

**This History is directly from the
CHOATES OF THE SOUTH--NEWSLETTER # 9
September 1992**

GABRIEL CHOATE

In Newsletter # 5 I had a picture of this GABRIEL CHOATE and the following is the story that appeared in the newspaper (unnamed) with picture. No date ..

THE STORY OF GABE CHOATE-- TEXAS RANGER, SCOUT & INDIAN FIGHTER

Editor's Note: Our thanks to Helen Draper Terry for providing this story about distant relative, Gabriel Choate who lived from 1826-1923 and worked as a Texas Ranger & Indian Scout. Mrs. Terry is a great-niece of Mr. Choate and the following is a story of some of his experiences.--FT

The Gabriel Choate descendants held their annual family reunion in Wintersmith Park in Ada, OK recently. Texas relatives attending were Mr. & Mrs. Orville Draper of Llano, Mrs. Helen Terry & Kelli Nicholson of San Saba.

A diversion of the day was the retelling of stories that have been handed down through the years of the life and exploits of Gabriel Choate.

The Ephraim Choate family were farmers in Tennessee. Gabriel was born 14 August 1826, the oldest of seven sons and three sisters. This large family moved to East Texas about 1845 for the purpose of acquiring cheap land for the boys.

Soon after arriving in TX Gabriel entered the war against Mexico in Captain Gillett's Company of Texas Mounted Volunteers. He was stationed at points along the Rio Grande to keep down outlaw Mexican bands and to protect the sparse settlements from Indian raids.

After serving three years under Captain Gillett's command he returned to civilian life and married Miss Mary Rainbolt of Georgetown, TX in 1848. They were parents of eight children. This family moved about in Central TX farming and raising horses and cattle. Later they came to San Saba County on Wallace Creek where he built one of the first rock houses in that part of the country.

This rock house and the land now belong to Mr. & Mrs. C. B. Lambert who have made interesting and useful improvements but have not altered the original thick rock walls and other features. The place is a major tourist attraction where Mr. & Mrs. Lambert have developed a business from the fossilized rock formations. There are also many signs that the Indians once lived in this vicinity.

Uncle Gabe, as he was called by his many friends and relatives, told a story about shooting an Indian from his house on Wallace Creek. He said the Indian had stolen several horses in the community so the younger men brought their families to his house and Uncle Gabe was given the job of guarding the woman and children.

He put his three horses in the yard near a loop-hole in the wall where he could keep a watch on them. He heard a noise and saw an Indian crawling up near the horses. He fired once and the Indian fell dead and two others ran away. They returned before the night was over and took the dead Indian with them.

According to a book, *The West TX Frontier*, by J.C. McConnell, Uncle Gabe belonged to the Texas Rangers. He was stationed at Bowser's Bend on the Colorado River about 20 miles north of Richland Springs in 1858. His commander was Captain John Williams who organized a group of about 100 men.

The main purpose of this group of Rangers was to control the Indian thieves and to protect the frontier settlers from Indian deprivations so they could go about their daily lives in safety.

The Moses Jackson family lived on Jackson Branch near the mouth of Pecan Bayou which is now in Mills County. This location was about 20 miles down the Colorado River from the Ranger's camp. A group of Rangers who were on patrol came upon a very sad sight. They discovered the dead bodies of four members of the Jackson family. The Indians had murdered part of the family and had taken Tobe, a 12 year old boy and his eight-year-old sister, Rebecca captives.

Lt. Gideon Cowan was in command of a company of eight Rangers. They were Sgt. Rhome Vaughn, GABRIEL CHOATE, Jack Brown, Rid Hoy, G. W. Freezell, Tom Potts and Frank Gholson. These Rangers were accompanied by about 30 or 40 irate citizens but after a few days of tracking the Indians west, many of the farmers had to return to protect their own homes.

Some civilians who were present at the recapture of the children were Dan Spencer, Bill Webb, John Webb and three others.

The Rangers followed the trail left by the Indians who were driving a large, herd of stolen horses. After many weary days they finally came upon their encampment at the mouth of Bitter Creek in Nolan County near the present city of Sweetwater. When the Indians discovered the Texas Rangers were fast approaching they caught up fast horses and road swiftly away to the west. They left the children and about 78 horses behind making the Rangers' job much easier than expected.

When the rescuers and the children were united, Jack Brown began to shout and said "Praise God that he inspired Lt. Cowan with such skill and ability to effect such an achievement." About that time GABE CHOATE said "Jack, are we going to have a revival in the wilderness?". Jack replied, "Yes, the good Lord deserves praise in the wilderness for such wonderful wisdom as this as well as in the church house."

The boy, Tobe was in good condition but the little girl was in very poor condition due to exposure and her inability to eat Indian food. The care of the little girl was given over to GABE CHOATE & Lt. Cowan who were the oldest Rangers in the group. Uncle Gabe used to tell the story of how they made a hammock of a blanket and carried the little thin girl between them as they rode southward.

Both children were returned to their brother in Lampasas County and the horses to their rightful owners.

Uncle Gabe saw limited action in the Civil War. He spent his time protecting the frontier from Indian raids. He often talked about the white man's injustice to the Indians.

After retiring from public service Uncle Gabe made his home with his sister, Mrs. George Washington Draper, on her farm and ranch in the western part of San Saba County near the Mason & Llano county lines.

He raised bees and helped with the work around the farm. Uncle Gabe lived to be 98 years old and was very active until the last years of his life when he was afflicted with slow gangrene of his toe. This finally took his life on the 14th of July 1923. He was buried in the Cole Creek Cemetery in Llano Co. near the San Saba Co. line.