay. The Indians remained in town until after dark and burned nearly all the houses. They drove off all the horses they could find, and burned a large number of cattle. They killed three white men and carried off a white woman, a negro woman, and her child. They withdrew from the town about nightfall, leaving it in ashes.⁷ This attack impressed the settlers with the necessity of making preparations for a continued war with the Comanches. It also made them more determined than

⁷Webb, <u>op</u>. <u>cit.</u>, pp. 57-59; Daniell, <u>op</u>. <u>cit.</u>, pp. 51-52; Richardson, <u>op</u>. <u>cit.</u>, p. 113.

ever that the Indians must be completely vanquished and forced to leave Texas.

The Indians retreated from Linnville to Flum Creek with a force of about a thousand. There they engaged a force of approximately two hundred under Bird, Ward, and Burleson. When their Indian chief was killed, they carried him back to the brush and immediately began to cry and wail. The Indians broke into parties and ran. The white men pursued them far down the trail and killed them in groups of ten or twelve. The Indians lost 138 men.⁸ The battle of Plum Creek was a very decisive blow to the Indians, and they never attempted again to send an expedition into the settlements of this area; neither did they ever attempt to destroy an entire town as they had attempted to do at Linnville.

The people of Texas felt that the battle of Plum Creek had not been sufficient punishment for the Indians and they determined to follow up the victory by sending an expedition into their own country. Colonel John H. Moore led an expedition through the Concho Country to the present Colorado City region. One of Moore's men, Garrett Harrell, was buried on the Concho River on October 16, 1840. From the Concho the expedition turned toward the Colorado, striking it at a spot where the soil was very fertile. Here Moore found a trail and followed it up the Red Fork of the Colorado. On Friday,

⁸Daniell, <u>op</u>. <u>cit.</u>, pp. 52-57; Webb, <u>op</u>. <u>cit.</u>, pp. 60-62; Richardson, <u>op</u>. <u>cit.</u>, p. 114; John Henry Brown, <u>Indian</u> <u>Wars and Pioneers of Texas</u>, pp. 79-82.

October 23, he found that the Indians had been cutting pecan trees to secure the nuts and the signs showed that they were Moore sent his spies to find the Indians. near. They came back and reported the presence of sixty families and about 125 warriors. Moore attacked the Indians in their camp and killed 130, taking four squaws as captives.⁹ He brought back five hundred horses and recovered some goods stolen at Linn-This was undoubtedly the severest defeat the Indians ville. had received in Texas up until this time. The fact that Moore had to march three hundred miles to attack the Comanches is proof that the Texans were getting more and more determined to exterminate the Red Men.

Another very severe fight took place near the present city of Paint Rock in 1846 between forty Rangers led by Captain Jack Hays, a Texas Ranger and Indian fighter, and about six hundred Comanche Indians. At the first fire a number of warriors tumbled to the ground. This caused the Indians to fall back, but after a short delay the line was formed again and the Indians charged. They fought with extreme courage and remained on the battle field until night, but neither side was successful. The battle opened early next morning and continued until nightfall again. The Indians were led by a brave war chief who carried a long shield to protect his body.

⁹Richardson, <u>op</u>. <u>cit.</u>, pp. 114-115; Webb, <u>op</u>. <u>cit.</u>, pp. 44-46; DeShields, <u>op</u>. <u>cit.</u>, pp. 332-337; Brown, <u>op</u>. <u>cit.</u>, p. 83; Wilbarger, <u>op</u>. <u>cit.</u>, pp. 43-47.

He was looking backward to urge on his followers and moved his shield too far to one side. Captain Hays instantly sent a bullet through his body and killed him. Soon after unsuccessfully attempting to rescue the body of their chief, the Indians turned and retreated in a northern direction, giving up the battle. This was the last engagement Jack Hays had with the Indians in Texas, but it was not the last encounter with the Red Men in the Concho Country. 10

About March, 1847, a ray of hope for more peaceful relations with the warring Comanches gleamed upon a region long clouded with Indian atrocities. On March 1 and 2, John Meusebach, one of the leaders of the German colonization movement in Southwest Texas, entered into a treaty with the Comanches in which twenty chiefs participated.¹¹ Meusebach was interested in securing a greater degree of safety for his German colonists in the area. It was agreed that Meusebach's settlers were to have the right to go and come when they pleased and that the Indians (Comanches) were to be protected when they went into the white man's cities and communities. Meusebach agreed to send surveyors into the country so that the settlers might know where to go and till the soil as well as to settle. He also agreed to give the squaws presents, or white pieces of metal called "dollars."

¹⁰J. M. Franks, <u>Seventy Years in Texas</u>, pp. 43-47.
¹¹Rudolph Leopold Biesele, <u>The History of the German</u>
<u>Settlements in Texas</u>, pp. 186-187.

The Meusebach Treaty was an important accomplishment, for both the settlers and the state of Texas, for it was then that the early German grants became of real value to the colonists. Without the treaty, it would have been dangerous for either surveyors or settlers to go into the grant. The treaty was kept by the Indians with the Germans and was an important factor in the successful settlement of the Concho Country.

The Concho Country was still not free from the Indian. There was a camp established on the south side of the North Concho River as a safeguard against the Indians. This camp was known as Camp Johnston, and remained there from March 15, 1852, until November 18 of the same year. The garrison numbered 168 men.¹²

The struggle with the Indians was continued in the summer of 1858 when L. S. Ross and Major Earl Van Dorn completely routed a group of Comanches at the battle of Wichita Mountains in the present state of Oklahoma.¹³ Fifty-six Indian warriors were captured, and all their lodges were burned as well as three hundred horses captured.

At the head of Pease River in 1860 another severe blow was dealt the blood-thirsty Comanches when L. S. Ross again

¹²Arrie Barrett, "Western Frontier Forts," <u>West Texas</u> <u>Historical Association Year Book</u>, 1931, p. 130.

¹³Daniell, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 115-116; Webb, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 159-161; Rister, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 113; DeShields, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 181-186; Brown, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 39-43.

attacked the Indians, killing Peta Nacona, the last of the great chiefs of the Comanches, and restoring to civilization Cynthia Ann Parker, who had been captured at Parker's Fort in 1836.¹⁴ With the Van Dorn and Ross victories came the end of the relentless war on the Comanches in the North. The Comanches had been followed beyond the limits of Texas and defeated first by Ford's Rangers on the Canadian River, and again by Van Dorn's regulars.¹⁵

About 1858 an effort was made to place the Indians on reservations. On May 5 of that year a Comanche Indian reservation was established about twenty miles from the present town of Albany, being located about two and one-half miles from Old Camp Cooper. The plan was to confine the Indians to a smaller area and give them instruction by paid agents or teachers. But a mistake was made when the Interior Department planned to place one thousand Indians on a little more than 18,000 acres of land. The Bureau of Indian Affairs and the military authorities evidently did not cooperate, for military officers often instructed the soldiers to kill any and all Indians not found on the reservation. The result was stampede and confusion. The settlers in the neighboring communities continued to be antagonistic and exhibited no little degree of hatred toward the Indians. They

¹⁴Daniell, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 30; Edgar Rye, <u>The Quirt and</u> <u>the Spur</u>, pp. 316-317.

15Webb, op. cit., p. 161.

seemed to believe with President Lamar that "the only good Indians were dead Indians."

This attempt of Texas to quiet the Comanches was a failure. Life on the reservation proved too tame and many of the Indians ran away, especially those who were young and full of energy.¹⁶ It was necessary to remove the few who were left to the United States Indian Reservation in the Indian Territory. This was done in 1859, and Texas claimed that no Indians were legally on Texas soil.

The Civil War ushered in a period of chaos on the western frontier. When the war came on, Federal troops were withdrawn from the forts. As a result, the Indians began murdering, stealing, and burning in their characteristic manner. Prior to the war two thousand Federal troops had been stationed at fifteen border posts in the state, but the Indians were not long in finding out that the troops were away and began to act accordingly.¹⁷ It was not an infrequent experience to have the savages creep into the ranch headquarters at night and steal, murder, scalp, and burn to the utter horror and dismay of the settlers. By the time the Civil War was over the citizens of West Texas had become so aggravated that it was not difficult to anger them, on a moment's notice, to fight the Indian whether he had committed an immediate injustice or not.

¹⁶Webb, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 161-172; Richardson, "The Comanche Reservation in Texas," <u>West Texas Historical Association Year</u> <u>Book</u>, 1929, pp. 43-63.

¹⁷Rister, op. <u>cit</u>., pp. 115-117.

Just such a condition existed along the Texas frontier in 1865. It seems that a friendly band of Kickapoo Indians were peacefully passing through the country on their way to Mexico. It is thought that there were about four hundred warriors and their families, who had decided that they had seen enough of the Civil War in Kansas and now wanted to join other bands of Kickapoos in Old Mexico.18

At the head of Dove Creek, which is some thirty miles from San Angelo, there occurred on February 8, 1865, one of the most outstanding Indian fights that ever took place in the Concho region. The state militia or Rangers of Parker, Erath, Palo Pinto, Brown, and other Central Texas Counties under the command of Captains Totten and Fossett, trailed these Indians from the Colorado to the North Concho River, thence down it and across the plain to the head of Dove Creek.

On the first attack Fossett captured between six hundred and a thousand horses, but in this first engagement the Texans lost several men and later were forced to retreat.19 The battle lasted until the middle of the afternoon and resulted in the loss of some twenty-five men for the Rangers and sixty or more injured. It was never known exactly how many Indians were killed, but their losses were supposed to be very heavy -- far heavier than the losses of the Totten forces.

18Joseph Carroll McConnell, <u>The West Texas Frontier</u>, II, p. 134; William Wilson Straley, <u>Pioneer Sketches</u>, pp. 25-36; J. M. Franks, <u>Seventy Years in Texas</u>, p. 32.

19Floyd H. Holmes, Indian Fights on the Texas Frontier, pp. 41-47.

On the morning after the battle it was snowing so heavily that a man could not be seen twenty steps away. The men were put to trimming pecan poles to make litters for the wounded. They placed the ends of these poles in the stirrup leathers and netted rope across them so that blankets could be laid across the poles and the wounded placed on them. 20 Several died on the retreat to Camp Colorado, which was located on the Colorado River a short distance from the present town of Ballinger. The camp was reached a few days later by a band of ragged, weather-beaten soldiers. This battle caused the Kickapoos to assume a revengeful spirit, and for many years afterward their retaliatory raids upon white settlers of West Texas was, no doubt, the result of this conflict.²¹ The Kickapoos went on to Old Mexico and formed a base in the Santa Rosa Mountains. From here they conducted their raids into the Concho Country and North Central Texas.

As a result of these Indian depredations, it was quite evident that something must be done if the western frontier was ever to be successfully settled and the citizens protected from these marauding Red Men. Consequently the United States undertook to establish a chain of forts at intervals throughout the western country, which would guard the inhabitants already there and at the same time induce others to come. A chain of forts running from the Big Bend region through the

21<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 74.

