

The book cover features a layered illustration. The top section shows several wind turbines against a pale, textured sky. Below this, a landscape of green trees and a yellowish-brown field is depicted. In the middle ground, a yellow oil pumpjack stands on the right side. The foreground shows a grassy field with three cows: one black and white, and two reddish-brown. A wooden fence runs across the middle ground.

# THE HISTORY OF TEXAS

Robert A. Calvert, Arnaldo De León, and Gregg Cantrell

SIXTH EDITION

WILEY Blackwell



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# Preface and Acknowledgments

The sixth edition of *The History of Texas* presents the fascinating story of the various peoples who have inhabited the land we know as Texas. Readers of this book will gain an understanding of the forces of cause and effect that have shaped the disparate pasts of different groups within the state as well as the heritage shared by all Texans. They will also develop an appreciation for the dynamic interpretations that scholars give to historical movements and specific events.

When initially published in 1990, the textbook was innovative in several ways. First, it took a social history approach, placing ordinary Texans at the center of the story, instead of the traditional “great man” approach. It thus became the first Texas history textbook consistently and systematically to include the histories of women, Tejanos, African Americans, and working-class people. The book was also innovative in its chronological coverage. Texas history textbooks had traditionally emphasized the nineteenth century at the expense of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and particularly of the twentieth century. This Sixth Edition devotes two-thirds of its pages to the post-Civil War era and nearly 50 percent to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

All peoples make history; we have continued to honor that tenet by incorporating the many cultures embraced by the Texas experience. The same principle also drove our effort to give due attention to the lives of ordinary Texans, as seen in the continued coverage of topics such as agriculture, industrialization, urbanization, economic disparity, migration patterns, and demographic change. Also included are the unsung subjects who contributed to the Texas saga, among them plain white folks, women, and the leaders and members of local labor, agricultural, and other grassroots organizations. Like its predecessors, this edition also pays attention to the history of folklore, music, literature, sports, religion, and other aspects of Texas culture that help determine the flavor of Texas, past and present. Believing that the history of Texas in recent times is as significant as that of past periods, we once again provide a comprehensive, unflinching analysis of Texas history in the more modern era.

Since 1990, the authors have kept abreast of new scholarly literature, incorporating it into each new edition and keeping the book historiographically current and relevant. Here we continue this practice. We have amplified some parts of the text and streamlined others for clarity. Therefore, the sixth edition features expanded discussions on the era between 1821 and 1848, on hardships civilians experienced during the Civil War, on agricultural

reform in the early twentieth century, on women and minority groups, on the modern LGBTQ-rights movement, and on recent environmental issues. At the same time, we cut statistics where we thought them repetitious or where we felt removing them would not harm the narrative. We also dropped passages when we considered them to overlap with information covered in American history survey classes. Our intent has always been to produce a highly readable work.

Like the text, we have updated the lists of suggested readings that conclude each chapter. Space limitations permitted the mention of only a small number of titles that have informed our writing or that we think must come to the attention of serious students of the state's past. Primary material also proved crucial to this endeavor, particularly in the final chapter, whose suggested reading list includes many of the online sources that provided information on contemporary Texas.

Finally, and like its predecessor, the sixth edition offers students and instructors a dynamic website in support of the text, making *The History of Texas* ideal for traditional as well as online courses.

Over the course of six editions and nearly three decades, we have accumulated more debts than we can acknowledge here. Our greatest thanks, of course, must go to the late Robert A. "Bob" Calvert, a devoted scholar, writer, and teacher who conceptualized this book in the 1980s and contributed directly to the first two editions. Over the course of his long career, Bob influenced thousands of students of Texas history, a subject to which he was ever devoted.

Other scholars who have contributed in varied and important ways include Paul D. Lack, Larry D. Hill, Fane Downs, Charles Martin, Alwyn Barr, William Childs, Jesús F. de la Teja, Walter L. Buenger, Robert Wooster, David La Vere, Randolph B. Campbell, Charldean Newell, Bernard Weinstein, James E. Crisp, Ty Cashion, George N. Green, Carl H. Moneyhon, James Smallwood, Patrick G. Williams, H. Sophie Burton, F. Todd Smith, Paul J. Sugg, Neil Carman, Karen Hadden, Barbara J. Rozek, Paul Carlson, Richard Bruce Winders, and the late Malcolm D. McLean, Dorothy DeMoss, Ben Procter, Barry A. Crouch, Stanley Siegel, Norman D. Brown, and Robert Weddle. In preparing the sixth edition, we gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Andrew J. Torget, Walter L. Buenger, and Paul J. Sugg.

We also owe a special debt of gratitude to our friend and editor for the first five editions, Andrew Davidson, who has continued his long tradition of help and support, even though he has now moved on to other enterprises. It is safe to say that this book would not exist without him.

