

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

# RED RIVER WAR OF 1874-1875

## CLASH OF CULTURES IN THE TEXAS PANHANDLE

A Texas Travel Guide

# RED RIVER WAR OF 1874-1875

## CLASH OF CULTURES IN THE TEXAS PANHANDLE

Headdress of Ervin "Buck" Chapman, grandson of Amos Chapman (scout who survived Battle of Buffalo Wallow) and Mary Longneck Chapman (granddaughter of Cheyenne Chief Black Kettle).

Courtesy Wolf Creek Heritage Mu-

## Battles Lost, Battles Found The Red River War Battle Sites Project

During the 1870s, an epic struggle for control of the Southern Plains pitted Native Americans against the U.S. Army. For almost two centuries, Europeans and Euro Americans had interacted with bands of Comanche, Kiowa, Southern Cheyenne, and Arapaho. Some relations were mutually beneficial, as those involving trade. But violent conflicts intensified as more and more whites moved westward into native territory in the early 1800s.

To end the clash of cultures, the U.S. Army resolved to force the Indians onto reservations in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). The ensuing

Red River War of 1874–1875 proved a turbulent turning point in the history of the frontier.

A score of battles and running skirmishes raged across the plains and canyons with some 3,000 soldiers engaging up to 700 Indian warriors. Several pivotal battles took place in the Texas Panhandle during the summer and fall of 1874. Outnumbered and outgunned, native warriors and their families spent months running and fighting. After decisive Army victories, Southern Plains Indians gave up their free-roaming way of life and by June of 1875 began new lives on the reservation.

The war's end also meant new lives for farmers and ranchers who quickly settled West Texas. Towns grew and prospered, and some battle sites were lost or forgotten.

In 1998, the Texas Historical Commission observed the 125th anniversary of the conflict by launching the Red River War Battle Sites Project. Archeological fieldwork conducted from 1998 to 2003 used metal detectors to locate and unearth battlefield artifacts at six battlegrounds—Red River, Lyman's Wagon Train, Buffalo Wallow, Sweetwater Creek, Palo Duro Canyon, and Round Timber Creek. The project also uncovered long-forgotten maps and records in the National Archives and elsewhere.

The fieldwork and archival research confirmed battleground locations and verified much that was already known about the Red River War. Project findings also shed new light on what really happened during 10 tense months on the high Panhandle Plains.



# UNEARTHING ARCHEOLOGICAL SECRETS



The Red River War Battle Sites Project conducted unprecedented fieldwork from 1998 to 2003 to determine the locations and chronology of six key battles. Much was already known about some battle sites, but the location of others was not clear from the military records, maps, or memoirs of those involved.

Field teams used metal detectors to unearth some 3,700 metal artifacts that lay relatively undisturbed for more than 125 years. The artifacts—mostly cartridges, cartridge cases, and bullets from Army and Indian weapons—were carefully collected, catalogued, and conserved.

A global positioning system receiver pinpointed each artifact's location, and the data was overlaid onto topographic maps using a computer-mapping program. Such precise battleground information clarified fighting positions and tactics. Some battlefields proved larger than expected, suggesting that combatants engaged in running skirmishes covering many miles.

Analysis also suggests that fewer Indians participated and were more poorly armed than Army records indicate. Metal projectile points and rifle balls found at the sites show that native warriors often fought with obsolete, close-range weapons—such as muskets, muzzleloaders, and even lances and bows and arrows. Soldiers, by contrast, were armed with long-range rifles and high-powered artillery.

Project leaders matched fieldwork findings with long-missing documents uncovered through historical research. In the end, the collaboration between archeologists and historians revealed compelling new details about a decisive moment in West Texas history.



## Struggle for the Southern Plains

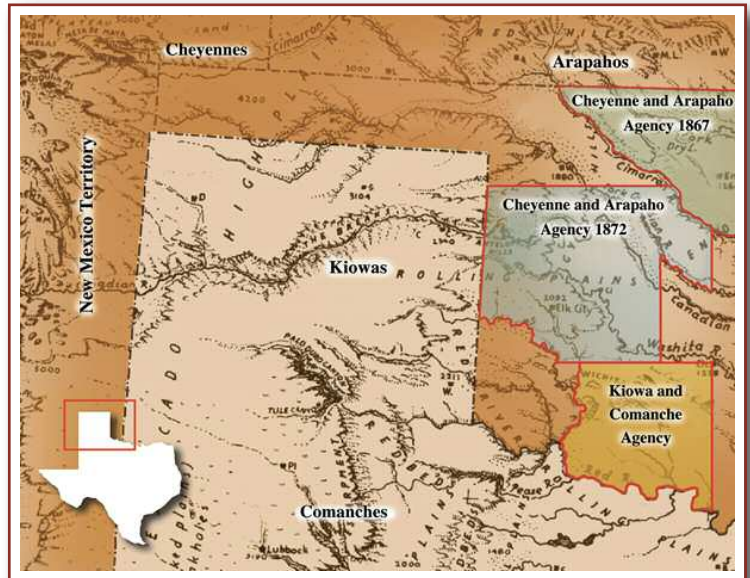
For centuries, Plains Indians traveled on foot to hunt buffalo for food, clothing, and shelter. They became accomplished horsemen after 17th-century Spanish explorers first brought horses to the Llano Estacado (Staked Plains).

Comanche and Kiowa bands migrated to the Southern Plains in the 1700s, later joined by Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho. The confederation of tribes developed a raid-and-trade network across Texas, Mexico, and New Mexico.

On raids against enemy tribes and settlers, mounted warriors rounded up horses, mules, and sometimes human captives. This plunder was traded, along with buffalo hides, to French, American, and Comanchero traders for manufactured goods such as cloth, metal, beads, and guns. The raids also offered warriors a chance to earn respect and influence within their band through acts of daring.

By the mid-1800s, a rising tide of American settlers and buffalo hunters encroached on native lands. Wagon trains headed westward along the Santa Fe Trail enroute to California's gold fields. To protect settlers and travelers, frontier regiments formed, and the U.S. government established military forts. The Army abandoned the forts during the Civil War, and Indians intensified raids to drive the settlers from their homeland.

After the war, the federal government convinced some tribes to sign the Medicine Lodge Treaty of 1867. The treaty called for Indians to halt raids and relocate to reservations in Indian Territory, where they would get government provisions and guns. Compliant bands would be allowed to continue seasonal hunts of any buffalo remaining south of the



Arkansas River. (Federal officials did not explain they had no authority over Texas land, which was state-owned.)

