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## THE ALABAMA-COUSHATTA AND THEIR TEXAS FRIENDS

*by Jere Franco*

Small, peaceful, and agricultural, the Alabama and Coushatta Indians called themselves the "medicine gatherers" and "white cane" people. For many years they built villages, planted crops, and hunted in peace. With the coming of the white men, they saw no reason to change their lifestyle. Although this peaceful attitude would be tested in years to come, it eventually led to the establishment of a home in Texas for them.<sup>1</sup>

In 1541 the Alabama and Coushatta lived in separate villages, but as ethnic and linguist members of the Upper Creek Confederacy they maintained close relations. The Coushattas lived on Pine Island near the Tennessee River and the Alabama lived in northern Mississippi. By 1686 the Coushattas had moved to Creek Country, near present-day Montgomery, Alabama, and a dozen years later the Alabamas moved to a village on the Alabama River near the Coushatta town. Both tribes remained in this region until 1763. They developed close ties with the French. After the French lost the Seven Year's War to England in 1763, they abandoned their fort and advised their Indian allies to leave the area or risk extermination by the English.<sup>2</sup>

The two tribes heeded this advice by emigrating together, thus continuing their closely-intertwined lifestyle. By the close of the eighteenth century the Alabama-Coushatta had emigrated to friendly Spanish territory in Louisiana. In 1795 some Alabama-Coushatta had settled in the Big Thicket area of East Texas along the Neches and Trinity rivers. The Spanish Governor specifically requested that more of their tribesmen join the Indians in the 1800s because he wanted to create an Indian barrier to Anglo settlement.<sup>3</sup>

The Louisiana Purchase (1803) caused Americans to push the Indians from their area, and many more Alabama and Coushatta, as well as their relatives, the Muscogee, came to Texas. Comfortably established there by 1822, the tribes traded crops and skins for clothing in Natchitoches and Galveston. In addition to cultivating melons, corn, rice, potatoes, and cotton, they also raised hogs and horses. During the period of Spanish rule the Alabama-Coushatta established good relations with government officials which they later maintained with the Mexican Government. Considering these two tribes "industrious and peaceable," the Mexican government felt it was "absolutely necessary to maintain peace" with them. To achieve this goal the Alcalde of Nacogdoches ordered several white families removed from Coushatta land and rebuked a governmental employee for surveying land within the boundaries of the Alabama-Coushatta area in 1835.<sup>4</sup>

When Texas won its independence in 1836, the Alabama-Coushatta

transferred their loyalty to still another new government and declared their desire to remain in their Big Thicket home. They remained there for the rest of the century despite conflicts with whites and a few attempts to have the tribe removed from Texas. After 1875 they were one of only three tribes who lived in Texas because their relationship with white settlers differed significantly from the relationship between the settlers and more hostile tribes. Since the Alabama-Coushatta generally maintained amicable relationships with their Texas neighbors, white friends continually aided the efforts of the tribe in petitioning the Texas government for a reservation.<sup>5</sup>

Despite good relations with Mexico, the two tribes began a firm friendship with the Texans soon after settlement developed, a friendship forged primarily because of Sam Houston. Houston, an adopted member of the Cherokee tribe, soon established close relations with most of the Texas tribes. His "friendly Indian" policy, based on expediency and affection, stood him well during the Texas Revolution. Some Alabama-Coushatta acted as guides during the Battle of San Jacinto while others offered food and shelter to Texas refugees.<sup>6</sup> When hostilities ceased in 1836, Sam Houston signed a treaty with the Cherokee and their associated bands, an agreement which specified a "firm and lasting peace forever." The commissioners promised the Indians land in addition to the same rights and privileges they enjoyed under the Mexican government. However, the following year the Texas Congress refused to ratify this treaty. Although the legislature recognized that the Alabama, Coushatta, and Muscogee "harbored pacific feelings towards the government of this Republick," it claimed that these tribes had no pretensions to territory.<sup>6</sup>

In 1838 the Texas Congress opened a Land Office to assist white settlers. As surveyors pushed into the Indian settlements to survey land for white claimants, the Indians retaliated with raids on both surveyors and settlers. The most hostile of these Indians joined with Mexican emissaries and conducted joint expeditions against the Texans throughout the spring and summer. By August Secretary of War Thomas J. Rusk informed Colonel Bowl, a Cherokee chief, that he should influence the Coushatta, who had joined the hostile Kickapoos, to desist from warfare. Although Bowl promised to inform Rusk of the tribes' movements, he failed to tell Rusk that some of the Coushatta had left their homes. On October 16, 1838, Rusk and a force of Texans attacked and defeated a combined group of Mexicans and Indians at the Battle of Kickapoo Village. A surprised Rusk discovered Coushatta, whom he had thought safely in their villages, among the dead.<sup>7</sup>