**Arnoldo De León**

*San Angelo*

**Gregg Cantrell**

*Fort Worth*

# About the Companion Website

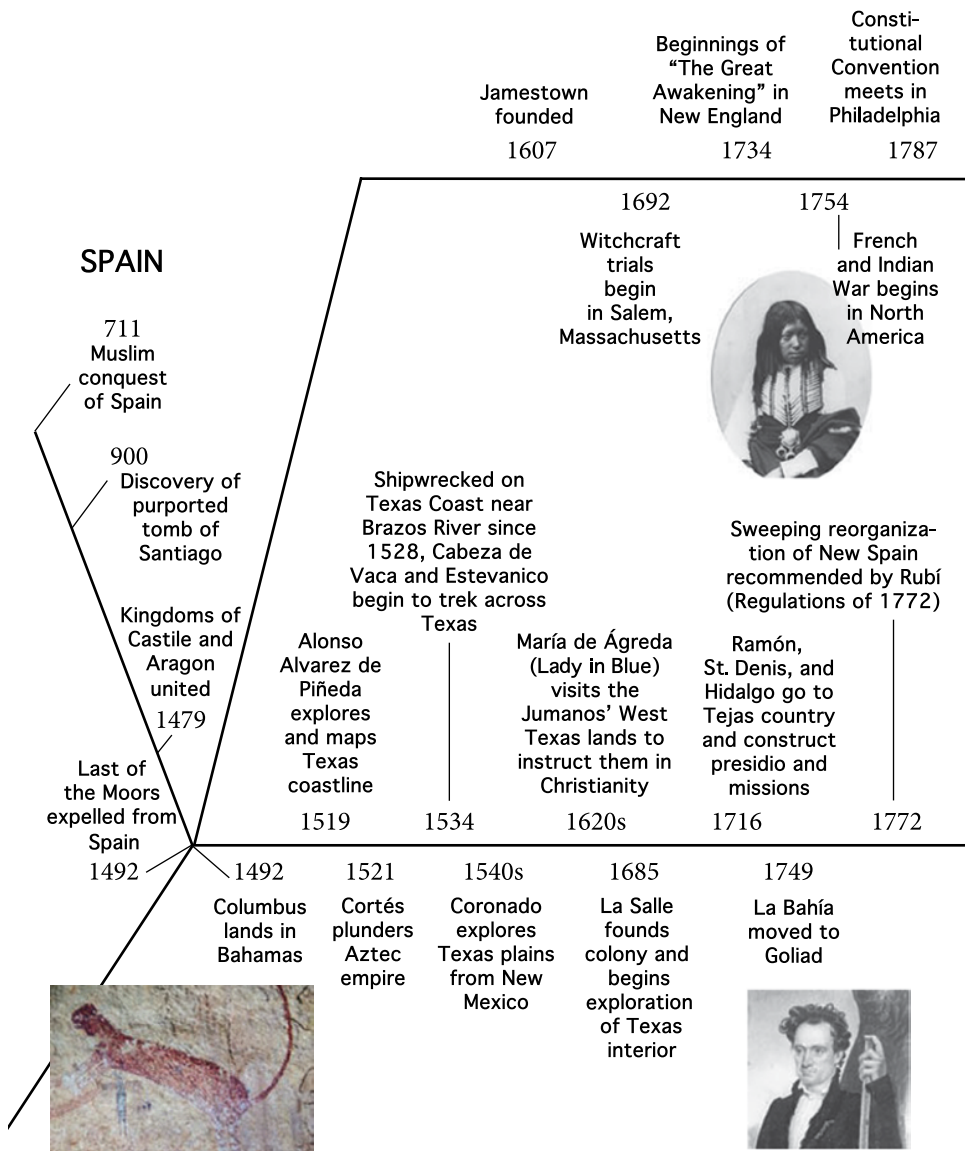
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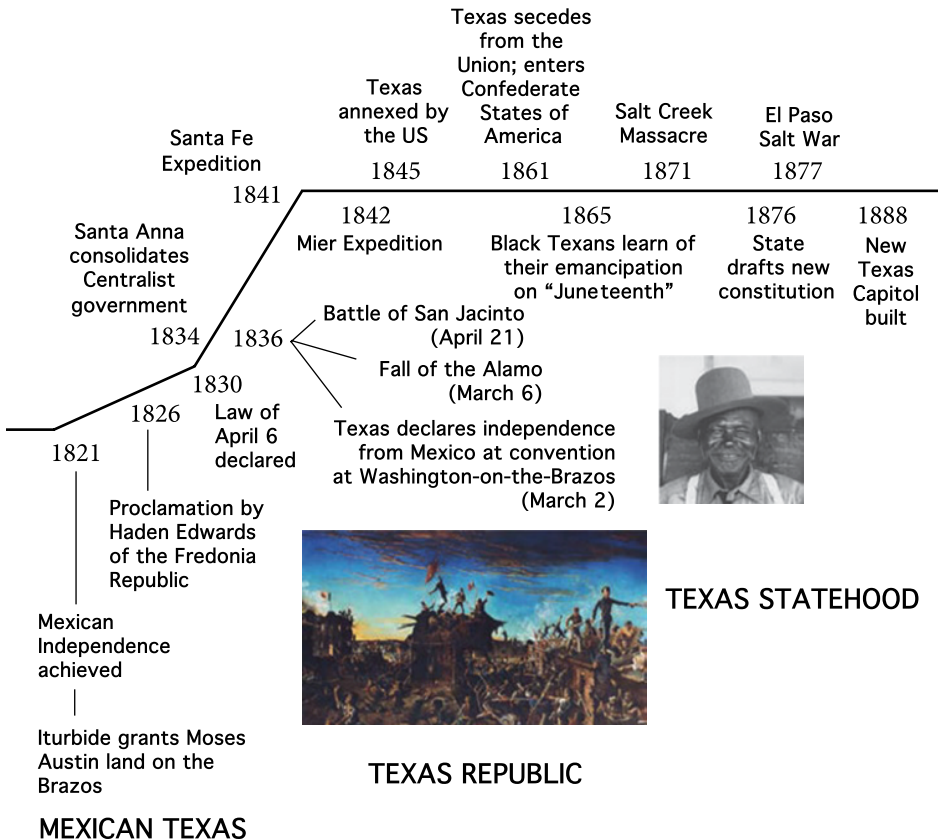
- Test Bank
- PowerPoint presentations
- Student Guide







**PREHISTORIC TEXAS**

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

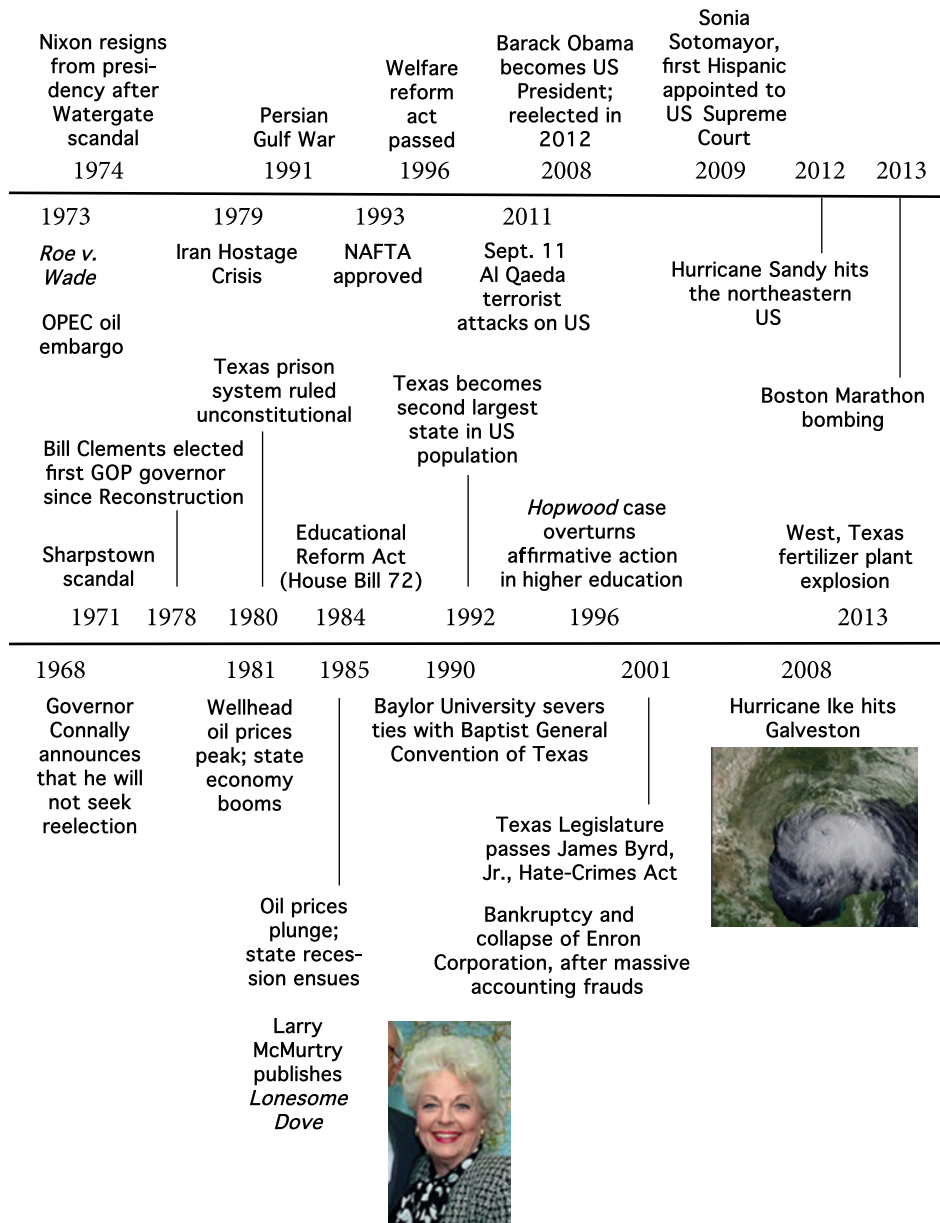
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|--|---|---|--|
| Missouri Compromise<br>1820                        | War with Mexico<br>1846                                   | Civil War begins<br>1861                        | Spanish-American War<br>1898                           |
| 1808<br>US Congress ends the importation of slaves | 1837<br>Panic of 1837 creates widespread depression in US | 1848<br>Seneca Falls, women's rights convention | 1877<br>US Reconstruction ends with Compromise of 1877 |



## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

|   |   |  |  |   |   |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| US enters World War I<br>1917   | Roosevelt initiates second stage of New Deal<br>1935                                      | House Un-American Activities Committee hearings<br>1947            | <i>Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka</i><br>1954                                 | Civil Rights Act passes Congress<br>1964                            |   |
| 1929<br>Stock market crash on Wall Street   | 1941<br> | 1950<br>Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and US enters World War II | 1963<br>President Kennedy assassinated   | 1965<br>First US combat troops sent into Vietnam                    |   |
| Galveston devastated by hurricane<br>1900   | Houston ship channel opens<br>1914  | LULAC founded<br>1929  |     | Heman Sweatt admitted to the University of Texas law school<br>1950 |   |
| 1901<br>Oil discovered at Spindletop  | 1915<br><i>Plan de San Diego</i> proclaimed   | 1930<br>Oil struck at Kilgore                                      | 1932<br>State unemployment level at 350,000 to 400,000                               | 1949<br>Gilmer-Aikin laws passed                                    | 1966<br>Farm workers strike in Rio Grande Valley and march on state capitol |
|  |   |  |  |   |   |

## TEXAS







# Contact of Civilizations, 1521–1721

The story of Texas begins many thousands of years before the birth of Christ. Between 12,000 and 40,000 years ago nomads from Asia trekked from present-day Siberia to present-day Alaska, entering North America in a series of distinct migrations. As they hunted for edible plants and animals, the nomads crossed broad fields of ice that spanned the Bering Strait during this long period of intermittent low sea levels. Even after the Bering Sea finally reclaimed this bridge of ice, other Asians managed to navigate the waters of the strait to arrive in the new continent. More such migrations followed but ultimately ceased, cutting off the early voyagers from humankind elsewhere on Earth.

Scientists now agree that American Indians descended from a relatively small number of parent migrants who contributed to the “founding” gene base. Once the ancestors of the American Indians were cut off from other Asians, natural selection and genetic mutation produced distinctive physical types.

Through the ages, these ancient nomads dispersed throughout the vast lands of North and South America. As bands struck out in different directions in search of fresh sources of game and vegetation, different cultural and linguistic patterns appeared. These cultural patterns further evolved over time as New World peoples began to develop agriculture, around 7000 BC. Once prehistoric societies learned to till the soil and harvest plants, human beings began to exercise some control over nature and develop strong ties to the land. Family units eventually formed into complex social and political organizations. Religious figures emerged as leaders or spiritual advisers, and gender roles became more clearly defined. As each group adapted in order to survive in its local environment, distinctive customs and practices developed, as evidenced by the different types of housing, decoration, clothing, and tools used by the people of particular regions.

## The Diversity of New World Cultures

Various groups and cultures spread throughout all regions of the New World. Although historians disagree over population estimates, most concur that more people lived in what

we now know as Latin America than remained in North America. At the time of Columbus's voyage in 1492, roughly twelve million people lived north of the line dividing present-day Mexico and the United States; between this boundary and the Isthmus of Panama lived an estimated thirty-five million people; finally, some sixty million people inhabited the continent of South America and the Caribbean Islands.

Of the pre-Columbian civilizations, that of the Maya has generally been considered the most intellectually advanced. Situated in what are today the Yucatán Peninsula and Guatemala, the Maya, during the height of their civilization (about AD 300 to AD 900), made brilliant advances. For example, the Mayas' discovery of the zero cipher, well before Arab mathematicians introduced the concept to Europe in the thirteenth century, helped them make significant achievements in architecture, astronomy, and calendrics. Speculation lingers as to why the Mayan civilization declined. A deadly disease may have spread throughout the population, natural catastrophes may have produced food shortages, or a social revolution to undermine the ruling class may have hastened their demise.

Another major civilization thrived for a time at Anáhuac (Valley of México), this of the Toltecs, who raised a mighty empire at Tula until drought and famine forced them to desert their capital city. In 1215, new barbarians named the Méxica, but more commonly known as Aztecs, arrived from unknown parts in the north and built upon the collapsed Toltec empire by establishing themselves in Tenochtitlán, today's Mexico City. One of the cleanest and most populous cities in the world at the time of its "discovery" by explorers from the Old World, Tenochtitlán contained pyramids, royal palaces, and other large structures; homes for the several social classes; canals crafted from stone that served as waterways for canoes, botanical gardens, and zoos; and causeways connecting the island city to the mainland. Although the Aztecs had a warlike disposition and a penchant for human sacrifice, they abided by strict codes of morality, esteemed education, adhered to an honest and efficient system of legal and political administration, and excelled in various branches of the arts.

In South America, another civilization flourished at the time of the European conquest of the Western Hemisphere. Embracing an area extending from today's Ecuador to Chile, the Inca civilization had its headquarters in Cuzco, in present-day Peru, and ruled through a remarkably efficient system of civil administration. A road system superior to any in Europe at the time enabled government officials to carry out their responsibilities, laborers to travel throughout the empire to maintain public works, and soldiers to move quickly in order to protect the realm and suppress rebellions. Unsurpassed by other Native American civilizations in architectural skills, the Incas designed and built structures that flexed with the tremors of earthquakes, resuming their original forms after each jolt. The Incas also possessed advanced scientific skills. Amazingly, archaeological findings point to their apparent success in performing brain surgery.

The Indian tribes that inhabited the North American continent generally developed less sophisticated civilizations. The Northeast Woodlands Indians, found from the Ohio Valley to the Atlantic Ocean and southward to Chesapeake Bay, lived in loghouse villages or in wigwams, and survived by farming corn, squash, and beans near their homes, or by hunting deer and wild fowl and fishing from canoes. Among the most famous of the Woodlands tribes was the Iroquois, who despite their renown as warriors organized the famous League of the Iroquois. The League, considered the most effective Indian alliance north of the Aztec Empire, succeeded in ending the chronic bloody conflicts among its member tribes.

