

JOSE MARIA: ANADARKO CHIEF

By Kenneth F. Neighbours*

At the dawn of history, Europeans found the Anadarkos and other Caddoan kinsmen in East Texas on the Sabine, Attoyac Bayou, Angelina, Neches, and other timbered streams, living in fixed habitations in scattered hamlets from which they went out to farm and hunt. In 1806 the Anadarkos lived on the Sabine seven leagues above Nacogdoches in East Texas.

There among the spreading trees and flowering shrubs, a baby boy was born sometime about the turn of the nineteenth century. He was given the name of *Aish* (or *Jesh*) by his family. When a Spanish padre made his circuit or when the baby was carried by his proud parents to the Mission Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe at Nacogdoches, he was christened "José Maria."¹

As he was a man when he entered the pages of history, his infancy and youth cannot be documented. We can document how members of his tribe lived and assume without a doubt that he grew up in the same surroundings. An Anadarko home was built by inserting long cedar poles in the earth in a circle twenty-five feet or more in diameter and tying the tops together in a conical fashion. Around the outside clumps of swamp grass were tied to parallel laths to thatch the lodge. In the interior, double decked bunks were built around the walls. Some were filled with bear skins and pelts for beds. Others held stores of dried meat and vegetables. In the center of the raised clay floor was the fire hole. In the top of the conical house was a small opening for a smoke hole. The smoke spiraled past the suspended seed corn to ward off weevils.

As an Anadarko mother hoed corn and vegetables in the tribal fields, she placed her baby in a cradle board and tied it to the bough of a tree where he swayed in the breeze. Here the baby could watch the flash of the red bird; a tiny wren might peer curiously at him; and the squirrel might run down a limb to scold him mischievously. Anadarko boys swam in the streams.

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¹ Joanna Oertle to KFN, interview, Midwestern University, May 4, 1964. Miss Oertle is the great granddaughter of José Maria's brother, Toban. An observer in 1864 thought that José Maria appeared to be about sixty years old.

and in the forests, they hunted bears, timber wolves, deer, and small fur bearing animals. They learned to use the bow and arrow, to use firearms and to ride like Bedouins. We can assume authoritatively that Iesh grew up in this manner.

We do know that Iesh said that as a man he was small in stature; that he said he was a young man in 1845; and that his coolness, courage, and daring marked him when still a youth for the leadership of his and related tribes. We know that the Spaniard was still in the land, and that Iesh also learned melodious Castilian. We know that the Spanish padres built the first Mission San José for the Nasonis and the Anadarkos, and later the Anadarkos lived near Mission Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Nacogdoches at Nacogdoches. The Anadarkos and other Caddoans had too much dignity and self respect to submit to regimentation in a mission compound. They continued their own tribal life and customs while treating the padres kindly when they appeared among them and making at least nominal allegiance to the Catholic faith.

His tribe was caught up in the games of empire played by the French and Spanish and had been obliged to change locations from time to time. Then the Latins were replaced by Anglo-Americans who came to settle the country solidly. Old Spain had regarded the aboriginals as tenants at will. No pieces of paper in archives fulfilled the European concept of ownership. Anglo-Americans came with the thing that steals the land—the compass. Surveyors in the vanguard were the especial target of the warriors of José María's tribe.

After the hostility of Anglo-Americans in 1836 drove the Caddo, Ioni, Anadarko, and Nebedsche from their homes in Nacogdoches County on to the prairie, José María and his second chief, probably Towash, while hunting buffalo three or four miles northeast of present Belton with their men captured five surveyors: James M. Norris, a Mr. Taylor and three others. The second chief insisted on killing the surveyors at once. As the warriors strung their bows eagerly, José María protested. As he and the second chief argued heatedly, Taylor suddenly made a Masonic sign which José María understood immediately and stepped between Taylor and the other chief. After talking briefly in English with Taylor, José María again excothulated with the second chief, this time successfully as the latter's men unstrung their bows.

Taylor, a Master Mason, later asked José María where he learned Masonry. José María is reported to have stated that he was made a Master Mason in a French Lodge in Canada.¹ In-

¹ See Watkins (ed.), *One League to Each Wind: Accounts of Early Surveying in Texas* (Austin: Von-Boeckmann-Jones, 1965), p. 202 f.

quiry in Canada failed to disclose any further information on this head,³ but there were other instances of Texas Indians displaying knowledge of Freemasonry.⁴

After some raiding in Milam County, Benjamin Bryant of Bryant's Station led forty-eight men in pursuit of the raiders. On the Brazos River near Morgan's Point, Bryant found a band of Indians in the open timber near a dry branch: "The noted chief, José Maria, who was riding in front in perfect nonchalance, halted, slipped off his gloves, and taking deliberate aim, fired at Joseph Boren, who was a few feet in advance, cutting his coat-sleeve. José Maria then gave the signal for his men to fire, and the action commenced."

In the ensuing fight José Maria, although he was struck on the breast bone by a ball and his horse shot from under him, out-generated the Texans whose retreat became a rout. As panic seized the Texans, José Maria made the "welkin ring with hideous and exultant yells," as he gave the command to charge in full force. When the Texans were driven from the field, they lost ten killed and five wounded. José Maria was said to have lost about the same number, but the victory was decisively his. Years afterward when he visited Bryant's Station, he offered his pipe, but Bryant magnanimously insisted that the chief smoke first as the victor, and he "proudly followed the suggestion."⁵

While living on Big Creek about ten miles east of present Marlin, José Maria developed a warm friendship for Squares Barkley and his large family. When one of the Barkley lads became chronically ill with malarial chills, the chief persuaded the parents to allow him to take the boy with him and his tribe to their winter camp near the Falls of the Brazos to hunt bear:

The old chief took good care of him, slept with him each night in the master wigwam, and about 4 o'clock every morning, no matter how cold the weather was, he gathered the boy up in his arms, and straightway plunged headforemost into the dark, deep and chilly water and with a snort bounded out and rubbed the fellow dry. This, after a while utterly routed the chills.