Immediate anger followed this discovery. Some Texans demanded removal or extermination of not only the Coushatta but also the peaceable Alabamas. Rusk threatened to attack the villages with 500 militia if they did not remain at home. "If you act as our friend and have nothing more to do with our enemies," Rusk cautioned them, "you and your people

have nothing to fear from us.”<sup>8</sup> At this point Houston intervened to help his friends. On December 19, 1838 he sent a peace message to the Alabama and Coushatta and expressed sorrow for those warriors who had died in skirmishes with white surveyors and other Texans. Stop the raids, Houston promised, and neither the government nor any other whites will take retaliatory action against the tribe.<sup>9</sup>

The president succeeded with his “talk,” and for over a year the Alabama-Coushatta remained at peace in the Big Thicket area where they had established several towns. But in the summer of 1839 Indians and whites in Liberty County accused one another of stealing stock. The settlers killed five Coushatta, ran off their livestock, and chased the remaining Coushatta from their Baptist Village. Colutta, a leader of the tribe, complained to Mirabeau Lamar, now president of the Republic. Although he was angry over the injustice and worried for his tribe, Colutta also feared for the end of good relations with their Texas neighbors. “This is not right and it will, if persisted in, cause a wound never to be healed,” he exclaimed.<sup>10</sup>

Lamar’s Indian policy emphasized vengeance rather than conciliation. However, Colutta’s message affected Lamar and he lost no time in responding to this plea. On July 9 he wrote to both Colutta and the citizens of Liberty County. In the letter to Colutta, Lamar expressed sorrow over the recent disturbances between the Indians and the nearby whites and blamed both groups for these problems. He blamed the Indians with stealing stock and warned them to behave honestly. Furthermore, he promised to send Indian Agent Joseph Lindley to act as mediator and protect their rights. In his message to the white settlers, Lamar described this tribe as “weak and defenceless.” He feared that unjust treatment could send the Indians fleeing to hostile tribes and an eruption of frontier warfare. Lamar promised the citizens that the new agent would control the tribe.<sup>11</sup>

On August 1, 1839, the citizens of Liberty County replied to Lamar on three counts. First, they claimed that they had not taken part in the previous disturbances. Secondly, they said that they had interfered in a “humble, persuasive manner to convince the persons imbodyed for the purpose of Exterminating said Indians, that the said Indians had done no harm, but were friendly.”<sup>12</sup> Finally, these thirty petitioners felt that Lindley had misrepresented the facts to Lamar and that he was unfit to be an Indian agent. They charged that he did not speak the tribal language, resided at least forty miles from the nearest Indian village, and was one of those who wish to drive out the Indians. The settlers asked Lamar to replace Lindley with F.H. Rankin, who they claimed was the best agent and interpreter in Texas.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps Lamar distrusted their motives, disliked their choice of agents, or simply did not believe them, because he disregarded this advice. Lamar’s views concerning Indian agents differed greatly from Houston’s.

Houston charged an agent to protect the interests of the Indian. Conversely, Lamar charged an agent to protect the rights of the settlers. On August 1, 1839, Lamar told Lindley to "keep a strict watch over them so as to prevent encroachments on the white settlements."<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, he told the Liberty County citizens that they should inform the agent whenever the Indians trespassed on their property. He instructed Lindley to take necessary and proper steps to punish all Indian offenders.<sup>15</sup>

Despite these precautions, Lamar recognized the general good relations which the two tribes had established with Texans in nearby counties and with prominent leaders such as Sam Houston. For this reason he announced:

To the Coshatees and Alabamas, who seem to have some equitable claims upon the country, for the protection of their property and persons, the hand of friendship has been extended, with a promise that they shall not be interrupted in the peaceful enjoyment of their present possessions, so long as they continue the same amicable relations towards the Government which they have hitherto preserved.<sup>16</sup>

Because of this recommendation, on January 14, 1840, the Texas Congress passed an act authorizing a land survey to determine the claims of the Alabama, Coushatta, and Muscogee Indians. The Committee on Indian Affairs recommended this action because of the tribes' long residence in Texas, their amicable dispositions, the act of the Spanish Ayuenetamenta, the Mexican Provisional Government, the recent Proclamation of President Lamar, and the Indians' want of numbers. In a glancing blow at unfriendly whites who complained at the proximity of the Indians, the Committee decided not to remove the tribes to another area. The surveyed land covered two leagues (900 square miles), and included the Fenced-In Village of the Alabama Tribe, the Baptiste Village on the Trinity River of the Coushatta Tribe, and an area for a Muscogee village. Although this act specified that the land was for the exclusive benefit of the Indians, it also stated that, if necessary, the tribes could be removed from the area.<sup>17</sup>

