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THE ALABAMA INDIANS OF TEXAS

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Near the Big Thicket in Polk County, Texas, lives a small remnant of the Alibimu and Koasati Indians—commonly known as the Alabamas and Coshattis. The two tribes are related, being of Muskhogean stock, and both were members of the Upper Creek Confederacy.[1] The Alabamas appear in history for the first time upon the coming of De Soto. Biedma, one of the chroniclers of the unfortunate expedition of the Spanish explorer, tells us that after leaving Mavila or Maubila, they marched to the northwest until they reached the province of the Alibamo,[2] which was probably somewhere within the limits of the present state of Mississippi.[3] The Gentleman of Elvas states that the governor in April, 1541, lodged at a small village called Alimamu, where they searched for corn.[4] Ranjel calls this village Limamu.[5] Here the Alabamas had built a stockade manned by three hundred warriors to resist the advance of the Spaniards, but after a sharp engagement, De Soto carried the fort, though with considerable loss. Garcilaso, in

[1]Hodge, Frederick W., *ed.*, *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1907-10, I, 719-20.

[2]Bourne, Edward Gaylord, *ed.*, *Narratives of the Career of Hernando de Soto in the Conquest of Florida*, New York, 1922, II, 24.

[3]Pickett, Alfred James, *History of Alabama and incidentally of Georgia and Mississippi; from the Earliest Period*, in Owen, Thomas McAdory, *Annals of Alabama, 1819-1900, Birmingham*, 1900, 44-5.

[4]Bourne, Edward Gaylord, *ed.*, *Narratives of the Career of Hernando de Soto in the Conquest of Florida*, I, 108-10.

[5]*Ibid.*, II, 136.

his version of the story, calls this fort Fort Alibamo.[6] The chroniclers also state that De Soto and his men came to an island village Coste (also Costehe and Acoste), which was, perhaps, an upper village of the Coshattis on the Tennessee River.[7]

After the passing of De Soto, these Indians are again lost to view until the appearance of the French in the Gulf region. The Alabamas and Coshattis, having moved eastward during the interval of a century and more, were then living near the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers, the two main tributaries of the Alabama. Here, together with the neighboring Indians, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Cherokees, Mobilians, and others, the Alabamas were trading with the Spanish at Pensacola, and across the Alleghenies with the English of Carolina, exchanging their peltries for lemburg cloth and blankets of white wool.[8] Iberville, governor of Louisiana, quick to see the value of this Indian trade in holding the province for France, in 1702, established Fort Louis, the first site of the present city of Mobile, where, with its easy water communication inland by way of the Alabama and Tombigbee rivers, could be debouched a vast Indian trade, once the friendship of the Indians was gained. French presents and French promises had their effect, and soon Mobilians, Choctaws, and many other tribes were the friends and allies of the French. Not so the Alabamas. In 1702, in 1704, and in 1708, they were at war with the French.[9] In the last year the whole Creek Confederacy was aroused, probably by the English, for the War of the Spanish Succession was then in progress, and Creeks, Cherokees, Catawbas, and Alabamas descended the river against the French at Mobile. But for some unknown reason the contemplated attack was not made, and the Indians,

[6]Garcilaso de la Vega, *La Florida del Inca Historia del Adelantado, Hernando de Soto, Gobernador y Capitan General, del Reino de la Florida. Y de Otros Heroicos Caballeros Españoles, e Indios,* Madrid, 1723, 173.

[7]Swanton, J. R., *Early History of the Creek Indians and their Neighbors;* Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 73, 201-2.

[8]Rowland and Sanders, *eds., Mississippi Provincial Archives,* 1729-40, Jackson, 1927, 260-3.

[9]Rowland, Dunbar, *ed., Mississippi Provincial Archives, 1763-6,* Nashville, 1911, 81-2; Rowland and Sanders, *eds., Mississippi Provincial Archives, 1729-40,* I, 193; Martin, F. X., *The History of Louisiana from the Earliest Period,* New Orleans, 1882, 104-18; Hamilton, Peter J., *Colonial Mobile,* Boston, 1897, 38-9, 43-4, 49-51, 59-61; *Colonial Records of North Carolina,* Raleigh, 1886-90, II, 422.

after burning the huts of the Mobilians above Fort Louis, put back to their homeland.[10]

The English were victors in the War of the Spanish Succession, nevertheless their influence among the Southern Indians steadily declined after its close, a situation due no doubt to the disastrous Yamassee and Tuscarora wars, which do not concern us here. In 1714, the chief of the Alabamas and other chiefs of the tribes near Carolina went to Mobile and proposed that the French erect a fort among them. The opportunity was not to be lost. The site chosen was a strategic one on a bold bluff of the Coosa, a mile from the Alabama village, and the Alabamas aided in its building. Fort Toulouse it was called in honor of the Count of Toulouse, then director of the colonies; but the usual name by which it was known was *"Aux Alibamons."*[11] Adair refers to it as the "dangerous Alabahma French garrison."[12] Here Jesuit missionaries ministered to the spiritual needs of the Indians, and traders received peltries and other products of the Indian hunting grounds far and near and floated them down the river to the sea at Mobile. Fort Toulouse was the farthest inland of the French forts in the Southern province and retained its importance throughout the French régime. It stood as a signpost to the English, protecting French territory and French trade.[13]

The long struggle between England and France for supremacy in America came to an end in 1763, and the country of the Alabamas passed to the conquerors. There was then a westward movement of many tribes, for the savages, warned by the French, held fast the idea that the English sought not only to secure their lands but to exterminate the race.[14] Some of the Alabamas remained in their homeland; others, how many it is impossible to state, migrated westward. Bossu tells us that they left their former haunts, burned

[10]Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile*, 80; Charlevoix, P. F. X., *History and General Description of New France*, translated and edited with notes by Dr. John Gilmary Shea, New York, 1900, VI, 25, 39*n*.

[11]Rowland and Sanders, *eds.*, *Mississippi Provincial Archives, 1729-40*, II, 588; Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile*, 162-4.

[12]Williams, Samuel Cole, *ed.*, *Adair's History of the American Indians*, Johnson City, Tenn., 1930, 267.

[13]*Colonial Records of North Carolina*, II, 383; Rowland and Sanders, *eds.*, *Mississippi Provincial Archives, 1729-40*, II, 358.

[14]Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile*, 183; Rowland and Sanders, *eds.*, *Mississippi Provincial Archives, 1729-40*, I, 12.

their huts and the fort which they had helped to build, cut down the fruit trees in their villages, and drifted down the river in their canoes to join the French at Mobile. Here their chief, Tamath-le-Mingo, who had been "decorated as a great chief with a medal bestowed by the King," sickened and died with these words on his lips, "I have lived like a man, I am going to die like one." He was buried with military honors by his friends, the French.[15] The Alabamas moved westward across the Mississippi, but they left their name on the region and on the stream upon whose banks they had lived so long.