The boy went on many a bear hunt with José and his men. Walking in single file with them, the boy returned in the spring to his own family in good health and gay spirits. The lad's respect for José Maria and his people knew no bounds.

Unfortunately a white settler with a bad reputation ac-

³ A. J. B. Milborne, Knowlton, P. Q., Canada, to K. F. N. March 6, 1905; Edward S. Rogers, Curator, Department of Ethnology, Royal Ontario Museum, University of Toronto, April 29, 1905 to K. F. N. Notes and Letter Files of Kenneth F. Neighbors, Wichita Falls, Texas.

⁴ Evette Haley, *Charles Goodnight: Cowman and Plainsman* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1942), p. 26.

⁵ James T. DeShields, *Border Wars of Texas* (Topeka: The Herald Company), pp. 278-280.

cused members of José María's tribe of stealing his hogs and threatened the chief with a gun. José gathered some of his warriors together, pursued the man and besieged him in Barkley's home. Barkley returned in time to persuade José to withdraw. When the disaffected settler threatened to raise a force to kill all the band, Barkley counseled his friend José that it would be wise to change locations. The chief then moved his people to a point on the Navasota River not far from Springfield in Limestone County. From thence they lived at various times on the Trinity and Brazos rivers.^{5a}

In the summer of 1841, George B. Erath led military companies from Milam, Robertson, and Travis counties up the Brazos where in an encounter they wounded José María and killed one of his men. The Indians killed one of the Erath's men, and they withdrew to the settlement.⁵

José María himself was not immune from raids by other Indians. In the spring of 1843, the Tawacanos stole from him one bay horse, one white horse, one roan or Sabine mare, one bay colt, one brown claybank mare, and one black colt.⁷

In the spring of 1843, United States Commissioner Pierce M. Butler interposed his good offices in an effort to effect peace between the Indians of Texas and its white settlers. At the council grounds on Tehuacana Creek seven miles below present Waco, Butler conferred with representatives of the Texas government and the Texas Indians.

Butler made conciliatory speeches, and various chiefs spoke eloquently. When José María was called upon, he declined to speak, however, saying that he had heard the other speeches, agreed with them and had nothing to add. He was among the signatories to an agreement designed to end the years of conflict, especially the military campaigns during the administration of M. B. Lamar, President of the Republic of Texas.⁸

In recognition of the services and standing of chief José María, president Sam Houston furnished him the following passport:⁹

^{5a} Marjorie Rogers, "The Restoration of a Paleface," *Frontier Times*, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 3.

⁵ Watkins, *One League to Each Wind*, p. 208. Luch A. Erath, "Memoirs of Major George Bernard Erath," *Southeastern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXVII, p. 31.

⁷ Dorman H. Winfrey (ed.), *Texas Indians Papers, 1844-1845* (Austin: Texas State Library, 1960), p. 29.

⁸ *Ibid.*, for 1825-1843, (Austin: Texas State Library, 1959), pp. 149-152.

⁹ Executive Record Book No. 49, p. 236, courtesy of James Day, Texas State Archives.

Executive Department

Washington, April 17, 1843

To all whom it may concern: Know ye that José María with his men, will accompany John Connor through the settlements homeward, and it is hoped the citizens will furnish them with the necessary supplies; and upon proper vouchers being presented the accounts will be paid by the government.

After Texan President Mirabeau B. Lamar's wars of extermination, President Sam Houston returned to his previous policy of peace. In the spring of 1843, he sent out his Superintendent of Indian Affairs Joseph C. Eldredge with Delaware guides and interpreters, including John Connor and James Shaw, to find the Comanches on the plains and bring them to the council grounds. Enroute the Delaware leaders wisely insisted on visiting the Indians.¹⁰

On the evening of May 27, 1843, Superintendent Eldredge encamped in sight of José María's village and sent a runner to apprise the chief of the official's arrival and his objectives. According to Eldredge:

On the evening of the 28th we were notified of the approach of the chief. He appeared escorted by thirty of his warriors, splendidly mounted presenting an exciting, novel and interesting sight from their unequalled horsemanship, fanciful costumes and paint. I invited them to dismount and had scarcely finished eating and smoking with them, when a runner came in announcing the approach of Nah-lah-to-wah the head chief of the Wacos.

After members of the Keechi band arrived, the circle numbered about seventy-five. José María witnessed a painful scene when Eldredge restored some captive Waco girls to the Waco chief. They did not wish to go with him and shrieked distressingly as they rode away. Eldredge arranged for a council of the chiefs of the region as soon as the Caddos could be notified. José María sent runners to the Caddos and in the meantime invited the Texan official to accompany him to the Anadarko village.

José María's village, north of Comanche Peak, according to Eldredge, was on "a western branch of the Trinity about eight miles from the main river," where the Texas Santa Fe expedition of 1841 had crossed. This location in Parker County was near the present Texas and Pacific Railroad crossing of the Clear Fork of the Trinity River just west of present Aledo.¹¹ The superintendent noted that there were but few lodges and these of inferior construction in the village, but he noted a considerable planting of corn.

¹⁰ Windley, *op. cit.*, 1825-1843 (Austin: Texas State Library, 1949), p. 211.

¹¹ Fred R. Cotten, Weatherford, Texas, to K.F.N., telephone conversation, June 8, 1966. Mr. Cotten has made a thorough exploration of the route of the Texas Santa Fe Expedition through Parker County. The opinion on the location of the village is the author's.

