

(from the 1904 Texas Almanac)

PRESIDIO COUNTY

Extends from north latitude 28 degrees 30 minutes to 29 degrees 30 minutes, and from west longitude 104 degrees to 105 degrees, and is bounded on the west and south by the Rio Grande, on which stream it has a frontage of about 130 miles. Area, 3500 square miles.

Population in 1900, 3673. Property assessment 1903, \$2,827,572. The northern portion of the county consists of high rolling prairies, destitute of timber and almost entirely destitute of natural or surface water. The southern portion, or that portion bordering on the Rio Grande, is broken and mountainous, and while having a few running streams, is not so well adapted for stock raising purposes as the northern portion. It has timber consisting of a stunted growth of live oak and cedar, sufficient only for fuel for ranch use. This county is pre-eminently suitable for stock growing, as owing to the exceedingly light rainfall, about 18 inches, the man with the hoe has no business here. Water is obtained by boring at depths varying from 150 to 500 feet. Along the Rio Grande, on the made lands, are a few farms, devoted to raising corn, beans and wheat, but these products are consumed on the spot, none of them ever being shipped out of the county. The important streams are the Rio Grande, which is a dry river bed a greater part of the year, and the Alamito and Cibolo creeks. On each of these creek are a few small irrigated farms, ranging in size from 30 to 100 acres. These farms, with very few exceptions, belong to and are managed by Mexicans, and afford a scant livelihood. The yield on these farms is 15 to 20 bushels of corn per acre and about the same amount of beans and wheat per acre. The only mining industry in the county is at Shafter, about 47 miles southwest of Marfa, the county seat. Here is situated the only silver mine in Texas, and it has been a fine producer for twenty years. The ore found here is free milling and is milled by a fifteen-stamp mill. The mine is owned by California capitalists and employs about 150 men. The town of Shafter, which owes its life to this mine, has a population of about 2200. The lands of this county, more than half of which belong to the public free school, are valued at prices ranging from \$1 to \$3 per acre. It is held in large pastures, the rentals of which are at the rate of 3 to 5 cents per acre. It takes about 25 acres of this land to support one cow or horse. The scholastic population of the county for the year 1903-04 was 1624. There are eleven public schools, in which sixteen teachers are employed. The Galveston, Harrisburg & San Antonio railway runs through the northern portion of the county from east to west. Marfa, the county seat, is on the railroad, situated 423 miles west of San Antonio and 197 miles east of El Paso, has a population of about 900, and is noted as a health resort for persons afflicted with consumption and asthma. The elevation of Marfa is 4696 feet, and malarial or other fevers are not known here. Marfa is a well built, neat and prosperous town, and is a distributing point for an immense territory, as all freight for Fort Davis on the north, Shafter and Presidio on the south, and the Terlingua mining district on the southeast, is hauled by wagon trains from Marfa. There are five churches in the town of Marfa, the Catholic, Methodist, Christian and Episcopal denominations being represented. The town of Presidio, on the Rio Grande, is in this county. Here is established a United States custom house, presided over by a deputy collector of customs and the usual corps of mounted inspectors.—W. W. BOGEL, Marfa.

END