A party of Alabamas consisting of forty men with their families made their first new home, according to their own tradition, on Bayou Bœuf, from which they later moved to a village in the Opelousas district.[16] A small village called Alabama was established two miles above Manchac on the Mississippi, and another at El Rapide on Red river, sixteen miles above Bayou Rapide. Those who had settled here later went higher up the stream where they raised a good crop of corn and hunted buffalo with the Caddoes. The greater number of the Alabamas went farther westward and settled a village on the Sabine.[17] This village and the village in the Opelousas district became the chief settlements of the tribe. In 1777, William Bartram, the traveller, put in to shore at Alabama, the village above Manchac, and describes it as "delightfully situated on several swelling green hills, gradually ascending from the verge of the river."[18] The Indians cultivated corn, raised hogs, horses, and cattle, and the men acted as boatmen.[19] They made

[15]Bossu, M., *Nouveaux Voyages dans l'Amérique Septentrionale, Contenant une Collection de Lettres écrites sur les lieux, par l'Auteur, à son Ami, M. Douin, Chevalier, Capitaine dans les Troupes du Roi, cidevant son Camarade dans le Nouveau Monde*, Amsterdam, 1777, 134, 139.

[16]Swanton, J. R., *Myths and Tales of the Southwestern Indians*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 88, 120; *Report of John Sibley to General H. Dearborn, April 5, 1805*, in *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, IV, 724.

[17]*Ibid.;* also Claiborne to Dearborn, November 5, 1808, in Rowland, Dunbar, *ed., Official Letter Books of W. C. C. Claiborne, 1801-16*, Jackson, 1917, 237-9.

[18]Bartram, William, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Choctaws, Containing an Account of the Soil and Natural Productions of those Regions together with Observations on the Manners of the Indians*, Dublin, 1793, 427.

[19]*Report of John Sibley* in *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, IV, 724.

reed baskets and earthenware, and the women and children gathered cotton. They were considered harmless and quiet people.[20]

About 1790, a large number of Coshattis followed the Alabamas westward.[21] Their village in the homeland had been about three miles below the confluence of the Coosa and Tallapoosa, near where the modern town of Coosada now stands.[22] That they do not figure largely in the chronicles of the period of French rule may be explained by the fact that the French applied the name *Alibamons* to many tribes living near Fort Toulouse.[23] In 1799, three hundred men of the Coshattis were settled on Bayou Chicot in the Opelousas district. But they became concentrated in two villages, one on Red river in the land of the Caddoes,[24] another on the east bank of the Sabine, eighty miles south of Natchitoches. There were said to be six hundred in this latter village.[25]

Hardly had the Alabamas and Coshattis become settled in their new homes before Louisiana was purchased by the United States. Realizing the value of an Indian trade ministering to a population of from thirty to forty thousand natives, controlled hitherto by Spain, the Americans endeavored to preserve friendly relations with the Indians. William Claiborne, governor, and Dr. John Sibley, Indian agent for Orleans Territory, handled the Indians with tact and kept the peace.[26] Natchitoches, founded a century earlier by the dashing chevalier St. Denis, became the chief Indian post, and here Alabamas and Coshattis traded their bear oil and deerskins for provisions and blankets. It was a region of almost

[20]*Ibid.;* also Claiborne to Dearborn, November 5, 1808, in *Official Letter Books of W. C. C. Claiborne, 1801-16*, 237-9.

[21]Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile*, 159; Hodge, *ed., Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*, I, 362-3; *Report of John Sibley* in *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, IV, 724.

[22]Hodge, *ed., Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*, I, 719.

[23]*Ibid.*, I, 362-3.

[24]Morse, Jedidiah, *A Report to the Secretary of War of the United States, on Indian Affairs, Comprising a Narrative of a Tour Performed in the Summer of 1820, under a Commission from the President of the United States, for the Purpose of Ascertaining,—for the Use of the Government, the Actual State of the Indian Tribes in our Country*, New Haven, 1822, 257.

[25]*Report of John Sibley* in *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, IV, 724.

[26]Abel, Annie Heloise, *ed., A Report from Natchitoches in 1807 by Dr. John Sibley*, New York, Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 1922, 5-9.

virgin hunting, and all went well with them for a time. One man alone on the Sabine killed four hundred deer and sold them at forty dollars a hundred. A small party of Coshattis, including only fifteen persons, men, women, and children, killed one hundred and eighteen bears on the upper Sabine. A bear usually yielded eight or twelve gallons of oil, and the skins sold for a dollar each.[27]

But troubles soon came. Four Alabama warriors who were charged with the murder of a citizen of Opelousas were sentenced to death.[28] This outrage was the first offence of the little tribe, and their conduct was exemplary. They promptly delivered up the murderers to the territorial authorities, the father of one of the guilty being among the most active in bringing them to justice. A Choctaw had recently been killed by a white man who had not been apprehended, and the neighboring Indians were greatly agitated over the Alabama affair. This inclined Claiborne to clemency. The exercise of mercy, he thought (and the better class of the people was with him) would not only prevent an Indian uprising and the shedding of innocent blood, but would also be an evidence of the disposition of the United States to be just and merciful toward the Indians. He pardoned two of the unfortunate Alabamas; the remaining two were hanged on August 13, 1808.[29]

Disaffection had broken out among the Coshattis. Tom, brother of Red Shoes, one of the chiefs of the tribe, was killed at the salt works near Natchitoches by a white man, all efforts for whose arrest had failed.[30] Sibley's presents of provisions seemed to appease the relations of Tom, but in a few days the two chiefs, Pia Mingo and Red Shoes, with thirty-three men from the Sabine village, appeared at Natchitoches and demanded satisfaction, Red Shoes saying that he could not think of losing his brother for nothing. Sibley, although upset at the demonstration, felt obliged to respond, and presented Red Shoes with a hat and half-regimental blue coat, faced with red, which he had had made of some moth-eaten cloth. A new element was introduced into the situation when

[27] *Report of John Sibley* in *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, IV, 724.

[28] Claiborne to Madison, July 11, 1808, in *Official Letter Books of W. C. C. Claiborne, 1801-16*, 183-4.

[29] Claiborne to Dearborn, August 8, and November 8, 1808; Claiborne to Sibley, August 9, 1808; Claiborne to Jefferson, October 5, 1808; in *Official Letter Books of W. C. C. Claiborne, 1801-16*, 185-7, 237-9, 188-9, 222-4.

[30] Abel, *ed., A Report from Natchitoches in 1807 by Dr. John Sibley*, 12-3.

a young Coshatti, who had been at Natchitoches with Red Shoes, killed a white man, confessed the deed, and admitted that he had wanted to commit the murder at Natchitoches, but the chiefs had restrained him.[31] There were rumors afloat that some of the neighboring tribes were gathering at the lower Coshatti village for the war dance,[32] and Pia Mingo had gone to the upper village, ostensibly to persuade them to come and live on the Sabine. Sibley, however, believed that he was sent by Cordero, the Spanish governor at San Antonio, as part of a plan to stir up the Indians west of the Mississippi against the Americans. These tribes were to be moved across the Red and the Sabine where they would make a formidable barrier to the invasion of Texas.[33]

Immediately after the murder, the Coshattis in the lower village began cutting their corn preparatory to abandoning their homes and moving into the dominions of Spain.[34] They crossed the Sabine in 1807 and settled on the Trinity about three leagues below the village of Salcedo.[35] On Sibley's urgent request that they come to Natchitoches for a friendly visit, they sent him the following message:

> That they were fully sensible of Our goodness towards them, and were greatly distressed at what had happened and they would never let go our hands or throw away Our talks; but they had been sent for by Governor Cordero of St Antonio, & had promised to go & See him, they did not know for what; but that they would Come to Natchitoches as soon as they returned from St Antonio and do their endeavour to have every thing Settled; but they Could not then think of giving up the Young Man who had Committed the Murder the fact they did not pretend to deny . . .[36]

A few years after their immigration to Texas, a party of Coshattis under their chief Rollins, a half-breed, joined the Magee-Gutierrez expedition. They were in Kemper's army against the Royalists at

[31]*Ibid.*, 14-5, 19-20, 32-9, 46-7.