^{201.} D. Ferguson, "The Battle of Dove Creek," West Texas Historical Association Year Book, 1934, pp. 75-87.

Concho area to Northeast Texas included Fort Davis (1854), Fort Stockton (1858), Fort Concho (1868), Fort Chadbourne (1852), and Fort Griffin (1867). Another line of forts ran from the Rio Grande through the Mason region to Fort Worth. These included Fort Duncan on the Rio Grande. This fort was established in 1849, but was abandoned in 1861 to be reoccupied in 1868. Fort Clark was established in 1852, and Fort McKavett in 1852.²²

Of the numerous forts along the Texas frontier, three were of great importance to the Concho area -- Fort Chadbourne, Fort Concho, and Fort McKavett. Fort Concho in the very heart of the region was linked to the northeast with Fort Chadbourne and to the southeast with Fort McKavett, each of which helped guard a portion of the Concho Country, although Fort McKavett is slightly south of the real Concho basin.

Fort McKavett was located on the south bank of the San Saba River. The Eighth Infantry first occupied the fort and it was named for Lieutenant Henry McKavett, who fought at the battle of Monterrey, Mexico, and was killed in the battle. The hospital was completed by the summer of 1852 and by winter five or six buildings were ready. Quite a number of soldiers were sick during the winter of 1853, and five deaths were recorded. The troops remained at Fort McKavett from

²²Joseph H. and James R. Toulouse, <u>Pioneer Posts of</u> <u>Texas</u>, pp. 33-115; <u>West Texas Historical Association Year</u> <u>Book</u>, 1925, p. 24.

the time of its establishment until its abandonment in February, 1859.²³

Fort Chadbourne, one of the earliest of the forts in Western Texas, stood near the northeastern side of the Concho region. The fort was located on a small stream in what is now Coke County. The stream was called Oak Creek and empties into the Colorado River. The Indians, it is said, held a peace conference here with the white settlers in 1854.²⁴ Troops occupied the post continuously from the time of its establishment until about the last of December, 1859. Conditions around Fort Chadbourne were generally quiet; Captain Calhoun was in charge of the garrison with about fifty men. Many of the men were in bad health and would not have been of great service had they been called to do military duty.

Fort Concho was built at the junction of the North and Main Concho Rivers. It was built of stone and hence was more durable than the other posts to the north. The fort was erected in 1867 at an estimated cost of \$2,000,000.²⁵ It was November 12, 1867, that a board of directors of officers of the United States Army selected the site. The place was first called Camp Hatch, after its commander. The name was later changed to Camp Kelly and finally in March, 1868, it

²³Arrie Barrett, "Western Frontier Forts of Texas," <u>West</u> <u>Texas Historical Association Year Book</u>, 1931, p. 24.

²⁴McConnell, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., I, 76.

²⁵San Angelo Standard, May 3, 1934, Sec. 16, p.16.

was again changed to Fort Concho, being named for the river upon which it was located. The post was located about three hundred miles southwest of Denison, Texas, and about one hundred miles northwest of Fort Mason.²⁶ On March 1, 1870, there were some eight or ten buildings completed. Among them were a commissary and quartermaster store, hospital, five officers' quarters, a magazine, and two barracks.27 The fort's nearest neighbor was a mail station three miles away (Ben Ficklin). The nearest actual residence was eighteen miles away. Getting supplies to the fort constituted one of the chief difficulties, for there was no means of transportation other than wagon. Indianola was five hundred miles distant and San Antonio, 230 miles away. When it rained, a great deal of transportation between these points was impossible.²⁸

First-hand information in regard to conditions in this lonely outpost may be had by examining a letter written by a Mr. Runge, a carpenter employed by the army, to his family in the Kerrville area. On January 2, 1868, he wrote:

We are in a neighborhood where there are plenty of buffalo and we are living on buffalo meat and bread made of good quality flour. My tentmate and I have built a fireplace in our tent and we keep warm. On the coldest of days our saw mill does not function because of ice, and we do not have to work and can

²⁶Rister, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 58.
²⁷Toulouse and Toulouse, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 49.
²⁸<u>Ibid</u>., p. 54.

keep warm. I am afraid the timber has cost the government fifteen cents per foot, and unless we get more timber from some other source we will be here four or five years building this fort.²⁹

Several celebrated American officers were stationed at this fort. General Shafter, who was a commander in the Spanish-American War, spent some time here as well as General Mackenzie, the famous Indian warrior.

Among the relics of the old fort found today in the West Texas Museum, which is located in one of the officers; quarters, is an old cannon ball shot from the fort (supposedly) and found buried in North San Angelo under eighteen inches of soil. There is also an old chair which was used by Dr. Smith, the fort surgeon. Another relic is the old and faithful sun dial, which has been re-established in front of the museum and stands telling the time to the modern tourist as it did to the soldiers of yesterday.³⁰

Fort Concho was abandoned June 20, 1889. It had rendered a splendid service to western pioneers for over twenty years, and the citizens of San Angelo brushed away an occasional tear when the entire garrison, followed by a long wagon train, paraded through the streets for the last time as the band played "The Girl I Left Behind Me."³¹

By 1868 the Indians of the western frontier were showing some signs of relenting, although there were many scattered

²⁹<u>San Angelo Standard</u>, May 3, 1934, Sec. 4, p. 10. ³⁰<u>Ibid</u>., p. 16. ³¹<u>Ibid</u>.

attacks over Texas for some time to come. On August 21, 1868, eight persons were killed and three hundred head of stock captured on the frontier. On May 17 of the same year they attacked a train near Red River, Texas, and killed seven persons. February 9, 1872, Indians on the North Concho River attacked a detachment of soldiers and again on March 27 Fort Concho troops were attacked and two Indians were killed and nineteen horses were captured. In 1873 a detachment of the Fourth Cavalry attacked a group of Indians at Kickapoo Springs, killing nine and capturing eighty-one stolen horses. Probably the most colorful fight in which the Indians tried to drive the white men from their hunting grounds occurred in 1874 in the Panhandle of Texas. A group of buffalo hunters had been encroaching on the Comanche territory and a group of fierce Comanche Indians attacked them at an old fort known as Adobe Walls.³² The hunters were armed with efficient rifles and were well protected by the thick walls, but the Indians nevertheless attacked them again and The Red Men were at last repulsed with a great loss again. of numbers. This battle, although it occurred outside the Concho area, had a direct bearing on the dispersal of the Indians from the Concho Country. This battle touched off a concerted drive by United States troops against the Comanches in 1874-1875 that completely broke their power. General Ranald S. McKenzie operating from Fort Concho participated in

³²Rister, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 105.

this final campaign against the Comanches in the Texas Panhandle. Other minor skirmishes continued for some time. In 1878 a Mr. Doty of near Brady City was killed in a fight with the Indians, and on June 30, 1879, a man named Anglin was killed by the Red Men near the headwaters of the North Concho River.³³ This seems to have been the last white man killed by the savages in the Concho area.

By the treaty of Medicine Lodge in 1867 the Comanches and Kiowas were placed on the Wichita Reservation, and the Cheyennes and Arapahoes on another reservation north of them.³⁴ Thus by 1876 the power of the Comanches was completely broken, and except for a few minor raids peace came to the Concho Country and to West Texas.

³⁴Rister, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., pp. 105-106.

³³"Records of Engagements with Hostile Indians in Texas, 1863 to 1882," West Texas Historical Association Year Book, 1933, pp. 101-118.

CHAPTER III

COMING OF THE ANGLO-AMERICANS

There were very few permanent settlers in the Concho region before 1870, but a definite beginning had been made. It is not definitely known just who were the first Anglo-Americans to enter this region, or when they entered. It is certain that traders and hunters visited the region for many years before the first permanent settlements were made, and it is probable that some prospecting for minerals was done in the hills of the Edwards Plateau. At any rate, rumors were circulated from time to time about silver mines in the San Saba region.

The Congress of the United States passed a law effective on July 1, 1820, reducing the minimum quantity of public land that could be bought to eighty acres at a price of \$1.25 per acre.¹ This had to be paid in cash. This cash land policy together with the panic of 1819 created dissatisfaction and discouragement among the settlers of the East who desired to go West to make their permanent homes. As a result of this

-Eugene	C. Barker,	"Notes on	the Colonization	of Morroe II
Southwestern	Historical	Quarterly,	XXVII (October.	1923) 109

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general unrest the stage was set for migration to Texas and hence to the Concho Country.

Just at this time the Mexican Government was making very liberal land grants to encourage immigration to Texas. Large tracts of land were granted to agents or empresarios who contracted to bring in a number of families to settle on the land. Among the early empresarios were such men as Stephen F. Austin, Green DeWitt, Hayden Edwards, Dr. John Lucius Woodbury, Dr. J. C. Beales, John Cameron, and the partners, Henry Fisher and Buchard Miller. The first three of these contractors do not primarily concern the history of the Concho region, but the last five do, because they had grants which included or touched upon the Concho area.

On November 14, 1826, Dr. Woodbury was authorized to introduce two hundred families into a region known as Woodbury's Grant. This land included about all of the Concho region.² It seems that Woodbury never fulfilled the obligations of the contract, and allowed it to lapse.³ John Cameron, a native of Scotland, but an inhabitant of Coahuila and Texas, received a grant of land on May 21, 1827, for the settling of one hundred families.⁴ This grant was directly north of the Woodbury Grant and touched only the northern edge of the Concho region. Cameron is said to have settled

³<u>Ibid., p. 19</u>

⁴Ibid.

²Mary Virginia Henderson, "Minor Contracts for the Colonization of Texas," <u>Southwestern Historical Quarterly</u>, XXXII (July, 1922), 18.

one hundred families and was entitled to premium lands for this accomplishment, but records do not seem to show that he received any premium lands.

In 1832 Dr. J. C. Beales of New York secured two contracts for the settling of families in Texas.⁵ Beales failed in his undertaking, although a few families were settled. Beales' territory included practically the same land as the Woodbury Grant and consequently included most of the Concho region. All unfulfilled provisions of the grants that had been made by the Mexican and Spanish governments before the Texas Revolution ceased legally on March 2, 1836, upon the adoption of the Texas Declaration of Independence. For all practical purposes these provisions became void on November 13, 1835, upon the adoption of a resolution by the Consultation to close all land offices.⁶

On February 5, 1842, a law was passed in the Congress of the Republic of Texas providing that the President be authorized to contract with responsible parties who would promote immigration enterprises. As a result, President Houston, on June 7, 1842, made a grant to Henry F. Fisher and Buchard Miller to establish a colony along the Llano, San Saba, Concho, and Colorado Rivers.⁷ This grant began at

⁵R. L. Biesele, <u>The History of the German Settlements in</u> <u>Texas</u>, pp. 27-28; J. C. McConnell, <u>The West Texas Frontier</u>, <u>1, 32</u>.