Within months, the U.S. government failed to provide adequate provisions, and many Indians left the reservations hungry and frustrated. Some warriors stayed on the reservation but continued raids into Texas.

In early 1871, the commanding general of the Army, William T. Sherman, narrowly escaped one such raid, known as the Warren Wagon Train Massacre. Gen. Sherman dispatched the 4th Cavalry under Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie to capture the chiefs who led the attack. Over the next two years, Col. Mackenzie pursued other Indian bands across the Panhandle Plains but failed to drive them from their stronghold.

By the spring of 1874, commercial buffalo hunters established a trading post named Adobe Walls. Having depleted northern bison herds, they took aim at southern herds to supply an ever-growing U.S. and foreign market for hides.

Native American shield made from an 18th-century Spanish shield and reputedly found at Yellow House Canyon.  
Courtesy Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum.



# BUFFALO

## LIFEBLOOD OF THE PLAINS

For centuries, Plains Indians hunted bison (or buffalo), using virtually every part of the animal—meat for food, fur for clothing, hides for tepee shelters, bones for tools, and even dried dung for fuel. They also traded hides for other items they needed. The buffalo became the sacred center of Plains Indian culture.

By the 1870s, a new tanning process made buffalo hides valuable for use as machinery belts in burgeoning industries in the United States and Europe. Powerful new weapons, especially the Sharps .50-caliber rifle, allowed hunters to kill thousands of buffalo a day. After depleting herds on the Central Plains, hunters led by Josiah Wright Mooar moved into Indian hunting grounds in the Texas Panhandle. The U.S. Army encouraged the buffalo slaughter as a way to drive native people onto reservations in Indian Territory.

Before the 1870s, some 50 million buffalo roamed the Great Plains. Within a decade, the buffalo were almost extinct. Buffalo bones littered the plains, and newly-arrived settlers loaded them on railcars bound for fertilizer factories.

In 1878, pioneer Panhandle rancher Charles Goodnight and wife Mary Ann saved a small herd as breeding stock that later helped reintroduce buffalo to Yellowstone National Park and elsewhere. Progeny of the Goodnight herd comprise the Texas state bison herd on view at Caprock Canyons State Park near Quitaque.



**Before the 1870s, some 50 million buffalo roamed the Great Plains. Within a decade, the buffalo were almost extinct.**

Outraged Comanches and Kiowas led by Quanah Parker attacked the post in June, but the hunters' skillful marksmanship repelled the strike. Alarmed by the attack on Adobe Walls, Gen. Sherman and Gen. Philip H. Sheridan devised the Indian Campaign of 1874. The military resolved, once and for all, to remove all Native Americans from the Texas Panhandle.

To carry out the campaign, the Army enlisted cavalry, infantry, and artillery units—some 3,000 troopers in all—armed with the latest long-range rifles and artillery weapons. White frontiersmen and friendly Indians—including Delaware, Ute, and Tonkawa—served as scouts to find the enemy hiding along countless bluffs and ravines.

The U.S. Army had never faced such an agile opponent. Armed with rifles—plus

traditional lances and bows and arrows—the mounted warriors were masters of guerilla warfare.

The warriors, on the other hand, had never faced such a large, well-armed and well-supplied force in their homeland. Nor had they experienced the new Army strategy of burning Indian camps, killing their horses, and starving their families into submission.

The military campaign called for columns of troopers and supplies to converge from five directions on Indian camps along the headwater tributaries of the Red River.

Lt. Col. John W. Davidson led companies of the 10th Cavalry and 11th Infantry headed west from Fort Sill in Indian Territory. Marching north from Fort Griffin, Texas, were companies of the 9th Cavalry, 10th Cavalry, and 11th Infantry, under the command of Lt. Col. George P. Buell.



## U.S. ARMY LEADERS

Gen. William T. Sherman believed Indian rights should not halt white expansion across the frontier. He had helped convince Southern Plains tribes to relocate to reservations, and he aimed to keep them there. In 1871, the West Point graduate narrowly escaped the Warren Wagon Train Massacre. After imprisoning the perpetrators, he employed Civil War-era “scorched earth” policies to crush native resistance.

Col. Nelson A. Miles, a consummate military man who worked his way up the ranks, led the first major battle of the Red River War. Miles achieved a partial victory at the Battle of Red River on August 30, 1874. Within days, some of his men also fended off Indian sieges at the battles of Lyman’s Wagon Train and Buffalo Wallow.

A top West Point graduate, Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie, led the war’s last decisive engagement, the Battle of Palo Duro Canyon. “Bad Hand,” as Indians called Mackenzie (for a Civil War injury), destroyed Indian villages in Palo Duro Canyon on September 28, 1874. Demoralized Indians drifted back to their reservations. Miles missed the Battle of Palo Duro Canyon, because of supply train delays; yet troops under his command engaged warriors in coming days at the battles of Round Timber Creek and McClellan Creek.

Miles and Mackenzie remained Indian fighters across the West until native resistance ended. Miles eventually became general in chief of the Army and led the Spanish-American War. A war-weary Mackenzie returned to Texas where he suffered a nervous breakdown and spent his final days in an insane asylum in New York. Gen. Sherman retired in 1884 and became famous for saying, “War is hell.”

**Col. Nelson A. Miles** led the first major battle of the Red River War.

Courtesy Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum.





Maj. William R. Price led companies of the 8th Cavalry from Fort Union, New Mexico Territory. Companies of the 10th Infantry, 11th Infantry, and 4th Cavalry marched northward, from Fort Concho, Texas, under the command of Col. Mackenzie.

From the north, at Fort Dodge, Kansas, came Col. Nelson A. Miles and companies of the 6th Cavalry and 5th Infantry. These 650 troopers won a partial victory on August 30, 1874, in the campaign's first fight, the Battle of Red River. They pursued a large band of Southern Cheyenne across 35 square miles of the lower Palo Duro Canyon. Soldiers killed as many as 25 Indians, but the remaining warriors held off the Army until their families could escape onto the open plains. Several native camps lay in ruins, leaving a clear message that the Army would prosecute the war to the fullest.

Indians struck back less than two weeks later near the Canadian River. On September 9, Comanche and Kiowa warriors—led by Chiefs Lone Wolf, Big Tree, and Satanta—attacked 36 supply wagons sent by Col. Miles to restock provisions. Some 400 Indians laid siege to 66 soldiers commanded by Capt. Wyllys Lyman. To prove his courage, one brave rode four times through the entrenched Army camp without being harmed. The Battle of Lyman's Wagon Train brought the first Army losses of the war, one soldier and two civilian teamsters.