[32]*Ibid.*, 16-7.

[33]*Ibid.*, 23-4; also Cox, I. J., *The Louisiana-Texas Frontier* in *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XVII, 154-69.

[34]Abel, *ed.*, *A Report from Natchitoches in 1807 by Dr. John Sibley*, 31-2.

[35]Undated MS., "Don Samuel Davenport's Report of the Indian Nations of the Province of Texas" in Bexar Archives, University of Texas Library.

[36]Abel., *ed.*, *A Report from Natchitoches in 1807 by Dr. John Sibley*, 67-8.

San Antonio and fought bravely in the battle of Salado and again at the Medina.[37]

The Alabamas in the village near the Sabine also moved across the river—the exact date is not known—and established themselves on the Neches three leagues above the junction of that stream with the Angelina. Their number was about six hundred.[38] Here they came to be known as friendly and peaceful Indians, and Austin thought their assistance and that of the Coshattis would be useful in protecting the frontier.[39] Eastern Texas offered an inviting field to the Indians in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Revolutionary, filibustering, and piratical operations after 1810 had practically depopulated the country so far as the white man was concerned, and Shawnees, Biloxies, Cherokees, Creeks, Delawares, and other tribes crossed the Sabine and the Red to find new homes. Of these the Cherokees, the most civilized of the tribes, became the dominant Indians of East Texas.

We get a definite picture of the Alabamas and Coshattis, their mode of living, and something of their manners and customs from a census of the Texas Indians taken in April, 1831, by J. Francisco Madero, commissioner of the state of Coahuila and Texas.[40] The Coshattis, numbering four hundred and twenty-six, lived in two villages on the east bank of the Trinity, not far apart, and about forty miles from the mouth. In the lower village consisting of thirty or forty detached houses, there were fifty-six families, fifty-seven single men, and sixty-four single women. In the upper village there were twenty-five houses of wood, the rest were of inferior material, and here lived sixty-four families, thirty-one single men and forty single women. The number in each family is not given. Long King was the principal chief of the tribe, and there were two sub-chiefs, Nekima and Keleite. The Alabamas

[37]Kenney, M. M., *The Indian Tribes of Texas,* in Wooten, Dudley Goodall, *ed., A Comprehensive History of Texas, 1685-1897;* Dallas, 1898, I, 717-83; Brown, John Henry, *History of Texas from 1685 to 1892;* St. Louis, I, 57.

[38]Don Samuel Davenport's report of the Indian nations of the province of Texas; undated manuscript in Bexar Archives, University of Texas.

[39]Austin to [Alcalde], May [24], 1824; Austin to Mateo Ahumada, April 30, 1826, in Barker, E. C., *ed., The Austin Papers* in *Annual Report* of the American Historical Association for 1919; Washington, Government Printing Office, 1924-8, II, 800, 1315-6.

[40]Copy of a portion of Madero's report is in Mier y Teran to Ecsmo. Sr. Srio. de Relaciones Ints. y Exteriores, July 4, 1831. Fomento Archivo, Legajo no. 4, Exp. núm. 10, Transcripts, Texas State Library.

were situated on the west bank of the Neches in three small villages, the principal one being what was known as the old Peach-tree-village. They had sixty-nine well-constructed houses in their villages, according to the census record, and they numbered in all one hundred and three families, one hundred single men and sixty-four single women, children not counted. Their chiefs were Tallustah (Valiant) and Oppaya. Both tribes had a goodly number of beeves and horses, and plenty of hogs. They planted corn, beans, sweet potatoes, and peas, and raised enough for themselves as well as a surplus to sell and to use for the entertainment of strangers. In the hunting season the Indians left their villages and with their women and children, their blankets, cooking utensils, and tents, they went deep into the woods to enjoy the pleasures of the chase. There they procured the beef, bear-meat, and venison on which they lived during the winter months.[41] The dressed skins and bear oil they now sold at Nacogdoches.

There was a large house in each village devoted to their religious cult. Here the Indians assembled each year to sanctify the mulberries and other ripening fruits and grains and present them as a thank-offering to their gods, which they said was according to their ancient custom.[42] The celebration and rejoicing lasted several days, after which time they ate of the fruits they had presented. Failure to abstain from the fruits until after the offering was punished by a fine of one deerskin or more according to the offence. This ceremony of sanctifying the first fruits was called the busk, from *poskita* or *boskita,* meaning a fast. The principal busk of the Texas Alabamas seems to have been their green corn dance usually held in June.[43] Both tribes used fire-water, but the Coshattis were more inclined to drink to excess than the Alabamas.[44]

Before many years elapsed, the Americans were settling rapidly in Eastern Texas. The immigrant tribes, with the whites pressing

[41]*Ibid.;* also Holley, Mrs. Mary Austin, *Texas, Observations, Historical, Geographical and Descriptive in a Series of Letters;* Baltimore, 1833, 97-8.

[42]Williams, *ed.,* Adair's *History of the American Indians,* 267; Swanton, J. R., *Early History of the Creek Indians and Their Neighbors,* Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 73, 203.

[43]Swanton, J. R., *Social Organization and Social Usages of the Creek Confederacy* in *Annual Report* of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1924-5, 546.

[44]*Ibid.;* also Padilla, Juan Antonio, *Report on the barbarous Indians of the Province of Texas,* translated by Hatcher, M. A., in *Southwestern Historical Quarterly,* XXIII, 50.

closer about them, sought to secure from the Mexican government titles to the lands they occupied between the Sabine and the Trinity. These lands had already been conveyed to others,[45] but the government was willing to grant to the Indians vacant lands along the frontier, where they could form a cordon of defense against the barbarous tribes of the West.[46] The Indians would not consent to remove to the frontier, and Mexican control of Texas passed with the immigrant tribes having no legal claim to the soil.

When the Texas Revolution began in 1835, the provisional government recognized the importance of keeping the Indians of the East quiet, lest they join forces with the Mexicans. To that end, a ranger force was created to protect the frontier and keep the Indians in check, and a commission, consisting of Sam Houston, John Forbes, and John Cameron, was appointed, authorized to guarantee to the Cherokees and their associate bands such rights or claims as they may have obtained from the Mexican government. Neither Alabamas nor Coshattis took any part in the war. The Alabamas have a tradition that Houston, when on his way to Washington-on-the-Brazos, visited their chief in the old Peach-tree-village, informed him of the approaching struggle, and advised that the tribe remain neutral, for defeat would mean their ruin. Just before the battle of San Jacinto, as army and people were fleeing eastward, the Alabamas left for Louisiana.[47] The Coshattis have a similar tradition, but they remained in their villages on the Trinity.[48] They slaughtered their cattle to feed the starving women and children, and after the battle, it is said that Colita, their chief, carried the news of the victory to the border of Louisiana and brought the Texans back home.[49] The Alabamas returned after the war was over and located at what was called the Fenced-in-village. According to Morfit's report to Jackson in 1836 on conditions in Texas, there were some twelve thousand aborigines in the new nation at the close of the Revolution. Of these there were

[45]Gammel, H. P. N., *Laws of Texas*, I, 304.