South of the Woodlands tribes, stretching from the Atlantic Coast to the Mississippi Valley and even into East Texas, lived a culture group that maintained ties to moundbuilding societies of a past age. These were the Choctaws, Seminoles, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Cherokees—later referred to by Anglo Americans as the “Five Civilized Tribes” because they adopted European American ways. The most famous of the descendants of the mound builders were the Natchez. At the time of the European exploration of the area, trappings of the classic Natchez era remained evident in villages along the lower Mississippi River. These villages surrounded temple mounds and ceremonial council houses, the identifying traits of the ancient mound builders.

A third advanced culture group that flourished at the time of Europeans’ arrival in the Western Hemisphere was located roughly from what is now West Texas to Arizona, and north as far as southern Colorado. Here the Hopi and Zuñi created a distinctive cultural heritage (Figure 1.1). These tribes, who belonged to a group that Spaniards referred to collectively as Pueblos, resided in planned towns consisting of stacked, apartment-type complexes, sometimes two or more stories high. For defensive purposes, the Pueblos built their adobe villages into rock walls or upon steep mesas and structured them so as to oversee the spacious streets and squares below. In the fifteenth century, the Pueblos cultivated corn and other crops, developed irrigation canals, used cotton to make clothing, and lived much in the same manner as did the European peasant of the same period.



**Figure 1.1** White Shaman. Cave art of the prehistoric inhabitants of the Pecos River area. Credit: Amistad National Recreation Area.

## **The Indians of Texas**

Anthropological evidence reveals that before the Europeans arrived, a number of distinct culture groups lived in the varied geographical areas of what is now Texas. Such pre-horse people shared numerous characteristics, certainly the result of evolutionary processes, adaptation to historical situations, and common responses to environmental factors. Generally, Native Americans bonded around self-reliant bands or extended families. Leaders rose through the ranks, gaining their positions by a proven display of bravery, wisdom, or special attributes. Their religion embraced the supernatural; today, it would be said that they were animistic. They thought, for instance, that natural objects—whether the galaxy, Earth’s geographical landscape, the flora or fauna—had an existence that paralleled that of humans and could be summoned for help in times of need. These culture groups recognized social/gender distinctions. Women cared for the household: cooking, preserving foods for later use, and fashioning animal skins into clothing. Women maintained a close contact with the land, cultivating it, foraging for edible products, and gathering clay from which they made cooking utensils or wares to be traded with other Indian nations.

Certain shared traits notwithstanding, Native American civilizations in pre-Columbian Texas were quite diverse. Several of the peoples had different places of origin, some tracing their lineage to culture groups in the modern-day US South, northern Mexico, or the Rocky Mountain region. No common language united Native American groups in Texas. Although some made war with or raided neighboring groups regularly, most preferred to avoid conflict and lived in terror of attacks by aggressors. Numerous peoples preferred a sedentary life, whereas others maintained a nomadic existence. Adaptation to local environment tended to separate one culture group from another. Thus, one Texas tribe might build villages (and reside in permanent dwellings constructed of cane and grass—Figure 1.2) and rely on farming, whereas another might stay on the move, living in portable shelters such as hide teepees as they migrated seasonally to gather wild vegetation or pursue game, trapping their prey and killing it with clubs and other crude weapons. Region also determined a group’s economy, as livelihoods might turn on agriculture, hunting big game such as the American bison (commonly known as buffalo), or perhaps a mixture of both combined with intertribal trade.

### **The Coastal Indians**

Along the coast of southern Texas and in parts of the Trans-Nueces lived the Karankawa and Coahuiltecan peoples. Both groups had common roots in modern-day northern Mexico: the Coahuiltecan were tied linguistically and otherwise to the Native inhabitants of Coahuila. The Karankawas and the Coahuiltecan lacked formal political organization; social life revolved around the family, extending into small autonomous bands (related by kin) presided over by a chieftain. Their religious life was primitive, and they believed that supernatural entities governed the cosmos.

Their respective environments of marshy terrain close to the Gulf Coast and the chaparral of the brush country were harsh ones. The territory of the Karankawa extended along a thin area running down the coast from Matagorda Bay (some archaeologists believe even as far north as the Lower Brazos River region) to Corpus Christi Bay, and the Coahuiltecan lived in the Gulf Coast Plain and much of what is today considered South Texas. Both



**Figure 1.2** Over 1,200 years ago, a group of Caddo Indians known as the Hasinai, who were part of the great Mound Builder culture of the southeast, built a village and ceremonial center twenty-six miles west of present-day Nacogdoches. Shown here is a reproduction of a typical Caddo house like those found here at this Mount site. Source: Courtesy of the Caddoan Mounds State Historic Park, Texas Parks and Wildlife.

tribes moved frequently, their migrations generally corresponding to the change of seasons. Over the years, the nomadic Karankawas and Coahuiltecan had learned the ecology of their respective regions well; they knew when nature produced its greatest yields and the precise grounds where such bounties lay. Indeed, they tended to live in the same general site during one part of the year before moving on to another favorite camp. To guarantee a reliable and abundant food supply, during the fall and winter months the Karankawas stayed close to the coast, where they relied heavily on shellfish, aquatic plants, and waterfowl, but also hunted deer and even alligators. For life along the bays and lagoons, the Karankawas built small canoes from tree trunks and made nets, an assortment of traps, lances, and bows and arrows. The Coahuiltecan also preferred to inhabit specific locations during the winter, places where they could expect to find abundant roots and other easily attainable foodstuffs. During the spring and summer, the Karankawas moved inland to the coastal prairies and woodlands. There, they relied less on marine life (though numerous rivers and creeks still provided them with fish) and more on land animals—among them deer, rabbits, prairie fowl, and occasionally buffalo—and the annual offerings of nuts, beans, and fruits produced by indigenous trees and shrubs. During the warmer seasons, the Coahuiltecan foraged for nature's yields over the large expanse of South Texas. They took advantage of the spring rains, catching fish trapped in receding pools of water, and hunting deer, lizards, birds, fish, and insects and gathering mesquite beans, prickly pears, pecans, and roots. Dome-shaped wigwams covered by animal skins or improvised windbreaks served as the most common type of Karankawa and Coahuiltecan housing. When it came time to move, they simply dismantled their shelters, taking them and other useful items with them.

## **The Northeast Texas Indians**

East of the Trinity River, tribes related to the Indians of the Mississippi Valley prospered, among them the Caddos. Many centuries before Europeans had realized the existence of the New World, people roamed the lower Mississippi River expanse in quest of edible plants and small game. Sometime around AD 800, however, these hunting-and-gathering peoples turned to farming, cultivating a variety of vegetables, among them beans, squash, and their major staple—maize, or corn. Around AD 1200, the Mississippian civilization reached its high point of cultural growth and tribal strength before entering a gradual decline. The Caddo Indians of Texas constituted the westernmost flank of Mississippian culture, owing much to it in the way of farming, village life, and religion, though the Caddos had also borrowed cultural traits from tribes to the west (in New Mexico) and the south (Mexico). Although Mississippian culture in general was in a state of decline when Columbus sailed from Spain, Caddoan civilization was persevering.

