

Section

3

The Texas Rangers and American Indians

Main Ideas

1. The Texas Rangers protected Texans on the frontier.
2. Conflict between frontier settlers and American Indians led to the creation of reservations.
3. Texas Indians were forced to leave the state.

Key Terms and People

- reservations
- Robert S. Neighbors

Why It Matters Today

Conflicts between American Indians and settlers erupted as more settlers moved west. Use current events sources to learn about ongoing conflicts over land in various parts of the world today.



TEKS: 4C, 8A, 8B,
9A, 9C, 11B, 17A,
19D, 20A, 21B, 21C, 21D,
22D, 23A

myNotebook

Use the annotation tools in your eBook to take notes on the roles of Texas Rangers and American Indians on the Texas frontier.

The Story Continues

Texas Ranger Jack Hays had orders to establish a road from San Antonio to El Paso. To prove that the journey could be made safely, in 1848 Hays led an expedition with 71 people, including Rangers and American Indian scouts. The journey was tough. The Rangers had trouble finding water and food in this dry region of West Texas. The men even had to kill some of their horses for food. Finally, the expedition turned back for San Antonio.



Conflicts on the Frontier

One of the reasons Hays was scouting for a route to El Paso was to help people looking to settle in the West. During the 1850s, hundreds of new settlers moved westward from the United States, many of them through Texas. A newspaper reported, “For the last two weeks scarcely a day has passed that a dozen or more movers’ wagons have not passed through our town.” Many of these settlers moved onto the lands of American Indians, creating conflicts.

As fighting erupted, frontier settlers asked the government for protection. The federal government was responsible for solving conflicts with American Indians within the state. This task was difficult, partly because the state controlled all the public land that Indians claimed.

Texas policies encouraged settlers to move west. The state did not recognize American Indians' land rights. On the other hand, U.S. policy was to keep settlers from moving onto Indian lands. The government placed troops along the frontier to guard settlements. U.S. troops had difficulty fulfilling their task, however. Most troops sent to the frontier were infantry, or foot soldiers. They were no match for the Comanches and Kiowas, who were expert horse riders.

Texas governor George T. Wood called out the Texas Rangers to help the federal troops. The Rangers had horses and could cover land as quickly as the Comanches and Kiowas did. In addition, the Rangers had the Colt six-shooter, a powerful new weapon that could fire six shots in a row. It gave the Rangers a great advantage in frontier warfare.

The Rangers were so effective that the federal government agreed to pay them to guard the Texas frontier. The Rangers established a camp east of Laredo, where they fought several battles with the Comanches. The Rangers continued to patrol the frontier throughout the 1850s.

Reading Check Finding the Main Idea What role did Texas Rangers play in shaping the Texas frontier?

★ Establishing Frontier Forts

While the Rangers worked to defend settlers on the open plains, the federal government tried to protect Texans by building forts. In the 1840s the government built a line of forts from the Rio Grande to the Trinity River. Fort Brown in Brownsville and Fort Duncan near Eagle Pass guarded the south along the Rio Grande. Far to the north, Fort Worth—just west of Dallas—protected people along the Trinity. Several more forts guarded the settlements in between.



Interpreting Visuals

Texas Rangers. The Texas Rangers protected settlers on the Texas frontier. **Why** were the Rangers better suited than army troops to guarding the frontier?

Analyzing Primary Sources
Drawing Inferences and
Conclusions How were Texas
 Indians affected by westward
 expansion?

★ Texas Cities ★



Fort Worth

History: When the U.S. Army abandoned Fort Worth in 1853, settlers quickly moved to the area. During the 1870s, Fort Worth became a popular stopover for cowboys on cattle drives.

Population in 2012: 777,992 (estimate)

Relative location: In north-central Texas, 33 miles west of Dallas

Region: Grand Prairie subregion of the Central Plains

County: County seat of Tarrant County

Special feature: Known as Cowtown and Where the West Begins because of its ties to cattle trails

Origin of name: Originally an army post named for General William Jenkins Worth, who served in the Mexican War

Economy: Fort Worth's economy, which once relied on meatpacking plants, is now based on petroleum production and manufacturing, including aviation and electronics.



These forts protected both settlers and travel routes, which had become busier since the discovery of gold in California in 1848. Traffic on the roads altered American Indian life, as one Texas Indian explained.

TEXAS VOICES

“The white man comes and cuts down the trees, building houses and fences and the buffaloes get frightened and leave and never come back, and the Indians are left to starve.”

—Muguara, *The Evolution of a State, or Recollections of Old Texas Days*,
 by Noah Smithwick

Before long, settlers had moved into areas west of the original line of forts. The army abandoned those forts and built a new line of forts farther west. To the north, it built Fort Belknap along the Brazos River. In the south, it built Fort Clark. You can see these forts on the map on page 343.

The line of forts did not stop conflicts between Texans and American Indians, though. The forts were too far apart to fully protect settlers. The forts had too few troops and were often short on supplies.

Reading Check Identifying Cause and Effect How did settlement patterns change in the 1850s, and how did these changes lead to conflicts?