[46]*Ibid.*, I, 410.

[47]*Hearings before the Committee on Indian Affairs, House of Representatives*, 70 Cong., 1 Sess., in H. R. 5479, 10.

[48]Kenney, M. M., *The Indian Tribes of Texas* in Wooten, *ed.*, *A Comprehensive History of Texas, 1685-1897*, I, 731.

[49]*Senate Journal*, 41 Legislature, Reg. Sess., 1929, 762; *House Journal*, 6 Legislature, Adj. Sess., 331-2; also Lesesne, S. M., *Tribe of Indians living in Eastern Part of Texas* in *Dallas News*, February 26, 1911.

about three hundred and fifty Coshattis with some eighty warriors living on the Trinity; and of the Alabamas, sixty warriors and two hundred and fifty others, all living on the Neches.[50]

Notwithstanding Houston's conciliatory Indian policy, the East Texas Indians were restless and discontented during the early years of the Republic, and there were constant alarms and depredations along the frontier. People returning after the "runaway scrape" and new settlers in search of lands often encroached upon the Indian territory. The treaty made with the Cherokees and their associate bands in 1836 failed of ratification, which added to the general unrest. Many of the Indians were incited by secret agents to join the Mexicans and involve Texas in a general Indian war. The crisis was reached in what is known as Cordova's rebellion, which was crushed with the defeat of the Indians and Mexicans at the battle of Kickapoo Village, October 16, 1838; and in the Cherokee war which resulted from Lamar's policy of removing the immigrant tribes who had no claim to the soil. The Alabamas and Coshattis were among the associate bands of the Cherokees, but they lived quietly in their villages while this turmoil was raging without, although some of the Coshattis were in the battle of Kickapoo Village.[51] With the Alabamas at this time were a few Biloxies and Muscogies (Creeks), who had been in Texas only two or three years.[52]

Lamar, whose Indian policy was not conciliatory, was opposed to removing the Alabamas and Coshattis. In his message of November 12, 1839, he states:

To the Coshattis and Alabamas, who seem to have some equitable claims upon the country for the protection of their property and persons, the hand of friendship has been extended, with a promise that they shall not be interrupted in the peaceful enjoyment of their possessions, so long as they continue the same amicable relations towards the Govt. which they have hitherto preserved.[53]

[50]*Senate Document*, 24 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 20, 13-4.

[51]Brown, John Henry, *History of Texas, 1685-1892*, II, 56; also Rusk to Bowles, October 20, 1838, in Gulick and Elliott, *eds., The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar*, Austin, II, 255.

[52]Report of Committee on Indian Affairs, October 12, 1837, in MS., Indian Papers, Texas State Library.

[53]Smither, *ed., Journals of the Fourth Congress of the Republic of Texas*, 1839-40, Austin, I, 11-2.

The Alabamas and Coshattis, however, made no pretensions to the soil except the right of occupancy. In 1840, they addressed a petition to congress for lands somewhere between the Neches and the Trinity; the Alabamas desiring land around the Fenced-in-village, and the Coshattis at some point on the Trinity, preferably at the Baptiste village.[54]

A relief act for these Indians was passed by the fourth congress, granting them a reserve for their exclusive use and benefit; two leagues for the Alabamas, including the Fenced-in-village, and two leagues for the Coshattis, taking in the Baptiste and Keleite villages. The government was at all times to have exclusive jurisdiction over the Indians, and an agent was to be appointed for the two tribes. The act also carried a provision creating a reserve thirty miles square on the frontier, to which all friendly Indians within the Republic should be removed as soon as circumstances would permit.[55] Thomas G. Stubblefield was appointed agent and selected the lands intended for each tribe. Ebenezer Jewell, the surveyor, immediately surveyed the lower league for the Coshattis, but owing to high water and sickness, did not complete the surveys until some time later.[56]

In 1844, Joseph L. Ellis, then agent for the two tribes, found that the lower league of the Coshattis was claimed by Hamilton Washington, who was willing, however, that the Indians should stay there and cultivate their fields.[57] They had made a good crop of corn, and at Ellis's suggestion the Indian Bureau sent them presents of hoes, axes, plows, wedges, and trace-chains; so for a time they seemed contented.[58] The upper league of the Coshattis was completely occupied by whites who refused to give up any part of the land. Thus dispossessed, a party of these Indians left their homes on the Trinity and joined their brethren on Red river.[59]

[54]*Ibid.*, I, 62-3.

[55]Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, II, 371.

[56]Stubblefield to Abner Lipscomb, November 2, 1840, in MS., Indian Papers, Texas State Library.

[57]Ellis to Western, December 8, 1844, in MS., Indian Papers, Texas State Library.

[58]Western to Ellis, May 31, 1845, in MS., Indian Papers, Texas State Library.

[59]Thomas F. Smith to Anson Jones, January 29, 1844, in MS., Indian Papers, Texas State Library.

There were left of the Coshattis in Texas about fifty warriors, as many women, and some thirty-five or forty boys and girls.

Ellis visited the Alabama town and found it entirely settled by whites, with no Indians at all there. When the surveyor appeared to run off their land, the Alabamas, taking it for granted that it was for the white man, without a word of explanation, picked up and left for Opelousas. But they wanted to live in Texas, so they returned to find their two leagues in the possession of the whites and the graves of their fathers and children in the hands of strangers. They had lost not only their land, about two hundred acres of which were cleared and under cultivation, but also their cattle and horses over an hundred head.[60] The Indians settled on a league about thirty miles west of Town Bluff on the Neches in Liberty county where they put in cultivation some one hundred acres and built thirty or more cabins. But shortly after they were forced to leave and they became homeless wanderers. The tribe at this time is said to have consisted of one hundred and seven men with their families and thirty-two young men.[61]

The Alabamas were gentle and friendly and lived to themselves in peace. The Coshattis were sometimes involved in troubles with the whites, and their chiefs took part in the talks and councils of the other tribes with the whites, and received their quota of presents of blue flaps, sheeting, blankets, hoes, beads, and tobacco.[62] In 1839, some of the citizens of Liberty county accused the Coshattis of horse-stealing, and five of the Baptiste Indians were murdered.[63] Colutta, the hundred-year-old counsellor of the tribe, alarmed for the safety of his people, sent the following "talk" to Lamar:

Tell the *Big Captain* of your nation I am a Friend to the *White Man* and have been so always; but the Indians are mad, five of the

[60]Petition of Alabama Indians, December 13, 1853, in MS., Memorial No. 19, File 1, Archives, State Department.

[61]Ellis to Western, December 8, 1844, in MS., Indian Papers, Texas State Library.

[62]Distribution of Presents under $100.00 to each Tribe; Minutes of a Council Called for the Purpose of Establishing a Nominal Line until a Treaty Could Be Made with the Comanches, May 13, 1844, both in MS., Indian Papers, Texas State Library; also Rusk to Bowles, August 28, 1838, in Gulick and Elliott, *eds.*, *The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar*, II, 211.