Senator I. W. Burton protested the creation of an Alabama-Coushatta Reservation vigorously. He stated that the tribes had not requested any land. Furthermore, 900 square miles was too much to give them. Such a large tract removed from the public domain would limit prospects of future "legal" land claimants in the region. He also claimed that a reservation would be "inexpedient and dangerous" because these tribes would come into contact with unfriendly, hostile Indians. Furthermore, he feared that Mexican agents would infiltrate and influence the tribes against Texas. "From known thieves and doubtful friends," he predicted, "they will become positive enemies of a formidable character."<sup>18</sup>

Unfortunately the land promised to the Alabama-Coushatta by the Republic of Texas already had been claimed by white settlers who refused to leave. After the disturbances of 1839, many tribesmen wandered through

Texas or fled to Louisiana where some of their kinsmen still lived. After a short time, these Indians became homesick for their Texas villages and returned to find the whites in possession of their cabins, crops, and livestock. Hamilton Washington, who claimed the lower league, said the Indians could remain and farm on the land, much in the manner of Southern sharecroppers. The white settlers on the upper league threatened to kill the Indians if they tried to return. Throughout 1840 to 1841, the Alabama and Coushatta lived wherever they could. Some of the Alabama stayed with Washington while others moved to an area on the Neches River, built thirty log cabins, and cultivated approximately 100 acres. The Coushatta sometimes lived on the Neches River with the Alabama or hunted on the Texas prairie. However, whites once again asserted claims on the Alabamas, and they abandoned the Neches River village.<sup>19</sup>

In 1842 Sam Houston once again became president of the Republic and he immediately turned his attention to the problem of the Alabama-Coushatta. Houston promised the Indians that the government would protect them and preserve their rights. If for some reason they left their land because of the whites, he explained, the government would keep the land for them. Furthermore, he promised to punish anyone who harmed the Alabama or the Coushatta. Houston was motivated by sincere sympathy for the Indians but he felt impelled to justify his protection of them to the Texas government. An Indian alliance, he told Congress, would protect Texas against a possible Mexican invasion. "It could render them invaluable to us as friends," he stated. "They would alarm the Mexicans out of all measure."<sup>20</sup>

Houston's conciliatory action came too late. The Coushattas, unlike their more peaceable relatives, reacted to the 1840-1841 outrages with anger and hostility. One source claimed that Mexican emissaries had recruited the Coushatta to fight for Mexico in a war of extermination against Texas. Although this never occurred, the Coushatta did raid in Texas from the spring of 1840 to the spring of 1842. During these raids, the Coushatta attacked and killed settlers and stole several horses. Afterwards they fled north into Chickasaw and Choctaw country in the Indian Territory.<sup>21</sup>

Texans immediately responded with retaliatory action. In April 1840, Captain Joseph Sowell and eight settlers chased the Coushatta across the Red River. When Sowell found the Indians in an encampment, they had lariats for stealing horses but no animals. After exchanging gunfire, the Indians escaped but they returned later that year and killed Sowell. In May 1841, General E.H. Tarrant sent a message to the Coushatta to meet him on the bank of the Red River. When thirty Indians came, he ordered them to go to the Trinity River reservation. They agreed to go but wished to travel through the wilderness. When Tarrant objected to this route, the Coushatta became suspicious of his motives. Fearing a trap, the Coushatta bolted across the river into the Chickasaw Nation.<sup>22</sup>

After 1842 relations between the Coushatta and settlers quieted and the Texas Legislature, under Houston, made efforts to help both tribes. Feeling that presents might prove more effective than warfare, in 1843 the Texas Indian Commissioner gave Coushatta Chief Ben-Ash \$9.25 worth of goods, including blue flaps, sheeting, utensils, beads, tobacco, and a gun. From December 13, 1844 to January 12, 1845, Texas spent an additional \$300 on presents for both the Alabama and Coushatta tribes. Of more importance to the tribe, the Texas Congress on August 1, 1844 appointed a new agent to replace Lindley. Houston told Joseph Ellis that "it is very desirable that the poor creatures should be protected in the enjoyment of their rights." He charged Ellis to protect the Indians from aggression and hopefully proposed that the Texas Legislature should soon pass a new Indian land act.<sup>23</sup>

