



# Tribal Histories

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Tonkawa Tribe of Oklahoma  
Research Report

August 2021

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## Introduction

The TxDOT Tribal Histories Project involves creating a set of geographic historical narratives of tribal presence in Texas through collaboration with participating Tribes. Taking a statewide approach, these histories will serve as resources to inform future statewide transportation planning, project development, tribal consultation activities, and public engagement by TxDOT.

This research report was designed to facilitate the extraction of geographic data, along with calendar and event information, to populate a GIS dataset for use by transportation planners and the Tribe. Information from the narrative and GIS dataset is also intended to be adapted for use in archeology reports and for educational outreach materials. Organized chronologically, the research report for this broad overview focuses on providing background context and setting for Tonkawa peoples, tribes, and cultures associated with the region encompassing Texas and on the physical locations and specific time periods during which the Tonkawa Tribe were present in Texas.

## Tonkawa Land Use in Texas

### *Pre-European Contact*

The Tonkawa are considered to be an amalgamation of subtribes and autonomous bands that coalesced to form the Tonkawa Tribe. It is generally agreed that the Yojuane, Mayeye, Ervipiame, Sana, Emet, Cava, Toho, and the Tohaha are the ancestral Tonkawa. A few bands who comprised the Tribe may have migrated to Texas from the Southern Plains of Kansas and joined together with bands native to Texas who ranged from the mouth of the Brazos River, the forks of the Trinity River, and near the Texas Coastal Plain from the Rio Grande to the Brazos River. Possibly 200 or so small groups of loosely associated and linguistically related clans inhabited and roamed the area, forming the nucleus of what would become the Tonkawa Tribe. They lived a nomadic, Archaic Period lifestyle of hunting and gathering without reliance on agriculture until the late seventeenth century. It is uncertain how long the Tonkawa people were present in central Texas; however, the Toyah Phase archeological period is often attributed to the ancestors of the Tonkawa. The scattered Tonkawa bands and subtribes had been reduced in number during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and by the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century they had begun to unite become a more singular Tonkawa tribe (McGowen 2020: 20; Newcomb, Jr. 1961: 134).

### *Early European Exploration and Settlement*

The Tonkawa and all other Indian tribes were dramatically directly and indirectly affected by European colonists and later settlers in Texas. European goods, guns, horses, missionization, diseases, and forced resettlement directly impacted their lifeways, culture, economies, and warfare. European encroachment forced other tribes to migrate from the north, west, and east into existing Indian territories, resulting in new trade networks, alliances, and warfare. Additionally, the use of the horse greatly altered tribes' hunting capabilities and expanded their range and territory.

### *Sixteenth Century*

Early Spanish explorers in Texas were likely the first Europeans to have encountered Tonkawa people, though intermittently. Although not confirmed, Cabeza de Vaca's 1528 expedition may have encountered a Tonkawa subgroup during their journey along the Texas coast and inland

across southern and western Texas. Members of the Hernando de Soto and Luis de Moscoso Alvarado parties may have also met Tonkawa members in 1542 (Sjoberg 1953: 281).

### *Seventeenth Century*

The first confirmed reference to the Tonkawa is attributed to Henri Joutel, a companion of French explorer René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, who is reported to have heard in 1687 that the Mayeye were living in central Texas at this time (Sjoberg 1953: 281-282).

The Ervipiame Indians were encountered in 1675 by the Spanish Bosque-Larios expedition north of the Rio Grande in the southwestern portion of the Edwards Plateau in close association with bands of Coahuiltecan speakers. It is theorized that the Ervipiame were originally Coahuiltecan who later became so closely associated with the Tonkawa that they were absorbed into the tribe. In 1698, Spain established a mission for the Ervipiame between the Sabine and Rio Grande rivers in what is now northeast Coahuila, Mexico (Campbell 1995).

Spain had claimed the territory which included modern day Texas in the early 1500s but did not attempt to colonize the area until after locating evidence of La Salle's failed French colony of Fort Saint Louis near Lavaca Bay in Victoria County in 1689. At this time, the Tonkawa mainly occupied the middle reaches of the Trinity, Brazos, and Colorado rivers, though they often traveled outside of this area for long range hunts, trade, and warfare (La Vere 1998:9).

The beginning of continued contact with the Tonkawa is marked by the Spanish Alonzo de Leon expedition in 1690 when he escorted Catholic missionaries through East Texas. During the expedition, Father Damien Massenet met the Emet, Cava, Toho, and Tohaha Indians between the lower Guadalupe and lower Colorado rivers in Victoria and Lavaca counties (Sjoberg 1953: 281-282; Newlin 1981: 8). This initial meeting marked the beginning of the policy to conquer and reduce the Texas Indians to servantry, elevating them to what was considered a "civilized" life through a Spanish lens via missionizing (Newlin 1981: 8).

### *Eighteenth Century*

By 1707, the Ervipiame had traveled north into central Texas and soon became the dominant group within what was referred to by the Spanish as the *Ranchería Grande de los Ervipiames*. This series of settlements made up principally of Coahuiltecan refugees from northeastern Coahuila and the adjoining part of Texas was located along the middle reaches of the Brazos River near the town of Gause within present-day Milam County (**Figure 1**). The Spanish founded mission San Francisco Xavier de Nájara in San Antonio for the Ervipiames of *Ranchería Grande*, and their village near the mission was known as the Ervipiame suburb (**Figure 2**). By the mid-1700s, the Ervipiame Indians who remained at or came back to *Ranchería Grande* were associated mainly with groups identified as Tonkawan: the Tonkawa, Yojuane, and Mayeye (Campbell 1995). The Spanish returned to southeastern Texas in 1716 and established several missions to maintain a buffer between its territory and the French colonial Louisiana district of New France. During this early period of Spanish contact, Tonkawa groups including the Mayeye, Yojuane, Ervipiame, and Tonkawa, ranged from the San Antonio River to the southwest and to the Neches River to the northeast. They were also reported to have been within an approximate 125-mile buffer along either side of the Camino Real de los Tejas stretching from San Antonio to Nacogdoches (Jones 1969: 66).



Figure 1: Ranchería Grande de los Ervpiames and La Tortuga/Sugarloaf Mountain

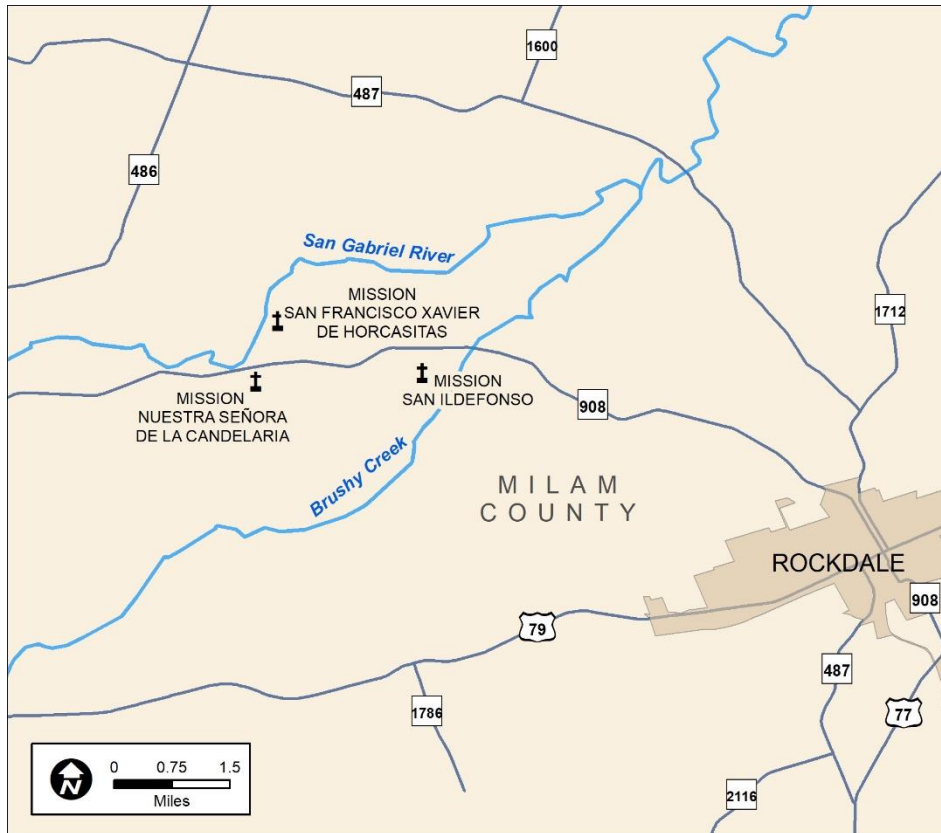


**Figure 2: Mission San Francisco Xavier de Naxara**

While exploring the middle reaches of the Red River in 1719, the expedition of French explorer and trader Jean-Baptiste Bénard de La Harpe recorded meeting with a number of tribes including the Yojuane and Tonkawa approximately 70 leagues up the Red River. Another Frenchman, Lieutenant Du Rivage visited a Tonkawa village on or near the Colorado River that same year (Newlin 1981: 8).