[63]Petition of Citizens of Liberty County, August 1, 1839, in MS., Indian Papers, Texas State Library.

Cushatta's are killed, and the balance of the Baptist Indians are now seeking safety among the Brush and trying to collect some of their horses and cows in order to retreat to some strong Nation or Town— The *White Man* accuses the Indians of stealing their Horses for an excuse to murder & Rob the Indians— This is not right and it will if persisted in cause a wound never to be heal'd, I'm now over one hundred years old. I can't take my rifle and Tomahawk and go to War, nor do I want to do so— I am the White mans friend, but will not accuse my nation wrongfully.

I have given the White man my Lands—

I have given them bread— and the former Big Captain told me that the White man should be my Friends. The white man lies, they are doing evil for good; I am for Peace and all my Indians are for peace, and if you your Big Captain is determined to murder us and destroy our property we will be compelled to surrender and die like a Brave Nation should do.

Times was, when we could have driven the White man off— but we were their Friends and did not want to hurt the White man.

. . . . . .

I will live here till I die which cannot be long and I want to know what is to become of my people—[64]

Lamar upheld the Indians. It was wrong, he said, to punish a whole tribe indiscriminately for the misdeeds of a few vicious members. War upon these weak and defenseless Indians would force them to flee for protection to the more powerful tribes on the frontier and from peaceful friends of the Republic, they would, for their own preservation, become the allies of the barbarous Indians of the West.[65]

Those Coshattis who had left their home on the Trinity had taken up their abode along the northern frontier. Some lived among the Chickasaws in the United States, a small group was collected at Daniel Rowlett's place on Red river,[66] and some, perhaps, went to the Coshatti village among the Caddoes, established many years before. Marauding bands of these Coshattis, in con-

[64]J. E. Ross to Lamar, June 10, 1839, in Gulick and Elliott, *eds.*, *The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar*, III, 16-7.

[65]President to Colutta, the Cushatta Counsellor, July 9, 1839, in MS., Indian Papers, Texas State Library; also Lamar to "The Citizens of Liberty County Residing near the Cushatta Towns and Villages," July 9, 1839, in Gulick and Elliott, *eds.*, *The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar*, III, 39-40.

[66]Sowell, Andrew Jackson, *Rangers and Pioneers of Texas with a Concise Account of the Early Settlements, Hardships, Massacres, Battles, and Wars, by which Texas was Rescued from the Rule of the Savage and Consecrated to the Empire of Civilization*, San Antonio, 1884, 17-22.

junction with the Choctaws and a few Chickasaws, descended upon the white settlements in Fannin county, robbing and plundering wherever they went. The Texans made futile overtures to the Coshattis to return and occupy the lands set apart for their use, and they also requested Major A. M. M. Upshaw, the agent to the Chickasaws, to remove the Coshattis from that nation, with equally futile results.[67] The raids continued. Incensed at these repeated depredations upon the frontier, Captain Joseph Sowell with a company of rangers crossed the river in the summer of 1841, stole upon a band of Coshattis, burned their huts, killed ten or twelve Indians, and captured the spoils they had stolen on Texas soil. A retaliatory expedition of the Coshattis resulted in the death of Captain Sowell.[68]

After the annexation of Texas, although the United States assumed responsibility for the Indians within the state, these bands of Alabamas and Coshattis remained under the protection of the state government. But the two tribes were landless and homeless wanderers. It was at the suggestion of Sam Houston that on October 29, 1853, the Alabama chiefs held a council with their white neighbors and friends at the home of Samuel Rowe in Polk county. Billy Blunt, a Muscogie, and Billy John acted as interpreters. The Indians recited the wrongs and losses they had sustained since they had been despoiled of the land granted them by congress in 1840. They were not willing, they said, to move to the Indian reserve on the upper Brazos, but had set their hearts on land on Big Sandy creek in Polk county near the Big Thicket, an unsettled and uninhabited region on the Trinity. It was in this territory that they had made their original settlement in the country, and here the chiefs wanted to bring the whole tribe, and here live and die. As a result of this council, the Indians petitioned the legislature for a grant of 1280 acres, or as much more as the state was willing to give them, in compensation for the

[67]Thomas F. Smith to Anson Jones, January 29, and April 22, 1842, in MS., Indian Papers, Texas State Library.

[68]Smith to Jones, January 29, 1842; deposition of R. W. Lee, April 22, 1842; Jesse Billingsley, Jr., to Anson Jones, May 1, and June 5, 1842; affidavit of Holland Coffee, May 6, 1842; statement of J. G. Jowett, May 7, 1842; deposition of Mark R. Roberts, May 7, 1842; Dr. Rowlett's affidavit, May 13, 1842, Edward H. Tarrant's affidavit, May 13, 1842, all in MS., Indian Papers, Texas State Library; also Sowell, *Rangers and Pioneers of Texas*, 17-22.

wrongs and losses they had suffered. If the land on Big Sandy was already located, they prayed that the state purchase it for them. The value of the two leagues they had lost they claimed to be three dollars an acre, a large sum compared to the pittance now sought. The chiefs, Antone, Cilistine, and Shemilah, put their marks to the document, with P. W. Kittrell as witness, and forty-two of the leading citizens of Polk county also signed the petition.[69] Vacant and unappropriated lands on Big Sandy were not obtainable, and in 1854, the state purchased for the Alabama Indians 1280 acres, or thereabouts, at two dollars per acre, all in Polk county, about seventeen miles from the town of Livingston.[70] The title is vested in the tribe, and the land is tax free and inalienable.[71]

The Alabamas were settled on their reserve in 1854 and 1855, three hundred and thirty in all. The new land was heavily timbered and difficult to reduce to cultivation, but it was not long before the Indians had made good clearings and improvements, working it in common for the benefit of all.[72] For their homes they built log cabins with floors and chimneys and sometimes with a little porch.[73] They raised plenty of corn and potatoes and planted fruit trees in their village. They had cattle and horses and several thousand hogs to supply meat for the whole tribe, and the Big Thicket abounded in game. During the season of cultivation, they not only worked their own crops, but also helped their white neighbors. The Indians enjoyed the confidence of the better class of people around them, although some of the whites tried to drive them from their land, plundering their stock and forbidding them to hunt for their strayed stock beyond the limits of their own land.[74]

The Alabamas were now prosperous and contented, living apart in a world of their own. When their crops were made and gath-

[69]Petition of Alabama Indians, December 13, 1853, in MS., Memorial No. 19, File 1, Archives, State Department.

[70]Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, IV, 68.

[71]Deed Records, Polk County, vol. D, 432-3.

[72]Barclay to Runnels, August 9, 1858, in MS., Governors' Letters, Texas State Library.

[73]Harrison to Lubbock, April 4, 1862, in MS., Governors' Letters, Texas State Library.