Ellis took his duties seriously and by December he had investigated the conditions of the Alabama Indians. He first approached Hamilton Washington, who had usurped the lower league and the Colettee Village four years previously. When Ellis ordered him to leave, Washington refused. Without military assistance, Ellis was powerless to compel him, and he moved the Alabamas to nearby land. Conditions proved the same at Baptiste Village, belonging to the Coushattas, and Alabama Town, as settlers refused to leave. "They [the Indians] took it for granted it was for the white man and without an explanation left," said a perplexed Ellis. He also reported the settlers had stolen several horses and cows belonging to the Alabamas. The agent better understood their reluctance to complain when the Indians explained the whites had threatened to murder them if they reported the land and property theft.<sup>24</sup>

Despite these problems, the Indians managed to settle on some land and plant crops. This condition prompted Ellis to request that their previous homes, along with fifty or sixty additional acres of land and farming implements, be given to the tribes. With these aids, he asserted, the Indians farming efforts could be doubled. By this time, however, Houston had left office again. Taking advantage of his absence, the Texas Congress abolished the agency for the Alabama-Coushatta. When Ellis requested another term as agent, the Texas Indian Bureau refused. They justified their decision on a lack of finances.<sup>25</sup>

In 1845 the United States annexed Texas and agreed to assume responsibility for the Indian tribes. For the next several years the federal government was concerned primarily with the hostile Comanches and Kiowas. Meanwhile, the Alabamas and Coushattas settled in a vacant, unappropriated area known as the Big Sandy near Polk and Livingston counties. Remaining largely unnoticed and receiving no federal or state annuities, the Alabama and Coushattas grew crops and used the Big Thicket forest area in Polk County to built huts, weapons, and baskets. In the 1850s they floated logs for sale down the Trinity and Neches rivers to Orange and Beaumont lumber mills.<sup>26</sup>

Because they now considered the Big Sandy their home, the Alabama decided once more to appeal for a land grant. Certain that Sam Houston had not forgotten them, they asked for his help in drafting a petition to the Texas Legislature. In 1853 they presented a document to the legislature asking for 1,280 acres, basing their request on historical precedent, financial consideration, and neighborly support. This memorial cited the previous governments which had recognized the land claims of the Alabama Tribe, specifically the Mexican government and the Republic of Texas. Furthermore, they stated that the two leagues of land granted to them in 1840 cost \$3 per acre and was "a large sum compared with the small pittance now asked for at your hands."<sup>27</sup> Finally, the claimants maintained that despite some past troubles, they sincerely wanted peaceful relations with their neighbors. Forty-five citizens from Polk and adjoining counties submitted a supportive petition.<sup>28</sup>

The cooperative efforts of Indians and white settlers were successful. On February 3, 1854 the Texas Legislature resolved:

That twelve hundred and eighty acres of vacant and unappropriated land, situated in either Polk or Tyler counties, or both, to be selected by the Chiefs of the Alabama Indians and the Commissioners hereinafter named, be, and the same is hereby set apart for the sole use and benefit of, and as a home for the said tribe of Indians.<sup>29</sup>

In 1855 the legislature approved another grant of 640 acres for the Coushatta tribe in Polk County, but conditions on this reservation were unsuitable for growing crops or grazing cattle. Therefore, the Coushattas remained among the Alabama, where there was insufficient space. Some officials feared more outrages by the Coushatta. During his term of office, Governor H.R. Runnels made a serious attempt to remove this tribe from Texas. In 1858 the Texas Legislature passed a bill calling for the removal of these tribes to the Indian Reserves on the Brazos. This reservation had been established in 1854 for the Comanches and Kiowas. Major Robert S. Neighbors, Supervising Indian Agent for the state, advised the government on July 7, 1858 that the Indian Reserves constituted the best possible place for the Coushatta Indians. He claimed these reservations contained an abundance of good land, that the Indians' rights would be protected, and that the United States government would furnish each tribesman an annuity. Pleased with this assessment, Runnels asserted, "If accepted by the Indians, it cannot fail to result in the elevation and improvement of the race."<sup>30</sup>

Runnels appointed James Barclay as Indian agent with instructions to obtain the consent of the chiefs for the removal of the tribe and to locate a home for them on the reservation. Barclay was cautioned to consider the welfare and happiness of the Indians and act as their "guardian, protector and friend" while also limiting Coushatta intercourse with whites.<sup>31</sup>