Caddo settlements extended from the Trinity River, due north past the Red River, and as far east as the Mississippi River. Stable communities—consisting of isolated rural villages—were generally located on the best farming lands in the region. Close to sources of fresh water (primarily rivers and streams), the Caddos constructed dome-shaped homes from grass and cane. As many as four families shared one such domicile, for Caddo home life apparently revolved around multifamily dwellings. With fields surrounding their settlements, the Caddos had easy access to their principal source of sustenance. Like peoples in the other parts of the world at the time, the Caddos planted twice a year—in the spring and early summer. Notably, Caddo society entrusted the role of agricultural production to women, who through experience and with good judgment tended the plants (generally corn, squash, and beans), rotated the crops as needed, fertilized the soil (with the droppings of wild animals native to eastern Texas), then carefully stored the excess harvest for use during lean times.

Chiefs known as the *xinesí* presided over Caddo society, both as political and religious leaders. Serving in a hereditary position, the *xinesí* (whose authority extended over several Caddo communities) mediated between his followers and a supreme deity—the world's creator who influenced both good and bad things in life—and led religious celebrations, ceremonies, and festivals. In Caddo society, the *xinesí* was a person whose high status demanded respect from tribal members who looked up to him as a powerful figure able to determine such phenomena as a successful sowing; as such, the *xinesí*'s wishes and directives were to be followed unquestionably. Under the supervision of the *xinesí*, the Caddos constructed impressive temple mounds (signature traits of their Mississippian kin) that served both as storehouses and places in which to conduct important meetings and ceremonies. Below the *xinesí* in the Caddo religious order were lesser medicine men who attended to the spiritual and physical needs of the people. Adept in the use of medicinal herbs and various folk remedies, these healers treated a multitude of wounds and illnesses.

Governing individual Caddo communities (also through hereditary right) were the *caddí*. Such rulers were members of the upper stratum. Although all but disqualified from holding office, a commoner might elevate himself to a leadership position through feats of bravery on the battlefield. Ostensibly, the Caddo administrators ruled efficiently, for at the time the Spaniards began their exploration of Texas, the Caddo world prospered. Lieutenants enforced the policies determined by the *caddí*, directing commoners in their tasks of tilling the soil, building shelters for all concerned, and seeing to the public good, which included defending the nation from outside threats. War was not, however, integral to Caddo culture.

Indeed, they undertook attacks on neighboring tribes primarily as a social pressure valve, a way to let eager young men act out their bravado, or as opportunities for anyone wishing to rise in social status.

The Caddos granted women rights and recognitions not generally accorded by European societies of the era. Their society was a matrilineal one, meaning that authority was handed down, both in families and in the larger clan, through the mother's line, so women held a distinct and influential place in kinship networks, within which they molded Caddo social conduct, privileges, and duties. Women could also influence individuals' economic, political, and social standing as they related to the broader group. Finally, it was women who classified others vis-à-vis the clan—as, for instance, friend or foe. In such a kin-based civilization, Caddo women gave advice on matters of intertribal trade and relations, including terms of war and peace. Ordinarily, women's presence among visiting Indian delegations symbolized peace; their absence from such teams conveyed hostility.

Although they primarily relied on farming for their sustenance, the Caddos supplemented their diet through other means. In addition to gathering roots, nuts, and fruits, another task assigned to women, Caddo men hunted the native game of eastern Texas: turkeys, rabbits, or quail in the summer; deer and bear (useful for lard, clothing, and shelter) in the fall and winter; and buffalo (present on the western rim of the Caddo confederacy) when the supply of other foods grew scarce during the colder months. Comfortable in their stability and self-reliance, the Caddos also engaged in extensive trade. Eventually the Caddo world served as a hub for those bringing goods from as far away as New Mexico, northern Mexico, and the Mississippi Valley. The Caddos welcomed many trading partners, bartering their baskets, tools, decorative art, and weapons for certain types of vegetables, furs, and other luxury items not otherwise available to them in East Texas.

### The Jumano Indians

Another group inhabiting Texas in the final years of the fifteenth century was the Jumanos, who inhabited the Trans-Pecos area (Figure 1.3). Ethnographers and other scholars still disagree over the distinct features of Jumano culture. Opinions also differ as to what specific peoples (or tribes) made up the Jumanos, what linguistic groups they derived from, and the precise regions they occupied. Some studies note that the term *Jumano*, as used by the first European observers, delineate those descendants of the Tanoan-speakers, a linguistic group from New Mexico, or those tribes that made their living as traders and traveled as far east as the South Plains of Texas. To some anthropologists, the word *Jumano* identifies people of a shared cultural background, and not necessarily a general grouping of people with a common language or a specific livelihood.

Recent research presents the Jumanos as descending from the Jornada line of the Mogollón, a people indigenous to modern-day Arizona, New Mexico, and neighboring regions. Sometime in the mid-fifteenth century, part of the Jornada tribe began migrating eastward toward the Trans-Pecos, ultimately establishing permanent settlements in the West Texas river valleys such as El Paso, but more specifically in the region that the Spaniards later referred to as *La Junta de los Ríos* (the confluence of the Rio Grande and the Rio Conchos). Quite plausibly, the whole of western Texas became the domain of the Jumanos—more militant tribes such as the Apaches and Comanches would not enter the region until sometime in the seventeenth century—for what were most certainly Jumano settlements (many of them temporary) have been found beyond the fertile river valleys. In



**Figure 1.3** This famous panther is an outstanding example of the prehistoric art of the Lower Pecos people. Credit: Amistad National Recreation Area.

any case, the Jumano civilization stretched from eastern New Mexico and perhaps into Oklahoma, and south to northern Chihuahua in Mexico, with its easternmost appendage extending into the South Plains. In these hinterlands, they made a living by farming and hunting.

At La Junta de los Ríos and other permanent settlements, the Jumanos worked irrigated produce gardens, cultivating traditional farm crops such as maize, beans, and squash. The Rio Conchos and the Rio Grande provided them with a variety of fish. Jumano communities resembled those used by their kinspeople in New Mexico—clustered single-family dwellings constructed of reeds and grass formed a village, over which a chief ruled. Such farm hamlets were indicative of the branch of the Jumanos that had opted for a sedentary life, though certain village members left on seasonal hunting expeditions.

Hunting nearly full time became the unique trait of the nomadic Jumanos of the West Texas plains. Living in transient camps, this branch of the Jumano people roamed the vast grasslands throughout the spring and fall in pursuit of a variety of game: from snakes, fish, and birds, to deer, antelope, rabbits, armadillos, and, naturally, the indispensable buffalo, which furnished them with meat for food and hides for shelter and clothing. During winter, the hunters relocated near the more permanent villages of their farming relatives, launching the hunting cycle anew in the spring.

Both the sedentary and nomadic Jumanos earned reputations among the Spaniards (who entered the world of the Jumanos in the seventeenth century) as accomplished merchants—as noted previously, some Europeans used the word Jumano synonymously with trader. La Junta de los Ríos served as a distribution hub for provisions, trade items, and intelligence coming in from northern Mexico, the Indian villages of the upper Rio



Grande, the world of the Coahuiltecan, or from the exchange marts of the Caddos. The nomadic Jumanos appear to have made commerce as much a part of their way of life as was hunting, and establishing trading villages on the plains as centers of exchange. In these posts, they bartered products manufactured or acquired by the tribes—bows and arrows, pearls, and animal furs and hides. But they also traveled widely to exchange horses (stolen from local ranches in northern New Spain), buffalo products, and foodstuffs for vegetables and fruits raised by local tribes, woolen textiles or pottery produced in New Mexico, or wares and foods available through the Caddos' own commercial network.