Most of the Tonkawa peoples lived too far away to be attracted to the existing Spanish missions, and although Spanish clergy traveled to the upper Trinity River to deliver presents to the Tonkawa in the area to entice them to enter the missions, they declined (McGowen 2020:27). The Spanish made a concerted, but temporary, attempt to Christianize and subdue the Tonkawa and their affiliated subgroups between 1746 and 1749. They established three missions along the San Xavier River (present-day San Gabriel River) on the edge of the Blackland Prairie approximately four miles north west of present-day Rockdale in Milam County (**Figure 3**). It was claimed that the impetus for the missions was that a group of Indians, including members of the Yojuane, Mayeye, Erviame, and Deadose visited mission San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo) in 1745 and asked to establish their own mission. After a temporary mission was erected in 1745, San Francisco Xavier de Horcasitas was founded along the south bank of the San Gabriel River in 1748 to serve the Yojuane, Mayeye, Erviame, Asinia, Top, and Nabedache. One hundred fifty Indians were recorded at the mission in 1750 (Gilmore 1996). Next, mission San Ildefonso was constructed nearby in 1749 to serve the Akokisa, Bidai, and Deadose Indians. The third mission, Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria, was also completed in 1749 for the Tonkawa subgroup, the Cocos, and their allies, including the Top and Karankawa. An additional mission along the San Gabriel River for

the Lipan Apache (enemies of the Tonkawa) was considered subsequent to a peace treaty with the Spanish, but it never materialized (Gilmore 2020).

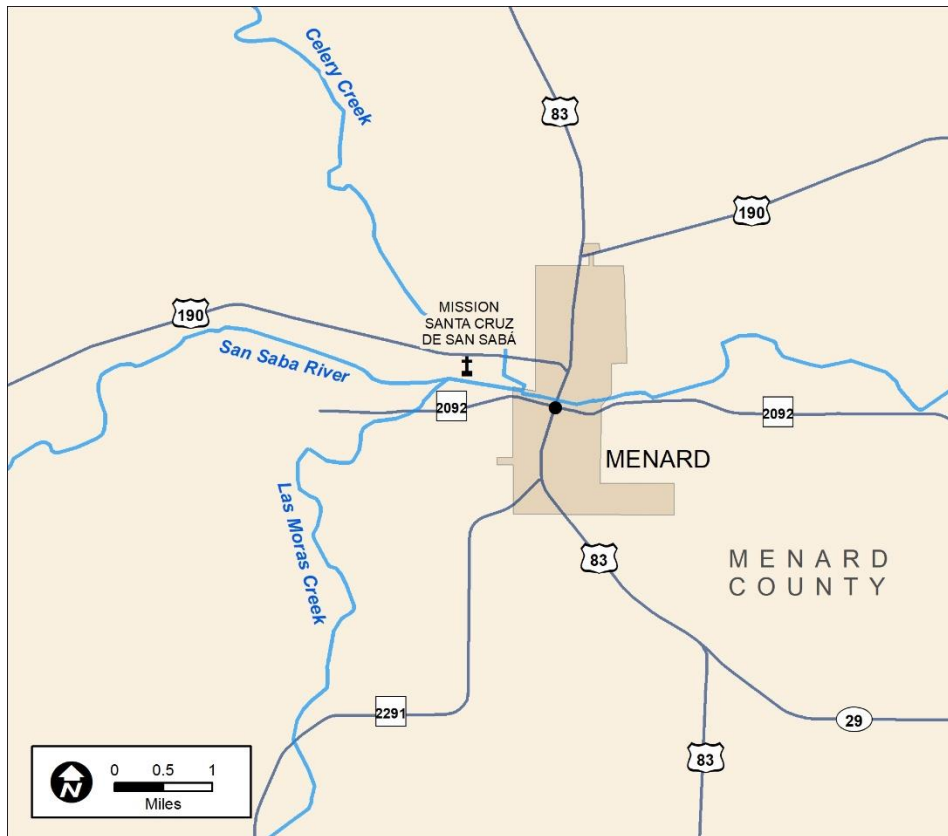


**Figure 3: San Xavier Missions**

After drought, epidemics, attacks by other Indians, and troubles with the missionaries and the captain of the nearby presidio, the three San Xavier missions were abandoned and moved in 1755 for a short time to springs along the San Marcos River possibly within present-day San Marcos. The following year, the Mayeye persuaded the missionaries to set up a new mission (technically the third relocation of mission San Francisco Xavier de Horcasitas) on the Guadalupe River at the present site of New Braunfels. However, the mission was short-lived, and it too was abandoned in 1758 after disagreements among church officials and fears of attacks from the Comanche (Chipman 2020). Some of the Mayeye relocated to San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo) at this time (Sjoberg 1953: 282). Like the Comanche, Wichita, and Caddo, the Tonkawa (including the Yojuane) never fully accepted the missionized life as they preferred their traditional nomadic lifeways over farming, Christianity, and being subjugates of the Spanish. However, they did take advantage of the mission system when times were tough due to lack of food and supplies, or when under threat from enemy tribes. (La Vere 1998:19).

After the previous failures of the San Xavier missions, the Spanish turned their focus to the Lipan Apache, some of whom were receptive to a mission to protect themselves from the Comanche who came into their territory from the north and warred for control. In addition to missionizing the Lipan, the Spanish hoped to control increasing Apache raids on Spanish and Pueblo settlements in the west. Without consulting with the Lipan Apache regarding the

mission location, the Spanish chose the site for mission Santa Cruz de San Sabá and the presidio along the San Saba River at about three miles from present day Menard (**Figure 4**). The Lipan Apache did not care for the location of the mission and with increased rumors of northern tribes heading to attack the new mission, they never resided at the mission (Weddle 2013). The Comanche and their allies, the Wichita and the Caddo, were enemies of the Apache as were the Tonkawa. When the Spanish chose to establish a mission for the Lipan Apache at San Saba, they angered the Comanche and the other “norteño” groups (La Vere 1998:20).



**Figure 4: Mission Santa Cruz de San Sabá**

After a previous raid on the mission San Sabá pasture, a group of 2,000 Tonkawa, Wichita, Comanche, Caddo, and Taovaya men under the guise of a friendly visit, attacked the small hastily constructed wooden mission compound with muskets and lances on March 16, 1758. El Mocho, a Tonkawa chief, was said to have helped plan the attack. The Lipan Apache had been long gone, but several other Indians and Spaniards were killed in the attack including priests and missionaries. Presidio commander Diego Ortiz Parrilla vowed revenge for the attack and in the fall 1759, lead a force of 600 soldiers and Indians (including Apache) northeast toward the Red River culminating at a fortified Wichita village near present-day Spanish Fort. The village, however, was well protected and armed, and the Spanish withdrew upon being overpowered by the Wichita. Although the Spanish were ultimately unsuccessful, while en route to the Red River, Ortiz Parilla and his men attacked other Indian villages along the way including a Yojuane ranchería along the Brazos River, killing 55 warriors and taking 149 captives (La Vere 1998:20-21).