On the morning of September 12, a group of 125 Indians left the wagon train siege and

happened upon a small detachment of four soldiers and two scouts searching for Capt. Lyman. Stranded on open ground, the six besieged men were quickly wounded but found cover in a depression where buffalo had wallowed. The Battle of Buffalo Wallow remained a stalemate throughout the day, though one soldier was killed.

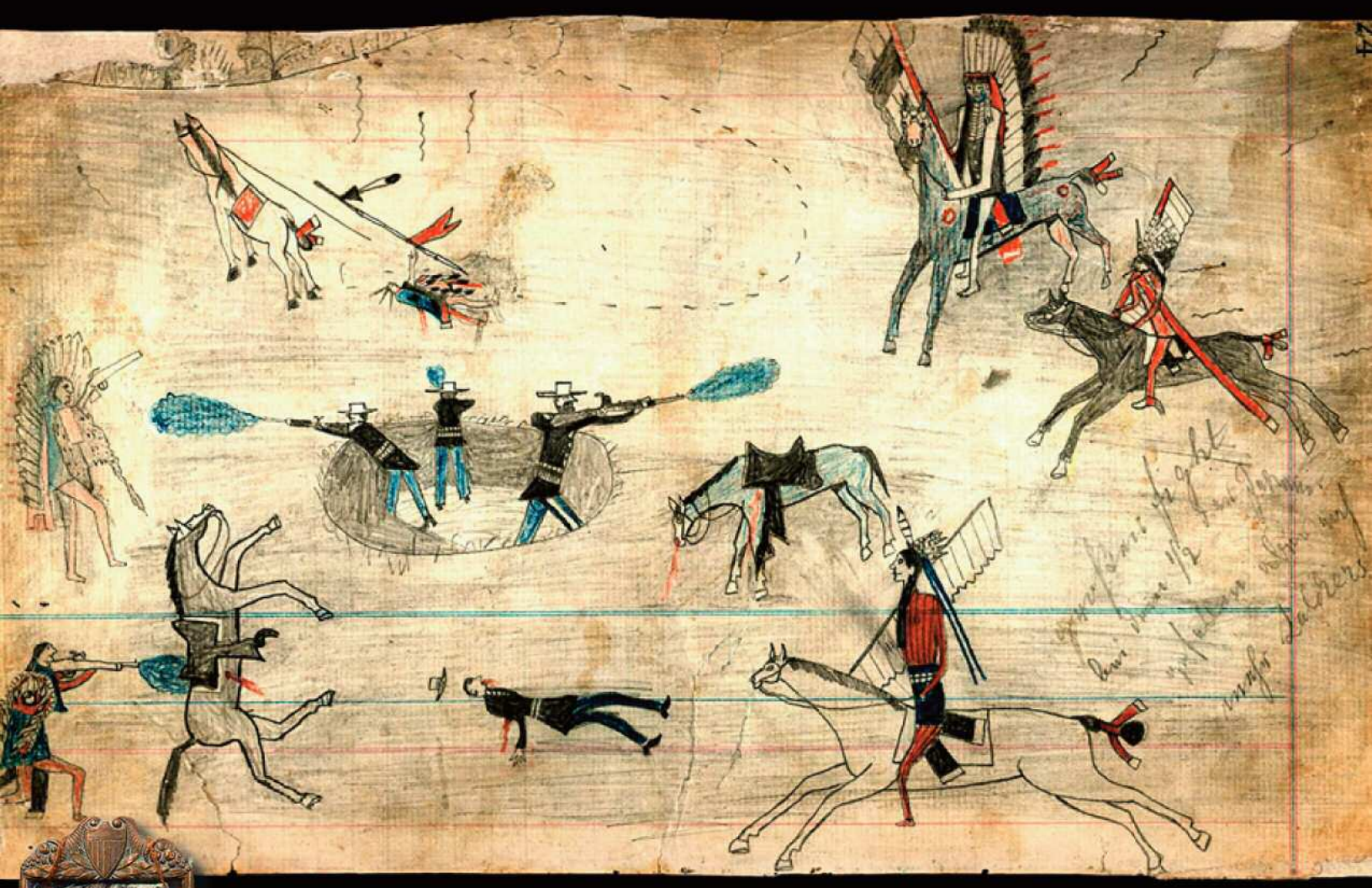


Native fighters broke off the sieges of Capt. Lyman's wagon train and the buffalo wallow after word reached them of nearby movement by Maj. Price and the 8th Cavalry from Fort Union.

Before that eventful September 12 was over, a large group of Comanche and Kiowa left the wagon train siege but engaged Maj. Price and 110 men at the Battle of Sweetwater Creek. The Indian attack diverted the Army's counterattack from nearby Indian families who fled toward Palo Duro Canyon where they joined other bands for winter camp.

Army scouts discovered the winter camp two weeks later. By daybreak on September 28, Col. Mackenzie and soldiers from Fort Concho, Texas, made their way to the canyon rim. Companies of the 4th Cavalry and 10th and 11th Infantries descended the escarpment and surprised the panicked villagers. Advancing troopers gave chase several miles up the canyon before warriors and their families scattered. The Battle of Palo Duro Canyon left the winter camp burned and more than 1,000 Indian horses killed. Unable to survive the approaching

# WAR IS HELL



The Kiowa ledger drawing (above) is probably a depiction of the Buffalo Wallow battle. Medal of Honor (left) is that awarded to Billy Dixon. Ledger drawing courtesy Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, The University of Texas at Austin. Medal courtesy Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum.



Panhandle winter, many demoralized Indians drifted back to the reservations.

Throughout the fall and winter, numerous skirmishes continued as military patrols pursued native holdouts. On November 6, a patrol of the 8th Cavalry under 1st Lt. Henry J. Farnsworth engaged Indians near Cheyenne Chief Grey Beard's village on the North Fork of the Red River. More than 100 warriors overpowered 1st Lt. Farnsworth and his 28 men, who retreated up Round Timber Creek and returned to their supply camp. They left two dead soldiers on the battlefield.

Two days after the Battle of Round Timber Creek, Lt. Frank D. Baldwin and a detachment of infantry and cavalry troops accidentally found Chief Grey Beard's relocated village at the head-

waters of McClellan Creek. The troops destroyed the village and rescued two captive white girls, Julia and Adelaide German, providing a surprise ending to the Battle of McClellan Creek.