The agreed upon council took place at José María's village at noon on May 31. Among those present were José María; Nah-ish-to-wah and Acaquah, Wacos; Bintah, a Caddo chief; and the Keechi chiefs, Bedi Iranoia, Sah-sah-rogue and Cah-hah-ti, as well as the escorts of the various chiefs. They agreed to come to a council at Bird's Fort; to an exchange of prisoners; Eldredge made them some presents; and the visiting delegations left satisfied.¹²

When a misunderstanding arose, Eldredge's Delaware guides notified him they were leaving immediately and forever for their home on the Cow River in Missouri, thus terminating Eldredge's tour prematurely. In the crisis, the Texas official inquired of José María whether he would escort him safely back to the settlements.¹³

Greatly pleased at such a mark of confidence—his keen black eyes giving full expression to his gratified pride—he promptly and solemnly promised to do so.

On the next morning, while Eldredge was packing and mounting for his homeward march, surrounded by his promised escort of one hundred Anadarko warriors, well mounted and armed with bows and lances, with José María at their head, Jim Shaw sent word to Capt. Eldredge that he had changed his mind and would continue the trip.

José María bade farewell to his official guests on June 3, 1843.

At Bird's Fort near present Fort Worth, on September 29, 1843, the authorities of Texas and the agrarian tribes of Texas concluded a significant treaty defining their relations. Among the terms was the provision for licensed trading posts, a boundary line, and the appointment of government agents.¹⁴ Among the signatories of this significant treaty was José María, chief of the Anadarkos. The treaty of Bird's Fort became the prototype of other agreements and was largely duplicated in a treaty of 1844 between the Republic of Texas and the Indians of Texas including the Comanches. Among the presents given to José María by the Texas agents were one kettle and pipe hatchet, one blanket, red strouding flaps, and tobacco.

In preparation for another council, Thomas G. Western, now Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Texas, met various chiefs including José María at the council grounds on Tehuacana Creek on April 27, 1844. After smoking the pipe around,

¹² R. N. Richardson (ed.), "Eldredge's Report of his Expedition to the Comanches," *West Texas Historical Association Year Book*, Vol. IV, p. 134.

¹³ John Henry Brown, *Indian Wars and Pioneers of Texas* (Austin: L. E. Dunkell, Publisher, n.d.), p. 96.

¹⁴ Winfrey, *op. cit.*, for 1825-1843 (Austin: Texas State Library, 1960), p. 248.

Western made a talk, embraced each of the chiefs, and listened to their talks.

José Maria was present at the same place for council on May 13, 1844, where efforts were made to reclaim stolen horses, and the Texans distributed presents to the various tribes assembled. As talks continued the next day, when his turn came, José spoke as follows: ¹⁵

My white brothers, first I will speak to you, as I am myself, small in size, my words to fit me, shall be few, long talks admit of lies; my talk shall be short but true. Captains and chiefs listen to me. The Great Spirit has given to us a good day and we have listened to many good talks. Captains I want you now to listen unto me, the Big Spirit, above, is watching all now here, young men you all look happy. Captains, if you love your children, advise them not bad, but good; and show to them the white path; I will counsel you like my Delaware brother, for his counsel is good, we are all made alike, all look alike and are one people, which you must recollect. The Great Spirit our father, and our mother, the earth, sees and hears all we say in council. You have here listened to none but good talk. I hold the white path in my hands, (a string of wampum beads) given by our white brothers, look at it; see, it is all fair. To you, Waco and Tawakoni captains and warriors I give it, stop going to war with the white people, they, the white people, gave it unto me; I give it now to you; use it as I have done and your women and children will be happy, and sleep free of danger. I give to you, this piece of tobacco to smoke, and consider of the white path, when you return to your village, then smoke this tobacco, think of my words and obey them.

That José Maria meant what he said to the Waco and Tawakoni chiefs was demonstrated shortly when Lame Arm, a Waco chief, rode into the Anadarko village, naked and painted for war. When José Maria demanded an explanation, Lame Arm claimed that he had come from a war with the Spanish: "If so, says José Maria, where are your warriors? When I go to war I lead my men; I am found in the front; if you did the same how do I find you here by yourself alone? You speak with a forked tongue; follow me."

José Maria escorted Lame Arm to the Keechi Camp where in the presence of John Connor, Delaware scout active in the service of Texas, Lame Arm confessed that he and ten of his men had started to raid Mexico, but had stolen horses instead from Texans near Gonzales. The Texans pursued the party and killed one Waco and one Tonkawa in the group. ¹⁶

It should be remembered that the Anadarkos were a people of sedentary life and hospitable nature when Europeans came among them. For more than a century they had been to some extent under the influence of Christian missionaries. It is not surprising then that when a civilized Texan executive appealed to all men, red and white to live in peace, José Maria lent his sup-

¹⁵ Winfrey, *op. cit.*, for 1844-1845, p. 44.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

port on the side of peace and order in restraining and bringing under ameliorating influences tribes less advanced. This was recognized and commended by President Sam Houston in a letter from Superintendent Thomas G. Western to Indian Agent S. T. Slater: ¹⁷

The advice of José María to Bintah and Red Bear is good, and such as all Captains brave in battle and wise in council will always give, he is a great man and a good friend, embrace him for me as my Brother, and say that Gen. Houston will approve of his conduct that he was right in preventing bloodshed, that our Great Chief wishes to keep the path white, not only between the white man and the Red man, but also between the Red man and the Red man; they must not make war one with another without his orders.

It is gratifying to find that you were well received by them, you are sufficiently acquainted with the Indian Character to render yourself popular with them, which it is hoped you will do.