[74]This description of the Indians is taken largely from an anonymous article, "The Friendly Indians of Trinity River in Texas," in the *Texas Almanac* for 1861, 126-31; see also *Senate Journal*, 7 Legislature, Regular Sess., 417.

ered and housed, then came their happy days. As of old, they went back to their Indian life and enjoyment. They broke up into hunting parties, and with their women, their children, their horses and tents, their blankets and household utensils, they went into the tall pine forests and deep recesses of the Big Thicket, and there they revelled in the wild and exciting sports of the chase. When they returned to their village, their horses were laden with bear oil, deer meat, and deerskins, both for their own use and for market.

The Alabamas have the usual Indian characteristics of reticence in the presence of white people, and seeming sternness and gloom, reckless generosity and indifference to the future, devoted attachments and implacable resentments, and a distaste for confinement and continued application. They possessed the Indian's fatalism and seemed indifferent to death, meeting it apparently without fear or reluctance. Yet they regarded the suicide as a coward and denied him the rite of sepulture.[75] An anonymous writer in the *Texas Almanac* for 1861, who lived among the Alabamas for twenty years, spoke their language, and knew them as intimately as a white man could know an Indian, describes them as a happy people, kind, warm-hearted and gay, docile and confiding, happy in their domestic relations, and with unlimited hospitality. The gravest fault of Alabamas and Coshattis alike was a fatal passion for ardent spirits. Nevertheless, it was rare to find habitual drunkards among them.

The Indians were fond of festivals of all kinds, ball plays, dances, and games. Their ball plays have been described as a combination of tennis and football.[76] They delighted in childish pleasures. Kenney in his *Indian Tribes of Texas* tells us that when he was a boy he saw a company of Coshattis at Houston in 1837; a salute was fired from a small steamer and with each discharge "they laughed gleefully like little children."[77] A curious custom

[75]*First Annual Report*, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1879-80, 180; also Swanton, J. R., *Social Organization and Social Usages of the Indians of the Creek Confederacy* in *Annual Report*, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1924-5, 397.

[76]Swanton, J. R., *Social Organization and Social Usages of the Indians of the Creek Confederacy* in *Annual Report*, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1924-5, 366.

[77]Kenney, M. M., *The Indian Tribes of Texas* in Wooten, *ed.*, *A Comprehensive History of Texas*, 1685-1897, I, 731.

among the Alabamas was that at certain festivals, all the children, both boys and girls, passed in array and received a flogging of such severity as to draw blood, after which they were lectured by one or more of their elders.[78] Both tribes were fond of dress and of showy colors and ornaments, especially of silver. The Coshattis wore flowered chintz shirts and adorned themselves with silver pendants from their noses.[79] Olmsted met a group of Alabama Indians at Lake Charles in 1854 "riding through town with baskets and dressed deerskins for sale. They were decked with feathers, and dressed more showily than the Choctaws, but in calico; and over their heads, on horseback,—a curious progress of manners—all carried open black cotton *umbrellas.*"[80]

The Coshattis had not fared as well as the Alabamas. In 1855, aided by Houston, they, too, presented a memorial to the legislature[81] and, "in consideration of their services to the country, and their devotion to the early settlers of Texas,"[82] they were granted a tract of six hundred forty acres.[83] The land was never located. Chickasaw Abbey, their chief, selected a home in Polk county on land which belonged to non-residents, and here about ten lived. The remainder of the tribe was scattered around in Polk and Liberty counties, disorganized, broken in spirit, and without hope. The whole number of the tribe in Texas at that time did not exceed eighty, including women and children.[84]

Scarcely were the Alabamas settled on their land before the question arose of removing them and the Coshattis to the Indian reserve on the upper Brazos, a large district placed at the disposal

[78]Swanton, J. R., *Early History of the Creek Indians and their Neighbors*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 73, 162; also Margry, Pierre, *ed.*, *Découvertes et Etablissements des Français dans l'Ouest et dans le Sud de l'Amérique Septentrionale* (1614-1754), *Mémoires et Documents Originaux*, Paris, 1875-86, V, 427-8.

[79]Maillard, N. Doran, *The History of the Republic of Texas, from the Discovery of the Country to the Present Time and the Cause of her Separation from the Republic of Mexico*, London, 1842, 252-4; also Padilla, Juan Antonio, *Report on the Barbarous Indians of the Province of Texas*, translated by Hatcher, M. A., in *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXIII, 50.

[80]Olmsted, Frederick Law, *A Journey through Texas; or, a Saddle-trip on the Southwestern Frontier*, New York, 1857, 401.

[81]Houston to Ashbel Smith, December 8, 1855, in MS., Ashbel Smith Papers, University of Texas Library.

[82]*House Journal*, 6 Legislature, Adj. Sess., 331-2.

[83]Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, IV, 503.

[84]Barclay to Runnels, August 9, 1858, in MS., Governor's Letters, Texas State Library.

of the United States by the state as a home for Texas Indians. R. S. Neighbors, Federal Indian agent, and Governor Runnels both urged removal as best for the welfare of the Indians and for the preservation of the race. There was an abundance of land on the reserve, and here, they claimed, the Indians would be assured of peace and protection.[85] As early as 1842, an effort had been made to remove the Alabamas and Coshattis and other tribes to the upper Brazos, or to a specified portion of the public domain on the northwestern frontier. Such were the provisions of a bill introduced in congress which failed of passage.[86] In 1858, a bill for their removal became law, but a condition precedent was the consent of the Indians to be removed.[87] It was thought that if the Alabama and Coshatti chiefs could be induced to visit the reserve, this could be easily obtained.[88] James Barclay was appointed agent to negotiate such consent,[89] and five thousand dollars was appropriated to pay the expenses of the removal.

The task presented serious difficulties. The two tribes felt at home in their haunts in East Texas and had always seemed to dread association with the Indians of the plains.[90] The Alabamas were satisfied where they were if they were only allowed to live in peace. Their chiefs, nevertheless, agreed to go with Barclay to see the reserve lands.[91] The Coshattis had everything to gain by removal, but the consent of their chief was not readily obtained, because the Indians seemed to have lost all confidence in the promises of the whites.[92] In the summer of 1858, Barclay and the Indians, together with a small party of white men, set out for the

[85]Runnels to Barclay, July 7, 1858, in MS., Governors' Letters, Texas State Library.

[86]A bill to be entitled an Act to dispose of certain Indian tribes in this Republic, in MS., No. 2552, Files, 6 Congress, Archives, State Department.

[87]Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, IV, 1154.

[88]Runnels to Barclay, July 7, 1858, in MS., Governors' Letters, Texas State Library.

[89]Instructions to James Barclay, agent for the Coshatti Indians, June 2, 1858, in MS., Governors' Letters, Texas State Library.

[90]Report of Committee on Indian Affairs, October 12, 1837, in MS., Indian Papers, Texas State Library.

[91]Barclay to Runnels, August 9, 1858, in MS., Governors' Letters, Texas State Library.