⁶L. E. Daniell, <u>Texas</u>, <u>the Country and Its Men</u>, p. 61. ⁷Biesele, <u>op</u>. <u>cit.</u>, p. 76.

the mouth of the Llano River and followed upstream to the source of its south fork. From there it extended due south fifty miles and thence west to the Colorado River. From this point it followed the meandering of the Colorado River back to the mouth of the Llano. The area included approximately 3,800,000 acres.⁸

Fisher and Miller agreed to settle six hundred families or single men over seventeen years of age on this grant within three years from the date the contract was made. It was their plan to induce European people, Germans in particular, to settle on this grant. After making initial preparations, Fisher went to Germany to collect his colonists. On June 24, 1844, a contract was made between Fisher, on behalf of Fisher and Miller, and Count Castell, a prominent promoter of German migrations to America. By the terms of the grant Fisher and Miller assigned two thirds of their interest in the Texas grant to the Count, who agreed to assume the responsibilities of the enterprise.⁹ "With the buying of that grant the doom of the company was sealed. They undertook to fulfill what was impossible to fulfill."10 This region seemed to be infested with hostile Indians and was located more than three hundred miles from the coast. The time allowed for the importation of one third of the families intended to be introduced was

⁸McConnell, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., I, 34-35. ⁹<u>Ibid</u>., p. 35. ¹⁰Daniell, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 422.

only eighteen months, and over half of this time had elapsed when the contract was made with Fisher and Miller.¹¹

From 1844 to 1848 the German Immigration Company introduced a large number of immigrants into the Gillespie region and the surrounding country, but due to the Indians and many other hardships of the frontier life, the company was not able to push its work as far into the north and west as it wished. It would be decidedly unfair to the leader of this company, as well as to its immigrants, to say that this German company played an insignificant role in the "trail-blazing episodes" of the Concho Country. Many German families entered the Concho region from the German communities of South and Southwestern Texas, and many of their descendants are found today in the Rowena section of Runnels County as well as on the Lipan Flat of Tom Green County. Many of the early settlers of San Angelo were of German descent, and they took a leading part in the early enterprises of the city. The famous Nimitz Hotel, a leading hostelry of the city in early days, was founded by one of these Germans who migrated from the Southwest Texas area.

Not many families were actually introduced into the Concho region as a direct result of the colonization plans of the Mexican Government and of the Republic of Texas. Constantly increasing numbers of people, however, were crossing the region for one reason or the other. The Concho

¹¹<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 423.

streams, North, Middle, South, and Main, furnish water throughout the year. These rivers, therefore, determined the routes of many immigrant and cattle trails leading to the West. The hills of the Edwards Plateau to the south rendered that section difficult to traverse, and the trails were routed north of the hills and through the Concho Country.

On March 3, 1857, the United States Congress passed an act which provided for the establishment of a stage line and mail route which was to connect the Mississippi region around Saint Louis with San Francisco. One John Butterfield was the low bidder on the contract offered by the Post Office Department. The contract was signed September 16, 1857. Butterfield agreed to carry the mail twice per week for the sum of \$595,000.12 Texas stations comprised the fifth and sixth divisions of this route which passed through North Texas via Fort Belknap and Fort Chadburne. From there it headed for the North Concho River, crossing it about fourteen miles above the present city of San Angelo, where a historical marker now designates the spot. From there the trail followed the Middle Concho to near its head and then went across the barren plains to the Pecos and on west to El Paso and Los Angeles.

The Butterfield line was "equipped with Concord spring wagons which could carry four passengers, their baggage, and

¹²McConnell, op. cit., I, 103; Rister, <u>The</u> Southwestern Frontier, p. 44.

five or six hundred pounds of mail."¹³ The team usually consisted of four horses or mules, according to the difficulty of the road, and was driven on an average run of ten or fifteen miles before changing.¹⁴ "More letters were carried by the Butterfield route by 1860 than by ocean steamer."¹⁵

In 1849 the citizens of Austin cooperated with the Federal government in establishing direct trade relations with El Paso. They sent Major Robert S. Neighbors and Dr. John S. Ford on an exploring expedition, in order to examine the country and determine the best route for the moving of troops, as well as goods, from Austin to El Paso. The expedition came by way of Brady's Creek to the headwaters of the Concho, thence westward to the Horsehead Crossing on the Pecos and thence to El Paso.¹⁶

On June 14, 1849, Lieutenant Francis T. Bryan tested a northern route from San Antonio to California by way of Fredericksburg, the San Saba, and Concho Rivers, and the Guadalupe Mountains.¹⁷

Another trail which went winding through the Concho area even before the Butterfield line was the California Trail or Marcy's Return Route. This trail was established in 1849 and was traveled extensively by immigrants to California.

¹³LeRoy R. Hafen, <u>The Overland Mail</u>, p. 165. ¹⁴<u>Ibid</u>., p. 95. ¹⁵<u>Ibid</u>., p. 98.

16A. B. Bender, "Opening Routes Across West Texas," West Texas Historical Association Quarterly, XXXVII (October, 1933), 120.

¹⁷<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 125; McConnell, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., I, 60.

This trail crossed the Red River and entered Texas in what is now Grayson County. From there it passed into Cooke, Montague, and Clay Counties, and thence into Young County by old Fort Belknap. From there it passed through Throckmorton, Haskell, and Jones Counties to or near Forts Phantom Hill and Chadbourne. The trail skirted the Concho area on the north and struck the Pecos at the thirty-second parallel and from there it ran southwest to El Paso.¹⁸

Still a third route known as the Goodnight-Loving Trail led from Palo Pinto County, the home of Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving, west to Buffalo Gap and Fort Chadbourne.¹⁹ From here the trail turned southwest to Fort Concho and ran west along the Middle Concho, thence crossed the staked plains and struck the Pecos River at Horsehead Crossing; from this point it led into New Mexico where it branched in some two or three directions and eventually led into California, Wyoming, and other Western states. This route was famous as a cattle trail, but many immigrants going to and from California used it, too.

Another trail which led from San Antonio to San Diego, California, and known as the San Antonio-San Diego Trail, passed at first south of the Concho area. In June, 1857, a contract was let to James E. Birch to carry the mail over

18_{R.} C. Crane, "Some Aspects of the History of West and Northwest Texas Since 1845," <u>Southwestern Historical</u> <u>Quarterly</u>, XXVI (July, 1922), 36.

19W. C. Holden, Alkali Trails, p. 35.

this route twice a month each way in thirty days. Due to the fact that the coaches on the line were drawn by mules it later came to be known as the "Jackass Mail."²⁰ It seems that due to Indian depredations along the old San Antonio-San Diego route the line was withdrawn from its original route and reestablished by way of Fort Concho.²¹ The <u>Texas Almanac</u> of 1869 gives the following description of the Concho region along this mail route:

[Fort Concho is] situated at the confluence of the North and Main rivers by that name and is at present a fourth company post and the headquarters of the 4th Cavalry; the extensive building operations at this post have collected quite a number of employees. . . . a mile and a half above the post on Main Concho, is the home station of the El Paso mail line, now in process of construction; three and a half miles above this settlement is the settlement of Bismarck located at the mouth of the South Concho, waters of which stream have been diverted from their natural channel for the purposes of irrigation by the enterprising proprietors of the settlement. The mail road crosses the Concho at the home station and follows that stream to within three miles of its source.22

The route was by Boerne, Cave Springs, Kickapoo, and thence to Fort Concho.²³ In 1870 there was another line running from San Antonio to El Paso and carrying passengers weekly. This route came by way of Fredericksburg and Fort Concho. At Fort Concho it seems that the line divided, one

²⁰Dan Elbert Clark, <u>The West in American History</u>, p. 509.
²¹R. C. Crane, "Stage-Coaching in the Concho Country,"
<u>West Texas Historical Association Year Book</u>, 1934, p. 65.
²²<u>Ibid</u>., quoting <u>Texas Almanac</u>, 1869.
²³<u>Ibid</u>.

branch of which went west to El Paso, while the other proceeded by way of Fort Griffin, Fort Richardson, Jacksboro, and Sherman to Fort Smith.²⁴ This was a partial re-establishment of the old Butterfield line, and was under the supervision of B. F. Ficklin, who had established the first pony express between California and the States.²⁵

In 1871 B. F. Ficklin was in charge of both the San Antonio-El Paso line and the Concho-Fort Smith line. By 1873, F. C. Taylor had become manager of the El Paso Mail Company's line. The line then ran from San Antonio by way of Fredericksburg, Mason, Rock Springs, McKavett, Concho, Fort Stockton, and thence to El Paso.²⁶

The Chisholm Trail is perhaps the most widely known of all the West Texas cattle trails. The trail is widely known by name, yet its location is disputed by many old settlers. The original trail took its name, it appears, from Jesse Chisholm, a scout, Indian fighter, and trail blazer.²⁷ The Chisholm Trail was followed by the first cattle drivers to Kansas when the market was opened after the Civil War. South of the Red River the trail was often spoken of as the Kansas or McCoy Trail. After crossing the Red River the trail spread out fan-like and divided into several branches. One branch or another of this famous trail ran through or near almost every West Texas region including the Concho area.

²⁴<u>Ibid</u>. 25<u>Ibid</u>. 26<u>Ibid</u>., p. 67. 27_{Holden}, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 34.

Jesse Chisholm and John Chisum must not be confused. Jesse Chisholm was an Indian trader; John Chisum was a cat-Chisum never blazed a trail; Chisholm did. 28 John tle man. Chisum was called the Cattle King of the Pecos. At one time he had a cattle ranch in Southwestern New Mexico which extended along two hundred miles of river front, and reached from the Hondo to the Texas border. 29 Chisum moved into the Concho Country in 1863 and located near the junction of the Concho River with the Colorado. He remained there until 1867, when he moved to New Mexico. 30 The trail over which he drove his herds from the Concho area to New Mexico and the Northwest was known as the "Jingle Bob" trail, so called from the split ear mark of his cattle. He commenced cutting at the end of the ear and cut until the end would hang down. His brand was called the Jingle Bob and Rail.31

Another trail called the Concho Trail led from the Concho River to the Rio Pecos, thence up it to the Hondo and out by the Gallina Mountains, crossing the Rio Grande at old Albuquerque. From there it led farther on down the Little Colorado of the West through New Mexico and Arizona, thence across the Colorado River of Arizona into California.³²

²⁸George Rainey, "Letter to A. E. Hickerson," <u>South-western Historical Quarterly</u>, XLIV (October, 1940), 249.
²⁹C. L. Douglas, <u>Cattle Kings of Texas</u>, p. 12.
³⁰Beatrice Grady Day, <u>Into the Setting Sun</u>, p. 16.
³¹West Texas Historical Association Year Book, 1927, p. 43.
³²J. Marvin Hunter, <u>The Trail Drivers of Texas</u>, pp. 55-56.

While the trails and stage lines were the chief means of communication during the 1860's and the 1870's, there was at least one other important communication service by the early 1870's. A telegraph line was built by the United States Government from San Antonio to Fort Concho in the early decade from 1870 to 1880.³³ Stacks of old musty telegrams now in the West Texas Museum at San Angelo bear evidence of the volume of communication that was carried on over this line during the days of old Fort Concho.

