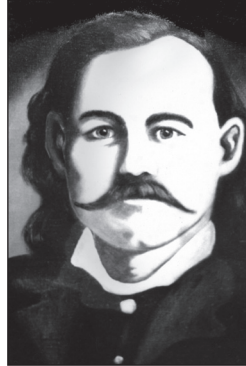


A LOOK BACK IN HUTCHINSON COUNTY HISTORY

Billy Dixon

William "Billy" Dixon was a mule skinner on wagon trains headed west, scouted throughout the Texas Panhandle for the Army, hunted buffalo, defended the Adobe Walls buffalo hunter's camp against Indian attack and was one of eight civilians in the history of the United States who received the Medal of Honor.

Billy Dixon was born in Ohio County, in West Virginia, on September 25, 1850. He was orphaned at age 12 and lived with an uncle in Missouri for a year before setting out on his own. He worked in woodcutters' camps along the Missouri River until he started working at age 14 as an oxen driver and a mule skinner for a government contractor in Leavenworth, Kansas.



Dixon led the founders of Adobe Walls to the Texas Plains, where he knew buffalo were in abundance. The group of 28 men and one woman occupied the outpost of five buildings 15 miles northeast of Stinnett. The camp was attacked on June 27, 1874 by a band of 700 to 1200 Comanche, Cheyenne, Arapaho and Kiowa Indians. Comanche Chief Quanah Parker realized the buffalo hunters were destroying vast numbers of the migrating herds and threatening the Indian way of life. He united the 4 tribes to fight the hunters. They fought to a standoff and the hunters returned to Dodge City. That battle was the precursor of the Indian battles of the Red River War and led to the defeat of the Plains Indians and their relocation to reservations.

In 1883, Dixon returned to civilian life and built a home near the Adobe Walls site. He was postmaster there for 20 years and also was the first sheriff of the newly-formed Hutchinson County, Texas. He served as state land commissioner and as a justice of the peace. Dixon died in 1913 and was buried in Texline, Texas. In 1929, his body was exhumed, moved to Adobe Walls and reinterred at the battle site. ■

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