Two events defeated this project. First, the Coushatta found the

Brazos Reservation, which was inhabited primarily by their traditional enemies, the Penateka Comanches, completely unacceptable, and refused to move. Secondly, white settlers across the Brazos River, outraged at recent Comanche depredations, had attacked the reservation, slaughtering many of the Indian inhabitants. An appalled Runnels retracted his orders to Barclay:

My own conscience revolts at the idea of practising a deception upon the Indians or carrying them where they might at any time be indiscriminately slaughtered, for no other cause than that the Creator has made them Indians, by a lawless and infuriated populace.<sup>32</sup>

In 1859 Sam Houston took office as governor. A complete realist concerning hostile Indians and methods with which to deal with them, he nevertheless professed great sympathy for the more peaceable tribes. On September 4, 1860, Houston commissioned Robert R. Neyland as agent for the Alabama and Coushatta Indians, who had returned to live again with their neighbors. As with all previous agents, he cautioned Neyland to "take care that they receive the protection guaranteed to them by the laws."<sup>33</sup> These guarantees extended to protection against trespassers, property dispossession, and bodily harm. Neyland replied to Houston on September 4, 1860, asserting that he had "in response to your call adopted such means as will secure those poor creatures, now dependent upon our humanity, from harm."<sup>34</sup> Like Ellis, Neyland proved to be conscientious and sincerely interested in his charges.

The Texas legislature continued to appropriate money for the Alabama and Coushatta Agency and raised the annual operating expenses from \$800 in 1860 to \$1,000 in 1863. Two other significant events occurred during these years. Sam Houston, the Indian benefactor and friend, died on April 2, 1863. He would be remembered fondly by the Alabama-Coushatta for many years. Despite this loss, the two tribes continued their friendly relations with Texas, and during the Civil War the Texas Confederacy recruited them for the war effort. Although the Confederacy did not make a treaty with the Alabama-Coushatta or issue them large amounts of appropriations, as they did with some tribes, they made consistent efforts to use them.<sup>35</sup>

When the war began, tribesmen told Neyland that they wanted to enlist in the Confederate Army. Because they were excellent horsemen, the agent trained the Indians as cavalymen. Before Neyland could arrange for the Alabama-Coushatta to join Colonel George W. Carter's lancer regiment, he entered the army. Company F of the 4th Texas Cavalry also asked the Indians to serve with them but they too left for military service before the tribes could join them. Finally, the new Indian agent also organized the Alabama-Coushatta into a militia unit. Because the state commissioner was simultaneously competing for the Indians' services, the tribes became confused about their duties and remained civilians.<sup>36</sup>

This situation continued for two years. Neyland, now a lieutenant

colonel, had continued his endeavors to recruit the Alabama-Coushatta by enlisting help from the governor and superior officers. He finally succeeded and on April 11, 1862 twenty Polk County Indians joined Captain Charles W. Bullock's Company G., 24th Texas Cavalry, after being sworn into the Confederate Army. Three months later the Alabama-Coushatta arrived at El Dorado, Arkansas, and immediately hated the Confederate camp. They disliked being drilled as infantrymen rather than as cavalymen and, like many recruits, they had difficulty adjusting to strict camp discipline. Fortunately the Confederacy sent the Indians back to their reservation in December just before the Union Army captured the camp and imprisoned its garrison.<sup>37</sup>

Meanwhile, Federal Troops captured Galveston, Texas. In order to regain this territory, Confederate General John B. Magruder planned to strengthen naval defenses on the Trinity River above Liberty County. He ordered Commander W.W. Hunter to take charge along with Major Hamilton Washington of Polk County. On a cloudy, windy January day, Hunter "councilled with head men of the Coushatta and Alabama tribes for the services of their warriors."<sup>38</sup> At this meeting they arranged signals which could be used between whites and Indians for assembly and repair work. On April 13, 1863 Hunter received a transfer to Richmond, Virginia, but he did not forget his new Indian recruits. He added their names to the accompanying transfer list.<sup>39</sup>

Ironically Colonel Hamilton Washington, who had stolen their property earlier, inherited the Indian program. He gave responsibility to civilian clerk (later promoted to captain) W.H. Beazley. Beazley organized 132 Polk County Indians into a cavalry company known as the 6th Brigade, 2nd Texas Infantry Division. Under the supervision of Captain Beazley, the Indians constructed and operated flat-bottomed boats on which they transported farm produce and supplies to the Confederate troops along the Gulf Coast. Although they did not participate in battles, the tribesmen had younger Indians herd horses along the coast which they rode back to the reservation. In March, 1865, for their part in the Civil War, the Texas government declared that Indians could receive the same aid as white soldiers. Because the government was financially weak, the Indians never received any money.<sup>40</sup>