Relentless military pressure and a lack of food forced more Indians into Indian Territory over the coming months. The final holdouts—Chief Quanah and his band of Kwahadi Comanche—had hidden from Army troops for a year after their surprise attack on buffalo hunters at Adobe Walls. On June 2, 1875, this last band of free-roaming Southern Plains Indians finally surrendered at Fort Sill, Indian Territory.

After his surrender, Chief Quanah—the son of Comanche Chief Peta Nocona and Anglo captive Cynthia Ann Parker—took his mother's maiden name and adapted to reservation life.

Opposite page: Buffalo hide was used to encase this Native American shield made from an 18th-century Spanish shield. It was reputedly found at Yellow House Canyon. Courtesy Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum.

# NATIVE AMERICAN LEADERS

Two of the principal Indian leaders during the Red River War were Kiowa War Chiefs Lone Wolf (Guipago) and Satanta (White Bear). In the early 1870s, Lone Wolf and Satanta launched raids incited by a medicine man named Mamanti, the so-called Owl Prophet who used messages from a magical owl skin to predict Indian victories. It was Mamanti who convinced the Indians that they would be safe if they took refuge in Palo Duro Canyon. Mamanti's predictions proved wrong, and the Red River War of 1874–75 secured the frontier for white settlement.

For his role in the Indian uprising, Satanta was sentenced to life in a Huntsville, Texas, prison where he died in 1878 after jumping from a second-story window. After returning to the reservation in 1875, Lone Wolf and Mamanti were among 72 Indian leaders incarcerated at Fort Marion, Florida. Mamanti died soon after arriving at the Florida prison, likely from dysentery. Lone Wolf contracted malaria while in prison and



Kiowa War Chief Lone Wolf (Guipago)



Courtesy Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum.



Despite government efforts to Americanize reservation Indians, many maintained important ancestral traditions, which survive today.

The Red River War opened the way for millions of cattle to cross the Texas Panhandle enroute to busy Kansas railheads. Cattlemen such as Charles Goodnight and T. S. Bugbee established huge ranches in the Panhandle that gave rise to a modern cattle industry. Goodnight also saved a small herd of southern bison from extinction, and their offspring now live at Caprock Canyons State Park near Quitaque, Texas.

Farmers turned the open prairies into immense fields of cotton, wheat, and other crops. By 1890, railroads connected the region to distant markets, allowing new railroad towns to thrive. By the 1920s, airplanes and automobiles traveled where, less than 50 years earlier, nomadic Indians battled determined soldiers in the Red River War.

Except for portions of the Battle of Palo Duro Canyon site in Palo Duro Canyon State Park, as well as the Adobe Walls and Buffalo Wallow sites, which are owned by the Panhandle-Plains Historical Society, the other Red River War battle sites are on private property. But thanks to cooperative landowners and generous donors, the Texas Historical Commission's Red River War Battle Sites Project discovered 3,700 artifacts and 1,200 pages of documents to chronicle the war. Many of these artifacts and much of the information remains on public view at more than a dozen museums and heritage sites in the region (see pages 17–24). The efforts of archeologists, historians, historical groups, and museums help keep alive the real story of the epic struggle that changed the face of the Texas Panhandle.

This Adobe Walls exhibit at the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon, Texas, includes a horned medicine headdress, war shield, and tipped lance belonging to Eschiti (White Eagle), who joined Comanche Chief Quanah in convincing native allies to attack buffalo hunters at Adobe Walls.

## The Battles of Adobe Walls

With federal troops removed from Texas during the Civil War, Indians increased raids on settlers. To quell the attacks, in 1864 several hundred New Mexico Volunteers under Col. Christopher “Kit” Carson battled several thousand warriors near the Canadian River at an abandoned trading post called Adobe Walls.

A decade later, professional buffalo hunters established a trading post near Adobe Walls as their headquarters on the Southern Plains. The presence of buffalo hunters in their midst outraged Indian leaders already alarmed by dwindling herds. Comanche prophet Eschiti incited the leaders by claiming supernatural powers to defeat the whites.

Eschiti and a young Comanche named Quanah gathered 200 warriors for battle. Quanah wanted revenge for previous attacks on his Kwahadi band. Early on June 27, 1874, the Indians rode against 28 men and one woman holed up at Adobe Walls. Long-range weapons, such as the Sharps .50-caliber rifle, allowed the outnumbered hunters to defend their position. Their skillful marksmanship shocked the natives into retreat.

According to legend, a hunter named Billy Dixon felled a mounted Indian nearly a mile away. Ten weeks later, Dixon would also shoot his way out of the Battle of Buffalo Wallow.

The Second Battle of Adobe Walls proved the spark that ignited the Red River War. After the attack, the Army vowed to permanently force the Southern Plains tribes onto reservations.

Background image is a detail of a peyote blanket once owned by Quanah Parker; the blanket is located in the Swisher County Archives and Museum in Tulia, Texas. Inset image is of Quanah Parker.





Artifacts from the Second Battle of Adobe Walls—an event that precipitated the Red River War—include unspent cartridges piled by a buffalo hunter as he fended off Indian attack. Courtesy Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum.

Below: Wagon ruts dating from 1840 are still visible on the Fort Smith–Santa Fe Trail in Amarillo, Texas.



## SPRINGFIELDS vs. SPENCERS WEAPONS OF THE RED RIVER WAR

Most artifacts found by the Red River War Battle Sites Project were weapon cartridges, cases, and bullets. Modern firearms identification analysis of the artifacts revealed how armaments affected the war’s outcome.

After the Civil War, government agents gave Indians surplus weapons, such as the .50-caliber Spencer repeating rifle. In 1874, the Army adopted .45-caliber Springfield rifles and carbines for frontier duty. The Army’s Springfields were single shots that had to be reloaded after each shot, whereas the Indians’ Spencers fired seven rounds before reloading. The apparent mismatch was more than offset by the firing-range advantage of the Springfield (800 yards) over the Spencer (400 yards). The long-range Springfield effectively thwarted native hit-and-run tactics and close-range combat where the Spencer had the advantage.

Archeological fieldwork found four Army cartridges for each Indian cartridge (most of which were Spencer types not manufactured after 1866). Warriors had to conserve scarce ammunition during skirmishes with soldiers and, to a large degree, fought with traditional bows and arrows.

In several battles, the Army also employed artillery including the mountain howitzer, a cannon called the Parrott rifle, and the .50-caliber Gatling gun in its first use after the Civil War. Though not well suited for rough Panhandle terrain, the artillery nevertheless had a debilitating psychological effect.