It is only natural that the trails and stage lines referred to above would familiarize the people who passed along them with the region. It was not long after the first trails and stage lines were blazed through the Concho Country until settlers began to come into the region.

Among the early pioneers to this area was R. F. Tankersley. In the year 1864 he settled at the head of South Concho Springs.³⁴ Tankersley was the first settler in this section of West Texas. While serving as a Texas Ranger he had discovered its value as a cattle country.³⁵

In 1869 Tankersley set out to drive 1,700 head of cattle to California. He delivered 1,000 head of them in San Bernando.³⁶ On his way home two men who camped with him for

³³San Angelo Standard, May 3, 1934, Sec. 3, p. 12.

34Ellis A. Davis and Edwin H. Grobe, The New Encyclopedia of Texas, p. 1114.

35 Ibid.

36 Tbid.

the night cut open a saddle bag and stole from it five hundred dollars. In another pair of saddle bags there were twenty-five thousand dollars in gold which they did not find.³⁷ Tankersley traveled from Houston to his ranch on the Concho by horseback and upon arriving deposited twentyfive thousand dollars beneath the floor of his cabin. Increasing Indian depredations caused the family to move to Fort Concho in 1869. From 1871 to 1873 Tankersley supplied the government with beef cattle at Forts Concho, McKavett, and Stockton.

A year after Tankersley settled at Concho Springs, G. W. DeLong moved into the country at Lipan Springs. He was one of the pioneer settlers of the Christoval area, and the DeLong descendants continue to reside in this area.

Eugene McCrohan moved to Tom Green County in 1867 and was among the first ranchmen of the region. 38

W. S. Veck came to the Concho area in 1866 as a wagon master at Fort Concho. At this time the post was still in the process of construction. Veck operated a store and saloon on the corner of Oakes and Concho streets. It was to this store that a very young lady would often come to purchase family supplies. She was a Miss Kataline Wuerlemburg, who later became the wife of Veck. Miss Wuerlemburg was born at Fort Craig, New Mexico, in 1858. She and Veck were married

37 Ibid.

³⁸San Angelo Standard, May 3, 1934, Sec. 4, p. 4.

on September 12, 1872. At that time she was fourteen years of age. Veck took a leading part in the building of San Angelo and in the organization of Tom Green County, being named along with J. L. Millspaugh, G. W. DeLong, W. S. Kelly, and F. C. Flowers as commissioners to organize the county.³⁹ At one time he is said to have been the wealthiest man in San Angelo. He died March 17, 1900, at the age of seventyfour.

It was in connection with the Veck family indirectly that San Angelo received its name. It is said that a Mr. Bartholmeu DeWitt came from San Antonio in 1868 and purchased a large tract of land on the north side of the North Concho River. For some time this side of the river failed to settle up. There were a few adobe huts, saloons, and gambling houses, but there was no town. It was referred to as "Over-the-River." As the north-side settlement began to grow it was clear that the place should have a name and not be referred to as "Over-the-River." DeWitt's wife, a woman of Mexican birth, had a sister who was Mother Superior of the Ursaline Convent in San Antonio. Her name was Santa Angela.⁴⁰ At the suggestion of Mrs. Veck the town was named for this Catholic nun, and the forms Sant Angela, St. Angela, and San Angelo appear in the various records and papers. The variations, according to Mrs. Veck, were due to the

39 Ibid.

⁴⁰Warner E. Gettys and others, <u>Texas</u>, <u>a Guide to the</u> <u>Lone Star State</u>, p. 473.

inability of the American tongue to pronounce the original name, Santa Angela, correctly. Later when application was made for a post office, the government did not accept the masculine "San" and the feminine "Angela," so the name was again modified. This time it was given its present form, San Angelo.

Among other early arrivals to the Concho area was Rich Coffey, who established a ranch in 1862 at the mouth of the Concho. This was two years before R. F. Tankersley made his appearance at Concho Springs, but probably a hundred miles farther east.

Another settler found in the Sterling section in the early 1860's was Captain Sterling, who camped on the North Concho in what is now Sterling County. He shipped many buffalo hides to Fort Concho.41

Three and a half miles above Fort Concho was the Bismarck Farm. It was located on the South Concho⁴² and was the first source of vegetables for the soldiers at Fort Concho. The farm was established by Jake Marshal and was operated by Mexican labor. The farm was irrigated from a temporary dam on the river. Gustav Schleicher, for whom Schleicher County is named, was among those interested in this project.⁴³

⁴¹Z. T. Fulmore, <u>History and Geography of Texas as Told</u> in <u>County Names</u>, p. 68.

42_{Crane}, "Stage-Coaching in the Concho Country," <u>West</u> <u>Texas Historical Association Year Book</u>, 1934, p. 65.

⁴³T. C. Richardson, "He Made the Land Fruitful," Farm and Ranch, August 15, 1936. Another early arrival in the Concho region was J. Willis Johnson, who came to Tom Green County before the county was organized. He came to San Angelo in 1874. After spending a short time as a clerk in a Mr. Frary's store on the North Concho and later as a clerk in Sam Pollock's store at Ben Ficklin, he bought a small flock of sheep and with this as a start began a most enviable career. He held several county offices and as sheriff took a stand for law and order that resulted in his election four successive times.

J. L. Millspaugh, who arrived at Fort Concho in the early 1870's, took a great interest in the public utilities of the community, and it was he who opened the first waterworks, the first ice factory, and the first power plant.⁴⁵ From the original little Millspaugh plant on the North Concho has grown a utilities system for San Angelo which is unsurpassed in West Texas. Millspaugh might be called the father of San Angelo utilities.

Charles B. Metcalfe came to the Concho Fort in 1873. In 1875 he built a dam on the South Concho for his uncle, Francis C. Taylor, and put 160 acres of barley under irrigation. The grain was sold to the military post at \$2.50 per bushel. Metcalfe was among the first to fence the range he owned and leased, only to have it cut by the "fence cutters." Metcalfe served six years as county commissioner and later

⁴⁴Davis and Grobe, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 1146. ⁴⁵San <u>Angelo</u> <u>Standard</u>, May 3, 1934, Sec. 3, p. 10.

represented his district in the Texas Legislature.46

By the early 1870's, therefore, permanent settlements had definitely been established in the Concho Country. Most of the early settlers were interested in the cattle business, in the army posts, or in the stage-coach lines. San Angelo, Ben Ficklin, and possibly other towns were getting started. The Anglo-Americans had come to make homes in the Concho region.

⁴⁶Richardson, "He Made the Land Fruitful," <u>Farm</u> and <u>Ranch</u>, August 15, 1936.

CHAPTER IV

ORIGIN AND ORGANIZATION OF COUNTIES

When Texas was a Mexican province the Concho Country was a portion of the Municipality of Bexar. When Texas became a republic in 1836, the older designations were discontinued and counties were created. The Concho region was included in the new county of Bexar with San Antonio as the county seat. Shortly before the Civil War, Runnels and Concho Counties were created as frontier counties, but they were not organized until more than twenty years later. The other seven counties partially or wholly within the Concho area were included in a large unoccupied and unorganized region called Bexar District or Bexar Lend District.

By 1874 a number of families had settled in the Concho region, and settlers wanted to have a county government of their own. It was necessary for them to attend Federal court at El Paso and have their county business attended to at San Antonio. On March 13, 1874, the Texas Legislature passed a law creating the county of Tom Green. This law named as commissioners to organize the county, J. L. Millspaugh, G. W. DeLong, W. S. Kelly, W. S. Veck, and Francis C. Taylor.1

1H. P. N. Gammel, The Laws of Texas, 1874-1879, VIII, 23.

The act also provided for an election to be held at Ben Ficklin near where the stage lines made their headquarters. This place was about three miles southwest of Fort Concho. It also provided that until the election and qualification of the officers of the new county, the business of Tom Green County should be transacted at the town of Ben Ficklin.²

On January 5, 1875, the county was organized.³ It was then discovered that the law made no provision for the administration of the oaths of office to the newly elected county officers, and they had to mark time until the third of February, when the Legislature passed another law supplemental to the first one. This act provided that the commissioners, or any one of them named in the act to create and provide for the organization of Tom Green County, might administer all oaths of office to the officers elected under said act, and that a majority of said commissioners might issue certificates of election to such officers, and might approve the bonds of such officers.⁴

With the passage of this act, F. C. Taylor and J. L. Millspaugh were inducted into the offices of chief justice and associate justice, respectively, of Tom Green County. These two offices corresponded to those of the county judge and county commissioner.

³Z. T. Fulmore, <u>The History and Geography of Texas</u>, <u>as</u> <u>Told in County Names</u>, p. 260.

⁴Gammel, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., VIII, 22.

²Ibid., p. 22.

The present county of Tom Green is only a very small part of its former self. Sixty-six additional counties have been carved from its original area. From this "Jumbo Tom Green County" there have been fifty-four counties carved from the area north of the present county and twelve created to the west of it.⁵

It seems that this great area was included in Tom Green County because the legislative act creating Tom Green in 1874, failed to mention a northern boundary.⁶ This area remained a part of Tom Green County for nearly two years, but this fact was not generally known.

When the organization of Tom Green County was completed, all of the territory contained in the original act continued as a part of that county for all purposes until ninety days after August 21, 1876. On this date the Legislature drew a line from the northwest corner of Runnels County west to the New Mexico line, thereby cutting off the fifty-four counties to the north.

These fifty-four counties cover an area 180 miles east and west by 300 miles north and south and comprise a region larger than the state of Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, New York, or Virginia; and the original Tom Green County was as large as Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts,

⁵R. C. Crane, "Original Tom Green County," <u>San Angelo</u> <u>Standard</u>, May 3, 1934, Sec. 4, p. l.

⁶Gammel, <u>op</u>. <u>cit.</u>, VIII, 23.

New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont all combined.⁷

All that remained of the giant county was still called Tom Green, being about two hundred miles east and west and sixty miles wide. From this area twelve additional counties were created. These counties, together with their areas, as well as their dates of creation and organization, are given in the following table.

TABLE 1

THE DATE CREATED, THE DATE OF ORGANIZATION, AND THE AREA IN SQUARE MILES OF THE LAST THIRTEEN COUNTIES FORMED FROM TOM GREEN COUNTY*

County	Date Created	Origin	Organized	Area in Square Miles
Tom Green Midland Ector Ward Glasscock Upton Upton Crane Loving Irion Coke Sterling Reagan	1874 1885 1887 1887 1887 1887 1887 1887 1887	Bexar Tom Green Tom Green	1875 1885 1891 1892 1893 1910 1910 1927 1931 1889 1889 1889 1891 1903	1,454 874 892 827 866 844 1,195 878 753 998 931 940 1,071
Total	• •	• •	* *	12,544

*Texas Almanac, 1941-1942, pp. 408-523.

