

**WOODLAND OF INDIAN TERRITORY,  
EXTRACT FROM THE 21TH ANNUAL  
REPORT OF THE SURVEY, 1899-1900,  
PART V, FOREST RESERVES-HENRY  
GANNETT, CHIEF OF DIVISION OF  
GEOGRAPHY AND FORESTRY PP. 609-672**

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**C. H. FITCH**

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR—U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
CHARLES D. WALCOTT, DIRECTOR

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# WOODLAND OF INDIAN TERRITORY

BY

C. H. FITCH

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EXTRACT FROM THE TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SURVEY, 1899-1900  
PART V, FOREST RESERVES—HENRY GANNETT, CHIEF OF  
DIVISION OF GEOGRAPHY AND FORESTRY



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**C. H. FITCH**

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## WOODLAND OF INDIAN TERRITORY.

By C. H. FITCH.

### INTRODUCTION.

Reference has been made in previous reports of the Survey to the subdivision of lands in Indian Territory during the years 1895 to 1898, and the results of the topographic and land survey have been, or are about to be, published. It is the purpose here to submit a special report on the woodland of Indian Territory, compiled from information obtained from the plats and field notes, not, however, including a report on the economic value or stand of merchantable timber, the data for which have not as yet been obtained. Consideration is here given to the distribution of woodland and the character of timber found in the lands of the Cherokees, Creeks, Seminoles, Choctaws, and Chickasaws, but not the Indian lands of the Quapaw Agency, occupying the extreme northeast corner, which lands, having long since been subdivided, were not entered upon by this Survey.

The character of the topography is diversified, ranging from high, rugged hills to smooth, rolling prairies. The rougher portion lies east of the line of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway, and its highest and most rugged area is along the Arkansas boundary, this region being the western limit of the Ozark Plateau. In the middle and western portions the hills are lower, and much of the area is undulating, the only group of hills of any note in that section being the Arbuckle Mountains, covering about 100 square miles. The elevation above sea level at the lowest point in the Territory is about 350 feet, and at the highest about 2,700 feet. The larger streams are generally broad and shallow, flowing through wide valleys, most of which are yearly inundated by spring floods.

The lands occupied by the Five Civilized Tribes, above mentioned, contain an area of 30,660 square miles of land surface, of which 18,925 square miles, or nearly 62 per cent, are wooded. The accompanying map (Pl. CXLII) shows the distribution of the woodland, and, as will be readily seen at a glance, the timber, although well distributed over the entire area, is most abundant and compact on the eastern side, and as a rule where the contour lines show the elevation to be greatest,

although in that, as well as in other portions, the river-bottom lands are heavily and densely wooded. The timber of this area is of great variety, including many oaks; but more abundantly than all others occur the black-jack (*Quercus marilandica*) and post oak (*Quercus minor*). Of other species we find the most important trees to be the loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*), black walnut, white oak, and cedar, all of which are of commercial value; and in addition ash, pecan, cottonwood, bois d'arc, sycamore, elm, hackberry, maple, plum, hickory, elder, gum, mulberry, locust, river birch, and shittim wood are found frequently mentioned in the field notes of the surveyors. Pine is found only in the mountainous portion of the eastern part of the Territory, its range being confined to a limited area. It grows with other trees and is nowhere very abundant, and in many places is inaccessible, while much of it growing nearest railroads and mills has been cut, principally for local consumption. Black-walnut logs of large size have been easily obtained in the river bottoms, and much has already been shipped out of the Territory. Some of the cedar has also been cut for shipment, and oak, ash, and hickory for fuel, bois d'arc for fence posts, and oak for railroad ties. The timber west of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway may be considered as a part of the belt of woodland extending through Texas, Indian Territory, and Oklahoma into southern Kansas, known as the "Cross Timbers." Growing on sandy or rocky soil of the uplands are found many varieties of oaks, but particularly post oak and black-jack, and on the river bottoms walnut, cottonwood, pecan, elm, gum, maple, etc. In the western and northern portions a view of the country gives the impression of more extensive timberless areas than really exist, for the reason that in the prairie country, although the streams are generally wooded along their margins, the belts of timber are as a rule low, and the stretches of prairie appear wider than is actually the case.

The following notes are taken from the general descriptions of the character of the timber found in each township, as given by the surveyors.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS.

##### TOWNSHIPS 1-4 SOUTH, RANGES 8-12 EAST.

*T. 1 S., R. 8 E. (Choctaw Nation).*—The principal kinds of timber in this township are oak, ash, elm, hickory, and bois d'arc.

*T. 2 S., R. 8 E. (Choctaw Nation).*—This township is about half wooded. Much valuable timber is found along the creek bottoms, consisting of oak, ash, walnut, pecan, sycamore, and bois d'arc.

*T. 3 S., R. 8 E. (Choctaw Nation).*—This township has a large quantity of fine timber, consisting of oak, ash, elm, bois d'arc, walnut, hickory, and pecan.