

Soon after the close of my last annual report (Ninthmonth 30, 1875 with the sanction of the Indian Department, the greater portion of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes were permitted to leave the agency in search of buffaloes for lodge-skins and meat. This measure was actually necessary from the fact that no subsistence for the fiscal year had yet arrived at the agency, although large quantities of the same were at Wichita awaiting transportation, and for the additional reason that much sickness prevailed in the tribes, which we believed would be greatly diminished by giving them an opportunity for active exercise in the chase. In this respect we were not mistaken, as sickness soon disappeared from the camps. About the 1st of November 1875, the tribes reached Buffalo on Beaver and Wolf Creeks, west of Camp Supply, where they remained the greater portion of the winter, securing only about sufficient buffalo for their subsistence, and a meager supply of robes.

During the latter part of the winter and in the early spring, they moved south on the main Canadian, Washita, and north fork of Red River, and their tributaries, as the buffalo had been driven south by fires and hunters. During the latter part of February, the buffalo had so far disappeared from that portion of country as to cause actual hunger with some parties who were destitute of ponies and ammunition. Soon after the 1st of March instructions were issued from this office for the entire hunting party to return to the agency, the last of whom arrived about the 1st of April, some of them having been absent about six months.

These hunting parties were accompanied by Benj. Williams and E.C. Lefebvre, as my representatives, who rendered valuable assistance and also by details of troops from time to time from Forts Reno, Indian Territory, and Elliott, Texas, and Camp Supply, Indian Territory, whose presence and assistance and also by details by troops from time to time from Forts Reno, Indian Territory, and Elliott, Texas, and Camp Supply, Indian Territory, whose presence and assistance had a very salutary influence in maintaining good order among the young men.

In company with my chief clerk, J.A. Covington, I visited their hunting-camps, about fifty miles west of Camp Supply, during the latter part of November; made them an issue of sugar, coffee, flour, and tobacco borrowing the same from Lee and Reynolds, post-traders at Camp Supply, and returning the same to them at this agency; and gave them such other assistance and advice as would best promote the interests of their hunt. The reward for their winter-hunt was only about 3,500 robes and the saving of a large amount of subsistence for the Government.

After their return to this agency, and fully-realizing that the buffalo were fast disappearing and the necessity for them to turn their attention to other pursuits than the chase for a means of support, very earnest appeals were made to me for farm-implements both by Arapahoes and Cheyennes, and such other assistance as would enable them to engage to some extent, in farming; and I feel well assured that, could I have furnished them with plows, hoes, & c., three-fourths of the Indians now at this agency would have gone to work heartily and, as the season has been very favorable, would have been successful and consequently encouraged and stimulated to further efforts.