★ The Reservation Policy

Because of the continuing conflict on the Texas frontier, the federal government worked with the state to create a new Indian policy. The U.S. government planned to move the Texas Indians onto **reservations**—limited areas of land reserved for American Indians. The federal government would manage the reservations, while Texas would maintain ownership of the land.

The federal government, with the cooperation of the state, created two reservations in Texas in the 1850s. In 1854 the U.S. Army opened the Brazos Indian Reservation just south of Fort Belknap. About 2,000 American Indians, including Caddos, Tonkawas, and Wacos, settled there. These Indians used part of their land for farming, receiving \$80,000 worth of supplies and cattle a year from the federal government.

Some 40 miles from the Brazos Indian Reservation, officials created another reservation for the Comanches. Called the Comanche Indian Reservation, it became home to about 450 Penateka Comanches. Government



agents taught the Comanches, who were traditionally hunters, how to farm. But the Comanches did not have much luck. Drought in the mid-1850s made growing crops very difficult.

The Caddos were among the Texas Indians forced to move onto reservations.

Overall, the reservations did not attract many American Indians. Many Plains Indians in particular continued to live outside the reservations. For this reason, a planned third reservation for the Lipan Apaches failed. The Apaches refused to move onto the land. They wanted to maintain their traditional way of life, hunting and following the buffalo herds. Settlers, on the other hand, wanted to build farms and homes. They refused to recognize American Indians' right to their hunting grounds and continued to move into Indian territory.

Reading Check Analyzing Information Why was the reservation system not successful in its goals?

★ The Removal of Texas Indians

The creation of reservations did not end conflicts in Texas. A Comanche leader recalled the Comanches' experiences.

TEXAS VOICES

"Many years ago we lived in Texas where the government opened farms and supplied us with cattle and other domestic animals which prospered and made us happy for a while, but the citizens of that county soon said, the Comanches are bad, and drove us from these homes. . . . There we had a school like you, at which twenty-five of our children attended; we have none of these now and my heart is weak."

—Tokaway, quoted in *Indian Affairs and the Frontier of Texas, 1865–1880*,
by Bruce Logan Parker

LINKING

Past to Present

Fort Bliss

During the mid-1800s the U.S. government built forts across West Texas. Today most of these forts are crumbling ruins. Fort Bliss, however, remains an active military post. First established in 1854, the fort has been relocated several times. During the 1990s more than 20,000 soldiers were stationed on the base, which houses an airfield and a hospital.

How do you think the purposes and uses of Texas forts have changed over the years?

Officials who hoped the reservation system would calm affairs between settlers and American Indians were soon disappointed. Settlers living near reservations claimed that Indians stole horses and cattle. Groups of armed Texans patrolled reservation boundaries. They sometimes killed Indians found off the reservations.

By the late 1850s some Texans were calling for an end to the reservation system. They wanted American Indians totally removed from the state, and the federal government agreed. By 1859 the Indians on the Brazos and Comanche Indian Reservations had been forced to move to Indian Territory in what is now Oklahoma.

The removal of American Indians angered some Texans. Federal Indian agent **Robert S. Neighbors** had hoped that Indians on reservations would be treated fairly. Disappointed with the policy of removal, Neighbors helped the Indians in their difficult move. After returning to Texas, Neighbors was murdered by an angry Texan at Fort Belknap.

Texas recognized the right of a few American Indian groups to remain in the state. One such group was the Alabama-Coushatta Indians of East Texas. During the Runaway Scrape, some of the Alabama-Coushattas had aided Texans fleeing east. Because of this service during the Texas Revolution—and because their land was poor and not in demand by settlers—many Texans were friendly to them. In 1854 Texas granted the Alabama-Coushattas 1,280 acres of land in Polk County. The federal government bought more than 3,000 additional acres for the reservation in 1928. In the west, reservations were established for the Tiguas near El Paso and the Kickapoos near Eagle Pass along the Rio Grande. Today these three reservations are the only ones in Texas.

Reading Check Evaluating Were U.S. policies effective in easing conflict between Texans and American Indians? How did they affect Indian life?



Section 3 Review



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ONLINE QUIZ

1. Define and explain:

- reservations

2. Identify and explain

the significance of the following in Texas history:

- Robert S. Neighbors

3. Locate on a map:

- Fort Worth

4. Evaluating

Copy the graphic organizer below. Use it to analyze the success or failure of the different frontier policies listed.

Policy/Action	How Successful Was It?
Rangers	
Forts	
Reservations	

5. Finding the Main Idea

- How did the Texas Rangers change life on the Texas frontier?
- How did westward expansion affect American Indians in Texas?

6. Writing and Critical Thinking

myWriteSmart

Identifying Points of View Imagine that you are trying to resolve a conflict between frontier settlers and American Indians in Texas. Write a letter that defines the issues and offers a solution to the conflict.

Consider the following:

- the westward expansion of U.S. settlers
- Texas Indians' views of U.S. settlers and opinions about reservation life