The success of the Bird's Fort Treaty with the agrarian tribes led Sam Houston to begin negotiations to formulate another including the nomadic plains tribes. In October of 1844, His Excellency met various chiefs in preliminary council at the trading post at the falls of the Brazos River in present Falls County. When Houston spoke of his acquaintance with José María and other chiefs spoke, José, a man of few words, simply asked when the Council would meet again. Two days later at the council grounds on Tehuacana Creek, a treaty of peace was signed by the Texas commissioners and the chiefs including José María of the Anadarkos. ¹⁸

When interested persons, it was believed living near Strouds on the Navasota River, made it their business to spread false rumors among the Indians, José María kept his treaty pledge by coming to the council grounds on Tehuacana Creek to report and renew his steadfast resolution of peace and good will. He said: ¹⁹

Brothers

My young men have left me and gone around because they have heard bad talk, but I do not believe this bad talk, and this is the reason I wish to hold council. That my young men may be convinced that the talk they have heard is false and the talk of bad men.

When I went out on my hunt, I got a passport from the agent, and did not meet any trouble until I got nearly back to this place. When I met this bad news.

When Col. Williams went up into our country last summer, I was told that the object of his mission was to get all the women and children in to the council in the fall, and that the whites were then to fall upon them and kill them. The waggon with the goods were to stop

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 114-119. The significance of the Bird's Fort Treaty—the last of the Republic of Texas with the Indians—is pointed out by Walter Prescott Webb in the *Southeastern Historical Quarterly* for June, 1922.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-164.

below and the troops from the United States were to assist in killing them. At the last Council all of the Captains said the old men with grey beards would not tell lies.—My beard is not yet grey. I am a young man, but I speak truth. For myself I believe that these stories I have heard are lies because I heard the talk of the chiefs at the last council, and I then told my white Brethren that whenever I heard any bad news, I would come to the Trading House and tell it and have the talk sent to the Great White Chief. I do not tell these things myself but tell what I hear. I intend to hold fast to what I said at the council—

For my own part I am not afraid, but my people say I am a fool for staying so near the whites, as so soon as the corn gets fit to eat they intend to raise and kill them all and that the reason these goods were put here was to cheat our people out of their hunts to pay for the good white men they have killed.

I have understood also that if we did not go with the whites and help kill the Waco that the whites would think we were friends to the Waco, and kill us.—The Waco say that if we do not move out, away from the whites they will steal our horses, so you see we are between two fires. What shall we do? I know that it is the desire of the whites to make peace with all, but it is impossible. The whites have done their best to make peace, but the Waco and others will not be friends.

Two nights ago news was brought me that the Waco had stolen all the horses from 6 of my men, and that the men had left their families and pursued the Waco, and I have not heard of them since and do not know whether they are killed or not.

The Waco also stole some horses from some Lipan a short time since, and the Lipan moved and camped in another place, and hid their horses, and watched them. That night the Waco came again to steal and the Lipan shot one of them and broke both his thighs, and in the morning he was sitting where he was shot. Then they took him and cut both his feet off and told him whenever he got well to come on and take choice of their horses. They then left him. They have also stolen all the horses from Blinsh's son, and he has followed them.

My men shall not go below to hunt like the Delaware have done, without permission from the agents as I know that the Delaware did steal horses, when they were there, and I do not wish my men to do the same, but be friendly with all whites whom they meet.

We are glad, and have been glad ever since the *Great White Road* has been made, and we wish to continue in it and meet our white brethren as friends. We are all now in the White Path and hope we shall always keep in the same path. I am determined to stick to what I have said in former council, and am in hopes that our Mothers and Fathers may live to see their young children grow up in peace with their white Brethren. I come in to see you and give you my talk so that it can be sent to your Chief as I do not wish to go around like my young men have done but come straight to the white path, and pursue it. Our women and children are naturally scary, but myself and men are not afraid.

Brothers my talk is done.

Caddo chiefs Bintah and Red Bear endorsed this report and reaffirmed their peaceful intentions.

When an expedition against the Wacos who had stolen horses was considered by the Texas authorities in the summer

of 1845, José María advised waiting until his hunting parties returned so that all might act in concert.²⁰ Texas authorities assured him that he would be consulted and notified before the expedition was sent. (None was sent.) Agent L. H. Williams remarked to Superintendent Western that the Indians associated with José María had about 150 acres of the finest corn that "I have ever seen in Texas and water melons, pumpkins, beans and peas innumerable. José says he has followed the directions of Sam Houston, and he finds that his advice was good, and that they were all satisfied now, and in the midst of plenty."²¹

The Texas authorities in the fall of 1845 gathered head men of the Indians of Texas for a council at the council grounds on Tehuacana Creek. General B. Morehouse spoke for the President of Texas, reaffirming the desire for peace and good will, and various chiefs responded. José María spoke as follows:

I address you all as my friends, both red and white. I heard of those [white] men being killed on the Colorado, and I sent some tobacco up to the Keechi, for them to smoke in peace, and some was sent also from the Trading House. I wanted the Keechi to send me word who it was that had killed the whites, and if they had any thing to do with it, that they must not do so any more, or steal any horses from them. They sent me word that they did not know who it was that committed the murder, that they had nothing to do with it, but the Wichita were in the habit of stealing, and coming through their villages, and the white people would think it was them, and they wanted me to come up and live among them, for I knew them to be friendly, and could tell the white people, and they would believe me. I heard that Acquash and two of his Captains (Aco) and Keechi-Karoqui, Chief of the Tawakoni, had become tired of War and stealing horses and that they had left their people, and joined the Keechi. I hope it is true, but I do not know it. I was here at the first Council, and I saw that the whites were friendly and I promised to keep my young men from stealing and I have done so, and will still do so. I have said but a few words, and they are true. Some people talk a long time, and promise much, and then do not do all they promise. I have nothing more to say.