In the post-Civil War period the Indians became financially impoverished. From 1866 to 1867 Governor James W. Throckmorton tried to help the Alabama and Coushatta. Throckmorton was an outspoken unionist prior to the Civil War but still became a brigadier-general in the Confederate Army. He requested that the United States Indian Commissioner appoint an agent and send gifts to the Alabama-Coushatta, who were in a destitute condition. The governor reported that the Alabama-Coushatta had well-cultivated crops but had to hire out to farmers during the cottonpicking season to sustain themselves. After wildlife declined in the Big Thicket, the Indians had tried cattle ranching but white rustlers

stole their cattle. Despite these facts, Throckmorton's request brought no federal action.<sup>41</sup>

Although he failed to gain federal aid, Throckmorton's administration's left a lasting legacy to the Alabama-Coushatta. The legislature passed a Civil Rights Act specifically for these two tribes. Under this law the Texas government declared that the Alabama and Coushatta were subject to the law and as fully protected as if they were citizens of the state. Furthermore, they could testify orally in civil or criminal cases involving crimes against themselves "under the same rules of evidence that may be applicable to the white race."<sup>42</sup> Throckmorton viewed this law seriously and he instructed Colonel Hamilton Washington, the Coushatta Indian agent in 1867, to investigate the murder of a Coushatta woman by unidentified Indians. He expressed his desire that the murderers be tried in either Texas military or civilian courts.<sup>43</sup>

In 1867 Texas came under Military Reconstruction and Throckmorton was removed. By 1870 Texas had been readmitted to the Union but one consequence of the military rule of the state was a federal investigation of the Alabama-Coushatta. Captain Samuel Whitside, of the Sixth United States Cavalry and the Fifth Military District, visited the Alabama, Coushatta, and Muscogee tribes in Polk County in the winter of 1869 and discovered great poverty among the Indians. Whitside's recommendations to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs included monthly rations for the elderly, farming implements for the Alabama and Muscogee, and a separate home for the Coushatta. He described these tribes as "honest, industrious and peaceful." Although Whitside approved of their traditional dress and customs, he was also very impressed with the more assimilated Muscogees. Among these twenty-eight tribal members who had adopted the language, dress, and habits of the whites, Bill Blunt most affected Whitside. "Bill Blunt is an educated Indian, and transacts all his own business with the whites in a very intelligent manner," reported Whitside. "He speaks the English language fluently."<sup>44</sup> Blunt told Whitside that the Indians opposed both men recently appointed by the Texas legislature and Whitside recommended that the Livingston Fort post commander act as their agent. As with Throckmorton, the United States neglected to act on these recommendations.<sup>45</sup>

The United States interrupted their policy of benign neglect concerning the Alabama-Coushatta in 1873 briefly to contemplate removing them from Texas and Louisiana. They intended to transfer these tribes to the Indian Territory where they would be united with the Creeks. Congress considered appropriating \$50,000 to purchase 160 acres per family, provided that all the tribes involved could agree upon the removal. Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, H.R. Clum, stated his reasons for such action:

It does not appear that these Indians are in a condition to be properly recognized as citizens and subject to taxation and entitled to franchise;

and it would probably be better for them and the community at large in which they are if they were removed to the Indian Territory and cared for like other Indians.<sup>46</sup>

As with all previous attempts at removal, the Alabama-Coushatta objected and the issue died. Although in 1875 Texas repossessed the lands used as Indian reserves in 1854 and 1856, it made no such move toward the Alabama-Coushatta. Never again would Texas attempt to remove these Indians. Through their long-suffering tenacity and amiable honesty, the Alabama-Coushatta had proven their right to remain in Texas. They had finally become neighbors.<sup>47</sup>

During the final two decades of the nineteenth century, Presbyterian missionaries played an important role with the Alabama-Coushatta. They built a church and a school on the reservation and provided desperately needed health care. By 1880 the tribe, which had once numbered 1,000, had been reduced to 400 people as tuberculosis, malnutrition, and alcoholism, all aggravated by the severe economic poverty wrought by the Civil War, decimated by the tribe. Nevertheless, the tribe continued to survive, trying to adapt to the white lifestyle and continuing to make friends among their Texas neighbors.<sup>48</sup>