### **The Plains Indians**

Strikingly different from the aforementioned Native American tribes were the Apaches, Comanches, Wichitas, and Tonkawas. None of these Indian peoples—all of whom would play important parts in Texas history during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—lived in Texas in pre-Columbian times. Their origins may be traced to the northern Rocky Mountain region of the present-day United States. The Apaches, for instance, were related linguistically to tribes in Canada and Alaska, while the Comanches had originally made their homes in the valleys of the upper Yellowstone and Platte rivers. No one knows when exactly these tribes commenced their pedestrian migration into the Great Plains (the geographical expanse immediately east of the Rocky Mountains) and the Southwest in the pursuit of buffalo. Historians do know that these Plains Indians found new power in the horse (acquired in the seventeenth century from raids upon fledgling Spanish settlements or by capturing wild herds), for they learned to ride horseback with great skill while hunting buffalo, conducting warfare, or relocating to newer locales.

A number of forces ultimately led the Plains Indians toward Texas. Mounted warfare produced winners and losers; the Comanches—the most successful because of their high mobility and unmatched riding skills—became such a terror on the Plains that the Apaches (namely the groups known as the Lipans and the Mescaleros) by the late seventeenth century began heading south to take refuge in Texas. So did the Wichitas from Oklahoma and Central Kansas, though they sought haven from their enemies attacking them from the upper Mississippi Valley. The Comanches, meanwhile, continued expanding their nomadic hunting grounds southward, pursuing buffalo on horseback, fighting the hated Apaches, and bolstering their pony herds by rounding up wild horses. For their part, the Apaches in their retreat southward threw so many lesser Texas tribal units into disarray that in Central Texas there formed a disparate group of refugees that collectively came to be known as the Tonkawas. As with the Apaches, the Tonkawas were no match for the Comanches, who by the early 1700s had arrived in Texas to become the dominant force in the northern, central, and western regions of the province.

In Texas, the Apaches, Comanches, Wichitas, and Tonkawas depended on the buffalo for almost all their essential items, including food, shelter, clothing, weapons, and tools. Using bows and arrows, the Plains Indians effectively hunted not only buffalo but also deer, antelope, turkeys, and other wild game. Small garden plots, however, provided a secondary source of food, and some of these bands raised maize and other vegetables including squash and beans. They also gathered berries and other domestic fauna such as agave, from which they made intoxicating beverages. Additionally, wild plants gave them herbs, fruits, and other products that they consumed themselves and used in barter.

The Plains Indians lacked any pan-tribal political structure, so families formed the basic social foundation. Groups of families under a chief composed working units that served to defend the people or to retaliate against other groups for wrongs inflicted. In some cases, their livelihood depended as much upon preying on other tribes who had items they needed for sustenance as it did upon reaping nature's bounty. Fiercely independent, the Plainspeople held religious views that allowed for individual relationships with deities; their faith in a single, all-powerful being was only ephemeral. Shamans, or religious figures, exerted no great authority among the wanderers of the Plains, as they mainly served to heal the infirm.

### **The Iberian Legacy**

The first white people with whom the indigenous inhabitants of Texas competed for political and economic advantage came from the Iberian Peninsula—a part of Europe in which history had departed in substantive ways from that of the rest of the continent. The early history of Spain, however, does not belie this difference. Like the rest of Europe, the Iberian Peninsula had come under the rule of the Greeks and later was subsumed by the Roman Empire. From the Romans, Spaniards derived their language, law, customs, religious faith, and the name of their country—*Hispania*. When Spain, along with the rest of Europe, fell to invading tribes in the fifth century, the Visigoths swept over the peninsula and superimposed their way of life over that which the Romans had instilled. Like other Europeans, the Iberians then began forging new lifeways that combined the Roman influence, the newer Germanic contributions, and evolving Christian beliefs, for in Spain, as elsewhere, the Visigoths ended up assimilating the religion, language, and form of government of the people they had conquered.

### **The Muslim era and the reconquista**

What chiefly separated the history of the Iberian peoples from that of the rest of western Europe was the conquest of Spain by Muslims from northern Africa (Arabic or Berber peoples known loosely as the Moors) who sought to spread their Islamic faith. Partly because of the Muslim domination of the peninsula, which began in AD 711, feudalism did not attain maturity in Christian Spain. The constant state of warfare to oust the Muslim intruders equalized social distinctions, thereby blurring class differences then prevalent in northern Europe. In each Christian state, furthermore, the war bolstered the role of the king as the military leader responsible for the *reconquista* (reconquest), the term generally used to refer to the centuries of struggle to regain Spain from the Muslims. Following a tradition used by the Moorish invaders, Christian fighters surrendered one-fifth of the spoils of their conquests to the monarch—a custom that granted further power and wealth to the Crown. Because the Muslims were among the world's best-connected merchants, their influence helped Spain enjoy brisk economic activity with the Islamic world. Numerous Spanish cities became commercial hubs as their merchants developed prosperous ties with their counterparts in Africa, the several Mediterranean countries, and the Muslim world of the Middle East. Even Iberians who earned their living from the soil participated in the economic good times, as they sold their produce in domestic as well as export markets. Efforts to resist the aggressors and reconquer the motherland molded Spanish culture during the Middle Ages. Of the several Christian states that individually or jointly sought to push back the Moors,

none excelled Castile, the heartland of Spain stretching from the peninsula's northern lands south to the central plateau. Castile's campaign to expel the Muslim interlopers turned into a way of life that accentuated the warrior hallmarks of valor, tenacity, intrepidity, and survival at any cost—traits embraced by the *conquistadores* (conquerors) whatever their social station.

Through time, moreover, the Castilian reconquista assumed the aura of a religious crusade. The discovery in AD 900 of what Spaniards believed to be the burial site and body of the apostle Santiago (St. James the Great) in northern Spain, inspired Spanish religious fervor, for St. James supposedly had brought Christianity to Iberia. The reconquista prompted the Crown to bestow the role of ally upon the Catholic Church, and, in turn, the Church's preaching in support of this cause rendered numerous social and political privileges to the clergy. By the thirteenth century, Catholic religious orders such as the Franciscans and Dominicans engaged in proselytizing activity among the Spanish Muslims.

The reconquista also encouraged the raising of sheep in agrarian Castile, for the Castilians found that sheep produced higher and quicker profits than did their crops. And unlike crops, herds could be moved quickly out of harm's way during the constant warfare. When stockmen imported merino sheep from northern Africa in 1280, the Iberians bred them with their native stock. The new strain produced such a superior grade of wool that merchants in the international market eagerly sought the product, which brought handsome profits.