[92]*Ibid.*

reserve.[93] They reached the upper Brazos agency in October[94] just after the frontier settlers had attacked the lower reserve—whither it was intended to remove the Alabamas and Coshattis—and expelled the Indians with slaughter. "Charity and humanity," Runnels said, "forbid . . . carrying them where they might at any time be indiscriminately slaughtered, for no other cause than that the *Creator* had made them Indians."[95] Suggestions were made to remove the two tribes to the Choctaw and Chickasaw reserve, or to the lands of their brethren across Red river, but the season was far advanced, and, notwithstanding the Muscogies and Coshattis both expressed a willingness to go, the matter was dropped.[96]

The Alabamas continued to live on their own land, where, with their consent, Barclay removed some of the Coshattis. The rest lived wherever they could find vacant lands in Polk and Liberty counties. About seventy-five Muscogies were settled close by on the Trinity. Billy Blunt, their chief, had married an Alabama woman, and the tribes lived amicably together.[97] But the fear of removal continued in the minds of the Alabamas, and on December 29, 1859, the chiefs of the tribe wrote Governor Houston as follows:

> The undersigned Antone head chief, and Cilistine Thompson, and John Scott inferior chiefs wish to say to Sam Houston, that they know him— that he is a great and good man, a friend to the Indians and that they love and respect him more than any other white man living— They are glad that he is governor, and wish that he could always be governor.
> They wish to say that they are now comfortably living on land given them by the state. They have made plenty of corn and potatoes and have many hogs, and cattle, and horses. The white people do not beat, nor rob them, nor steal any thing of much value from them. All they desire is to be allowed to live where they now are and to cultivate their fields in peace. Many of the Coshattis have come to live with the Alabamas on their land. There are about five hundred Alabamas old men, women, and children

[93]Runnels to Barclay, March 18, 1859, in MS., Governors' Letters, Texas State Library.

[94]Barclay to Runnels, October 26, 1858, in MS., Governors' Letters, Texas State Library.

[95]Runnels to Barclay, February 12, 1859, in MS., Governors' Letters, Texas State Library.

[96]*Ibid.;* also Barclay to Runnels, February 11, 1859, in MS., Indian Papers, Texas State Library.

[97]Barclay to Runnels, March 3, and August 18, 1859, in MS., Governors' Letters, Texas State Library.

included, and two or three hundred Coshattis including all. There ought to be some more land given for the Coshattis. They further say that Jim Barclay has been their agent for nearly two years. They believe he does not wish them driven off, and that he is now a friend to them. And if they have the power to choose an agent, they would choose him, because they fear that they might otherwise get an agent who would consent to their removal.[98]

Barclay was a Runnels' appointee, and as such not acceptable to Houston who chose R. R. Neyland as agent for the Alabamas.[99] In his report of 1861, Neyland estimated the value of the Indians' property, real and personal, at $30,000. They had then about four hundred acres in a good state of cultivation, had made plenty of corn, and had begun the cultivation of cotton. They had three hundred head of cattle, three hundred fifty head of horses, and about two thousand hogs. Their number was given as one hundred thirteen males and one hundred females. Neyland considered the Alabamas honest and industrious and thought they would do well if undisturbed.[100]

The Civil War came on, and into its maelstrom were drawn these isolated and inoffensive Indians. They were excellent horsemen, and it was proposed that the Alabamas, Coshattis, and Muscogies form a company and join Colonel G. W. Carter's regiment of Lancers, then drilling at Chappel Hill.[101] This company did not materialize. Twenty joined Captain Bullock's company at Woodville in March, 1862, and their bounties were paid them.[102] Antone, the chief, and sixty-five others were recruited and wanted to go, but remained behind because they thought the governor required it. Neyland, who was on Colonel Carter's staff, had resigned to join his regiment, and A. J. Harrison, his successor, was permitted to organize the Indians into a company for home defense.[103] The

[98]Antone and others to Houston, December 29, 1859, in MS., Governors' Letters, Texas State Library.

[99]R. R. Neyland to Houston, September 25, 1860, in MS., Governors' Letters, Texas State Library.

[100]R. R. Neyland to F. R. Lubbock, November 4, 1861, in MS., Governors' Letters, Texas State Library.

[101]*Ibid.;* also Harrison to Lubbock, December 5, 1861, in MS., Governors' Letters, Texas State Library.

[102]Records, War Department.

[103]R. R. Neyland to Lubbock, April 4, 1862, and Harrison to Lubbock, December 5, 1861, February 17, and April 4, 1862, in MS., Governors' Letters, Texas State Library.

twenty who enlisted in Bullock's company were discharged in December, 1862.

The statute books bear evidence that amid the perplexities and troubles of the Confederate period and the years immediately following, the state was not unmindful of the welfare of these Indians. In 1861, 1863, 1864, and 1866, acts were passed fixing the salary of the agents, defining their duties, and making appropriations for the three tribes.[104] In 1866, the same rights were extended to the Muscogies that the Alabamas and Coshattis possessed, and three hundred and twenty acres of land were granted to them.[105] This land was never located. Billy Blunt said later that if the state would cancel the grant and furnish them a few agricultural implements instead, they would be able to make a living.[106]

The transfer of the Alabamas, Coshattis, and Muscogies to the guardianship of the United States was proposed by Governor Throckmorton in 1866. He suggested to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that these Indians would be greatly benefited by a few gifts which the state, because of its poverty, was unable to bestow. "Thousands of dollars of money is distributed annually," he said, "by the government to other tribes who continually depredate upon our citizens and . . . something might be given to the unfortunate ones . . . who have always been peaceable & honest."[107] The Davis administration likewise considered the Indians as properly the care of the Federal Government, and in 1870, they were placed under military rule.[108] A bill empowering the Secretary of the Interior to remove the Alabamas and Coshattis to some place among the Creeks in the Indian Territory was introduced in Congress in 1873 and lost.[109]

The war impoverished the Alabamas to some extent, but the census of 1880 shows them in a prosperous state again.[110] Their

[104]Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, V, 541, 696, 719, 1047-8.

[105]*Ibid.*, V, 1086-7.

[106]*Executive Documents*, 41 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, Pt. 4, 790-2.

[107]Throckmorton to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 20, 1866, in MS., Throckmorton Papers, University of Texas Library; Washington to Throckmorton, July 17, 1867; Washington to Rowe, July 7, 1867; Rowe to Washington, July 15, 1867; Washington to Taylor, July 16, 1867, in MS., Governors' Letters, Texas State Library.

[108]*Executive Document*, 41 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, Pt. 4, 790-2.

[109]*House Executive Document*, 42 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 234, 1-3.

[110]In MS., Census Records for 1880, I, 4, 8, 9, 23-6.

chief at this time was John Scott, who was one of those who enlisted in Bullock's company. He served the tribe more than forty years, dying in 1913, at the advanced age of one hundred and seven years.[111]

The chief force in the advancement and civilization of the Indians in the last fifty years has been the work of the Presbyterian missionaries among them. It was largely through the efforts of Dr. Samuel Fisher Tenney that the interest of the church was aroused and a mission for the Alabamas established and supported by the East Texas Presbytery.[112] The Reverend Mr. Thomas Ward White preached the first Protestant sermon to them. He won their friendship with a Christmas tree laden with gifts for the whole tribe, contributed by people all over the United States.[113] In 1881, the Reverend Mr. L. W. Currie and his wife began their work among the Alabamas. A church with fourteen Indian members was organized, a rough church building was erected and a school established. The church was burned by outlaws, which interrupted the work for some time. After Mr. Currie's death in the missionary field in Alaska, Mrs. Currie returned to the Alabama village as a missionary teacher, serving until 1900.[114] In this year Dr. and Mrs. C. W. Chambers began their ministry, he as pastor and she as teacher of the mission school, which was then supported partly by the church and partly as a public school. The Indians now have several good school buildings, a clinic, and a large and commodious church erected on the old dance and ball grounds of the village. The home of the missionaries is just off the reservation. The Indians would not permit them to build on their land, because, they said, General Sam Houston had told them never to allow a white person to live on their land.[115] In later years, however, after their school grew into a four-teacher school, they have permitted the teachers to live on the reservation, but in government-owned buildings.