In the end, converging Army columns of well-armed troops left Indian fighters no option but to surrender and resign themselves to life on the reservation.

## A New Era

For decades, a nomadic warrior culture reigned supreme on the Southern Plains. The Red River War of 1874–75 ended that domination and removed southern tribes to Indian Territory, leaving the region at peace for the first time in half a century.

American farmers and ranchers quickly settled the Texas Panhandle. The Western Trail supplanted the Chisholm Trail as the main cattle trail to northern railheads. Cattlemen established huge ranches, some of which are still in existence. Farmers laid out farms and tapped underground water to turn the prairies into an agricultural wonder. Railroads arrived in the 1880s, opening distant markets for farm and ranch products. New towns popped up along expanding rail lines, and the Panhandle saw unprecedented development, especially after oil was discovered in the 1920s.

Even after the Red River War officially ended, the clash of cultures between Euro

Americans and Native Americans continued. U.S. government policy sought to replace native ways with American ideas of education, religion, and land use. On and off the reservations, Plains Indians assimilated into modern society while maintaining many of their ancestral traditions and beliefs.

The Red River War was relatively brief, with few combatants killed—25 to 50 Indian warriors and fewer than 10 soldiers. As a result, the intense struggle has received only passing attention by historians of the American West. The Texas Historical Commission hopes to awaken interest in the war through new findings by the Red River War Battle Sites Project. The fieldwork resulted in the listing of the battles of Sweetwater Creek and Lyman’s Wagon Train in the National Register of Historic Places. Future archeological fieldwork and historical research may uncover more about this epic struggle that changed the face of the Texas frontier.

James Coverdale, a volunteer at Perryton’s Museum of the Plains, is a great-great-grandson of Kiowa Chief Two Hatchet (1842–1902).





## Legacy of the Red River War

Many battlefield and frontier artifacts chronicling the history of the Texas Panhandle are on public view at 13 museums and heritage sites in the region. This important cultural heritage is described in the following pages.

1. **BORGER**, Hutchinson County
2. **CANADIAN**, Hemphill County
3. **CANYON**, Randall County
4. **CLARENDON**, Donley County
5. **CLAUDE**, Armstrong County
6. **CROSBYTON**, Crosby County
7. **LIPSCOMB**, Lipscomb County
8. **MIAMI**, Roberts County
9. **MOBEETIE**, Wheeler County
10. **PAMPA**, Gray County
11. **PERRYTON**, Ochiltree County
12. **QUITAQUE**, Briscoe County
13. **TULIA**, Swisher County





## 1. BORGER, Hutchinson County

Located near the Canadian River, state historical markers pinpoint the site of an 1840s adobe trading post called Adobe Walls. Frontiersman Kit Carson fended off an Indian attack at this site in 1864. A decade later, Quanah Parker attacked a large buffalo hunting camp during the Second Battle of Adobe Walls, igniting the Red River War. The historic site is now owned by the Panhandle-Plains Historical Society, which offers periodic interpreted tours.

During the 1874 battle, sharp-shooting buffalo hunter Billy Dixon reportedly shot a mounted warrior nearly a mile away. Dixon later served as an Army scout and homesteaded at Adobe Walls before becoming Hutchinson County's first sheriff.

The Hutchinson County Museum displays Dixon's monocular field telescope, his 1859 percussion revolver, and a Sharps rifle similar to the one he used for the "shot of the century." Other interesting Red River War artifacts include Indian trade goods and patent medicine bottles found at Adobe Walls, an Army cartridge box, and a corporal's jacket. The Native American exhibit shows a Kiowa boy's buckskin war shirt (ca. 1870), as well as moccasins from four Southern Plains tribes—Kiowa, Comanche, Southern Cheyenne, and Arapaho.

The River Valley Pioneer Museum in Canadian features an exhibit on the Battle of Lyman's Wagon Train.

An Adobe Walls exhibit at the Hutchinson County Museum displays a buffalo hunter's trading post, and shows tools and trade goods typical of the era.

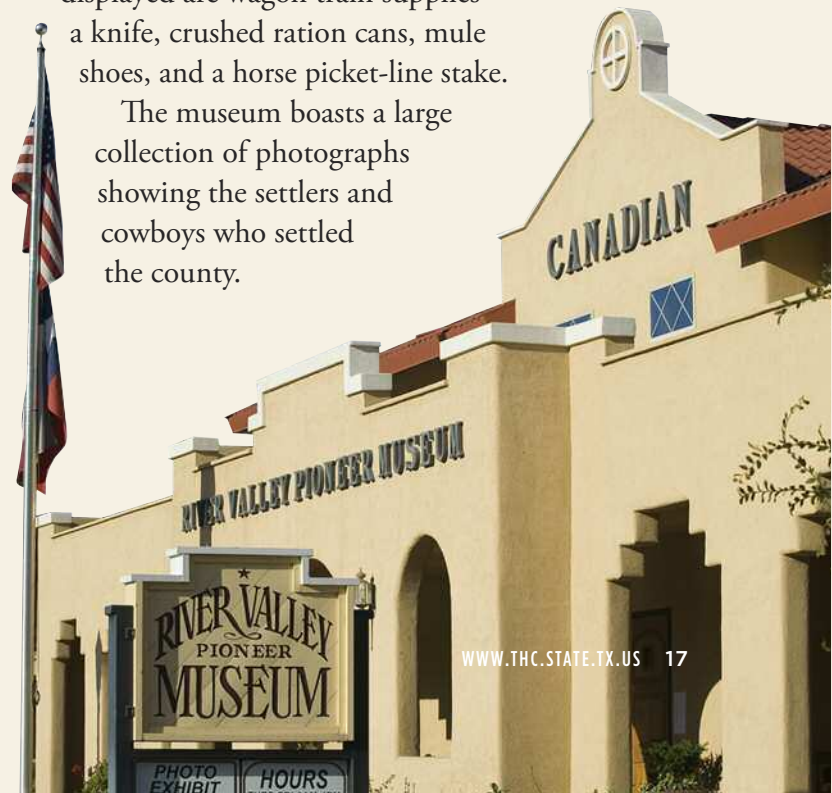
## 2. CANADIAN, Hemphill County

The high-rolling prairies around Canadian witnessed a dramatic siege on September 9–14, 1874. An Army wagon train led by Capt. Wyllys Lyman was attacked by Kiowa and Comanche searching for a warrior taken prisoner—a red-headed, white-skinned Kiowa named Tehan ("Texan"). As a boy, Tehan had been captured by Indians and adopted by medicine man Mamanti. Recaptured by Capt. Lyman's men, Tehan managed to escape during the wagon train attack and joined the Indian siege.

