



Rangers and Pioneers of Texas

A.J. Sowell

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“When the white settlers of Texas, composing Austin's and De Witt's colonies, first began to erect their cabin in this wild and beautiful country, all the Indian tribes were friendly. The Comanches were the most numerous numbering several thousand warriors. Hostilities commenced by thieving parties of Indians stealing horses from the whites; and, when caught by the exasperated settlers, were roughly handled: in fact, there was not much law in the country in those days regulating the punishment for such offenses, and the unfortunate red man caught under such circumstances was generally shot on the spot. White horse thieves were served the same way, or strung up to the limb of a tree.

The consequence of these severe measures was that all the tribes (then numbering twenty or more) sooner or later became hostile, with the exception, perhaps, of the Tankaways, who always lived on good terms with the whites, and were very useful in scouting and trailing hostile bands when they made incursions into the settlements, and some of them went with Taylor's army to Mexico. From the time the Indians became hostile, almost up to the present time (1883), every settler who pitched his cabin in the West, from the coast to the Staked Plains, had to contend with hostile Indians, and if all the incidents were related, connected with these settlements, of Indian battles, adventures of the settlers, massacres, etc. which occurred while these settlements gradually extended out towards the Rio Grande (Big River), which was the boundary line between Texas and Mexico in the West, it would fill a volume ten times the size of the one I contemplate writing. My object is to give as many of such incidents as the size of this work will admit, and try to convey a correct idea of what the brave men and women of that period had to contend with in settling this fair land of Texas and paving the way for capital, railroads and more immigrants. Being myself raised in Texas, and spending some time on the frontier, I have, from time to time, collected such incidents as I thought worth relating and which would be interesting to the reading public, as Indian battles, massacres, and scalp dances are now a thing of the past in Texas.”

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