Since the coming of the missionaries, the Indians have been

[111]Lesesne, S. M., *Tribe of Indians Living in Eastern Part of Texas* in *Dallas News*, February 26, 1911.

[112]"Reminiscences of Samuel Fisher Tenney," MS. vol., 8-9.

[113]White, Dabney, *Alabama Indians, First Finders of Oil in East Texas, are Living Penniless but Contented Lives* in *Dallas News*, March 29, 1931.

[114]*House Document*, 62 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 866, 13.

[115]Information obtained from Dr. C. W. Chambers.

undergoing a radical change in their manner of living. As late as 1890, they continued to live their simple, primitive life, adhering to the language and customs of their ancestors, and governed by their own chief and surordinate chiefs. They held their dances and ceremonials. They worshipped their own gods; Abba Mingo, the "chief of the sky," was the god of the Alabamas; the chief god of the Coshattis was called Emila-hé-Mikoó, "he who never dies."[116] With greater educational facilities, the Indians have begun to dress like white citizens, to use English names, and almost universally to speak the English language, although in their homes they continue to use the Alabama tongue. They have continued to cultivate their farms. But only about thirty-five per cent of their land can be classified as agricultural, and this has become exhausted from crude and unscientific cultivation over a period of fifty or sixty years.[117] They have continued to work for their white neighbors on their farms, and also in the sawmills and logging camps of the region. But the supply of merchantable timber has been rapidly decreasing, and this source of income is being checked; there is little or no market for their handicrafts,—earthenware, reed baskets, and moss saddle rugs; and the game in the Big Thicket is becoming scarcer and scarcer; so the Indian has been facing increasing poverty and distress with the succeeding years.

As early as 1896, Mr. J. C. Feagin and other citizens of Livingston undertook to interest congress in behalf of the Polk county Indians.[118] The United States had been liberal with other tribes, and it was thought something might be done for the Alabamas and Coshattis. The solution first proposed was for the tribes to secure allotments on the public domain under the law of 1887, or for them to avail themselves of the privileges of the Homestead Act of 1884, extending the benefits of the law to persons of Indian blood.[119] But the Indians were unwilling to leave their own land. In 1910, and again in 1918, the Department of the Interior made an investigation into the condition of the Alabamas and Coshattis of Texas with the same result in each case; viz., that their greatest needs were more land and vocational education to enable them to make a

[116] *Ibid.*

[117] *House Document*, 65 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1579, 1-4.

[118] *Ibid.*

[119] 23 Stat. L. 96; 24 Stat. L. 388; also *House Document*, 62 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 866, 14-7.

living.[120] In 1910, the department hesitated to recommend the purchase of land for fear it would prove an entering wedge for similar appropriations for other tribes. However, the department did recommend an appropriation for additional facilities in agriculture and other pursuits.[121] Congress did nothing for these Indians in 1910. In 1918, the Secretary of the Interior recommended an appropriation of $100,000 for the purchase of land, and an additional appropriation of $25,000 for the purchase of livestock and agricultural equipment.[122] But congress went only so far as to appropriate $5,000 for the education of the Alabamas and Coshattis, this money to be used for the construction of a school building, including equipment, upon land belonging to the Indians. There was also an additional annual appropriation of $2,000 to be expended for educational purposes under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior.[123]

Ten years later, in 1928, the United States purchased 3071 acres of land in Polk county adjoining their original reserve to be held in trust for the Alabama Indians of Texas. The purchase price was $29,000.[124] A state highway runs through the entire tract, and it is crossed by three streams. About two-thirds of the land is covered with timber, and the remaining third is available for cultivation. The grantees retained perpetual royalty rights in oil, gas, and sulphur.[125]

The Indians are subject to state and county laws, but they have never been regarded as citizens of the state, nor have they been called upon to exercise any of the duties incident to citizenship. By Federal statute of 1887, they became citizens of the United States.[126] During the World War about one-half of the adult male members of the tribes volunteered for service, but they were not accepted because they were Indians.[127] The state has erected better dwellings for them, has given them seed and livestock, has provided

[120]*House Document*, 65 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1579, 1-4.

[121]*House Document*, 62 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 866, 4.

[122]*House Report*, 70 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 824, 2.

[123]40 Stat. L. 586, Sec. 22.

[124]45 Stat. L. 883-1900; Deed Records, Polk County, vol. 88, 209; vol. 342.

[125]*House Report*, 70 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 824, 1-3; *House Report*, 70 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 2318, 1-8.

[126]U. S. Code (1926), 8:3.

[127]Information obtained from Dr. C. W. Chambers; also *Senate Journal*, 41 Legislature, Reg. Sess., 760, 762.

medical attention for them, and has appointed a full-time agent to look after their interests.[128] The Indians receive aid under the Smith-Hughes act, and in 1927, by special act the state granted them rural aid.[129] Under a coöperative agreement between the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the State Board of Control, their classroom building is to be enlarged, a new shop building to be constructed and manual training equipment purchased, and a light, water, and sewer system to be installed.[130] The census of 1930 gives the number of Indians in Polk county as two hundred forty-five as against two hundred forty-eight in 1920, and two hundred two in 1910.[131] Their chief is Charlie Thompson, who is known as Chief Sun-Kee.[132]

Through all the years the Alabamas have maintained their racial integrity, and since the days they moved westward across the Mississippi they have been known as peaceful and friendly Indians. During the century and more that they have lived in East Texas but few crimes can be laid at their door. As of old, they raise corn, peas, potatoes, peanuts, a little cotton, and they have peach trees in their village; they also raise cattle and hogs and a few ponies. But now an agricultural supervisor teaches them the proper cultivation of the soil and the care of their livestock. There is the busy hum of the schoolroom where once were the ancient ball plays, the dances, the ceremonials. In 1911, the Indian children were accounted the best writers and singers among the school children of the county.[133] The boys have a champion basket ball team. The girls of the domestic science class prepare each day a well-balanced luncheon for all the children of the school. A young woman of the tribe is now one of the teachers of the Indian school. It is a far cry from Tamath-le-Mingo, "decorated as a great chief with a medal bestowed by the King," leading his people down the river to Mobile, to Charlie Thompson, Chief Sun-Kee, ruling a small remnant of his tribe in the Indian village near the Big Thicket in Polk county, Texas.

[128] *Ibid.;* also *General Laws,* 42 Legislature, Reg. Sess., 637.

[129] *General and Special Laws,* 39 Legislature, 1 Called Sess., 106.

[130] Agreement between Commissioner of Indian Affairs and Board of Control, September 18, 1931; in MS., Files, Board of Control.

[131] *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Population,* III, Pt. 2, 1015.

[132] Information obtained from Dr. C. W. Chambers.

[133] Lesesne, S. M., *Tribe of Indians Living in Eastern Part of State* in *Dallas News,* February 26, 1911.