The longest battle of the Red River War ended when natives spotted Maj. William R. Price and his 8th Cavalry nearby. Indian Chiefs Lone Wolf, Satanta, and Big Tree headed to Palo Duro Canyon—families in tow—where they set up winter camps.

The River Valley Pioneer Museum displays artifacts found at the site of the Battle of Lyman's Wagon Train. The exhibit features lead bullets from Indian rifles and metal points from their arrows. Army artifacts include cartridges and bullets from Colt revolvers and Springfield rifles. Also displayed are wagon train supplies—a knife, crushed ration cans, mule shoes, and a horse picket-line stake.

The museum boasts a large collection of photographs showing the settlers and cowboys who settled the county.





Now located at the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, this 1870s cabin is made of timber from Palo Duro Canyon. It was originally built by Leigh Dyer, the Panhandle's first farmer after the removal of Indians during the Red River War.

### 3. CANYON, Randall County

At dawn on September 28, 1874, Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie and the 4th Cavalry launched a surprise attack from the rim of Palo Duro Canyon on Indian villages strung out along the river below. As in previous battles, Cheyenne, Comanche, and Kiowa warriors held off advancing troops long enough to allow their panicked women and children to escape. Col. Mackenzie ordered native lodges burned and almost all Indian horses were captured and later shot. The beleaguered Indians returned to the reservations in Indian Territory, and the Battle of Palo Duro Canyon proved the turning point of the Red River War.

Today, the battlefield lies within the 30,000-acre Palo Duro Canyon State Park. An interpretive center outlines the battle, along with the canyon's natural and cultural heritage. The canyon floor features a replica of the dugout camp of legendary cattleman Charles Goodnight, who started the Panhandle's first ranch in the canyon. Each summer, the park amphitheater hosts "Texas," an outdoor musical drama retelling the story of Indians and pioneers who lived and fought there.

The colorful history of the Texas Panhandle is vividly recaptured daily on the campus of West Texas A&M University at the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum. The People of the Plains exhibit reveals how Southern Plains tribes adapted to changing conditions. Another exhibit shows Indian artifacts—including a bonnet, shield, and



lance from White Eagle (Eschiti) and buffalo hunters' weapons and provisions found at the Battle of Adobe Walls site. A nearby exhibit details the Comancheros—Hispanics from New Mexico who traded with Plains Indians in an elaborate trade network.

Rotating exhibits from the native arts collection feature beaded bags, moccasins, buckskin dresses, and gourd rattles from peyote rituals. A rare hybrid artifact may have been used in the Red River War—an 18th-century Spanish shield encased in a Comanche shield cover that still bears bullet holes and bloodstains.

From the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, a cradleboard used by Quanah Parker's wife, Toonicey.

A large firearms collection boasts an 1873 Winchester rifle owned by Comanche leader Quanah Parker and a plains rifle used by Goodnight. The Red River War weapons exhibit compares military and Indian firearms.

Elaborate exhibits and interactive displays chronicle how the Panhandle developed in the decades following the Red River War. Pioneer Town examines life on a changing frontier through a mock livery, saloon, schoolhouse, and authentic pioneer cabin. Two floors detail the burgeoning petroleum business, beginning with the 1920s oil boom. A recreated car dealership, diner, and movie theater examine advances in transportation after the horse-and-buggy days.

Red River War exhibit at the Saints' Roost Museum features photos of Army and Indian leaders and a replica cavalry uniform.



#### 4. CLARENDON, Donley County

The Army's relentless campaign to round up Plains Indians continued in the fall of 1874. On October 9, Lt. Col. George P. Buell and his Fort Griffin command struck a small Indian village northwest of today's Clarendon, along the Salt Fork of the Red River. Farther upstream, they burned several hundred lodges in three more villages.

Three years after the Red River War, Irish landowner John Adair partnered with Texas cattleman Charles Goodnight to establish the JA Ranch in Palo Duro Canyon. A Methodist minister laid out the nearby "Christian colony" of Clarendon, and rowdy JA cowboys gave the bar-less town a new nickname, "Saints' Roost." After Adair died in 1885, his wife, Cornelia, ran the ranch, and in 1910 opened the Adair Hospital to care for ranch hands.



The historic hospital now houses the Saints' Roost Museum, a repository for county artifacts. The Red River War room displays photos and information on key military and Indian leaders. Other exhibits outline the lives of Goodnight and Cornelia Adair. Museum grounds feature a restored cowboy bunkhouse and the 1887 Fort Worth & Denver Railroad depot.

#### 5. CLAUDE, Armstrong County

Charles Goodnight grew up on the Texas frontier—first hunting with Indians, and then fighting them as a Texas Ranger. He blazed cattle trails and, right after the Red River War, established a ranch in the Palo Duro Canyon. Goodnight introduced Hereford cattle, and wheat farming to the region and even invented the chuck wagon. The fascinating life and times of the "Father of the Panhandle" unfolds at the Armstrong County Museum.

In 1877, Goodnight incorporated his ranch into a partnership with John Adair to form the JA Ranch, which grew to more than one million acres. An extensive exhibit captures the colorful story of the Panhandle's first cattle ranch, still operated by Adair descendants.

Comanche beaded purse at the Armstrong County Museum, given by a wife of Chief Quanah Parker to the housekeeper of Charles Goodnight.

