

*(from the 1859 Texas Almanac)*

## THE INDIAN RESERVES OF TEXAS.

The State of Texas, by Act of the Legislature, set apart twelve leagues of land, upon which the Texas Indians were to be settled by the U.S. Government. Said twelve leagues, or 55,728 acres of land, to be reserved to the United States for the use and benefit of the Texas Indians exclusively. Under the supervision of Maj. R. S. Neighbors, eight leagues of land were located on the Brazos River, below the junction of the Clear Fork and Main Brazos, and about fifteen miles below Fort Belknap. This Reservation is called the Brazos Agency, and contains about eleven hundred souls, consisting of Caddoes, Anadahkoes, Wacoës, Tahwacanoës and Tonkahuas. There are other Indians than those tribes named, but they are enumerated as Caddoes chiefly. On this Reserve there are six hundred acres of land in successful cultivation in wheat and corn. The mode of culture is the same, or similar to that of the Americans. These Brazos Reserve Indians have made extraordinary progress in civilization, since their settlement in 1853; and are very honest, trustworthy and industrious. They have a school, under the charge of Mr. Ellis Combes. Mr. C. reports fifty scholars in regular attendance; and, judging from the interest taken in this educational enterprise by the Old Indians, he is inclined to the opinion that good results will come of it. On the Reservation there are several good houses built expressly for the transaction of all and any business connected with the Indians. These buildings are situated near the centre of the Reserve, in a very pretty mesquit valley, the approach to which affords a most lovely and sightly landscape. Capt. S. P. Ross, an old Texian, and a worthy man, is the Special Agent of the United States Government, in charge of the Brazos Agency. Capt. Ross' long experience on the frontier and superior knowledge of the Indian character, eminently fits him for the position he occupies. His salary is \$1500 per annum.

The Comanche Reserve is about sixty miles distant from the Brazos Agency, and is located on the Clear Fork of the Brazos River, forty-five miles above its confluence with the Main Brazos. Their Reserve extends over four leagues of land, and contains four hundred souls — all Comanches, known as the Southern band of that tribe. Their head chief is a good man, and has been a valuable auxiliary in the reclamation of these Indians from savage life. He is known by the name of Ketemesie. The Comanches have not made the same progress as the Brazos River Indians — not that they are any more indolent or lazy, but because of their total estrangement heretofore from the manners and customs of the white man. The Indians of the Brazos Reserve have always lived near, and frequently among the white settlers, while the Comanches have been outside of all intercourse of a friendly nature. This agency is furnished with all necessary buildings, and, like the Brazos Agency, is supplied with competent and trustworthy farmers and artisans. The Comanches have a good crop this year, and will, most probably, make sufficient to bread themselves. Col. M. Leeper is their Agent, at a salary of \$1500 per annum.

The United States Government has been very liberal in its appropriations for the benefit of the reclaimed savage, and has spared neither trouble or expense in the furtherance of the peace policy — a policy which is now beginning to show its good effects.

It does justice to the Indian — is due to the cause of humanity, and reflects great credit upon the originators thereof.

Maj. R. S. Neighbors is the Supervising Agent of the Government for all the Texas Indians, at a salary of \$2000 per annum. The Major is too well known throughout the country for any attempt to be made here eulogistic of his public services. To him, more than any other, should be ascribed the success of the Indian feeding policy in Texas. The duties appertaining to the office of Supervising Agent, are very onerous and responsible, and not unfrequently hazardous. His course towards the Indians must be scrupulously correct and straightforward; there cannot be one jot or tittle of deviation at all from the line of policy marked out. The Indian is liberal in extending his confidence, but it *must* be carefully cherished. His memory is the rock of ages, there is no “two ways” about it. Maj. Neighbors disburses annually about \$80,000 for the use of the Texas Indians.

Texas has wisely granted jurisdiction to the United States, over ten miles adjoining each Reserve. This is to prevent the sale or traffic in intoxicating liquors. The civil authority has jurisdiction in all criminal cases, on both Reserves; as well have the Indians police regulations, of the strictest sort, for their own government. Their immediate agents are constituted magistrates, before whom all or any offenders are brought for trial. There is less theft or disturbance, or any kind, among these people, than there is among the same population of Americans. Suffice it that the Feeding or Peace Policy of Texas is a success. It has demonstrated, beyond a doubt, that Indians can be civilized and reclaimed. The Brazos Reserve Indians have tended their own crops, which will compare favorably with any in the State; and have also kept from fifty to one hundred men on ranging service during the season, and have been great protection to the frontier.

Charles E. Barnard, Esq., is the authorized Government Indian Trader for both Reserves. Mr. B. has been trading with the Indians on the frontier for a period of fifteen years or more. His is well known to all the Indians in Texas, and enjoys their entire confidence. It is nothing but justice to Mr. Barnard to say that his services have been invaluable to the Indian Agents in carrying out the views of the Federal Government. The trading with the Indians is not so profitable now as it was some years past, when the Indians depended upon their hunting for means of support. The trade in skins and peltries is entirely stopped, and the Indians now look to the products of their farms and stock-raising for support. They have generally good stocks of hogs, cattle and horses, and are doing well with them.

A. J. B.