Affairs were thoroughly discussed. Everyone deplored the horse stealing propensities of the Wacos, Wichitas and Tawacanos. The other Indians could only absolve themselves from responsibility for the delinquents, promise to take any stolen property from them if opportunity offered and return it to government agents.²²

When the Lone Star of the Republic of Texas was hauled down on February 19, 1846, Texas retained its public lands and the Spanish policy of regarding Indians as tenants at will, while Texas Indian affairs passed into the realm of the United States government.

To enter into relations with the Indians of Texas, the United

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 270-297.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 324-333.

States sent Pierce M. Butler and M. G. Lewis to treat with them. Among those present at the council grounds on Tehuacana Creek was José Maria of the Anadarko. The resulting treaty remained in force as long as the Indian signatories remained in Texas. According to its terms, the United States might license traders to go among the Indians; the Indians must give up all white and negro prisoners; the whites must give up all Indian prisoners; felons of either race must be tried by law; horse stealing must be stopped; trading houses be established; liquor be prohibited; blacksmiths, teachers, and preachers sent among the Indians. The United States Senate appropriated \$10,000.00 for presents to be distributed later. Among the signatories was José Maria of the Anadarko.²¹

To acquaint the Texas Indians with conditions in and power of the United States and something of the operation of their government, Butler and Lewis took with them to Washington, D.C., a delegation of chiefs and the Texas Indian agent, Robert S. Neighbors. Among the chiefs was José Maria, chief of the Anadarko. The chiefs were quartered in the suburbs to give them more room and more freedom from the crowds.²² The chiefs grew restless especially after some of them fell sick. They were more than happy when R. S. Neighbors commenced the homeward journey with them. President James K. Polk issued the following testimonial to José Maria:²³

(July 25, 1846)

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, That Jose Maria a Chief of the An-dah-kos—Anadarko and the tribe to which he belongs are by Treaty, on terms of Peace and Friendship with the United States of America.

Jose Maria has in person visited Washington City, the seat of Government of the United States and conducted himself according to the terms of the treaty, to which, he was a party.

This paper is given in testimony of the Friendship existing between the two countries.

Done at the City of Washington this twenty fifth day of July one thousand eight hundred and forty six.

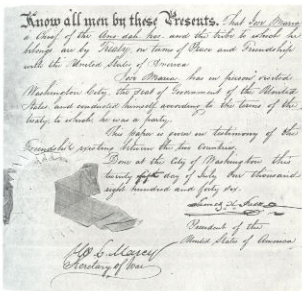
James K. Polk
President of the United States
of America

Wm. L. Marcy
Secretary of War

²¹ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. IX, pp. 844-849; Grant Foreman, "The Texas Comanche Treaty of 1846," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. II, p. 338.

²² Butler to McGill, May 24, June 16, and June 28, 1846; Lewis to McGill, June 29, 1846, Indian Office Letters Received, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

²³ This document is cited in Winfrey, *Texas Indian Papers, 1844-1859* (Austin: Texas State Library, 1900), p. 68. This same document is cited in 1846, for 1826-1843, p. 62, erroneously as of 1844. The original manuscript of this testimonial to "Jose Maria of the An-dah-kos" is in the Library of the Oklahoma Historical Society.



(Original Document, Oklahoma Historical Society)

TESTIMONIAL: JOSE MARIA, CHIEF OF THE ANO-DAH-KOO
 Bearing the signature of President James K. Polk, 1846.

After a tiring trip home Neighbors gave the Indians the horses they had been furnished, and the chiefs and head men left eagerly for their homes. José Maria and his people had their village on the Brazos during this period. One location was sixteen miles west of Hillsboro where Fort Graham was later located. Later the village was located below Kimball's Bend.

In May of 1847, Major Neighbors, United States Indian agent, after being denied an escort by the military, set out on a tour of the frontier with six Delawares. He obtained six Anadarkos from José Maria at his village. José would have gone but for a painful fall from his horse. With the support of his Indian escort, Neighbors brought Indian horse thieves to account and threatened the chiefs in the strongest terms if they did not return the stolen property.

In August Neighbors found the Anadarkos suffering from the drought. When Neighbors visited José Maria in Hill County on February 27, 1848, the agent found him perplexed. Although Neighbors had furnished him seed corn, José was afraid the proposed dividing line between Indians and whites would be run above his village and his people would lose their crops. Neighbors assured him the government would do him justice in any event.²³

A chain reaction of violence affected José Maria's people in the spring of 1848. Rangers on the northern frontier killed a Wichita. Wichitas on the Trinity then killed three surveyors of the Texas Emigration and Land Company. Rangers of Captain Middleton Tate Johnson on returning from burying the surveyors wantonly killed an Anadarko boy. The Rangers knew the boy for he had furnished them game. José Maria had difficulty in restraining his people, but he agreed to take no action until Lieutenant Colonel P. H. Bell could be heard from. Bell promised to have the killing investigated by the grand jury and the matter was closed for the time being, probably by paying the victim's family a wergild.²⁴

On the recommendation of Major Neighbors, José Maria's people and associated bands located below DeCordova's Bend on the Brazos in Hood County near Comanche Peak. Charles Barnard established a trading post nearby also on Neighbor's recommendation. The Indians were to remain here a few years.