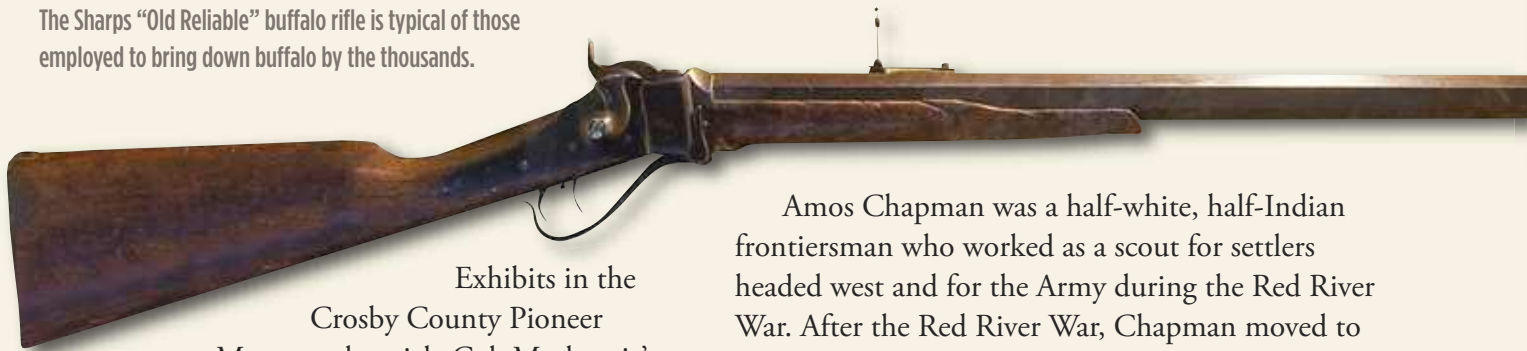
After the Red River War, Goodnight befriended Comanche Chief Quanah Parker and other Indian leaders and staged occasional buffalo hunts on his ranch for the former warriors. The museum displays a Kiowa bow and arrow from the last such hunt. Another display explains how Charles and Mary Ann Goodnight helped save the last of the Southern Plains bison herds. Another exhibit covers the basics of the battles of Red River and Palo Duro Canyon.

In the nearby community of Goodnight, the museum hosts tours of the partially-restored 1887 Goodnight home, located a short drive from Goodnight's grave.

## 6. CROSBYTON, Crosby County

In 1871, southeast of present Crosbyton, Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie launched his first campaign against the Comanche heartland. Skirmishes around Blanco Canyon failed to drive Kwahadi Chief Quanah and his warriors to the reservation. Col. Mackenzie returned to Blanco Canyon in 1874, where he set up a supply camp for his military column from Fort Concho, Texas, during the Red River War.

The Sharps “Old Reliable” buffalo rifle is typical of those employed to bring down buffalo by the thousands.



Exhibits in the Crosby County Pioneer Museum chronicle Col. Mackenzie’s career and the Battle of Blanco Canyon. A display on the 4th U.S. Cavalry features 1870s McClellan saddles and the tombstone of Pvt. William Max, who died at the 1874 supply camp.

Soon after the war, buffalo hunters killed nearly all of the region’s remaining buffalo. Early settler and freighter Hank Smith shipped wagonloads of buffalo tongues and bones for sale at Fort Griffin, Texas. He even used the bones to mark the road to Estacado, the first seat of Crosby County. The museum details his life through a large collection of Smith family relics, including his 1876 Sharps buffalo rifle.

The museum’s Wayne J. Parker Center for Native American Studies features a research library and photographs of Indians who experienced the Red River War. The museum also holds 23,000 Indian artifacts collected by Wayne Parker, Quanah Parker’s fourth cousin. Relics range from prehistoric pots to arrowpoints made from Army cartridge cases.

## 7. LIPSCOMB, Lipscomb County

During the bison slaughter of the 1870s, hunters set up “hide town” camps along Wolf Creek. Buffalo skinners cut hides from buffalo on the prairie and left the carcasses to rot. In camp they staked out the untanned “flint” hides and treated them with arsenic. After scraping away any tallow, camp workers folded the hides for shipment to eastern markets. The Wolf Creek Heritage Museum interprets the life of the buffalo hunter through displays of scrapers, cleavers, and knives used at hide town camps.

Amos Chapman was a half-white, half-Indian frontiersman who worked as a scout for settlers headed west and for the Army during the Red River War. After the Red River War, Chapman moved to Indian Territory where he lived with his wife, Mary Longneck, the adopted daughter of Cheyenne Chief Stone Calf. Their grandson, Ervin “Buck” Chapman, eventually returned to the Panhandle to live in Lipscomb County. His headdress remains on display, recalling the county’s native heritage.

Other exhibits showcase artifacts from early settlers—including a leather fly net used to protect horses, a bear skin robe from German immigrants, and the sidesaddle of 12-year-old Augusta Bell Mugg, who rode to Lipscomb from the Guadalupe Mountains in 1893.



## 8. MIAMI, Roberts County

Twenty-five miles east of present Miami, Amos Chapman and fellow scout, Billy Dixon, rode with four soldiers of the 6th Cavalry on a fateful September 12, 1874. Surprised by 125 warriors, the six men took cover in a buffalo wallow and held off an intense Indian siege throughout the day. All six later received the Medal of Honor—one posthumously—for action in the Battle of Buffalo Wallow.

The heroic fight captured national attention, and artist Frederic Remington immortalized it in “The Last Stand.” That work inspired a painting by Richard Thompson, which recalls the battle at the Roberts County Museum. A nearby diorama captures the fight’s intensity, and a case displays period Army weapons.

Before Dixon died in 1913, his wife, Olive, wrote her famous husband’s biography. Olive Dixon lived in Miami for 20 years, working as a news reporter and raising money for the granite monument erected in 1925 at the Buffalo Wallow site.

Housed in an 1888 railroad depot, the museum also features archeological displays of Paleoindian projectile points found locally, as well as other displays of local fossils and mammoth bones. Early settlement comes to life in a four-room pioneer house, barn, and blacksmith shop.

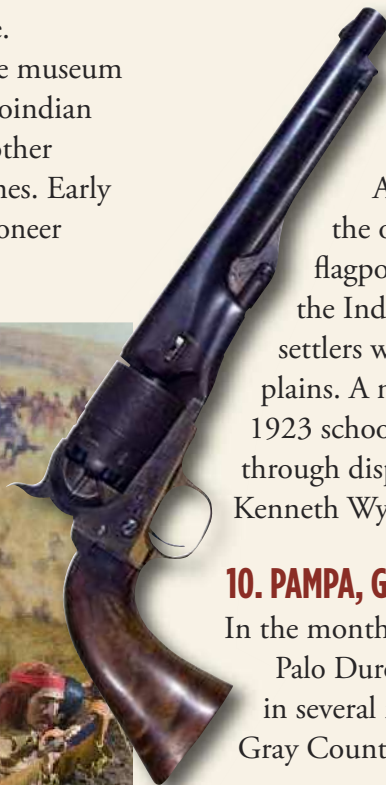


Roberts County Museum features a diorama of the Buffalo Wallow battle.

## 9. MOBEETIE, Wheeler County

On September 12, 1874, Maj. William R. Price battled Kiowa Chief Lone Wolf along Sweetwater Creek just north of town. The Battle of Sweetwater Creek sent warriors retreating but also diverted military attention from nearby Indian families.

