

*(from the 1858 Texas Almanac)*

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

**SOIL.**—It may be observed in regard to the soil of Texas, that it varies very greatly. The size of the State is so great as to embrace within itself, all elevations of soil, from the sea line up to 5,000 feet above it, lying over ten degrees of latitude. The temperature also varies considerably. Every species of soil, adapted to nearly every species of production, may be found in the State. The depth of soil over the State may be safely averaged at eighteen inches, and there is this in the soil, that it holds moisture for a long time. Even if Texas be liable to drought, it must be remembered that its soil stands drought better than that of any other State.

**FENCING.**—The rail fence is in universal use. Where both timber and labor are furnished, rails cost, say one dollar and twenty-five cents per hundred, upon an average. The mere labor alone would be about seventy-five cents to the hundred rails. Vast quantities of cedar, for fencing, are found along the rivers and creeks, and cedar rails once laid, last a life-time. Even the scrubby mountain cedar has been cut up by the saw, furnishing boards for cheap and durable fencing. Wire fencing will not do. Bois d'Arc is good in red sandy soil, such as is found in Northern Texas. Walls of concrete have been proposed, but none put in successful operation.

**HEALTH.**—Upon the coast good water is rather scarce. Cisterns, however, are being generally introduced. The yellow fever has occasionally appeared in some few places, but in all seasons, save midsummer, and as a general rule, even then, health is very good upon the coast. Along the river bottoms, and in low, wet places, chills and fevers prevail occasionally. A little prudence in placing the residence high, dry and exposed to the wind, as well as care in the use of water, prevents the prevalence of sickness to any great degree. Upon the high prairies to the North, there is a tendency to pneumonia, and will be until the houses are built more with regard to comfort, than has been the case. Diseases are as mild, and as easily managed, and health is as good, to say the least, as is to be found in any State in the Union.

**TRANSPORTATION.**—A vast proportion of transportation is done by ox-teams. The price varies according to the season of the year, and the condition of the grass, ranging from one cent to a cent and a quarter per pound per 100 miles.

**STOCK.**—All the common kinds of stock are found in Texas, and in all parts of the State. Mast is found almost everywhere, and fails only about once in five years, consisting of pecan and oak. The annual increase of hogs and sheep may be set down at from one hundred to one hundred and seventy per cent; of cattle, from thirty to thirty-three per cent. In Connecticut, it cost twenty-five dollars to raise a cow; fifteen dollars in Indiana; twelve dollars and fifty cents in Illinois. In Texas, it costs to raise a cow about what it does to raise a chicken. Murrain is almost the only disease to which stock are liable; the loss

from it and all other diseases being only about four per cent, at the utmost. It is rarely necessary even to salt the cattle, as salt licks abound. The laws in regard to cattle stealing are very stringent. Where labor in tending cattle is hired, it costs two dollars a day during actual labor. Sometimes a third, sometimes a fourth of the increase is given for tending. Stock raising is considered fully as profitable as any other business — often very much more so.

**WATER.**—By digging, water is obtained generally from twenty-five to thirty feet below the surface. Springs are very common, and in Middle and Northern Texas very numerous, and often remarkably copious. The declivity of Texas, from North to South, insures a plentiful water power in the interior, and locations suitable for manufacturing purposes, are without number. For stock purposes, there is generally an abundance of water. Even when many streams cease running in dry seasons, water is found in holes in creek beds, and over the prairies. The rains are most abundant in winter and early spring. In regard to Artesian wells, there was one bored at Corpus Christi some years ago. The boring was through sand and clay, to the depth of three hundred and eighty feet, when a mineral water was obtained, which rose readily and plentifully to the surface. Sometime ago, a Joint Stock Company was formed, and an Artesian well is now being bored in Austin City by this Company—Mr. Cooper doing the work. The well is upon the eminence on Congress Avenue, near the site of the Old Capitol. Mr. Cooper furnishes the following formations, as having been passed through so far :

Alluvial Soil, - - - - -	1 foot.
Common Limestone, - - - - -	18 feet.
Blue Limestone, - - - - -	58 "
Bituminous bed, saturated with Petroleum oil	24 "
Carboniferous Slate, - - - - -	9 "
Marble, - - - - -	35 "
Blue clay, with shells and pyrites, - - - - -	62 "
Conglomerate with flint and shells, - - - - -	61 "
Silecious Slate with pyrites, lime and shells, - - - - -	1 foot.
Total, - - - - -	269 feet.

The Legislature of 1856, made an appropriation of \$5,000 towards boring an Artesian well in the Capitol Ground in Austin. Under the supervision of Mr. Peterson, the work reached a depth of one hundred and forty feet, through formations the same as above.

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