

**Newspaper and Other Articles**  
**Brazos River, Coahuila and Texas**  
**Letters from an Early Settler of Texas**  
**July, 16, 1822**

Dear Friend – After a long and toilsome journey I arrived at this point from Red river, in company with three or four families from that country, on the first day of January, last. We encamped at the crossing of the old San Antonio road, two miles above the mouth of the Little Brazos river. We were several months in getting here, there being several families in company, among whom were quite a number of women and children. A part of the time we were detained by the sickness of one or another of the company, besides this, we lost several horses on the way, and in fact we seemed to meet with a great many misfortunes. We carried our luggage entirely upon pack-horses, the roads being perfectly impassable for a vehicle of any description. I believe I have already given you a description of the country, between Pecan Point and Nacogdoches, in a former letter. From the latter place to the Brazos the country is high and dry; the land is generally poor, though well timbered between Nacogdoches and the Trinity, from there on, we met with large prairies. On arriving at the Brazos we found two families, Garrett and Hibbings, who had got there a few days before us, and were engaged in erecting cabins. We were, all of us, much pleased with the situation of this place, and decided to remain here for the present. The settlement now consisted of seven families; there is no other settlement within fifty miles. About the time of our arrival here, a few families settled below us on this river, near the old La Bahia crossing.

As far as we have seen, we are well pleased with this part of the country. As high up as we have explored, the Brazos has the appearance of being a large navigable river. The land is very rich and fertile ! The timber is good, and in places, particularly on Little river, the white oak and cedar reminds me very forcibly of the timber in Kentucky.

Our mode of living, particularly for the women and children, has been a rough one since our arrival on this river. About that time our bread-stuff gave out, and we had no chance of obtaining more till we could raise it, and we have been obliged to subsist entirely upon the game which we take in the woods and prairies. We have no reason to fear suffering for food, as the country is literally alive with all kinds of game. We have only to go out for a few miles into a swamp between the Big and Little Brazos, to find as many wild cattle as one could wish. If we desire buffalo met, we are able to go out, load our horses, and return the same day. Bears are very plenty, but we are obliged to use great care when hunting for them, lest the havalenas (meaning the peccary) kill our dogs.

The families have saved a few pecks of corn which we planted, but on account of the dry weather and the want of culture, it will yield but a small amount.

The only cows we have, are a few which were brought out by Cherokee John Williams. This of course will prove a good stock country, for the prairies are teeming with wild horses and cattle. There are a vast quantity of bee trees about here, so that we have no want of honey; one might almost give this country the same description as was anciently given of Canaan, "a land flowing with milk and honey," but we are rather short off for the milk just now.

Upon the whole we spent our time very pleasantly; when we get tired of lying about camp, we mend up our moccasins, and start up the Brazos hunting buffalo, more for pastime than for anything else. We frequently are gone out for two or three weeks; we generally go up as high as we dare go, on account of the Whaco Indians. You would scarcely believe me, were I to tell you of the vast herds of buffalo which abound here; I have frequently seen a thousand in a day between this place and the mouth of Little river.

In May, some six or seven of us took a trip as high up as Little river by water. We constructed a small canoe, and about the time we were ready to start, a young gentleman, who had just arrived here from the States, desired to make the trip with us. To this we consented. On our way, we would amuse ourselves by going out and shooting wild cattle, which are in great abundance here. It was dangerous for us to encamp at night, on the east side of the river, on account of the cattle coming in for water, the night being the only time they go to water. We made our station camp at the mouth of Little river on the beach ! there we stayed two weeks, killing and drying buffalo meat. We went out every day, killed a buffalo or two apiece, and brought the choice pieces, particularly the tongues, into camp. Our young friend, whom I mentioned as having just come out from the States, had informed me that he was a minister of the gospel. When one kills a buffalo, he generally lays claim to the tongue as private property, it being a very choice piece; the other portions are shared equally. Our little yankee preacher seemed to enjoy himself very well during the trip, though he was greatly disturbed by our profanity, for we were a rough set. My reason for calling him a yankee, by the by, is on account of the way he managed to get our buffalo tongues. About the time we got our canoe loaded with meat ready to start home, he proposed a plan to break us from swearing, to which we all very readily agreed. The first one who used an oath, was to give whoever first reminded him of it, one of his dried buffalo tongues. Oaths being so common with us, we, of course, did not notice them, and in less than three days, the minister was possessor of our dried tongues.

Perhaps a description of the wild rye, which grows very plentifully here in the bottoms, might not be uninteresting to you. Indeed, I know if I can give you half an idea of its beauty, you cannot fail to be delighted. The bottom of the Brazos is very wide and level, and in the summer season, rye grows here spontaneously, about four feet high. It would, were it not for the timber standing in the midst, present the same appearance which a cultivated rye field in the States presents, for miles and miles. In fact, it far surpasses the common rye fields in beauty, being much larger and thicker.

I have never witnessed a sight of the kind, which, in my opinion, was more beautiful than this. The color of it is far deeper and richer than any grain I have ever before seen. I always admired the sight of a fine wheat field at home, but when I look at this, I sometimes wonder how I could ever have thought that beautiful; it seems so insignificant when compared with this rye. The timber, in the midst of which it grows, renders the sight the more imposing. There is not in these wild rye bottoms any undergrowth to the timber. The trees are large and tall ! The long moss waves from their thick branches, and mixes with the heads of the rye; all seems still, solemn and beautiful, beyond the power of pen to describe. One must see it to get even a faint idea of its beauty.

You, in Kentucky, cannot for a moment conceive of the beauty of one of our prairies in the spring. Imagine for yourself a vast plain extending as far as the eye can reach, with nothing but the deep blue sky to bound the prospect, excepting on the east side where runs a broad red stream, with lofty trees rearing themselves upon its banks, and you have our prairie. This is covered with a carpet of the richest verdure, from the midst of which spring up wild flowers of every hue and shade, rendering the scene one of almost fairy-like beauty. Indeed, it is impossible to step without crushing these fairest of nature's works. Upon these natural flower gardens feed numerous herds of buffalo, deer, and other wild animals. Here and there may be seen beautiful clumps of trees, and anon, a little thicket comes in view. The flowers of the prairie are certainly the most beautiful which I have ever beheld. Our ladies in Kentucky would feel themselves amply repaid for all the labor, which they bestow upon their beautiful flower gardens, could they but afford one half of the beauty of one of our prairies.

Yours truly, W. B. D.

Deweese, W.B. Letters from an Early Settler of Texas. Louisville, KY: Morton & Griswold, 1852, pages 23-28