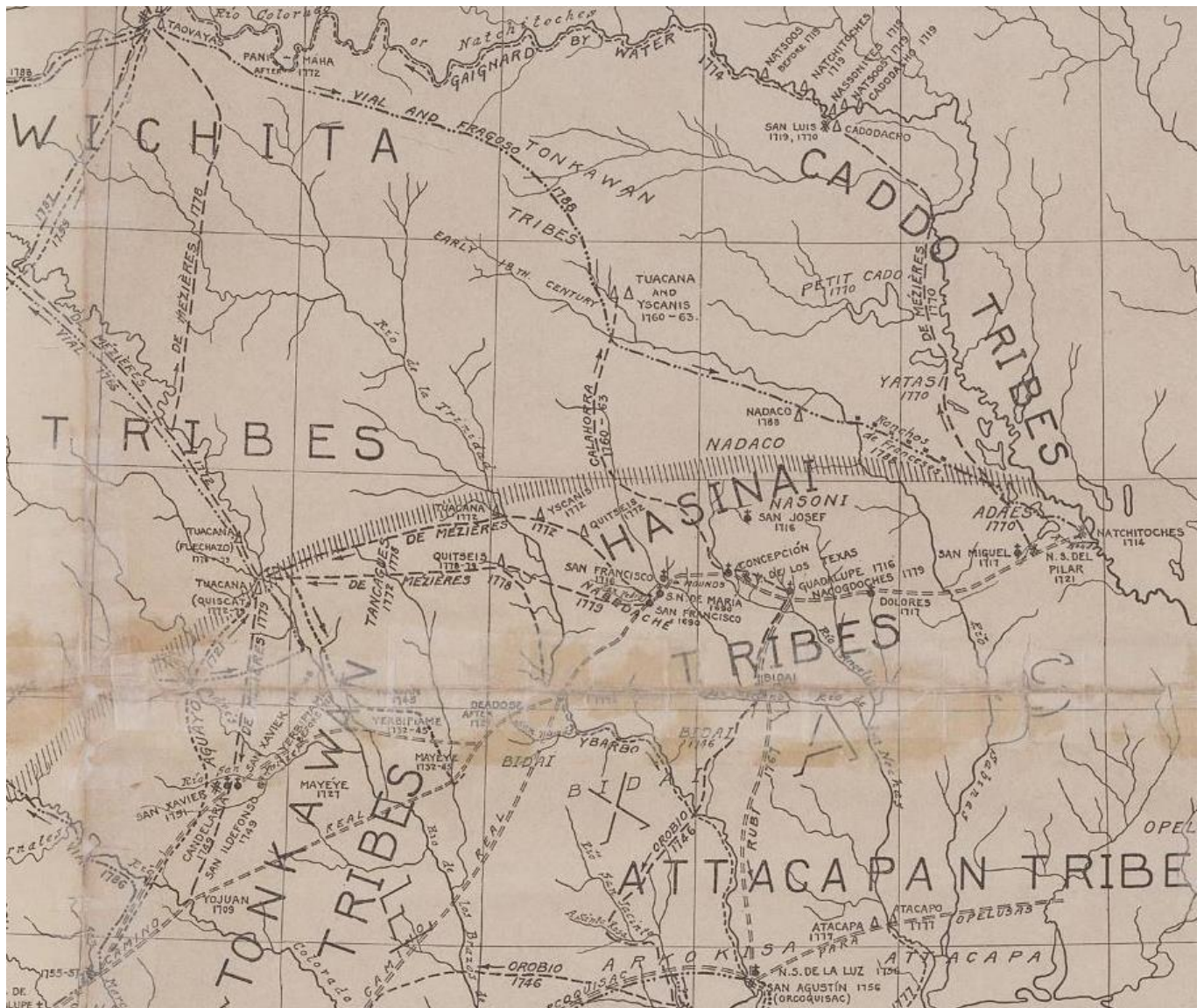
Despite the attack on Mission San Sabá, the Spanish spent most of the 1760s and 1770s trying to gain back the Tonkawa's confidence and restore peace via Tonkawa Chief Neques, who unlike El Mocho, was in favor of an alliance with the Spaniards (Newlin 1981: 2, 14). By this time, many tribes, including the Tonkawa, had come to depend on the Spanish as well as the French for manufactured goods, guns, cloth, and etc., for their personal use and their own economies. And thus, with the recognition of dependency, the Indians interactions were marked by cycles of civility and hostility instead of all-out war with the European colonizers. The Spanish, in turn, recognized that continuing to supply manufactured goods to the Indians might reduce the number of raids and lead to peaceful interactions (La Vere 1998:22).

El Mocho frequently clashed with Neques regarding peace with the Spanish but acquiesced to a 1771 peace treaty with Spain that included the Caddo, Tonkawa, and Wichita (Schilz 2020a). At this time, the Spanish developed a policy that authorized only licensed traders to visit the Indian villages in an effort to have control over the Tonkawa and other tribes (Newlin 1981: 13- 14). However, the Spanish were undermined by merchandize shortages brought on by the American Revolution and the Indians continued to trade with unlicensed traders including the French (La Vere 1998:22-23).

During the 1770s-1780s, groups of Tonkawa were living between the middle and upper Trinity River to the northeast and the San Gabriel and Colorado rivers to the southwest, above the San Antonio Road. One of their villages was located between present-day Waco and the Trinity River crossing of the San Antonio Road. During this time, Spanish Indian agent Athanase de Mézières visited several Indian settlements throughout central and East Texas. In 1770, Mézières made the first of his expeditions up the Red River and managed to enact treaties and trading relationships with the Kichai, Tawakoni, Taovaya, and Tonkawa tribes. He made several additional trips during 1772 and noted Tonkawa, Yojuane, and Mayeye camps (**Figure 5**). In 1778, Mézières visited the Tonkawa and observed 300 warriors at La Tortuga (the Turtle), an eminence significant to the Tonkawa near the confluence of the Little and Brazos rivers in present-day Milam County also known as Sugarloaf Mountain (see **Figure 1**). The following year, he traveled in the area of the Little River in what is now Bell County with Chief El Mocho and remarked on their dependence on hunting and gathering, the most important animal being the buffalo (Jones 1969:66; Mayhall 1939: 441-442).

Mézières attempted to remove El Mocho as a Tonkawa chief, but was unsuccessful. In 1779 he accompanied 400 Tonkawa and the Chief to Bexar (San Antonio). There, Spanish Governor Domingo Cabello made El Mocho a captain in the Spanish army in an attempt to win Tonkawa favor. El Mocho accepted the title and gave an empty promise regarding peace and permanent village settlement. Although other Tonkawa leaders wished to make peace, El Mocho understood that the Spanish aimed to acculturate and subdue the Tonkawa and feared his tribe would further disintegrate. He sought alliance with the French and obtained firearms from them. In 1782, he called together a council of 4,000 Indians including Lipan Apache (now Tonkawa allies) on the Guadalupe River urging them to make a military alliance with the French in an attempt to form an anti-Spanish confederacy. Unfortunately, the council ended with no results as El Mocho was viewed as too ambitious and greedy by the Lipan Apache and some of the Tonkawa because he sought to become lead war chief. Opposition to El Mocho continued, though likely without his awareness. In July 1784, Tonkawa who had personal grudges against him encouraged El Mocho to meet the Spanish at the presidio of La Bahía del Espíritu Santo (Goliad). Upon entering, he was gunned down by the Spanish to further squash Tonkawa resistance (Newlin 1981: 14-15). By the following year, the Tonkawa were

living at a permanent village along the Navasota River. During their approximately 10 years of residence there, the Spanish were no longer concerned about uprising as they had established a system of economic dependency, and Tonkawa had acquiesced to a non-nomadic life (Newlin 1981: 15-16).



**Figure 5. Tonkawa villages and Mézières' travels in Texas during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century (Herbert E. Bolton, Map of Texas and Adjacent Regions in the Eighteenth Century, 1915, Courtesy of the Portal to Texas History)**

### *Nineteenth Century*

By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Tonkawa had returned to their homelands in central Texas between the Trinity and Colorado rivers and, for the first time, came in contact with Anglo-Americans. In 1807, while being taken across Texas by the Spanish, Zebulon Pike was the first American to meet and describe the Tonkawa. He described the Tonkawa as a group of 600 men strong on the banks of the Colorado River “confined to no particular district,” following the buffalo and wild horse, trading with the Spanish, and “as the most independent

Indians we encountered in Spanish territories.” Similarly, early Texas settler Noah Smithwick observed that the Tonkawa were a wandering remnant of a once much larger tribe (Newlin 1981: 20-21). By the early 1820’s, the Tonkawa were estimated at 250 families periodically ranging from the middle and lower sections of the Guadalupe, Colorado, and Brazos rivers.

During this time, Plácido, or Ha-shu-ka-na became a lead chief of the Tonkawa having rose to prominence in 1819 during the failed Long expedition, the last of a series of filibustering campaigns in which Anglo Americans and Mexicans attempted to wrest Texas from Spain. Warriors from several tribes joined in James Long’s venture in East Texas and gained horses and scalps during battles with the Spanish army (Schilz 2021).