In June of 1851 José Maria's village was visited by Samuel Cooper, Assistant Adjutant General of the United States Army, who, escorted by Captain H. H. Sibley of the United States Second Dragoons of Fort Graham, toured the Texas frontier along the Brazos River. Enroute Cooper visited Indian villages

²³ Neighbors to Medill, March 2, 1848, *House Executive Documents*, 20th Congress, 2nd Session, Doc. No. 1, p. 581.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 580.

gathering information. José María's village was located at this time in present Palo Pinto County not far from the present village of Palo Pinto. While each tribe had its separate village and chief, Cooper stated that the Caddos and Ionies also recognized José María as their head chief. Cooper found that these Indians were perfectly peaceable and friendly toward the whites; had extensive crops of fine corn and vegetables which they cultivated with worn out hoes; but felt that the United States government had failed to carry out its commitments in the treaty of 1846 in which it agreed to furnish aid such as farming implements, cattle, and hogs. Cooper thought this trifling investment would pay big dividends in the influence which the sedentary or agrarian tribes had on the nomadic plains tribes who came to trade for agricultural products.²⁷

In July of 1851, Captain H. H. Sibley of the Second Dragoons stationed at Fort Graham escorted by Lieutenant Newton C. Givens called at the village of José María. The Indians expressed considerable uneasiness, according to Sibley, that Brevet Brigadier General William Goldsmith Belknap of the Fifth Infantry had established what became known as Fort Belknap, on the Salt Fork of the Brazos in present Young County. The Indians claimed that Belknap had given them a severe and rude "talk" in which he threatened to visit them with a heavy hand if he traced any stolen horses in the direction of their village. José María and Acaquash, a Waco chief, accompanied Sibley to Fort Belknap where they found the general absent. He later denied making the threats attributed to him. The return of the chiefs to the Anadarko village was made without incident.²⁸

José María made fast friends with white men along the Brazos River. When John Davis near Galconda in Palo Pinto County lost his small daughter, Aletha, many friends assisted a Parson Slaughter at the funeral. Parson Slaughter read: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions."

As kindly hands lowered the coffin into the earth, friends sang,

"Oh sing to me of Heaven when I am called to die,
Sing songs of holy ecstasy to wait my soul on high.
There'll be no sorrow there. There'll be no sorrow
there."

²⁷ Report of Samuel Cooper, June 14, 1851, Indian Office Letters Received. The National Archives, Washington, D.C., photostatic copy in Archives. The University of Texas; H. H. Sibley, Map of the route to the Indian Villages on the Upper Brazos in June 1851.

²⁸ Sibley to Dea. Fort Graham, July 29, 1851, Army and Air Corps Records, Record Group 84, The National Archives, Washington, D.C., Microfilm copy, Fort Belknap Archives, Fort Belknap, Texas.

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The brave Jose Maria is Chief of the An-a-da-coe, the principal Chief also of the associated bands of Caddoes, An-a-da-coe and Tonies, frequently designated by the general name of Caddoes.

He is in Treaty with our Govt. and has faithfully respected his Treaty obligations.

It is believed that there is no Chief on the frontier of Texas, whose friendship is of more importance and value than Jose Maria's, and who deserves more consideration, or is better entitled to good treatment, than he.

I therefore confidently and earnestly recommend him to all officers of the Sub. Govt. and all good citizens, and bespeak for him and his people their sympathy and confidence.

He has been in attendance at all General Councils held by me on the part of the U. S. with the various Indian Tribes of Texas, in February and March 1852, near Fort Graham, and has exhibited himself to my entire satisfaction.

Given under my hand at Fort
Graham Texas March 27th
1852
Jesse Steen
U. S. Sub. Agent for the
Indians of Texas

(Original Document, Oklahoma Historical Society)

TESTIMONIAL: JOSE MARIA, PRINCIPAL CHIEF
Associated Bands of Caddoes, An-a-da-coe and Tonies. 1852.

Hearing horse's hooves, the group saw "José María racing towards them on his sorrel pony, his feather headdress blowing in the wind, his bright blanket about his shoulders. As he neared the group of mourners he reined in his horse and sat like a statue watching the men lower Aletha's body into the grave."

After decorating the grave with pretty vases, small pieces of china, shells and colored stones, the friends crossed the river to be home by night where duties awaited them.¹⁹

When his friends and neighbors had gone, Davis sat quietly by the grave. Then he felt a hand upon his shoulder and looked into José María's face. "José María see many people cross river. Afraid something wrong with little white squaw. He come to see. José María is sad for his white brother," the serious-faced chief said, then jumping on his horse, he dashed down the hillside and into the woods.

José María also visited often in the home of Reuben Vaughan with whom he hunted cattle.²⁰

The chief was friendly and had a sense of humor. He liked to tease Anaeffer Vaughan, the youngest son, but Shaeffer was afraid of the Indian. He always hid when he saw him coming. José María made it a point to hunt for the boy whom he called Shaffe. One day after finding Shaffe under the bed, the chief put him on the horse in front of him and galloped away over the prairie. Soon he was back, considering it a big job. Strangely enough from that day on Shaffe ceased to fear José María.

In the spring of 1854, twelve Tonkawas went on a stealing spree in Central Texas. Among other petty depredations the Tonks stole forty horses from José María's village eight miles from the Paluxy River below DeCordova's Bend. The chief overlooked the Tonks at the mouth of the San Sabá on the Colorado where he and his men killed one Tonkawa, wounded another and took the rest prisoners. He recovered all his horses except two.²¹

After securing twelve leagues of land from the Texas legislature for Indian reservations, United States Supervising Indian agent Robert S. Neighbors in 1854 consulted José María on his preferences for the location. José María without hesitation gave his opinion:²²

Great Father (the President) had abundant power to send them wherever he chose; but if it was convenient, he would prefer having their lands assigned to them below Fort Belknap, upon the Brazos. . . . That they had been driven from their homes several times by the whites since they came upon the Brazos, and that they now cherished the hope that their troubles were ended, and that they would in future have

¹⁹ Mary Whalley Clarke, *The Palo Pinto Story* (Fort Worth: The Manning Company, 1858), pp. 45-48.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26f.