⁷Crane, "Original Tom Green County," <u>San Angelo Stand</u>ard, May 3, 1934, Sec. 4, p. 1. It will be observed that the counties shown in the above table constitute an area of 12,544 square miles, an area as large as the states of Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Delaware combined, with half of New Jersey added.⁸

The present Tom Green County consists of approximately 1,454 square miles of territory⁹ and is still larger than the State of Rhode Island with several Districts of Columbia added.¹⁰ The present city of San Angelo has a greater population than the Jumbo County of Tom Green had in 1874.¹¹

It was Francis C. Taylor, manager of the stage line (San Antonio-El Paso division), who gave Tom Green its name. He named it for the famous Confederate general, Thomas Green, 12 who was born in Amelia County, Virginia, June 8, 1814, and who was killed on the thirteenth day of April, 1864, at the battle of Blair's Landing on Red River in Louisiana.

On January 5, 1875, there was an election held to decide the question of the organization of the county, the location of the county seat, and the election of the first officers. The principal issue was the struggle between Ben Ficklin and San Angelo for the county seat. The former had the stage line and the post office, while the latter boasted

⁸Ralph S. Tarr and M. Frank McMurry, <u>World Geography</u>, pp. 251-252.

⁹Texas Almanac, 1941-1942, p. 511.
¹⁰Tarr and McMurry, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 251-252.
¹¹R. C. Crane, <u>San Angelo Standard</u>, May 3, 1934, Sec. 4, p. 17.
¹²Fulmore, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 260.

of the fort and its soldiers; it also had a number of gambling houses and saloons.

Francis C. Taylor and Jim Spears, who was later sheriff, were the principal supporters for Ben Ficklin, while W.S. Veck, R. F. Tankersley, and Asa Frary were using all their influence to get the county center located at San Angelo.

Ben Ficklin won and Tom Green's first courthouse, a small "picket" structure, was rented at Ben Ficklin at the rate of ten dollars per month. Another courthouse, built by F. C. Taylor and Jim Spears, was presented by them to the county in 1876.¹³

This donated building was used until 1882, when an \$18,000 stone structure was completed. The Commissioners' Court authorized a special levy of fifty cents on the one hundred dollars valuation for the new building. The building was paid for out of the first year's tax collections.

This building was two stories high and about fifty by sixty feet in dimension. The stone for the structure was hauled from near Ben Ficklin as was the stone for the building of Fort Concho.¹⁴

When the Ben Ficklin flood destroyed the county courthouse, as well as many other buildings at that place, there was not a great desire evidenced, even among the survivors, to rebuild the county seat at Ben Ficklin. So the year 1882

¹³San Angelo Standard, May 3, 1934, Sec. 1, p. 1.
¹⁴Ibid.

(the date of the flood) marks the end of Ben Ficklin as the county capital.

By a unanimous vote the county seat was moved to San Angelo. Thus "Mother Nature" seemed to be the final arbiter in a dispute which had been waged for many years, but another dispute arose as to the exact location of the courthouse. Should it be located on the south side of the river at Fort Concho or at a place on the north side called "Over-the-River"? The matter, after being carried to the courts, was finally settled and San Angela (San Angelo) won.

Much of the history of the Concho Country is connected with Tom Green County, not necessarily because it contains today the metropolis of the Concho Country, but because it was the "Mother of Counties," and too, because of the part Fort Concho played in the early history and development of the region.

Of all the counties in the Concho region, only three were never included in Tom Green County. The three are Runnels, Concho, and Schleicher.

Runnels County was created by special act of the Legislature on February 1, 1854. The county was not organized, however, until February 16, 1880. The county was named for Hiram G. Runnels, who was a native of Hancock County, Georgia. He came to Texas in 1842 and engaged in planting on the Brazos. He later represented Brazoria and Galveston Counties

in the Texas Senate. He died in Houston December 17, 1857.15

The county was immediately created from Bastrop County on the date mentioned above, and the county seat was located at Runnels on the west side of Elm Creek about five miles above its junction with the Colorado.¹⁶ After several years it was moved to Ballinger. This was due to the coming of the Santa Fe Railroad through a section of the county about ten miles south of Runnels. Ballinger has continued to be the county seat to the present time. It is located in the midst of a prosperous farm and ranch country, and today Runnels County is one of the leading counties in the Concho section.

Concho County was created February 1, 1884, from Bexar County, and organized March 11, 1879.¹⁷ The county seat is Paint Rock. It takes its name from the famous painted rocks located on the bluffs of the Concho River about one-fourth mile from the town. Concho County takes its name from the Concho River, which not only traverses the county but the city as well.

In 1875 Crockett County was carved out of Bexar County, and in 1887 Schleicher was formed from Crockett, but it was not organized until 1901. The county was named for Gustav Schleicher, a native of Germany. He was one of "The Forty"

15Fulmore, op. cit., p. 239.

16 Burke's Texas Almanac, 1882, p. 76.

17<u>Texas</u> Almanac, 1941-1942, p. 428.

who entered into an agreement with Count Castell to found a settlement on the Fisher and Miller Grant. Schleicher has been acclaimed "one of the most cultured men in Texas."18

Due to a lack of population the county of Schleicher was attached to Kinney County and later to Menard County for judicial purposes.¹⁹ The final and independent organization of the county took place in July, 1901, after its citizens had secured a separation from Menard County. The first commissioners were C. C. Yaws, W. D. Ake, and Hames Garrett. These were the first county officers: A. B. Prious, county judge; F. C. Bates, Jr., county clerk; Henry Mills, sheriff; and C. C. Doty, tax collector.²⁰ At the second meeting of the Court, H. Bucklew was appointed constable of precinct No. 1, and A. D. Hobbs was appointed constable of precinct No. 2, under bonds of five hundred dollars each.

Eldorado, the county seat of Schleicher County, was established in 1895, and its first large store was owned by Silliman, Gray, and McCartney.²¹ In December, 1901, the first newspaper was printed. It was called <u>The Eldorado</u> <u>Paper</u>, and was owned and edited by R. L. Carrothers.

Besides the present Tom Green County, five of the counties entirely or partially within the Concho Country were carved

¹⁸Fulmore, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 240.
¹⁹R. D. Holt, <u>Schleicher County</u>, p. 5.
²⁰<u>Ibid</u>., p. 6.
²¹<u>Ibid</u>., p. 7.

from Tom Green: Irion, 1889; Coke, 1889; Sterling, 1891; Glasscock, 1893; and Reagan, 1903.

Irion County joins Tom Green County on the west. This county was organized on April 16, 1889, after having been created by an act of the Legislature on March 7 of the same year.²² The county takes its name from Robert Anderson Irion, who was born in Paris, Tennessee, on July 7, 1806. He came to Texas in 1883 and located near Nacogdoches. He served as Secretary of State in Houston's cabinet and as a member of the first Senate of the Republic of Texas. He died in 1860. Sherwood was selected as the county seat; it is located on Spring Creek, a tributary of the Middle Concho.

Coke County was created March 13, 1889, from Tom Green. It was organized April 23, 1889, and contains approximately 931 square miles. The county seat is Robert Lee. The county bears the name of Richard Coke, who was a Confederate soldier, district judge, associate justice of the Supreme Court, and Governor of Texas. He was born in Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1829, and died in Texas in 1897.²³

The coming of the Texas and Pacific Railroad to the north in the early 1880's, and the building of the Santa Fe Railroad to San Angelo in 1888, placed the county in a far better position as far as markets were concerned.

Sterling County borders Tom Green on the north. It was

22 Gammel, The Laws of Texas, IX, 1127.

²³L. E. Daniell, <u>Texas</u>, <u>the Country and Its Men</u>, pp. 105-108.

created by an act of the Legislature on March 4, 1891, and was organized on June 3 of that year. It had an area of about 821 square miles. Sterling City is the county seat. The county is named for Captain Sterling of whom we know little or nothing beyond the fact that he was a buffalo hunter and during the Civil War period pitched his camp on a creek in what is now Sterling County. He shipped hides to Fort Concho and engaged in the business as long as there were buffaloes in the country.²⁴

Glasscock County was organized on March 28, 1893, after having been created on April 4, 1887.²⁵ It contains approximately 866 square miles of territory and is named for George W. Glasscock, who came to Texas from Kentucky and in 1835 took part in the Grass Fight. In 1846 he moved to Georgetown, Texas, which was named for him. George W. Glasscock served as a member of the tenth and eleventh Legislatures.²⁶

Garden City is the county seat of Glasscock County. It is the only town of any size in the county. The county is located in the drier portion of the state, but is noted for its large number of cattle and sheep sent to market each year. In this county lie some of the mighty ranches of the West and within its limits live some of the sturdy and

²⁴Fulmore, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 95. ²⁵<u>Toid.</u>, p. 282.
²⁶<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 129.

prosperous cattlemen who have helped to make the pages of history more resplendent with true stories of the Concho Country.

Reagan County was the last of the Concho counties to be created and organized. It was created by an act of the Legislature on March 7, 1903, and was organized in the same year. Stiles was selected as the county seat. The county has an area of about 1,190 square miles and is noted for the raising of cattle and sheep. It has an annual rainfall of approximately twenty inches. The county was named for John H. Reagan,²⁷ the illustrious Texan, who resigned his seat in the United States Senate to accept the chairmanship of the newly created Texas Railroad Commission.²⁸

The creation and organization of counties reflected the rapidity of the influx of permanent settlers. It was now evident that Indian troubles were past and settlers from other sections of Texas as well as those from other states were coming in large numbers to take advantage of the cheap grazing lands which were still plentiful in the Concho Country. The first really local county government to be organized was Tom Green at just about the time the early pioneers were firmly established in their new homes. With time more settlers came, and more counties were organized. By 1903

²⁷<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 175.

²⁸Lewis W. Newton and Herbert P. Gambrell, <u>A Social and</u> <u>Political History of Texas</u>, p. 387.

the last county, Reagan, was organized and the early period of the history of the region came to an end. No changes in the county lines have been made in the region since 1903.

CHAPTER V

THIRTY YEARS OF PROGRESS

In the period from 1870 to 1900 the Concho Country experienced a steady development. It was a period of slow but definite progress in almost every way.

This period witnessed the final expulsion of the Indians; it saw the coming of railroads to the area as well as large numbers of immigrants who came to the region for the purpose of engaging in the great ranch industry. It saw the number of United States post offices increase from eight in 1880 to twenty-five in 1900.¹ This furnishes some proof of the fact that people from other areas were beginning to come to the region and make permanent homes. This meant that schools, churches, and towns would soon dot the valleys, and that civilization and all its forces would begin to beat back the frontier and offer to those who would choose to come at a later day the promise of prosperity and security.

While the period had a great many bright features, it also possessed a few dark ones. During this time all West

¹Burke's Texas Almanac, 1882, pp. 138-149; <u>Texas Al-</u> manac, 1904, pp. 44-53.

Texas bade good-bye to the buffalo. It also marked the passing of the deer, turkey, bear, and other wild species that offered to the early settlers a means of livelihood. It sounded the death knell of the open range and brought to an end the good old trips up the trail -- an experience so dear to many of the old-time cowboys.