### ***Mexican Province of Coahuila y Texas (1821-1836)***

Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821 and settlement in Texas began in earnest which would further transform the Tonkawa way of life. The Tonkawa and the other Texas Indian tribes would become more and more limited in their movement within their traditional lands and later new lands. American empresario and founder of Anglo Texas and Austin’s Colony, Stephen F. Austin arrived in Texas in 1822 and found the Tonkawa along the west bank of the Brazos River within present day Washington County. He soon established a trade relationship with the Tonkawa. Unlike the Spanish, the Texans allowed the Tonkawa to trade freely amongst the settlers and the Texans began to set up trading posts for bartering (Newlin 1981: 21).

This change led to fairly peaceful relations between the Texans and the Tonkawa in the early 19th century; however, after a Tonkawa band was accused of raiding settlements on the Brazos River in 1823, Austin demanded punishment. He dictated that the responsible warriors would be lashed by their chief Carita as well as himself to display solidarity. Carita complied with Austin’s demands because he saw the need for an alliance with the Texans, mostly to help defend their lands from the Comanche. In conjunction with liberal trade activities, Austin also strongly encouraged the Tonkawa to settle in the bottomlands of the Colorado River and abandon their traditional lifeways and he supplied seed corn and tools for cultivation. Carita however, informed Austin that the Great Spirit had instructed him to keep the tribe’s traditional nomadic and hunting lifeways. This statement from Carita, in addition to being blamed for thievery, led many of the settlers to harbor ill-feelings toward the Tonkawa (Newlin 1981: 23-24).

Despite tensions with the settlers, the Tonkawa remained friendly towards the Texans under the leadership of Plácido who was acknowledged as the head chief of the Tonkawa in 1823 after the death of Carita. He befriended Austin and continued to help defend the Texas frontier against Indians that were considered hostile. In 1824, the Tonkawa aided as scouts to help the colonists pursue and capture Tawakoni thieves near present-day Bellville in Austin County (Newlin 1981: 25; Schilz 2021).

It was also during the early nineteenth century under the leadership of Carita that the Tonkawa began an alliance with a segment of Lipan Apache. Both tribes were still largely nomadic and relied on hunting often using the same hunting grounds, and both had reduced populations due to epidemics that made them vulnerable to the Waco as well as the Comanche, their common enemy (Newlin 1981: 23). By 1827 The Tonkawa and Lipan had moved into more settled areas south of the San Antonio Road. In February of that year, a group of Comanche and Waco attacked and defeated a party of Lipan and Tonkawa on the San Marcos River, nine

miles above Gonzalez. The attack was repeated several months later to the east on Yequa Creek, in present day Washington County (Jones 1969:67).

The Supreme Government of Mexico appointed a field party to explore Texas and survey the boundary between Mexico and the United States during 1827-1828. Among the men appointed to this expedition were Jean Louis Berlandier, a botanist and zoologist, and José María Sanchez, a draftsman. Berlandier and Sanchez visited a Tonkawa camp of 80 families between the Trinity and Colorado rivers in present day Colorado County. Sanchez recorded in his diary that there were approximately 30 conical shaped huts covered in green branches and some in buffalo skin with a central fire (Jones 1969:67).

### ***Republic of Texas (1836-1845)***

Sam Houston became the general of the provisional Texas government during the impending Texas Revolution in 1835 and helped to negotiate a treaty in 1835 with several East Texas tribal representatives including those from the Alabama, Coushatta, and several other tribes. In an effort to ensure neutrality during the Texas Revolution, the treaty declared peace between the parties, promised to respect the land rights of the Indians within East Texas, and established clear boundaries with the tribes - the same rights the tribes had under the Spanish and Mexican governments. The land between the Angelina, Neches, and Sabine rivers, and the Old San Antonio Road (part of the Camino Real de los Tejas) was to be reserved for Indian occupation and use, much smaller than the amount of land that the Indian tribes in East Texas had occupied. In accordance with the treaty, the Indians could live under their own laws, trade with the Texans, and expect justice from the new government. However, when delegates met at the Texas Congress Convention on March 2, 1836, they declared their independence from Mexico then refused to discuss, much less ratify, the treaty. This failure was viewed by the Tribes as a betrayal and the threat of war between Texas and the East Texas tribes continued (Winfrey and Day, ed 1966[1]:14; Texas State Library and Archives Commission 2019).

The broken treaty left many of the East Texas tribes like the Caddo, Cherokee, Kickapoo, and Shawnee supporting Mexican overtures and promises of land in exchange for attacking the Texans. This resulted in several raids by Indians on northeast Texas settlements. However, the Tonkawa and the Texans appear to have remained friendly with each other and established a mutual cooperation especially concerning the Comanche, who were threats to the Tonkawa and the Texans (Newlin 1981: 26-27).

Prior to becoming president of the Republic of Texas, Houston's policy was to limit trade to established posts, keep the Tonkawa and other tribes out of the settler's towns, and prevent intertribal warfare. Under his Presidency, he ordered forts and trading houses built, and appointed agents to live among the Indians in an effort to prevent hostilities. In the early part of Houston's administration, Congress gave its support via treaties of peace, friendship, and trade with the Tonkawa (Newlin 1981: 27-28).

The Republic of Texas entered into treaty with the Tonkawa represented by chiefs Ouchcala, Gosata, and Harshokena in 1837. The treaty called for peace, but also control including various terms on trading such as the appointment of an agent to oversee the intercourse between the Tonkawa and the people of Texas. In addition, the treaty stated that the Texans

and the Tonkawa would be punished upon aggressions against each other, though punishment against the Texans required sufficient evidence of guilt to do so. The same was not stated for the Tonkawa. The following year, a new treaty was signed in Houston by Tonkawa chiefs Campo, Ocquin, and Placido which further illustrated the prejudices Texans held toward the Tonkawa. It included more detail of the punishment of the Tonkawa regarding crimes but excluded what should prevail if settlers made transgressions against the Tonkawa. It also allowed the government to appoint an agent to deal not only with trade, but also with all facets of tribal business. During the following years, the agents' duties devolved to simply trying to keep the Tonkawa out of the white settlements. With both treaties, the Tonkawa felt the need to sign because of the increased pressure of organized campaigning against them by the Comanche and they wanted the assurance of the Texan's protection (Jones 1969:68; Winfrey and Day, ed 1966[1]:46-49).

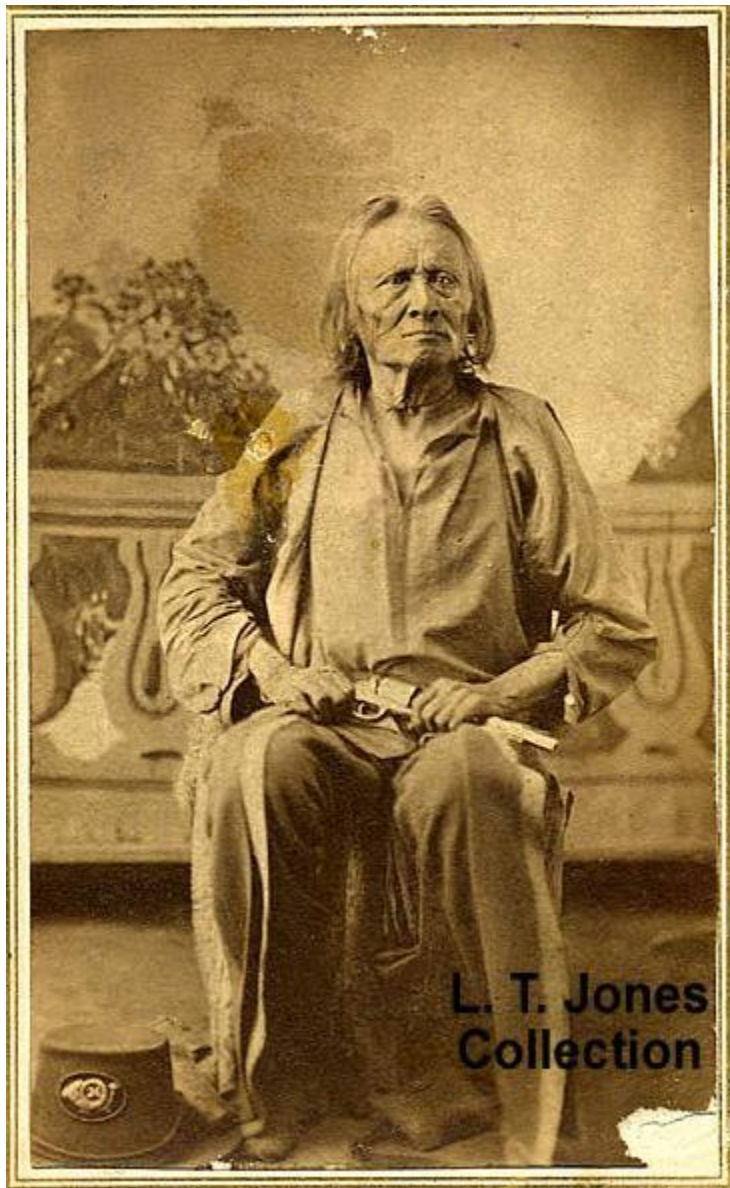
Mirabeau B. Lamar succeeded Houston as president of the Republic of Texas in late 1838 and, as his political rival, he adopted a program that included exterminating the hostile tribes and removing friendly tribes or moving them to reservations within Texas or to Indian Territory (Oklahoma). Via use of Texas troops and the murder of their chief Duwali, Lamar succeeded in removing the Cherokee from northeast Texas in 1839 and into Indian Territory, and forced several other tribes including the Delaware, Choctaw, and Shawnee to the upper Brazos River where they built a small village, beyond the line of Texas settlements. There were a few isolated families of Indians, but, by the 1840s, most of the immigrant Indian tribes had been removed from Texas (La Vere 1998:175).