²¹ Report to Governor E. M. Pease, April 16, 1854, Indian Office Letters Received, The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²² Randolph B. Marcy, *Thirty Years of Army Life on the Border* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1866), p. 172f.

permanent homes for their families. He added that he would prefer to be settled as near the fort as possible, in order that he might receive protection against the incursions of the prairie tribes. That heretofore he had had his enemies, the palefaces, on one side of him, and those lawless robbers, the Comanches, on the other; but that, of the two evils, he rather preferred being near the former, as they generally allowed him to eat a portion of what he raised, but that the Comanches took every thing; and although the whites had heretofore been equally prone to make war upon them, yet, if they must die, they should prefer to make their entrance into the spirit land with full bellies, and for this reason he would, if it was agreeable to us, take his chances on the Brazos, near the fort.

When United States Supervising Indian Agent Neighbors surveyed two Indian reservations, one in Throckmorton County for the Southern Comanches and one in Young County for the East and Central Texas Indians, some of the Anadarkos, Ionias, and Caddos commenced building homes even before arrangements were completed. In the spring of 1855, Major Neighbors instructed Agent G. W. Hill to officially locate the tribes on the reservation. Hill placed the Caddos near the east line of the reserve on the north bank of the Brazos River; the Anadarkos, one and one-half miles west of the Caddos on the north bank of the Brazos in Anadarko or Salem Bend; and the Wacos and Tawacanos about a mile north of the Brazos and east of Salt Creek. With the Caddos and Anadarkos were the slender remnants of other East Texas tribes such as the Tejas, Ioni, and Bidais. The Tonkawas were later located in Tonk Valley. Next year Agent Hill resigned and was replaced by Agent Shapley Prince Ross, father of the later Governor, Sul Ross.

The Indian chiefs including José Maria organized an intertribal council to coordinate relations and to try offenders against good order. Tonkawas caught stealing melons were let off with a reprimand and the admonition to sin no more, but Comanche horse thieves were taken outside the reservation and shot.

Under Agents Hill and Ross the Indians built either grass or log houses. José Maria built his house of logs. The East Texas Indians from time immemorial had farmed with the hoe. The agents now introduced them to the plow drawn by horses or oxen. The government through Major Neighbors furnished animals, seed, tools, and wagons. Each tribe cultivated its fields communally, but some of the livestock was held in severalty.

Prominent Texans such as Middleton Tate Johnson and John S. Ford commented on the rapid progress of the Indians in the arts of civilization and on the domestic scenes afforded on the reservation. Supervising Agent Neighbors provided a me-

Jose Maria, Chief
 From 31st 1854

Ti-nah.

The bearer was appointed Chief of the Caddo people in Sept. last, since which time he, with a party of his young men, made a tour of some months through the Comanche country. North & West, seeking some American prisoners. He has arrested a party of those War & Tawnee Indians with stolen horses & delivered into my possession the horses & Indians. He has promptly reported to me every circumstance & appearance of danger in his vicinity, which he thought might lead to trouble. He & his people have given undeniable evidence of their desire to follow the counsel given them, & to settle permanently under the protection of the U. S. & cultivate the soil. I hope it will be deemed proper by those appointed to select them a home, to consult their wishes on this subject so far as the policy of the U. S. towards these people will allow. This Chief has done every thing in his power to aid me in keeping his people from whiskey, & whiskey from his people, in which he has exercised much influence. His devoted friendship for the white people certainly merits consideration in a matter so important to him & his people as their future home.

J. H. Bell
 Sped. Agt. Wash. D. C.

(Original Document, Oklahoma Historical Society)

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION:
 TI-NAH, CHIEF OF THE CADDO, 1854.

sionary, the Reverend Pleasant Tackitt, a Methodist circuit rider, and established a school where the Indian children made good progress under Schoolmaster E. Z. Coombes.¹³ José María and the other chiefs encouraged the education of the children.

When on July 22, 1856, Ketumse and Buffalo Hump, Southern Comanche chiefs, led seventy-five warriors into the Brazos Reserve, the women and children fled from the other Indian towns, but the venerable and doughty José María halted the Comanches a few hundred yards from his village and inquired testily whether they "wished to fight, if so, that his men were ready and he Catemalc, might lead off at his will." The Comanches decided that "prudence was the better part of valor," and sheepishly told José that they wished to talk. When Ketumse demanded to know whether the Brazos Reserve Indians would continue to serve as Army guides against the wild Comanches, Agent Ross, who had hurried to the scene, answered in the affirmative and reminded the Reserve Comanches that they had agreed to the same service.¹⁴

When hostile Indians from north of Red River continued to raid the frontier settlers and the Reserve Indians, Agent Ross went out on a scout of Brazos Reserve Indians under such chiefs as José María, Ah-ha-dat, a Waco, and Campo, a Tonkawa. When José and Campo stayed out after the others returned, Ross sent a party to give them safe conduct home.¹⁵

To redress the grievances of complaining frontier settlers, Governor H. R. Runnels in 1858 sent nearly a hundred Texas troops under Captain John S. Ford to carry the fight to the enemy territory north of Red River. Ford had the consent of Agent Neighbors and Agent Ross to enlist the support of the Brazos Reserve Indians. In the forefront of the battle of Antelope Hills against the northern Comanches were José María, Jim Pockmark, Placido, O'Quinn, Acsquash, Jim Linney, Midwats, Caddo John, Chulequah, Jim Logan, Doss and many others. Seventy-six Comanches were killed, sixty taken prisoners and 300 horses were captured. At the insistence of José María, the Comanche camps and food were not destroyed as he explained that he and his fellow chiefs and warriors did not make war on women and children. On the triumphal return to the Brazos

¹³ Kenneth F. Neighbours, "Chapters from the History of the Texas Indian Reservations," *West Texas Historical Association Year Book*, Vol. XXX; ———, "Masons and Texas Indian Schools," *Texas Grand Lodge Magazine*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 312-317; ———, Robert S. Neighbors and the Founding of the Texas Indian Reservations," *West Texas Historical Association Year Book*, Vol. XXXI.