This was the period when many of our "Cattle Kings" received their start. They came to the region when land was cheap. Much of this land sold for as low as one dollar per acre.

The cattle industry was directly responsible for the first railroads coming to the Concho area. There was a dire need experienced by the early cattlemen to get their cattle to market. They could drive them to the railroad towns in Kansas and other cattle markets of the North. When the barbed wire fence began to make its appearance, it became necessary to drive the cattle many miles out of the direct path in order to avoid the fences.

Mention has already been made of some of the earliest cattlemen who came to the Concho region. Among the most important as well as the first of them were R. F. Tankersley, John Chisum, and Rich Coffey. Others followed them with larger herds and better stock.

John Sheen moved a herd of cattle to Camp Colorado near Ballinger in 1858.² Ten years later he moved to Menard County,

²San Angelo Standard, May 3, 1934, Sec. 3, p. 16.

where he established himself and conducted a ranch for some time.

The Coggin brothers moved to Home Creek in Coleman County in 1860. In the autumn of 1871 they concentrated their cattle at the mouth of the Concho River, but on December 25 the Indians were on the warpath in Tom Green County again, and this time these men lost about five thousand head of cattle.³

Another early arrival in the Concho region was John Richard Nasworthy. He came to Texas in 1869 and settled on the frontier west of the Colorado River.⁴ Nasworthy had many interesting experiences with the Comanche Indians. He participated in many fights with these fierce warriors of the frontier, but he said that he had seen but one dead Indian left on a battle field. The Indians, he said, invariably carried off their dead. Nasworthy claimed to have been the first stockman west of the Colorado River to raise strictly thoroughbred horses and shorthorn cattle.⁵ He was also widely known for his breeding of fine race horses.

Robert Wiley had a ranch at Ballinger and in 1872 drove nine thousand head of cattle to the Pecos River region, where they stampeded in a snowstorm and mixed with the cattle of John Chisum. Chisum laughed about the matter and bought the entire herd from Wiley.

3Ibid.

⁴L. E. Daniell, <u>Texas</u>, <u>the Country and Its Men</u>, pp. 294-298. ⁵Ibid.

In 1873 Joseph Funk, a rancher, drove cattle from Erath County to the Colorado River. It is said that Funk had the first Herefords in that part of the state.⁶

Lease B. Harris, who had come to Texas in 1832 and settled in DeWitt's colony, engaged in the ranching industry in that area, and in 1876 came to the Concho Country, where he developed extensive ranch interests during the 1870's and 1880's.

The Murray brothers are said to have brought the first cattle to the North Concho in 1876. Their brand was the Half Circle S.

J. M. Shannon was sent from New York by William L. Black in 1876 to manage a ranch which Black had established on the San Saba River.⁷ Black made a trade with Shannon whereby he would give him one-third net interests in the profits of the ranch for a period of five years.⁸ Shannon later became one of the leading ranchmen of the Concho area, and it was here that he, very likely, laid the foundation for the \$1,500,000 fortune which he later amassed.

In the same year that Shannon came from New York, Monroe Pulliam drove one hundred head of cattle to the Concho area from Uvalde. In 1877 he drove six hundred head of cattle to Kansas. For the next ten years the family lived alone

⁶San Angelo Standard, May 3, 1934, Sec. 3, p. 16.
⁷R. D. Holt, <u>Schleicher</u> <u>County</u>, p. 11.
⁸Ibid.

in this particular section except for some few families who had arrived earlier. Pulliam prospered in the ranch industry, but later became interested in the banking business, devoting most of his time to an office in the First National Bank of San Angelo.

R. H. Looney was elected surveyor of Concho County in 1877, and in the same year established ranches in the Big Bend area.

Joseph W. Tweedy came from New York to the San Angelo area in 1877.⁹ He leased land which was located on Dove Creek in Tom Green County. In the midst of this lease he founded the ranch village of Knickerbocker. Since he was from New York, he gave the town which he founded one of the historic names of his native state. The word, Knickerbocker, refers originally to Diedrich Knickerbocker, the pretended author of Irving's <u>History of New York</u>, or a "New Yorker." Tweedy was a factor in the development of that community's ranch interests as well as other industries and enterprises there. He served as county commissioner of Tom Green County from 1884 until 1886.¹⁰

W. B. White came to the Brady country in 1877 and established the O. M. brand in that section. About the same time Sam and J. E. Henderson moved into the Concho region and established ranches.

⁹Davis and Grobe, <u>The New Encyclopedia of Texas</u>, p. 3638. ¹⁰Ibid.

C. C. Slaughter, who located at the head of the Colorado River in 1879, gained a wide reputation as a breeder of Herefords. W. T. Scott established a ranch twenty-five miles southwest of Colorado City in 1887.

C. C. Doty, who named Christoval, came into what is now Schleicher County in 1880. He drilled the first water well and built the first windmill between the South Concho River and Del Rio.¹¹ Doty was one of the early settlers of Schleicher County and later held important offices in that county. Another early settler in the Schleicher region was C. C. West, who drilled the first water well on top of the divide about 1887.¹²

These men and many others were the great cattlemen of the Concho Country, and they greatly deserve credit for their devoted interest in building one of the great industries of the Lone Star State. Such men as Jose Tweedy, R. F. Tankersley, L. B. Harris, J. M. Shannon, J. Willis Johnson, J. R. Nasworthy, and other great pioneer ranchmen cannot easily be forgotten, and their work for the development of the Concho area cannot be erased quickly from history's pages.

With the cattle industry was closely associated the "round up." This was a high light of the year's work and was looked forward to with great enjoyment by all the ranchmen -- especially the cowboys.

¹¹<u>San Angelo Standard</u>, May 3, 1934, Sec. 3, p. 16. ¹²<u>Ibid</u>.

The round-up usually came in the fall. It consisted of branding, cutting out the "strays," and otherwise eliminating the undesirables. At night the cowhands would gather around the camp fires, sing, tell stories, and talk of their experiences on the trail, or on some other ranch or round-up. In these camps were born some of the famous cowboy songs heard over the radio today.

Greatest of all round-ups in the history of West Texas, according to Jesse W. Lewis, an old cowhand, was that at Knickerbocker in the spring of 1886. He says that 25,000 cattle were rounded up there at that time. "It had been dry," said Mr. Lewis, "and cattle had drifted from points as far as the Pease River."¹³ In the Knickerbocker region they could find plenty of water, for there two spring-fed creeks converge and furnish an unlimited supply. About fifteen "outfits" were present at this gigantic round-up, and many a trail drive was re-lived while cowboy songs echoed from the hills.

It must not be thought that the life of the cattlemen was one of ease. There were many obstacles which beset their path. They not only were confronted with the Indians, but with many other problems which in all probability would have discouraged men of weaker fiber. In the first place they were laboring under difficulties so far as markets were concerned. They must drive their herds hundreds of miles in

13 Ibid.

some cases in order to get them to market. This meant untold hardships. It meant Indian attacks, suffering from cold, rain, and even at times, from hunger and sickness. Sand storms and blizzards were frequent visitors to the Concho region. Droughts were frequent, and "die outs" were an ever present fear of the cattlemen. Prairie fires would often destroy not only the stockmen's herds but also their homes. Grasshoppers would often come in great swarms and destroy the grass. If they had had none of these with which to contend, they still would have the "cattle rustlers." Since the country was sparsely settled there were few organizations for law and order. This meant that the rustler could operate almost unmolested in some sections. This type of character was responsible for the theft of thousands of cattle during the 1870's, the 1880's, and the 1890's. TO add to all these ill fortunes there were floods in which the ranchmen lost hundreds and even thousands of cattle. Sudden downpours in the mountains would often put creeks and rivers out of banks so suddenly that the cattle could not be gotten to places of safety. The prairie dog and the coyote were other discouraging factors to the ranchmen. The former would dig holes in the ground; the stock would step into these and often break a limb. The prairie dogs would occupy a great deal of space with their various "towns" scattered over the hundreds of acres of ranch land. They would also cut and devour much of the grass. The coyote was a

continual annoyance and caused the loss of thousands of young lambs and calves each year. With all these obstacles the early stockmen coped. They hardly knew the meaning of failure, and to this trait they are indebted, more than to any other, for their ability to succeed.

By 1880 another industry was rapidly claiming the attention of ranchmen. This was the sheep industry. In <u>Burke's Texas Almanac</u> of 1882 is found this significant statement:

It is probable that never before since the creation of man, in any state or country, has the wool growing interest taken such an impetus as in Texas during the years 1880 to 1881. In fact, there seems to be a mania among our people and the thousands of immigrants to our state in regard to this vocation. It seems that the Spanish proverb of two hundred years ago, "a sheep has a golden hoof," is being realized.14

The above excerpt from a current periodical of the day shows clearly the interest of Texans in sheep at this time. Without doubt the Concho Country was one of the most favorable regions at that time, and still is, for the raising of sheep.

The sheep industry was begun in the Concho Country during the 1880's. The first sheep were brought in over the Texas and Pacific Railroad from California, but soon many sheep were shipped from New England.¹⁵ David P. Gay moved

¹⁴H. J. Chamberlain, "Wool Growing in Texas," <u>Burke's</u> <u>Texas Almanac</u>, 1882, pp. 134-137.

15<u>San Angelo Standard</u>, May 3, 1934, Sec. 3, p. 16.

to Ballinger in 1886 and at one time had on his ranch twelve thousand sheep. This was about the dawn of the sheep industry in this country so far as producing on a large scale was concerned. W. V. Glenn was in the sheep business near Brady in the early 1880's. His profits from this business by 1883 were sufficient to purchase a ranch from a Mr. Dodge.¹⁶

After a few men had blazed the trail in the sheep industry, it was not long until others, including some cattlemen, entered the business. The sheep business was augmented in the Concho Country by natural conditions. The climate was warm and dry. Much of the region was rough and unsuited to farming. In some areas the grass grew so short that even cattle could not well bite it off. Sheep could graze successfully where cattle or horses could not.

Other early sheepmen to follow the industry into the Concho section were Colonel Hodson and Arthur Henderson. Hodson ran from 100,000 to 110,000 sheep on the North Concho River soon after the industry was established. After ranching in the Concho area, Henderson moved to the Trans-Pecos section in the early 1880's.¹⁷

In the spring of 1882 wool was bringing twenty-five cents per pound, but by 1893 it had dropped to four and five cents per pound. This decrease was evidently due to the general financial conditions together with a general lack of tariff protection.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

Charles W. Hobbs, who has had many years of experience in financing the sheep industry, says that credit began to be extended to the sheepmen in the 1880's.¹⁸ This was encouraging because it meant that the financial interests were beginning to see that the industry was a profitable one and one which would aid in the general development of the country.

