

Populating the State: Immigration to Hill County

Supplement to **Heart of Texas Tales Website**

Buck Barry's Detailing of Indian Troubles: James & Isabella Wood from Scotland Relocate to Safer Land near Fort Graham

James and Isabella Wood immigrated from Scotland to Texas, to property in Bosque County which had been purchased 'sight unseen' from land agents for 25¢ an acre. That area was plagued by frequent Indian raids, (Comanche and Caddo tribes), as detailed in the book, *Buck Barry Texas Ranger and Frontiersman* by James Greer. When Texas became a state, it was the responsibility of the United States government to protect settlers from Indians and that is the primary reason that Fort Graham was established. Consequently, the areas around the fort were largely free of Indian trouble, while other areas (like Bosque County on the other side of the Brazos River) suffered.

The family letter sent to Scotland shows that Mr & Mrs Wood enjoyed safety and good living conditions near Fort Graham when they stopped there on their way to their unseen property in Bosque County. Thus, when the Indian troubles became unbearable, they sold their land in Bosque County and moved back across the Brazos to what was now Hill County (est. 1853). Mr. Wood became active in Hill County government and even hosted a precinct meeting at his home. He was the first naturalized citizen of Hill County.

<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fba89>



Buck Barry, Texas Ranger and Frontiersman

From the book, *Buck Barry Texas Ranger and Frontiersman*, (paraphrased, not quoted):

Buck Barry recorded in his voluminous journals (donated to the University of Texas) many stories about repeated Indian raids. Often when the men were away from home, hunting or planting, women and children were exposed and many were killed or captured by raiding Indians. Indians often struck at night, so during the full moon, settlers were especially vulnerable.

Barry reported that when he had to decide whether to join in the fighting of the Civil War, he was conflicted about which side to join (although he was a slave owner). He said he ultimately threw his support to the southern states because the US federal government had not done enough, in his mind, to protect settlers from the Indians. Barry thought that if the government was located closer to the problem (i.e. in the south), they might be more responsive to the problems of Indian raids.

Note that Barry was part of the Texas Rangers party that "rescued" Cynthia Ann Parker from the Indians.