¹⁴ Ross to Neighbors, July 23, 1856, Indian Office Letters Received, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, February 17 and 20, 1856.

Agency, about after about went up and the women dressed in their best, met the warriors with songs and dances.¹⁴

For a brief time this valiant service for Texas reacted in the favor of the Brazos Reserve Indians, but designing white men claimed that the frontier depredations were committed by Reserve Indians. When men from Erath County under Peter Garland attacked and killed in their sleep a number of peaceful Reserve Indians at the mouth of Koochi Creek, it was all José María could do to restrain the Reserve warriors from taking vengeance on people in the neighborhood of the massacre. He refused to make war on the innocent and assured the Indians that Agent Ross would see that justice was done.¹⁵ In spite of the forceful and sustained efforts of Major Neighbors, however, the perpetrators of the massacre were never brought to justice in this world. Instead the grand jury of Palo Pinto County indicted José María for allegedly stealing a mule although Neighbors said everyone knew the mule belonged to an Indian on the Reserve.

While the warriors of the Brazos Reserve were absent assisting Major Earl Van Dorn of the United States Second Cavalry against the northern Comanches at the battle of Wichita Village (1858) and later campaigns, two hundred fifty white men under John R. Baylor, smarting from his dismissal as United States Indian agent to the Comanches, invaded the Brazos Reserve in May of 1859. Finding that the agents had put the Indians in a state of defense at the agency and that a small detachment of United States infantry were supporting them, Baylor and his men declined to fight. As they were leaving, however, they killed two elderly Indians.

Whereupon the chiefs including José María with fifty old men and boys pursued the two hundred fifty brave white men for eight miles to William Marlin's rancho where the Indians besieged them. The Indians killed seven hostile white men, although they were careful not to fire into the Marlin home for fear of injuring Mrs. Marlin and the children. Caddo John was killed.¹⁶

Since it was obvious that the disaffected whites would not leave the Reserve Indians in peace, Major Neighbors obtained permission from the general government to move them to a dis-

¹⁴ John S. Ford, *The Memoirs of John Salmon Ford*, Archives, The University of Texas, MS. Vol. IV, pp. 893-892.

¹⁵ Sturm to Ross, December 28, 1858; Ross to Neighbors, January 28, 1859. *Senate Executive Documents*, 35th Congress, 2d Session, Vol. 1, Doc. No. 1, pp. 588-596.

¹⁶ Plummer to Assistant Adjutant General, May 23, 1859. *Senate Executive Documents*, 35th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 1, Doc. No. 2, p. 641. Raymond E. Copley, "Lieutenant William E. Burnett, Letters: Removal of the Texas Indians and the Founding of Fort Cobb," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 372.

tract north of Red River that had been leased to the government by terms of the Treaty of 1855 with the Choctaws and Chickasaws. On June 26, 1859, Neighbors took José María and other chiefs to this region north of Red River to confer with Elias Rector, Superintendent of the Southern Indian District, and the chiefs of the other tribes to be located in the area (generally referred to as the Leased District.)⁴⁰ José María participated in the council at Fort Arbuckle on July 1, 1859.

After arduous exertions Major Neighbors and the Indians, escorted by United States troops under Major George H. Thomas made the exhausting exodus in the late summer of 1859. Among the 1430 Indians were José María and 235 Anadarkos.⁴¹

After selecting sites for the Indian villages in the vicinity of present Anadarko, Oklahoma, Major Neighbors relinquished his Indians to Agent Samuel Blain, representing Superintendent Rector, and returned to Texas where he was immediately assassinated by one of the disaffected whites.⁴² The Indians threatened to avenge his death.

When local officials in Texas attempted to extradite José María on the spurious charge of stealing the mule mentioned above, Agent Blain refused to comply.

At their new location, José María and the Anadarkos applied themselves with their accustomed zeal and were prospering in their new homes near Fort Cobb when the Civil War came on. In spite of their shabby treatment in their native homeland, José María, along with other Southern Indians, cast his lot with the Confederacy and signed the treaty secured by Commissioner Albert Pike for the Confederate States of America on August 12, 1861. According to Muriel H. Wright, José María appears to have remained loyal to the Confederacy until his death about the time of the massacre of the Tonkawa Indians by Northern Indians in 1862.⁴³

Thus came to an end the life of one of the noblest of American Indian chieftains whose career had spanned the final decline and dispersion of his tribe from Texas. According to his descendants, life in the wilderness had undermined his health. Few had equalled and none had surpassed his bravery, his nobility, and his good sense whether in battle, in council, or in the presence of Presidents. His heritage to us is of the highest order.

⁴⁰ Rector to Greenwood, July 2, 1859, *Senate Executive Documents*, 36th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 1, Doc. No. 2, p. 8752.

⁴¹ Kenneth F. Neighbors, "Indian Exodus out of Texas in 1859," *West Texas Historical Association Year Book*, Vol. XXXVI.

⁴² Kenneth F. Neighbors, "The Assassination of Robert S. Neighbors," *West Texas Historical Association Year Book*, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 28-29.

⁴³ Muriel H. Wright, *Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press), p. 35.