San Antonio went into the wool business as soon as the railroad reached the town, and much of the wool from the Concho area was sold there, but it was not long until a market developed in the Concho area. One of the first wool buyers in the section was Tom Scollard, who came to San Angelo in 1885. Charley Adams of Sonora was one of the first men to purchase muttons. He purchased one thousand head and shipped them to Chicago. But it was not until San Angelo handled 1,500,000 pounds annually that Tom Scollard became active around that city.

Wool again dropped in price in 1894. In that year it sold for five cents per pound, but in 1895 it rose to ten cents. Ballinger had a railroad before San Angelo, and naturally there was quite a temptation for the wool growers to take their wool to Ballinger instead of San Angelo. This did not look so well to the people of San Angelo who realized that they were losing money by permitting the wool to be shipped to Ballinger instead of to San Angelo. Consequently

18_{Ibid}.

the citizens of the latter city put up \$15,000 to pay the wagon freight on wool concentrated at San Angelo.¹⁹ It was not until 1888 that San Angelo had rail connection and due to this fact the city was delayed in assuming its role in becoming the greatest inland wool market in the United States.

Goats came into the Concho Country after the beginning of the twentieth century. The center of the industry formed around Kerrville and Rock Springs.

It has been mentioned that the period from 1870 to 1890 saw the buffaloes disappear from the Concho Country. It was during this period that the buffalo hunters roamed the plains for this prized animal and caused its eventual extinction. It has been estimated that in 1876 four thousand buffalo hides were marketed in San Angelo.²⁰ In 1876 a big buffalo camp was located on the Kiowa Creek and was operated by Wiley Poe. It is said that his men killed three thousand buffaloes in the winter of 1876. Buffalo camps were located on the North Concho River, Spring Creek, Colorado River, and Panhandle of Texas. The question naturally over the arises why was there such an increasing interest in buffalo hunting just at this time? The answer very likely lies in the coming of railroads to the West. As soon as railroads reached the buffalo range, buyers began to offer six dollars

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<sup>19</sup><u>Ibid</u>. 20<u>Ibid</u>., Sec. 2, p. 18.
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per ton for bones.²¹ It required about one hundred carcasses to make a ton of bones. A man never thought of traveling through the country in an empty wagon; he could pick up bones as he went along and sell them at six or eight dollars per ton when he arrived at the market. The bone hunters would often strike camp on the range and mark or fence off certain portions of the bone-strewn land. Disputes often arose in regard to these claims, and fights occurred frequently among the hunters.

More important than the bones were the hides. Skinning an animal required the work of two men for about twenty minutes, and the typical buffalo hunter's outfit consisted usually of one killer and two skinners. They usually drove a span of mules to a wagon or sometimes they would drive oxen. They would carry along a supply of ammunition, powerful rifles, a number of butcher knives, and whetrocks.22

One man could kill more buffaloes in a few hours, if they were plentiful, than two men could skin all day. "A skinner averaged about twenty to forty hides per day and sold them for an average of twenty-five cents per hide."23

The period from 1870 to 1900 marked the close of the open range. Barbed wire had made its entrance into the cattle

21_{W.} C. Holden, <u>Alkali Trails</u>, pp. 11-18.
22<u>Ibid</u>.
23<u>Ibid</u>.

area. It is said that the first barbed wire fence ever to be erected in Texas was one made by an old Swiss named Grenninger. It was erected near Austin in the year 1857.24

Exactly ten years after this the first patent in the United States was granted, but it was not until 1873 or 1874 that the patents which were destined to bring cheap fence to Texas cattlemen appeared. In 1875 Henry B. Sanborn, later the founder of the city of Amarillo, came to Texas and sold at Gainesville the first spool of barbed wire ever sold in Texas.

In 1879 the Concho Country was wide open. The first barbed wire fence ever erected in the region was that built by L. B. Harris on the Colorado River and Buffalo Creek in the present County of Coke. In 1882 that pioneer cattleman enclosed an area of sixteen thousand acres.25

The largest pasture built in Tom Green County was that enclosed by John R. Nasworthy. The next largest pasture was fenced in Irion County by C. B. Matcalfe in 1883. In 1883 Metcalfe fenced eighteen thousand acres of Washington County school land, and later in 1884 he enclosed twenty thousand acres of the XQZ Ranch land.²⁶

²⁴R. D. Holt, "The Introduction of Barbed Wire into Texas and the Fence Cutting War," <u>West Texas Historical Associa-</u> <u>tion Year Book</u>, 1930, pp. 65-79.

 $^{25}\mathrm{R.}$ D. Holt, "The Saga of Barbed Wire in Tom Green County," <u>ibid.</u>, 1928, pp. 32-49.

26 Ibid.

In 1884 the Vermont Ranch in what is now Schleicher County was enclosed with barbed wire. It was the first large pasture between San Angelo and Del Rio.²⁷ In 1879 W. H. Day fenced a large pasture in Coleman County. That year he fenced practically one fourth of the county. A short time after this R. K. Wylie fenced a large pasture in Runnels County.

It was a deplorable yet somewhat natural affair that followed the fence-building era. The "fence cutters" followed the fence builders and a very acute situation developed.

It was hardly natural to expect those free men of the open-range period to submit quietly to the enclosing of their once-free grazing lands. They offered several reasons for cutting the fences. Some of these reasons were as follows: (1) enclosing the streams, (2) obstruction to travel, (3) desire for free and open range, (4) fencing by people who never owned the land, (5) damage to stock, (6) the fence threw cowboys out of work, and (7) the fence was opposed by the "rustlers" because it was difficult to get cattle out of the country.²⁸

In the first part of December, 1883, the fence around the Harris pasture on the Colorado River was cut for a

²⁷Holt, "The Introduction of Barbed Wire into Texas and the Fence Cutting War," <u>ibid.</u>, 1930, pp. 65-79.

²⁸ Ibid.

distance of about nineteen miles. It was cut once between each two posts. The total loss to Harris was about six thousand dollars. Governor Ireland offered a reward of five hundred dollars for the arrest and conviction of any party who was connected with the destruction of the Harris fence.²⁹

On December 10, 1883, the fence of John R. Nasworthy was cut for about five miles, and in the summer of 1884 a number of men were arrested by the sheriff and Rangers for fence cutting in Runnels County.³⁰

On January 8, 1884, Governor Ireland called a special session of the Legislature to provide a remedy for this deplorable condition. A law was passed making fence cutting a felony punishable by not less than one year nor more than five years in the penitentiary.³¹

At least one United States soldier turned fence cutter in Tom Green County. The soldier was L. C. Lane of Fort Concho. He did not cut the fence for the purpose of revenge. He had been hunting and merely clipped the wire in order that his vehicle might pass through and thereby save a drive of some five miles or more around the pasture. This was the only indictment and conviction in Tom Green County.³²

²⁹Holt, "The Saga of Barbed Wire in Tom Green County," <u>ibid</u>., 1928, pp. 32-49.

30 Ibid.

³¹Gammel, <u>The Laws of Texas</u>, IX, 34.

³²Holt, "The Saga of Barbed Wire in Tom Green County," West Texas <u>Historical</u> <u>Association</u> <u>Year</u> <u>Book</u>, 1928, pp. 32-49.

The fence-cutting war was about over. The special law passed by the Legislature put a stop to this unlawful practice, but it took the combined efforts of the Legislature, the Texas Rangers, the Governor, and the sheriffs of Texas to end it.

In a discussion of those factors which contributed to the progress and development of the Concho Country, <u>The</u> <u>San Angelo Standard</u> should not be omitted. This institution was founded on May 3, 1884, by W. A. Guthrie and J. G. Murphy.³³ <u>The San Angelo Standard</u> has been a leader in the great progressive movement of the West and Southwest since that time. It has led in the movement for highways, railroads, and schools. The paper began publication in an adobe building just north of the early banking house of Veck-Sterrett and Company. A few years later this place became too small, and the <u>Standard</u> moved up on Chadbourne Street just north of the present Mays Building. It remained at this location until the partnership was dissolved in 1900.

It might be interesting at this point to relate the "Red Rooster" story. To every reader of <u>The San Angelo Standard</u> the appearance of a big red rooster on the front page after each rain is a familiar sight. The present red rooster made its first appearance on the front page of the <u>Standard</u> on September 17, 1910. It was after a long "dry spell." A fine

³³San Angelo Standard-Times, May 3, 1934, Sec. 2, p. 1.

rain was falling and Murphy was elated over the splendid prospects of a good fall business. He said he felt so elated over it that he wished he could put something in the paper to impress upon the people just how fine the rain was. He said he felt so elated that he wanted to crow about it. "Then why don't you put a rooster in the paper?" inquired Mrs. Murphy. "That's an idea," said Mr. Murphy; "we shall have a weather rooster." This is how the big red rooster, which greets West Texans on the front page of the <u>Standard</u> after each rain, was born.³⁴

Another mile post was reached in the Concho Country when the Santa Fe Railroad was built to Ballinger in 1886. While it had barely reached the edge of this historic region, its presence lent hopes for the day when the great "Iron Horse" would traverse Concholand from the east to the west and from the north to the south.

This dream was at least partially realized when the city of San Angelo celebrated, on September 17, 1888, its first rail connection with the outside world. Former Governor Frank Lubbock was the principal speaker at the celebration, and four thousand people from all parts of the state were in attendance. It was a very joyful occasion. It meant much to San Angelo and to the people of the Concho Country in general. It meant that now a great portion of the country would have direct rail connection with the outside world and

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34 Ibid.

that more people, more cattle, and more sheep would dot the valleys and prairies of the area, and that these cattle and sheep could be gotten to market without resorting to the trail-driving method, a method which had proved to be not only slow and dangerous but expensive as well.

Another important factor in the development of the Concho region was the religious progress. No factors can lay greater claim to the progress of a region than can those of education and religion.

The beginning of religious development in the area dates back almost three hundred years to the time of those courageous Spanish missionaries who trod the soil of Concholand as early as 1650.³⁵ In that year Captains Martin and Castillo made an expedition into the Concho area and brought with them missionaries to teach the Indians. Guadalajara made a similar tour in 1654 and Father Salas made an expedition earlier than either of the above, coming to the Concho Country in 1632.³⁶ No important permanent results followed, and for many generations nothing was done about religion or education. With the coming of permanent settlers after the Civil War such activities were revived.

In 1890 four Sisters came to San Angelo and started schools for the American families. In 1895 a larger school

³⁵Paul J. Foik, editor, <u>Our Catholic Heritage in Texas</u>, I, 204.

³⁶<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 203.

was begun at The Academy of Immaculate Conception.³⁷ Other Catholic churches were located during this period at Sonora, Eldorado, Ozona, and Knickerbocker. By 1900 a number of Catholic churches and schools were located throughout the Concho region.

The first Baptist church was organized in San Angelo in 1884. It was the second Protestant church to start work in this city. Reverend E. M. Wells was the first minister, and R. E. Harris, the first Sunday School superintendent.