Cattle raising also flourished in the reconquered areas of southern Castile. In Andalusía, lords raised breeds of cattle that became widely known for the fine quality of their beef and hides. Seasonally, *vaqueros*, mounted herders, drove the stock cross-country from the northern summer grazing lands to winter in southern pastures. The *vaqueros* developed a distinctive dress and equipment, as well as cattle-ranching traditions and practices such as the *rodeo* (roundup) and the branding of calves for identification purposes, which were later transplanted to areas that came under Spain's dominance.

Compared to other various European urban centers that experienced economic downturns, Spain's cities witnessed a good deal of development, for in the process of reconquest, towns held down and consolidated the gains of battle. In return for their assistance in helping to regain territory from the Muslim "infidels," towns received charters by which the king guaranteed townspeople the protection of their individual possessions and privileges and permitted them a semblance of self-governance. During this period, city inhabitants came to belong to *ayuntamientos* (city councils), which elected town officials. Furthermore, they organized *hermandades* (brotherhoods) responsible for maintaining the peace. This new form of municipal government replaced the old Roman administrative structure that had broken down following the arrival of the Muslims.

## Los Reyes Católicos

The two Iberian kingdoms of Castile and Aragón united in 1479, when Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragón, married since 1469, inherited the thrones of their respective dominions. Seeking to consolidate their power over the whole peninsula, the monarchs swiftly pressed for the pacification of the countryside and the subordination of the nobles, the Church, and the military orders, which had gained power during the final stages of the reconquista. The couple's strategy for accomplishing their plans proved shrewd and inventive—even cunning. In order to suppress criminal activity, for instance, Isabella co-opted the

medieval institution of the *hermandad*, turning what had begun as municipal brotherhoods to defend mutual interests—ironically against the nobility—into a standing army for the Crown. Political gains made by individuals at the local level during the reconquista thus receded as *los reyes católicos* (the Catholic kings) began the task of molding Spain into a sovereign nation.

With a semblance of peace and unity restored domestically, the monarchs turned their attention to foreign policy. By the fifteenth century, technological advances enabled Spain to expand its commerce. Much of the new technology came from Portugal, where Prince Henry the Navigator had made brilliant strides in map making and ship building in an effort to see his own country be the first to probe the African coastline, establish sea routes to the Orient, and find a friendly ally for a besieged Christian Europe. As fate determined, it was Portugal's rival, Spain, that used Henry's inventions to discover a world completely unknown to Europe.

## **Columbus**

In 1492, Isabella gave consent to the Italian mariner Christopher Columbus to sail under the flag of Spain in a westerly course to the East Indies. Columbus's principal motives were economic and political gain, but a desire to spread his religion also prompted him. If successful, he would achieve great things for Spain and Latin Christendom.

From the port of Palos in southern Spain, Columbus, in command of three caravels, steered toward the Canary Islands, already claimed and colonized by the Spaniards. After reprovisioning there, the crews headed into the strong Atlantic seas never before sailed by Europeans. The admiral reckoned he would reach the Orient in 30 days, tap its riches, and in the process establish new allies and trading partners for the Christian world and open vast new lands for religious proselytizing. On October 12, 1492, after more than a month at sea, Columbus sighted land. But he had not reached Asia, as he had assumed he had; rather he came ashore on the modern-day Bahamas. He named the first island on which he stepped *San Salvador* (Holy Savior).

## **The conquistadores**

Following Columbus's grand find, Spain proceeded swiftly to transform the "New World," as the Europeans had dubbed it, into colonies that would provide the Spaniards with the elusive riches they had hoped to reap by finding a shortcut to the Orient. Now a new wave of conquistadores, who in many ways resembled those who had reclaimed the peninsula from the Muslims—having ousted the last of the Moors from Granada in 1492—took the initiative for the acquisition and subordination of new dominions. Characteristics of the traditional conquistador—courage and tenacity, but also callousness, a propensity toward violence, religious zeal, and a desire for gold and glory—typified those who led the conquest of the New World.

Columbus himself played a major part in the takeover of the Caribbean Islands, but the exploration, and exploitation, of the New World proved too vast for one man's energies. Numerous explorers thus left what had been labeled the "West Indies" for fresh explorations; among them was Vasco Núñez de Balboa. Balboa ultimately crossed the Central American Isthmus, and in 1513, he claimed the Pacific Ocean on behalf of the king of Spain.

In the same year, Juan Ponce de León reached Florida, bringing the North American peninsula into the Spanish sphere, though the Spaniards did not succeed in settling the region until the 1560s. The expedition to establish control over modern-day Mexico was spearheaded by several intriguing war campaigns led by Hernán Cortés, who by 1521 had conquered and plundered Montezuma's Aztec empire, paving the way for the ruthless domination of the rest of Mexico. In Peru, conquest of the Incas fell to an unlettered conquistador named Francisco Pizarro, who arrived there in 1532, eventually executed the emperor, and despoiled buildings and shrines of their treasures throughout Inca settlements. Blood, rapine, and plunder marked the Spaniards' path through Peru, as it had their swath through Mexico.