The majority of settlers still tended to view all Indians as the same and it took convincing for Lamar to see the Tonkawa as allies. The Cherokee War was the first formal engagement in which the Tonkawa sided with Texans against other Indians as they were used as guides, spies, and scouts. The Tonkawa further convinced Lamar of their alliance when they helped fight against the Comanche and Waco Indians at Peach Creek in Gonzalez County in 1839-1840 under Tonkawa war leader Captain Jim and Texas Captain Ben McCulloch. The Comanche continued to raid settlements in the Guadalupe River valley, the coast, and central Texas. In August 1840, the Texans, led by McCulloch and the Tonkawa under Placido's command, ambushed and attacked Comanches near Lockhart at Plum Creek. The combined effort helped to lessen Comanche raids and achieve Lamar's goal of ridding Texas of Indian enemies (Newlin 1981: 34-35).

In 1841, Sam Houston regained the Presidency on the heels of Lamar's policy of extermination and removal of tribes, especially in East Texas where lands were now open for white settlement. In dealing with the remaining Indians, Houston began to pick up where he left off - building frontier posts and trading houses, encouraging councils to result in peace treaties and appointing agents - all in an effort to reduce raids and the cost of Indian affairs in Texas. Despite Houston's policies, the majority of the population still distrusted the Tonkawa. However, the Tonkawa had developed somewhat of a dependency on the settlers for protection and trade, and thus the Tonkawa remained close to the white settlements of Bastrop and Gonzalez and were easy targets to blame for raids and theft. In February of 1844, Cambridge Green became Indian agent for the Tonkawa and Lipan Apache and was directed by Houston to instruct the Indians to keep out of the settlements which they visited for

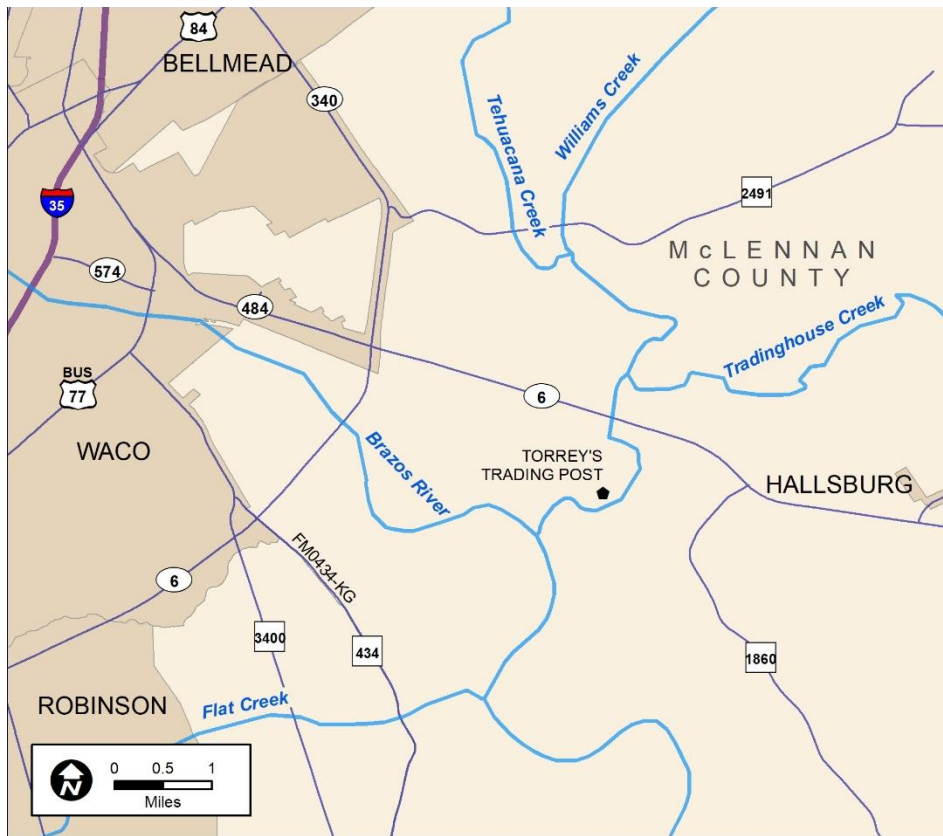
supplies and in hopes of procuring labor. Green relayed the message at a Tonkawa camp on Cedar Creek west of Bastrop. The Tonkawa responded by relocating to a camp along Buckner's Creek south of Smithville and later, headed for the Colorado River by way of the San Marcos River as to avoid the settlements (Winfrey and Day, ed 1966[2]:167-69). In an effort to discourage the Indians from entering white settlements, the Republic of Texas government provided some supplies including food. The Tonkawa received 35 pounds of beef in November of 1844 (Winfrey and Day, ed 1966[2]:189).

The Tonkawa and the Lipan Apache were assigned permanent Indian agent Robert S. Neighbors in January of 1845 under the Republic of Texas. Neighbors was immediately instructed by Superintendent of Indian Affairs Thomas Western to have, what he called, the "talk" with the Tonkawa - that they would be removed away from the vicinity of the settlements as soon as possible. Western stated to Neighbors that he should select a location along the San Marcos River either above or below the San Antonio Road away from their enemy tribes of the Comanche and Waco. Neighbors was also told to keep the traders without licenses out the area and keep the Tonkawa at peace with other tribes. The Tonkawa were soon relocated along the San Marcos River and organized under new leader Chief Campo at the request of Neighbors (**Figure 6**). Removal and relocation would become constant themes for the Tonkawa that would continue for almost another 50 years (Newlin 1981: 40; Winfrey and Day, ed 1966[2]:198).



**Figure 6: Chief Campo, ca. 1865-1872** (Courtesy of Lawrence T. Jones Photography Collection, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University)

Neighbors spent periods living with the Tonkawa and strongly encouraged them to hunt in range of their new location. He also insisted that they take up farming and provided seeds and farm implements. Trading of skins and pelts was allowed at Torrey's Trading Post on Tehuacana Creek near the Brazos River in McClennan County until a closer trading post could be established (**Figure 7**). Western seemed to view the Tonkawa as allies of the Texans and recognized their needs. In a February 1845 letter regarding the Tonkawa, Western encouraged the Indian agents to "treat them kindly" and to see that trade with them is "upon just and equitable terms" as an incentive to keep peace. The Tonkawa seemed to have acquiesced to their new location and the provisions given to them though they were largely under the control of the Indian agents (Winfrey and Day, ed 1966[2]:198, 202-203).