One of the famous preachers of the early days was Rev. Andrew Jackson Potter or "Parson Potter." He came from Seguin, Texas, and wanted to raise money to erect a Methodist church. He went into one of the leading saloons and asked the cowboys for contributions. They promised him all the money that they took in at the next game of monte. Eight hundred dollars was raked into the parson's hat as a result of this round of gambling. The parson thanked them and walked away with the foundation fund for the first lots and building of the First Methodist Church in San Angelo.³⁸ Farson Potter would often go into the saloons and preach amid the jeers of the drunks. He was a fearless type of individual, but usually got along with the frontier characters.

It is said that the first camp meeting held in West Texas was in the summer of 1882. It was held on the banks

³⁷<u>San Angelo Standard</u>, May 3, 1934, Sec. 2, p. 21. ³⁸Ibid.

of the South Concho. Frank Lerch was the evangelist in charge.

On May 15, 1882, the congregation of the First Christian Church of San Angelo started holding services in an adobe building, its organization being due to the interest manifested by two real estate men who were also ministers. In 1883 the Methodist Church and the Catholic Church were the only churches with buildings. On January 21, 1885, Lerch and Landrum, the two pioneer real estate men, purchased a lot at the corner of Harris and Oakes Streets and deeded the property to the Christian Church. A frame structure was erected, valued at three thousand dollars. The materials which went into the building were hauled by ox team from San Antonio.

It must be remembered that San Angelo for many years to come was a typical frontier town with all the earmarks and characteristics of such a place. There were many saloons and gambling houses, and not infrequently was there a man killed. Fights were daily occurrences. Gambling was no pastime; it was a profession. Every town had its gamblers who hung together and in some cases threatened the officers who attempted to stop their activities. The Pickwick Club, which was the center of all social activities, was built in 1884, and was managed by Dr. L. S. Smith. One of the big affairs was the banquet given at the club for the officials of the Santa Fe Railroad when that road came to town in

1888.³⁹ At least one masquerade ball was given each year. The Stockman's Ball was an annual event.

Soon after the establishment of the first churches came the first schools. Neither can be of too great an advantage without the other. The first public school building was erected in 1884 on what is now the J. C. Penney corner in San Angelo.⁴⁰ Private schools were conducted in a few places over the Concho area, but they were indeed scarce and far apart. Mrs. Sam Pollock was one of the first teachers to work in a public school in the San Angelo area. J. F. Cross was the principal of the school in which Mrs. Pollock was a teacher.

After the county seat was moved from Ben Ficklin to San Angelo, the old county courthouse was moved to San Angelo, too, and rebuilt on the present site of the Junior High School, where it was utilized as a school building. Mrs. T. A. Kincaid, who has been referred to as the first white child born in San Angelo, was a pupil in the above-mentioned school.

L. O. Nimitz, San Angelo clothier, attended school in that city over sixty years ago. The first school Nimitz attended was located on East Beauregard Avenue overlooking the North Concho River.⁴¹ Nimitz says there was "no graduation;

³⁹<u>Ibid.</u>, Sec. 2, p. 4. ⁴⁰<u>Ibid</u>., Sec. 4, p. 2. ⁴¹<u>Ibid</u>.

boys went to school until they were old enough to drive a delivery wagon."

One of the most important factors which have been responsible for the development of the Concho Country has been the ever presence of the spring-fed Conchos running through a country which is naturally inclined to be arid. These streams, together with their tributaries, have furnished the country with a plentiful supply of water. It was due to this fact that Fort Concho was located just where it was. The supply of water was responsible for the irrigation carried on at the Bismarck Farm as well as at a dozen of other such places in the Concho Country. Had it not been for a plentiful supply of water, the cattlemen who settled there in the 1870's and 1880's would have passed to other more promising regions.

It must be remembered, too, that the Concho Country is known far and near as the "Sportsman's Paradise." It is the home of large numbers of animals, birds, and fish. This fact is also due to the abundance of water in the region.

By the year 1900 about twenty thousand people had settled in the nine counties of the Concho region. That was a substantial beginning and gave promise of greater development in the twentieth century. In 1870 the country was just beginning to be occupied; most of the inhabitants were soldiers, workmen, and others connected with Fort Concho. There were a few people interested in cattle and the stage-coach lines.

Statistics on these early settlements are difficult to obtain, but fortunately the United States Census of 1870 provides some interesting population figures for that year in reference to the settlements in the Concho region. These figures⁴² are set forth in the following table.

TABLE 2

POPULATION STATISTICS IN CONCHO AREA IN 1870

Bismarck Farm .		•	•								42
Concho Mail Stai	t1	on	•							•	34
Fort Chadbourne											ĩ
Fort Concho and	V	ici	ini	Ltx	r		-				913
Jones' Ranch .				•				÷			7
Kickapoo Spring:	3	•	•	•	•		Ì	ļ	-		12
Lipan Springs .		•								•	21
San Angela				•					÷	•	41
			•	•		•	•	•	•	•	

Total . . . 1,071

From the above table it will be noted that in 1870 the San Angelo area contained more people than the rest of the Concho Country combined. This is partly due to the fact that Fort Concho was then occupied by United States soldiers and they were enumerated in the census. San Angela or "Overthe-River," as it was called, was a struggling village of forty-one people. Bismarck Farm was about three miles up the South Concho River from Fort Concho and was the principal source of vegetables for the soldiers at the Fort. Fort

42 Statistical Abstracts of the Ninth United States Census, I, 63-64. Chadbourne had been abandoned in 1870. This explains the fact that only one person, who was probably the postmaster, was enumerated at this place. A few scattered ranchmen probably still received their mail at that point.

Below is a table which shows the growth by counties in the Concho Country from 1870 to 1900 inclusive. 43

TABLE 3

County	1870	1880	1890	1900
Concho. Coke Glasscock. Irion. Reagan. Runnels. Schleicher. Sterling. Tom Green.	*** ** ** ** ** ** ** ** ** ** ** **	800 * * 980 **** 3,615	1,065 2,059 208 870 * 3,193 155 * 5,152	1,427 3,430 286 848 * 5,379 515 1,127 6,804

THE POPULATION OF EACH COUNTY IN THE CONCHO AREA IN 1870, 1880, 1890, AND 1900, RESPECTIVELY

Included in Tom Green County.
 Included in Bexar District of Bexar County.
 Census report indicated no population.
 Included in Crockett County.

It will be noted from the above table that the census reports for 1870 did not indicate any population in either of the nine counties in the Concho region. Runnels and Concho Counties had been created, but seven of the counties were

⁴³Abstract of the Twelfth Census of the United States (third edition), 1900, 1, 170-172; <u>Statistics of the Popula-</u> tion of the United States at the Tenth Census, June 1, 1880, 1, 663-664.

then included in the Bexar District of Bexar County. Runnels and Concho Counties had been created, but none of the counties had been organized by that time, and consequently no returns were made for these counties. The Bexar District contained a great deal of West Texas other than the Concho Country, but evidently most, if not all, of the population was confined to the Concho area. The population of the entire region, therefore, increased from about one thousand in 1870 to about twenty thousand in 1900. By 1880 Tom Green County had been organized and included the present counties of Coke, Glasscock, Irion, Reagan, and Sterling. By 1890 Reagan and Sterling Counties were still a part of Tom Green County. By 1900 Reagan County was the only county still a part of Tom Green. Concho and Runnels Counties were at no time a part of Tom Green, but were not organized in 1870.

The increase in population and the spread of settlements in the area are also reflected in the number and location of the United States post offices. Table 4 shows the United States post offices in the Concho region which had been established up to and including 1880.

In this table it will be seen that the center of population in 1880 was in the present Tom Green County. Four of the eight post offices of that year were located in the present Tom Green County, and three of them, Ben Ficklin, Fort Concho, and San Angelo, were located within three miles

TABLE 4

THE POST OFFICES IN THE CONCHO AREA IN 1880 AND THE COUNTY IN WHICH EACH WAS LOCATED*

Post Office

County

Fort Chadbourne	(later in Coke County)			Tom Green
Fort Concho	• • • • • • • • • • • •		-	Tom Green
Knickerbocker .				Tom Green
raint Rock	* * * * * * * * * * * *			Concho
Kunnels			•	Runnels
San Angelo				Tom Green
Sherwood (later	in Irion County)	٠	٠	Tom Green

*Burke's Texas Almanac, 1882, pp. 142-149.

of the present San Angelo. Knickerbocker was located about eighteen miles southwest of San Angelo. Fort Chadbourne was located in the portion of Tom Green County later to be organized as the County of Coke and was about fifty miles northeast of San Angelo, while Sherwood was in the future Irion County about twenty miles southwest of that city. Runnels was in Runnels County about ten miles north of the present city of Ballinger, and Paint Rock was located in the northern part of Concho County.

By 1900 the population had increased not only in Tom Green County but also in the counties surrounding it. Table 5 shows the post offices in the Concho area by 1900.

It will be noted that only four of the original post offices found in the Concho region in 1880 (Table 4) were in existence in 1900, Ben Ficklin and Fort Concho having been discontinued as post offices. A flood had washed Ben Ficklin

TABLE 5

THE POST OFFICES IN THE CONCHO AREA IN 1900 AND THE COUNTY IN WHICH EACH WAS LOCATED*

Post Office County Arden . . Irion Ballinger . . . Runnels . ٠ ٠ Bronte . Coke Christoval Tom Green . . Eden . . • • Concho Eldorado . Schleicher . . . Fort Chadbourne . . Coke Garden City . . . Glasscock . Knickerbocker . . Tom Green ٠ . Mereta Tom Green . ٠ Miles Station . • . Runnels . . . Millersview . . Concho Paint Rock . . Concho Robert Lee . . Coke Rowena . . . Runnels . Rudd . . . • • • Schleicher . ٠ . San Angelo Tom Green . ٠ Sherwood . . . Irion Silver . . Coke . Sterling City . ٠ . Sterling . ٠ ÷ . . Stiles Reagan Tennyson . . Coke . . . Vale . Runnels Water Valley . . Tom Green . Wingate Runnels ٠ • . .

*Texas Almanac, 1904, pp. 44-53.

away in 1882, and the county seat had been moved to San Angelo. Fort Concho had been abandoned in 1887. The post offices in the area had increased from eight in 1880 to twenty-five in 1900. From the above table it can be seen that counties other than Tom Green in the Concho area were settling up, and the Concho Country was giving promise of great progress and development in the years ahead.

By the close of the century the Concho Country, while far from being fully developed, had made a splendid start and was well on its way to take its position among other progressive sections of the state. The Indians were gone, as were the buffaloes; the railroads had reached the region and hundreds of settlers were trickling into the area. Ranching had become a well established industry, and San Angelo was the leading cattle, sheep, wool, hide, and pecan center of West Texas. Other counties of the Concho area were settling Villages were growing into towns, trails were being up. widened into roads, and barbed wire fences were to be seen where once the cattle roamed freely. Schools and churches were established, but like other institutions of the region, only a beginning had been made and much was left for the future to develop. Some farming was done, especially along the creeks and rivers, but the region was still primarily the land of the cattlemen. The Concho Country held promise, however, of other thriving industries which would undoubtedly be developed with the coming of the new century.

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