The Red River War ended in June 1875, and the Army established a new fort on Sweetwater Creek to protect buffalo hunters, settlers, and cattle drovers coming to Texas. Fort Elliott was served by African American troops called Buffalo Soldiers, including West Point’s first black graduate, Henry O. Flipper. A nearby buffalo hunter’s trading post became Mobeetie, the Panhandle’s first town. The settlement attracted saloons and gamblers such as Bat Masterson who killed a man over a poker game. To maintain order, Capt. George W. Arrington arrived with the Texas Rangers. The lawman later became Wheeler County sheriff and lived in the two-story stone jail, now the Old Mobeetie Jail Museum, where frontier artifacts are housed.



This U.S. Army service revolver, typical of those used during the Indian wars, can be found at the Old Mobeetie Jail Museum.

A mock frontier town surrounds the old jail and original Fort Elliott flagpole. Exhibits chronicle the lives of the Indians, buffalo hunters, soldiers, and settlers who struggled for control of the plains. A new visitor center, housed in a 1923 school, chronicles the Red River War through displays and paintings by Texas artist Kenneth Wyatt.

## 10. PAMPA, Gray County

In the months following the pivotal Battle of Palo Duro Canyon, the Army fought warriors in several more skirmishes, including two in Gray County. The Battle of Round Timber



These artifacts at the White Deer Land Museum are from the Battle of McClellan Creek.

Creek occurred on November 6, 1874, near Cheyenne Chief Grey Beard's village on the North Fork of the Red River. Roughly 100 warriors ambushed 1st Lt. Henry J. Farnsworth, forcing his scouting party to retreat. Two days later, a wagon train led by Lt. Frank Baldwin charged Chief Grey Beard's relocated village. Villagers fled the fighting, and as soldiers searched the deserted camp, they freed two white captives, sisters Adelaide and Julia German, who had been taken two months earlier. The Battle of McClellan Creek would be the last major struggle of the Red River War.

With fighting on the wane, in early 1875, Army Maj. James Biddle set up a cantonment of soldiers to guard the Indian Territory border. Maj. Biddle's Camp Cantonment was abandoned when Fort Elliott was established later that year. The Gray County battles and the story of Camp Cantonment live on in elaborate exhibits—complete with battlefield artifacts—at the White Deer Land Museum.

Housed in the 1916 headquarters of an early land development company, the museum also showcases period artifacts that chronicle the lives of warriors and soldiers.

## 11. PERRYTON, Ochiltree County

Before the arrival of Plains Indians or Spanish explorers to the Texas Panhandle, a unique Native American farming community flourished along Wolf Creek in a complex called the Buried City. These Plains Villagers lived from A.D. 1200 to

1500 in semi-subterranean pit houses and stone slab houses. An exhibit at the Museum of the Plains details the archeological fieldwork done over many decades at the Buried City and displays artifacts from the site.

Other native exhibits feature a replica tepee and period Indian trade goods—such as metal arrowpoints, ornamental cones and tinklers, and cast-iron cookware. A reproduction of the Annual Calendar of the Kiowa retraces tribal history from 1833 to 1892. Originally painted on buffalo hide by Little Bear (Set-t'an), the calendar shows key historical events—such as an 1833 attack on American traders, the 1861–62 outbreak of smallpox, and the 1867 Treaty of Medicine Lodge negotiations. Perryton artist James Coverdale, the great-great-grandson of Kiowa Chief Two Hatchet, created the deer hide replica.

Some 10,000 historical artifacts at the museum chronicle the cultural heritage of the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles. The museum grounds feature an 1899 Santa Fe depot, a 1906 Victorian home, and a 1908 general store.



A replica Kiowa Indian calendar from the Museum of the Plains features pictographs painted on tanned deer hide to chronicle 60 years of Kiowa history.

## 12. QUITAQUE, Briscoe County

Millions of buffalos roamed the Southern Plains for millennia, hunted first by nomadic peoples on foot, then by horse warriors who built a culture around them. In the 1870s, new markets for buffalo hides attracted hundreds of hunters who reduced southern herds to near extinction within a decade. In 1878, pioneer cattleman Charles Goodnight and his wife, Mary Ann, preserved a small buffalo herd on their Palo Duro Canyon ranch. Throughout the 20th century, the Goodnight buffalos helped revive the breed at Yellowstone National Park and elsewhere across the plains.

In 1996, the remaining Goodnight herd was given to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and became the official state bison herd at the 15,000-acre Caprock Canyons State Park. The park's new visitor center offers exhibits on how the buffalo fits into the native prairie ecosystem, and a nearby open-air platform provides sweeping views of the canyon. The 80 or so bison at the park descended from the Goodnight herd. A new breeding program aims to improve genetic diversity in the state herd while maintaining the three genetic markers that make them "Goodnight buffalos."

The park's Lake Theo is situated near an ancient bison kill site where 10,000-year-old Folsom projectile points have been found.



Caprock Canyons State Park is home to the official state bison herd, offspring of wild Southern plains bison saved from extinction by early rancher Charles Goodnight in Palo Duro Canyon. This animal remains an important symbol of Native American culture.

## 13. TULIA, Swisher County

Today, 15 miles east of town, boaters ply the waters of Mackenzie Reservoir in Tule Canyon where, in 1874, the lake's namesake, Gen. Ranald S. Mackenzie, ended the Red River War's most pivotal battle at nearby Tule Creek.

Mackenzie set up camp in Tule Canyon before his September 28 surprise attack on Indian villages in nearby Palo Duro Canyon. Once the Indians had fled in panic, Mackenzie's men burned the villages and drove the captured Indian horses back to the Tule Canyon camp. The next day, the troops picked out the best 376 horses and killed the remaining 1,048. Left largely on foot and with few provisions, the Plains Indians returned to the reservations.

One of Mackenzie's 4th Cavalry subordinates, Capt. Robert G. Carter, later chronicled and mapped Mackenzie's exploits. A reproduction of one of Carter's maps rests alongside other Indian-era artifacts at the Swisher County Archives and Museum.

The museum also details the life of the last free-roaming Comanche chief, Quanah Parker. The Red River War ended in June 1875 after Chief Quanah and his followers surrendered at Fort Sill, Indian Territory. On the reservation, he became a successful businessman and native leader.



TEXAS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION   
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

[thc.texas.gov](http://thc.texas.gov)

P.O. BOX 12276 • AUSTIN, TX 78711-2276  
PH: 512-463-6100 • FAX: 512-475-8222



This program is made possible  
in part by a grant from  
Humanities Texas, the state  
affiliate of the National  
Endowment for the Humanities.