**Figure 7: Approximate location of Torrey's Trading Post**

In September of 1845, the Annual Council at Tehuacana Creek was held four miles from Torrey's Trading Post. The Tonkawa were escorted by the Indian agents who also provided supplies and food for their roundtrip journey. The councils served as meetings between Indian representatives and Texas officials, and aimed to result in intertribal peace treaties as well as with the Texans. Present at the council were Comanche, Delaware, Anadarko, Caddo, Cherokee, Lipan Apache, and the Tonkawa, who were represented by chiefs Campo, Placido, Benavidez, and Jose. Campo is reported to have stated at the council that he was "anxious to live in peace with all his Red Brothers" especially with the Comanche and that he has "always been friendly with the whites and fought for them and shall continue to do so" (Giles 1995; Winfrey and Day, ed 1966[3]:341). In a letter to Texas President Anson Jones regarding the council meeting from Texas Indian Commissioners, it was stated that the Lipan Apache and Tonkawa "consented to leave their present location and remove within the limits of the Comanche who have given their assent to it." It is unknown why traditional enemies would agree to such a provision, but perhaps the tribes wanted peace and hoped the agreement would keep the settlers from removing them from Texas entirely (Winfrey and Day, ed 1966[2]:370). The council meeting did not result in a signed treaty between the Republic of Texas and the tribes because the federal government would soon take over all treaty negotiations with the Indians (Newlin 1981: 42).

### ***State of Texas (1845-1860)***

In December of 1845, the United States annexed Texas. Neighbors remained the Indian agent for the Tonkawa and Lipan Apache, and in a February 1846 letter to Western, he remarked



that the two tribes were “contented to occupy the vacant country between the San Marcos [Marcos] and San Antonio rivers.” He further stated that the Tonkawa were thriving, but “are now anxious to be located on lower land that they call their own and to be instructed in farming.” He further remarked that the tribes were at present on their way to attend council with U.S. Commissioners at Comanche Peak in Hood County (Winfrey and Day, ed 1966[3]:14).

In May 1846, another council was held at Tehuacana Creek, also called Council Springs. This time it was between the tribes and the U.S. Commissioners, and was intended as a diplomatic initiative between the federal government and the remaining Texas Indians. The resulting treaty was known as the “Treaty with the Comanche and Other Tribes.” In addition to the Comanche, the Ioni, Anadarko, Caddo, Lipan Apache, Longwa, Keechi, Tawakoni, Wichita, Waco, and Tonkawa were signatories. Campos and Placido and 9 other war leaders represented the Tonkawa. Similar to previous agreements, the treaty greatly favored the United States and the settlers. Article One stated that the tribes were under the protection of the United States and would no longer rely on Texas. Article Two dictated that the federal government would solely deal economically and diplomatically with the Texas Indians. The treaty also permitted the United States to use force against the tribes and included a list of punishments for crimes. Lastly the treaty allowed the President to “use his exertions, in such a manner as he may think proper, to preserve friendly relations between the different tribes or nations parties to this treaty and all other tribes of Indians under his jurisdiction” (Winfrey and Day, ed 1966[3]:43-50). Again, the Tonkawa signed and gave up their external jurisdiction in order to continue receiving protection from the United States, especially from the Comanche (Newlin 1981: 50).

Robert Neighbors continued as Indian agent for the Tonkawa providing provisions and protection for the tribe while Placido was to keep the Tonkawa from white settlements. In March 1847, Neighbors was appointed agent to all of Texas Indian Affairs. Intertribal peace and peace with settlers lasted for a time, but by August of 1847 the Comanche claimed that the Waco were constantly committing raids on the settlements. Texas Rangers were called by the governor to set up along the western frontier in an attempt to restrict the Indians. In an effort to protect the Tonkawa from suspicion or confrontation, Neighbors wrote to U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs speaking to the friendliness of the Tonkawa. In a letter to H.G. Schoolcraft describing his interactions with Texas tribes, ex-Texas President David Burnet also defended the Tonkawa noting their long-time alliance with the Texans and help in military campaigns against other Indians. However, he also noted that the settler population would continue to grow and suggested that removal by the federal government would be inevitable (Winfrey and Day, ed 1966[3]:-97-99).

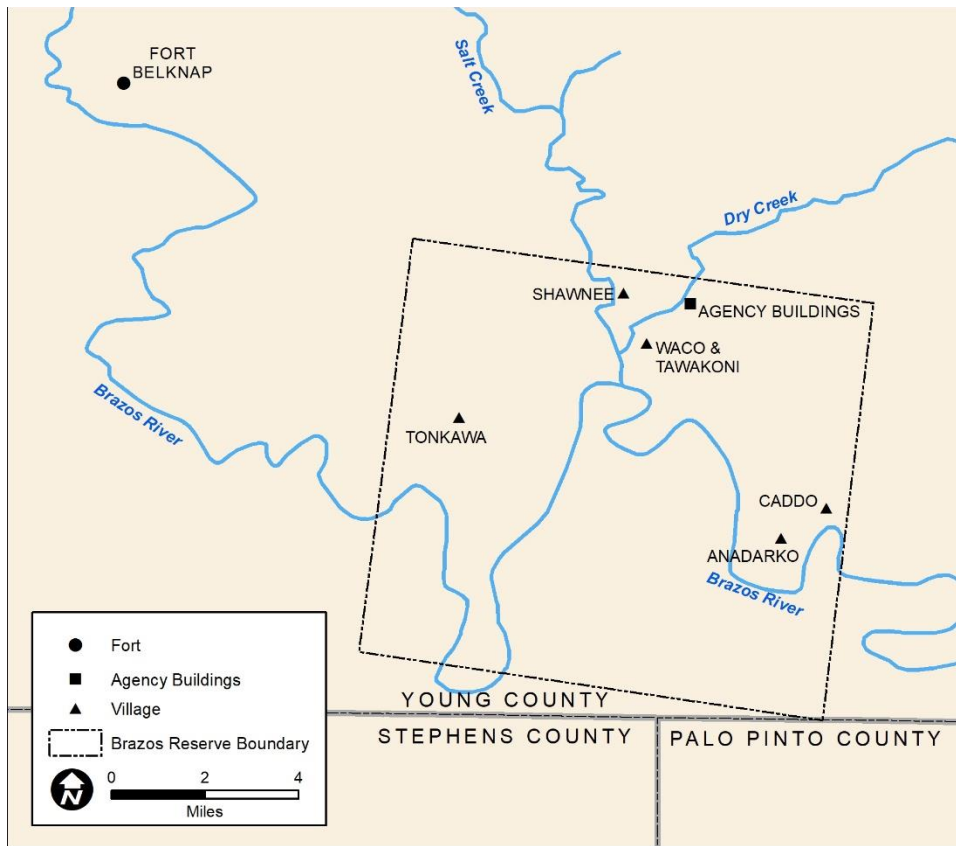
For the next year, Neighbors lived among the Tonkawa and other tribes noting their locations and populations. In 1848, Placido and many Tonkawa were living on Edward Burleson’s farm, likely near present-day San Marcos (Newlin 1981: 53). In an account of Texas Indians, Neighbors listed the population of Tonkawa as 650, with 130 of them warriors (Winfrey and Day, ed 1966[3]:-97-108). In early 1849, despite claims by settlers that Tonkawa were to blame for raids and thefts, Neighbors was able to dispel these rumors. Through communication with the Comanche, the blame was thrust upon the Apache and other Indians

near the Rio Grande. But despite the depredations being carried out by a small a group of hostile Indians, the majority of Texas wished to rid the state of all of the tribes. In January of 1850, a petition of citizens of Leon, Lampasas, and Salado was sent to Governor Peter Bell asking for protection from Indians along the “Waters of Brazos.” In it they claimed theft of livestock committed by the “Witchataws, Tonkaway, & Towash Indians (as we suppose)” (Winfrey and Day, ed 1966[5]:-68-69).

In August of 1853, Neighbors reported that “the Tonkawa reside on the Colorado, driven from point to point, and have no assurance that they would be permitted to occupy a tract of land long enough to gather their corn if they were to plant.” This uncertainty of where to live may have been a combination of being driven out by both the settlers and the Comanche. Reports of Indian depredation from the white settlers increased throughout 1853-54 and the Texas legislature passed an act in February 1854 to select and survey vacant lands within Texas for the exclusive use of Indians (Newlin 1981: 61-62).

#### *First Texas Reservation, Brazos Reservation*

Captain Randolph B. Marcy and Agent Neighbors reported the results of the Brazos Reservation survey in September 1854. It was located twelve miles south of Fort Belknap near present-day Graham in Young County (**Figure 8**). The first reservation encompassed eight leagues (37,152 acres) on the main fork of the Brazos River and was established for the Tonkawa, Ioni, Caddo, Anadarko, Waco, and several other eastern and central Texas tribes. The Penateka band of Comanche were settled on four leagues (18,576 acres) approximately 40 miles southwest of Fort Belknap on the Clear Fork of the Brazos River. The remaining four leagues were intended for bands of the Mescalero and Lipan Apaches, but these groups remained far to the west and probably never became aware of the land claim (Newlin 1981: 64,70; Winfrey and Day 1995[3]: 186-190).