From 1896 until 1918 Judge J.C. Feagin, who moved to Livingston, Texas, became the most influential and persistent friend of the Alabama and Coushatta. Feagin disagreed with the missionaries' attempts to make white men out of the Indians and he strongly urged the federal government to issue appropriations to sustain the tribe. Furthermore, he charged the government with injustice toward these Indians whom the United States had ignored for so many years. In 1918, largely because of his efforts, the United States Congress authorized \$8,000 for the Alabama and Coushatta Indians. Other appropriations followed and in 1928 the United States purchased 3,071 acres of land for the tribe.<sup>49</sup>

In 1938 Congress incorporated the Alabama-Coushatta under the Wheeler-Howard Act. However, the relationship proved to be tenuous. Perhaps the Indians missed their Texas guardians or Texas regretted losing its wards. On May 8, 1953, after only thirty-five years of responsibility to this tiny tribe, the federal government terminated the Alabama-Coushatta to Texas. The state then created the Texas Indian Commission. The tribe subsists on tourism, state aid, and off-reservation jobs. However, the recent discovery of natural gas on the reservation promises substantial future income.<sup>50</sup>

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Dan L. Flores, "The Red River Branch of the Alabama-Coushatta Indians: An Ethnohistory," *Southern Studies*, 16, No. 1 (Spring, 1977), p. 55. The tribes will be referred to as alternately the Alabama-Coushatta and the Alabama and Coushatta. Although they always lived in close proximity and emigrated together, they maintained separate residences. More importantly, the Indians considered themselves separate tribal cultures despite the fact that they often intermarried.

<sup>7</sup>Flores, "The Red River Branch," pp. 55-56; and John H. Bounds, "The Alabama-Coushatta Indians of Texas," *Journal of Geography*, 70 (1971), p. 175; Anna Kilpatrick Fain, *The Story of Alabama Indians*, (Livingston, Texas, 1948), p. 10; and Harriet Smither "The Alabama Indians of Texas," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 36 (October, 1932), p. 89.

<sup>8</sup>Smither, "The Alabama Indians," p. 89, and Bounds, "The Alabama-Coushatta," p. 176.

<sup>9</sup>Bounds, "The Alabama-Coushatta," p. 176, and James Day and Dorman H. Winfrey, ed., *The Indian Papers of Texas and the Southwest, 1825-1916*, (Austin, 1966), I, pp. 2-3.

<sup>10</sup>*Texas Indian Commission Report*, 1984, p. 1. The Kickapoo of Eagle Pass, Texas and the Tiguas of Ysleta, Texas are the other two tribes. This figure includes Indians with land claims such as the Alabama-Coushatta and immigrant groups. Texas considered the Alabama-Coushatta a non-immigrant tribe because they arrived in Texas before the advent of the white man. Charles Adams Gulick, Jr., *The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar* (Austin, 1936), III, p. 391.

<sup>11</sup>Day, *The Indian Papers*, I, p. 14 and p. 23.

<sup>12</sup>Eugene C. Barker and Amelia W. Williams, *The Writings of Sam Houston* (Austin, 1938), II, pp. 114, 123-124, and III, p. 294, and Gulick, *Lamar*, II, p. 255.

<sup>13</sup>Gulick, *Lamar*, II, p. 309 and p. 255.

<sup>14</sup>Barker, *Sam Houston*, III, p. 293.

<sup>15</sup>Gulick, *Lamar*, III, pp. 16-17.

<sup>16</sup>Gulick, *Lamar*, III, pp. 39-40 and Day, I, pp. 72-73.

<sup>17</sup>Day, *Indian Papers*, I, p. 79

<sup>18</sup>Day, *Indian Papers*, I, p. 79.

<sup>19</sup>Day, *Indian Papers*, I, p. 73, and Gulick, *Lamar*, III, p. 40.

<sup>20</sup>Day, *Indian Papers*, I, p. 73 and Gulick, *Lamar*, III, p. 40.

<sup>21</sup>Harriet Smither, ed., *Journals of the Fourth Congress of the Republic of Texas, 1839-1840* (Austin, 1931), pp. 11-12.

<sup>22</sup>Smither, *Journals*, I, p. 48, pp. 62-63, and Day, I, pp. 102-104. At this time there were 107 Alabama families, forty-six Coushatta families and twelve Muscogee families, for a total of 232 men.

<sup>23</sup>Smither, *Journals*, I, p. 239.

<sup>24</sup>Daniel Jacobson, Howard N. Martin and Ralph Henry Marsh, *The Alabama-Coushatta Indians* (New York, 1974), p. 288, and "The Alabama Petition of 1853," Texas State Archives, 49, Box I, A, p. 2.