**Figure 8: Location of Tonkawa and other villages within the Brazos Reservation**

In July of 1855, the majority of the Tonkawa who were residing on the Colorado River followed Placido to the Brazos Reservation. He believed that stability and peace could be found on the reservation lands and the Tonkawa could once again become self-reliant there. Other groups of Tonkawa had scattered across the frontier seeking food and shelter at military establishments of Fort Inge in Uvalde County and Fort Clark in Kinney County. They were less convinced of the federal government’s promise, but eventually relocated to the Brazos Reservation as well (Newlin 1981: 64-65.)

The Tonkawa and other tribes each had their own village within the reserve and were instructed in agriculture, as farming was practically enforced. They also hunted the surrounding area to supplement their diet and maintain some of their traditional lifeways. Over the next few years settlers located south of the reservation claimed repeated attacks by hostile Indians. The Northern Comanche viewed the reservation Indians as enemies and often raided the reserve while continuing to attack the Texans. The settlers still blamed the reservation Indians despite verification from Neighbors that the Northern Comanche were the responsible party as well as newspaper articles attesting to the Tonkawa’s willingness to aid in pursuing the Comanche (Newlin 1981:73).

In April of 1858, the Tonkawa once again proved their loyalty to Texas when they offered to serve as guides and scouts in an offense against the Comanche. Chief Placido joined the Texas Rangers and lead 100 Tonkawa and Shawnee warriors on an expedition to the Canadian River in the Texas Panhandle. In May, Placido’s men crossed the Red River into

Indian Territory, and attacked and captured a Comanche village in what became known as the Battle of Antelope Hills. But despite the Tonkawa's faithful alliance to Texas, they gained little trust from the settlers (Newlin 1981:80).

The situation continued to deteriorate despite confirmation that further attacks were committed by off-reservation Comanche, Kiowa, and Kickapoo, and complaints from the Texans regarding all Indians in Texas and against Agent Neighbors swelled. In addition, conditions at the reserve depreciated as Neighbors received little aid from the federal government for the Indians within the Brazos Reserve. Then, after settlers murdered a hunting party of Indians from the reserve in December of 1858, Neighbors felt that removal was inevitable. He wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1859 recommending that the Texas Indians be moved across the Red River into Indian Territory. He further stated that the reservations were not maintainable in Texas due to the "lawless bands of white barbarians who now infest that portion of our state and the General Government at defiance" (Newlin 1981:80).

#### *Wichita Reserve, Indian Territory*

On August 1, 1859 after Neighbors held council with Placido, the Tonkawa and other tribes prepared for removal to a new reservation in Indian Territory. The journey of approximately 2 weeks left the group of 245 Tonkawa hungry as they were forced to abandon their cattle and other supplies at the Brazos Reserve (Jones 1969:225). The Tonkawa were relocated to the newly established Wichita Reserve in Oklahoma and placed under agent Samuel Blaine who was also agent to the removed and relocated Wichita, Caddo, and Penateka Comanche (**Figure 9**). They continued farming on the new reservation, but the Tonkawa were unable to harvest enough crops to feed themselves and their newly acquired cattle. (Newlin 1981:99).



**Figure 9: Wichita Reserve in Indian Territory**

Fort Cobb was soon established nearby to protect the Indians within the Wichita Reserve from other tribes such as the Northern Comanche and Kiowa. In addition to other Indians, the tribes within the Wichita Reserve also faced threats from the Texas settlers just across the Oklahoma border. However, the Tonkawa still remained loyal to Texas, especially to the Texas Rangers, who remained for a year along the Red River often using the Tonkawa as scouts against the Comanche (Newlin 1981:101-102).

### **Civil War (1861–1865)**

Issues with reservation security worsened in 1861 upon the heels of the Civil War. Texas ceded from the Union and joined the Confederacy in February, and the federal government abandoned its garrisons from the state and within Indian territory, leaving the area essentially defenseless. The Indian Department of the Confederate States was soon formed, and a treaty of peace was signed in late 1861 with some of the reservation Indians near Fort Cobb on the condition that the Confederacy would issue supplies and protect them. Despite their removal to Indian Territory, the Tonkawa had remained loyal to Texas. By August 1862, the Tonkawa were the only Indians in western Indian Territory who supported the Confederacy. The Tonkawa remained at Fort Cobb despite abandonment by Confederate troops which left them vulnerable to other tribes who despised their alliance with whites in general and to the Confederacy (Newlin 1981:104-105).

In October 1862, a group of Shawnee, Delaware, Kickapoo, Caddo, Comanche, and Kiowa armed with rifles from the Federal government in Kansas attacked administration facilities

and agents on the Wichita Reserve. Fearing for their lives, 306 Tonkawa led by Placido fled south toward the safety of the Confederate troops at Fort Arbuckle within Indian Territory. Camped along the Washita River, the attackers surprised the Tonkawa and killed approximately 137 tribal members including Placido in what was known as the Great Massacre. The surviving Tonkawa continued to Fort Arbuckle seeking the protection of the Confederates and were joined by a smaller group of Tonkawa who were away from camp at the time of attack (Haaskarl 1962:226; Jones 1969: 71; Newlin 1981:104-105).

The Tonkawa had begun drifting further south into Texas by the summer of 1863. Though they were few in number, there appears to have been no union among the tribe likely due to the death of Placido, one of their greatest leaders. Some survivors found their way back to central Texas including near Austin and Waco around the premises of former Indian agent Captain Shapley P. Ross. Others stayed near Fort Belknap adjacent to the Brazos Reserve. Castile, a Tonkawa warrior, assumed the role of chief after Placido's death (**Figure 10**). He and his followers lived close to Fort Belknap for safety and began to be used by the Texas Rangers once again as guides and scouts along the Texas frontier (Newlin 1981:109-110; Sjoberg 1953: 284). In December 1863 after Governor Pendleton Murrah wrote to the Texas Congress acknowledging the Tonkawa's past and present loyalty as well as their need for food and supplies, the Texas legislature granted appropriations for the tribes and officially allowed for their employment on the frontier. In his letter, Murrah stated that a few Tonkawa were also located at Camp Colorado in present day Coleman County (Winfrey and Day 1995[4]: 78-80).



**Figure 10: Chief Castile, ca: 1865-1871** (Courtesy of Lawrence T. Jones Photography Collection, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University)

In 1864, after petitions from Castile and the Texas Rangers for a permanent residence for the Tonkawa, the Texas legislature enacted another resolution to settle the Tonkawa on the public domain on their old reserve near Fort Belknap. It also allotted them \$3,500 annually during 1864 and 1865. The majority of Tonkawa settled at Fort Belknap, though those who were living near Waco were labeled a rebellious band as they resisted the move back to the Brazos Reserve lands (Newlin 1981:109-110).

### ***United States***

After the fall of the Confederacy to the Union in May of 1865, the United States was to resume control and oversight of the Texas Indians. In July of the following year, the federal government signed “The Treaty of Washington” with the Cherokee within Indian Territory. One article of the treaty gave the government permission to settle the remaining Texas Indians within the

eastern half of the Cherokee Outlet, while the Cherokee retained possession of the western section. However, Texas Governor James Throckmorton did not see that relocating the Tonkawa back to Indian Territory would be the prudent thing to do as he felt the Tonkawa would be back amongst their enemies (Newlin 1981:113). Throckmorton wrote to the U.S Commissioner of Indian Affairs D. M. Cooley in September of 1866 asking they arrange for provisions and an agent for the Tonkawa who he described as “always friendly to the whites” and in “deplorable and destitute condition.” Throckmorton stated that he would also appeal to the Provisional Texas Legislature to authorize a league of land for the Tonkawa as they had previously provided land for the Alabama and Coushatta tribes (Winfrey and Day 1995[4]:112-115). In a November 1866 letter to Cooley, Throckmorton stated that the league of land was authorized to be used by the Tonkawa “as a home as long as they shall live the same,” but also asked for the federal government to use the appropriations expended for the Wichita Reserve for their settlement in Texas (Winfrey and Day 1995[4]:123-124).