<sup>25</sup>Barker, *Sam Houston*, IV, pp. 350-351.

<sup>26</sup>Day, *Indian Papers*, I, pp. 126-133.

<sup>27</sup>Day, *Indian Papers*, I, pp. 126-133.

<sup>28</sup>Day, *Indian Papers*, I, pp. 281-284 and II, p. 64.

<sup>29</sup>Barker, *Sam Houston*, IV, pp. 350-351, and Day, *Indian Papers*, II, p. 146.

<sup>30</sup>Day, *Indian Papers*, II, pp. 146-150.

<sup>31</sup>Bounds, "The Alabama-Coushatta," 181 and *Letters Received From the Office of Indian Affairs, Texas Agency, 1847-1859*. Record Group 75, Film 458, Reel I, Frame 278.

<sup>32</sup>"The Petition of 1853," pp. 2-4.

<sup>33</sup>"The Petition of 1853," pp. 2-4.

<sup>34</sup>Jacobsen, 209 and *State Session Laws of America, States and Territories, Texas, 1846-1899*, Fifth Legislature, Chapter 44, pp. 68-69. Hereinafter referred to as State Laws. Also Chapter 5, p. 85, Microfiche 26.

<sup>30</sup>Texas Indian Commission Report, Unpublished Manuscript, 6 and Day, *Indian Papers*, III, pp. 293-294.

<sup>31</sup>Day, *Indian Papers*, III, pp. 287-289.

<sup>32</sup>Day, *Indian Papers*, III, pp. 293-294, and Smither, "The Alabama Indians," p. 102.

<sup>33</sup>Archie McDonald, *Selected Inaugural Addresses of Texas Governors*, (Austin, 1979), pp. 18-19, and Barker, 7, p. 132.

<sup>34</sup>Barker, 8, p. 133 and State Laws, Ninth Legislature, Chapter 36, p. 19, Microfiche 46.

<sup>35</sup>State Laws, Ninth Legislature, Chapter 36, p. 19, Microfiche 46, and Chapter 62, p. 42; Microfiche 45 and Tenth Legislature, Chapter 34, p. 25, Microfiche 46; and Ronald Gibson, ed., *Jefferson Davis and the Confederacy* (Dobbs Ferry, New York, 1977), pp. 137-141.

<sup>36</sup>Howard N. Martin, "Texas Redskins in Confederate Gray," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 70 (1966-67), pp. 586-587.

<sup>37</sup>Martin, "Texas Redskins," pp. 587-589.

<sup>38</sup>*The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Series I*, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1905, Vol. 19, p. 811. Hereinafter referred to as Navy Records.

<sup>39</sup>Navy Records, Vol. 19, p. 811.

<sup>40</sup>Martin, "Texas Redskins," pp. 590-592.

<sup>41</sup>Day, *Indian Papers*, IV, p. 85, pp. 110-111, and State Laws, Eleventh Legislature, Chapter 124, pp. 129-130, Microfiche 49 and Bounds, "The Alabama-Coushatta," p. 178.

<sup>42</sup>Bounds, "The Alabama-Coushatta," p. 178, and State Laws, Eleventh Legislature, Chapter 124, pp. 129-130, Microfiche 49.

<sup>43</sup>Day, *Indian Papers*, 4, p. 215.

<sup>44</sup>*Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, (Washington, D.C., 1899), pp. 327-328. The Muscogee were granted 320 acres by the Texas legislature but as no land was available the grant was worthless to them.

<sup>45</sup>*Annual Report*, 1899, pp. 327-328.

<sup>46</sup>"A Bill for the Relief of the Alabama, Coushatta and Muscogee Tribes of Indians in Texas," *House Executive Document No. 234*, 42 Cong, 3 Sess, February 25, 1873, pp. 1-3.

<sup>47</sup>State Laws, Fourteenth Legislature, Chapter 5, 4-7, Microfiche 93.

<sup>48</sup>Fain, *The Alabama Indians*, p. 12, and Bounds, "The Alabama-Coushatta," p. 178.

<sup>49</sup>"Alabama Indians of Texas," *House Document No. 866*, 62 Cong, 2 Sess, p. 17; "Advisability of Purchasing Lands for Alabama and Coushatta Indians," *House Document No. 1579*, 65 Cong, 3 Sess, p. 2; Charles Kappler, ed., *Laws Relating to Indian Affairs*, (Washington, D.C., 1904-1928, 4, p. 172, 5, p. 78; and Jacobson, *Alabama-Coushatta*, p. 87.