The league of land was to be selected by the Governor and located out of the unappropriated public domain of the State on the line of the frontier. Unfortunately, the Tonkawa never resided on land provided under the 1866 Act. The land was not selected before the federal government ordered Major Starr, the commanding officer of the Jacksboro Post (an outpost of Fort Belknap 35 miles to the east), to take control of the Tonkawa in early 1867 (**Figure 11**). At the time, there were already approximately 150 Tonkawa living in the vicinity of Jacksboro, but many were also living near Austin (Jones 1969: 72; Newlin 1981:114). From March 3 to April 18 of 1867, the remaining Tonkawa in central Texas were escorted to Jacksboro via their Indian agent John Lovejoy and the military. A list of beef and supplies purchased along the way for the Tonkawa details their route which included Georgetown, Salado, Belton, Mastersville to Waco then Clifton to Fort Graham, followed by Kimbleville, Acton, and Weatherford to Jacksboro. It appears that 135 Tonkawa departed from Austin while only 103 arrived in Jacksboro (Winfrey and Day 1995[4]:188).





**Figure 11: Forts and Outposts on the Texas Frontier**

Upon their arrival in Jacksboro, Governor Throckmorton declared in a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that the State was no longer responsible for the Tonkawa. Throckmorton recommended that they again be relocated to a Texas frontier post and be employed as scout and guides to the government. If that was not feasible, he recommended, that they be sent back to the Wichita Agency, although he previously stated that he understood their safety would not be guaranteed there (Winfrey and Day 1995[4]:214-215).

#### *Resettlement to Fort Griffin*

The Tonkawa were again resettled within Texas by the federal government around July of 1867 at Fort Griffin in Shackelford County, approximately 65 miles southwest of Jacksboro (see **Figure 11**). The newly constructed fort was located on the Clear Fork of the Brazos River about 37 miles southwest of Fort Belknap. The Tonkawa situated their village at the foot of a hill between the fort and the river (**Figure 12**). Some of the warriors led by war leader and chief Johnson, served as scouts and trailers for the American soldiers and the Texas Rangers against the Comanche and Kiowa who were still active on the western frontier (**Figure 13**) (Newlin 1981:115; Sjoberg 1953: 284). Over the next few years, Johnson and followers continued to scout out of Fort Griffin. From July to September of 1870, Tonkawa scouts were enlisted with the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> U.S. Calvaries in hunting raids on the frontier. During 1871, Colonel Ranald Mackenzie specifically requested the Tonkawa aid as scouts during a campaign against the Comanche. After the successful campaign, Mackenzie gave the Tonkawa a number of ponies taken from the Comanche (Newlin 1981:117). In September of 1874 the Tonkawa guided and fought along with Mackenzie and his federal troops against

the Comanche in Palo Duro Canyon in the last major battle of the Red River War. Chief Johnson and his scouts located a path to the canyon floor allowing Mackenzie to attack the scattered camps who were unable to assemble a united defense. The Tonkawa scouts and Mackenzie captured the villages and the possessions with little loss of life. However, the Battle of Palo Duro Canyon was significant as it represented the southern plains Indians last effort at military resistance against the white encroachment and ended in the confinement of the Comanche, Kiowa, Kiowa-Apache, Cheyenne, and other southern plains Indians to Indian Territory (Schilz 2020b). The United States rewarded the Tonkawa for their service through appropriations, food, and ponies (Newlin 1981:118).



**Figure 12: Tonkawa Village near Fort Griffin, 1873** (Courtesy of Lawrence T. Jones Photography Collection, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University)



**Figure 13: Johnson, Chief of Tonkawa Scouts ca. 1870-1875** (Courtesy of Lawrence T. Jones Photography Collection, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University)

#### *Permanent Removal to Indian Territory*

In 1880, a delegation of Tonkawa including Chief Johnson and four other men as well as R.N. Getty with the federal government selected a site near the vicinity of the Nez Perce and Ponca agencies in Indian Territory. However, removal was delayed after the Tonkawa refused upon discovering that the Nez Perce had died of pneumonia, thinking it was a bad omen. Fort Griffin was then abandoned in 1881 when the U.S. Army determined that it was no longer necessary for defense (Texas Historical Commission 2019). The Tonkawa remained in the area of Fort Griffin and survived on rations. In 1884, the federal government passed the Indian Appropriation Act, which was to provide for the “support, civilization, and instruction” of the Tonkawa, among other Indians. The remaining 92 Tonkawa were almost immediately removed to Indian Territory and arrived by railroad from Cisco, Texas in October to the Iowa Reserve of

the Sac and Fox Agency, making them the last tribe to be assigned to a reservation in Indian Territory. The Tonkawa did not remain on the Iowa Reserve long as the Iowa objected to sharing their reserve (Newlin 1981:118). In June of 1885, the Tonkawa travelled another 100 miles north by wagon through swollen rivers and wagon axle deep mud in what was the last leg of the of the Tonkawa Trail of Tears (Patterson and Myer 2020) (Figure 14). They were permanently resettled on 91,000 acres at the Oakland Agency west of the Chikaskia River in the northeastern Indian Territory in present day Kay County, Oklahoma (Newlin 1981:118).

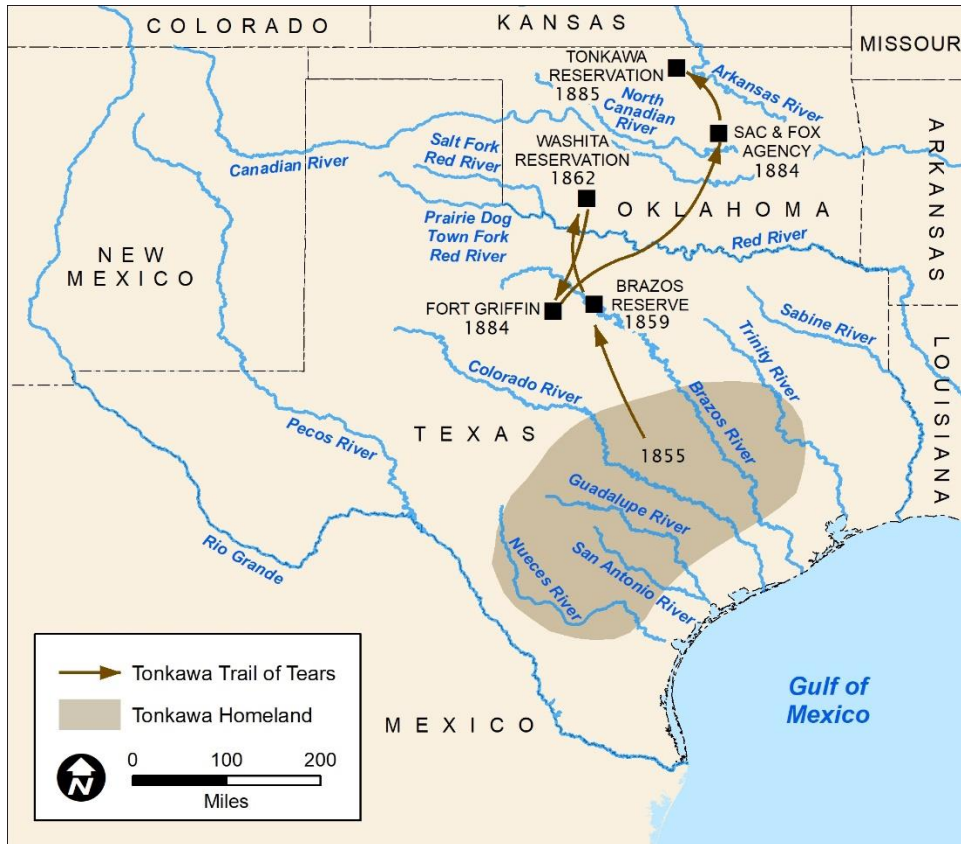


Figure 14: Map of Trail of Tears

Soon after the Tonkawa arrived at the Oakland Agency, the reservation system began to break down. The Dawes Severalty Act of 1887 authorized the President to allot lands in severalty to any tribe that were thought to be “sufficiently advanced to benefit from the change” in land ownership. In 1891 the land allotment was finalized and after a great amount of pressure on the Tonkawa in order to obtain agreement, it was ratified by Congress in 1893. Out of the approximately 91,000 acres, 11,273 acres were allotted to the Tonkawa while the other 79,727 acres were sold to the U.S. government for white settlement in the Indian Territory (Newlin 1981:120-121).

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