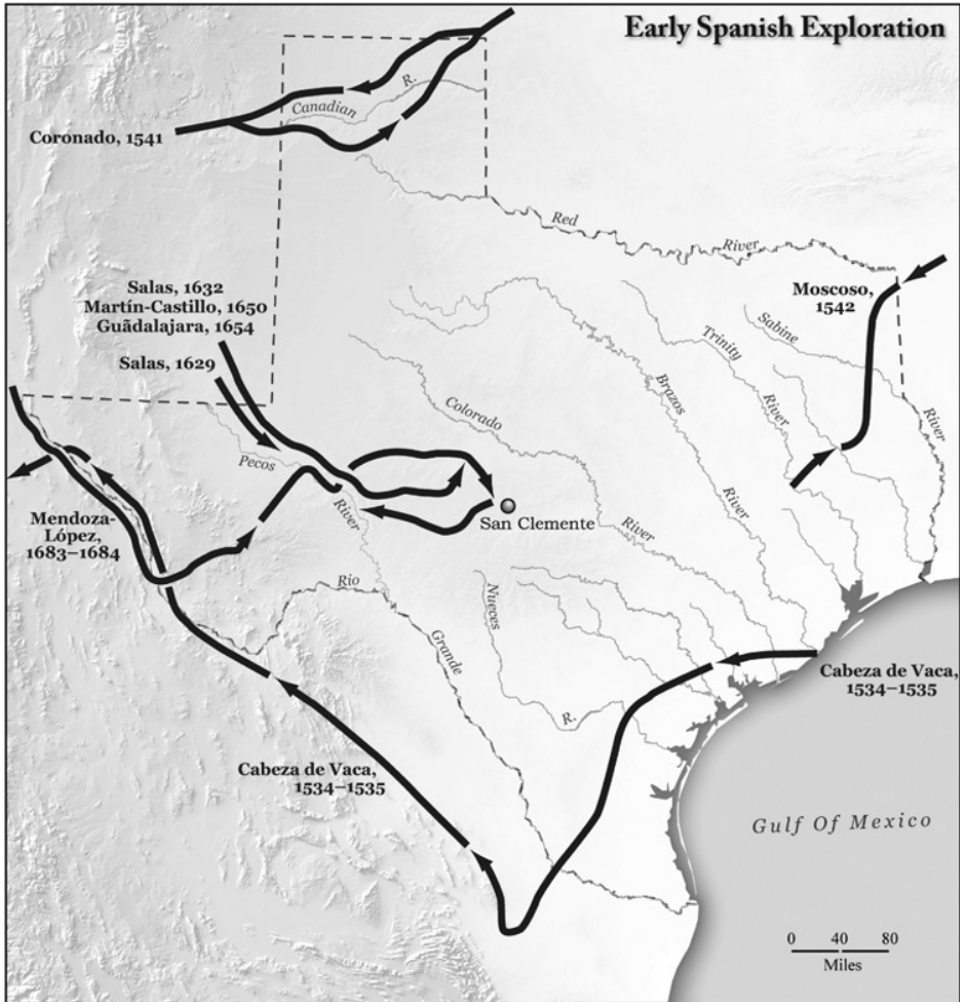
### **Looking for Fortunes in Texas**

Just as the atmosphere of fifteenth-century Spain helped to mold the ruthless nature of the exploring Spaniards, so, too, did it shape their desire to find riches and amass fortunes. Many people in late medieval Europe still believed in romantic tales of mythic adventure, and books describing fantastic places of great riches and enchantment stimulated Spanish hopes of finding the fabled land of the warlike Amazon women, of the opulent Seven Cities, and the legendary Fountain of Youth. The very real treasures (gold and silver, principally) that the conquistadores did find in Mexico and in Peru only encouraged their people's convictions that the dreams of lore were indeed realizable in the New World.

It was this search for great fortune that led the Spaniards to the land now known as Texas (Figure 1.4). The earliest European penetration of what was to become Texas occurred accidentally in 1528, shortly after Pánfilo de Narváez led 400 men into Florida. Landing first near today's Sarasota Bay, Narváez took three-fourths of his crew ashore with him to investigate stories of a golden land. Narváez and his men were left stranded on Florida's west coast, however, after miscommunications prompted his ships to depart for Cuba without them.

Improvising, Narváez and his fellow castaways killed their mounts, fashioning five small boats from the horse hides, in which they hoped to float along the Gulf Coast and eventually reach Mexico. But on a spit of land close to the western portion of modern-day Galveston Island, the Spaniards were shipwrecked and forced to brave the winter of 1528–29. Enslaved by a band of coastal Indians, only a handful of the Spaniards, among them Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and Estevanico, a Moorish slave, survived into the spring. After years in bondage, and with their number now down to four, Cabeza de Vaca persuaded the others to escape and follow him. Posing as “medicine men” as they traveled, the Spaniards undertook a remarkable odyssey that led them across the Rio Grande, to a spot northwest of present-day Roma, Texas, then on through northern Mexico and eventually back into Texas, near today's Presidio. From there, they trekked along the east bank of the Rio Grande, toward a site some seventy-five miles below El Paso, then back across the Rio Grande into Mexico and, finally, into the Spanish frontier town of Culiacán, in the western province of Sinaloa.

Upon his arrival in Culiacán in 1536, Cabeza de Vaca had much to tell, including tales of riches existing in the lands somewhere north of those he had roamed. To confirm his reports, the Crown in 1539 dispatched Friar Marcos de Niza to the northern lands, with Estevanico accompanying him as a scout. In present-day western New Mexico, the friar, supposedly viewing a Pueblo Indian town from a distant hilltop, reported upon his return



**Figure 1.4** Early Spanish exploration.

of having seen a glittering city of silver and gold. Niza's fabulous vision may be accounted for by the reflective quartz imbedded in the walls of the adobe dwellings sparkling in the sunlight, but Spanish officials interpreted his testimony as evidence of the existence of the fabled Seven Cities. Their general location was deemed *Cíbola*, a term meaning buffalo, which the Spaniards had heard the Indians use and now applied as a place-name to the pueblos of the Zuñis.

Historians question whether or not Niza actually traveled as far as *Cíbola*, but whatever the truth, Niza's report raised expectations among the Spaniards, and the viceroy assigned Francisco Vázquez de Coronado to lead a follow-up expedition. Coronado arrived in Zuñi country the next year, only to discover that Niza's glittering cities were, indeed, merely adobe complexes. Conflict soon brewed with the Pueblos, for Coronado and his troops mistreated the villagers and inflicted numerous indignities upon them, even burning some Pueblo people at the stake. After this, newly generated tales of a golden kingdom called Gran Quivira induced other parties of Spaniards to venture out upon the Great Plains, but as they crossed what we know today as the Texas Panhandle, none saw anything of value to themselves or the Crown.



**Figure 1.5** *Coronado on the High Plains* by Frederic Remington. Source: Copied from a reproduction in *Collier's Magazine*, December 9, 1905. University of Texas at San Antonio.

At first, Coronado refused to be disillusioned, continuing his search for Gran Quivira near the land of the Wichita tribes in Kansas (Figure 1.5). But two years of futile searching finally convinced him to return to Mexico, and his reports of the absence of riches in the lands he had traversed discouraged further exploration of the north for another half-century.

While Coronado was exploring the Plains, another expedition, this one led by Hernando de Soto, made its way from Florida to Alabama and across the southeastern Mississippi Valley, tracking down rumors of gold treasures and civilized cities. This quest also proved fruitless, and De Soto, despairing of his failure, took ill with fever and died in the spring of 1542. His party, now situated on the Mississippi River, was taken over by Luis de Moscoso de Alvarado, who opted to march west in hopes of reaching Mexico. During their trek, the Spaniards entered eastern Texas and may have ranged as far west as the Trinity River, near present-day Houston County. Frustrated that they had not yet managed to reach Mexico, Moscoso and his men returned to the Mississippi, building crude boats and floating downstream and then westward along the Gulf Coast. Destiny forced the sailors ashore near present-day Beaumont. Two months later, the 300 men arrived in the Spanish town of Panuco, Mexico, with, of course, no reports of having found riches. This report further dampened the Spaniards' desire to explore Texas.

### Competition for the North

By the early part of the seventeenth century, Spain's New World dominion extended nearly 8000 miles, from southern California to the tip of South America. But Spain could claim no monopoly over the world discovered by Columbus, for several other European countries now competed for their share of colonies in the Western Hemisphere. The Dutch laid claim to the Hudson Valley and New Netherlands, the settlement that later became part of the

English colony of New York. The French, meantime, founded Quebec in Canada and launched the occupation of Nova Scotia. As time passed, French traders pushed southwestwardly into the Great Lakes area, and by the 1650s they had infiltrated the general region around what is today the state of Wisconsin.

The most determined of the seventeenth-century efforts were those of the English, who explored along the Atlantic Coast north of the lands chartered by Ponce de León, Pánfilo de Narváez, and Cabeza de Vaca. By the 1640s, the English empire had established solid possession of the Atlantic seaboard between northern Florida and New England. Britain now prepared to expand its mainland North American empire west, toward areas that the Spaniards regarded as exclusively their own.

### **Colonizing baggage**

Spain held an edge over its European competitors in skills required for colonization, for by the seventeenth century the trappings of Spanish civilization (much of it a legacy of the reconquista) were well in place throughout much of Latin America and ready for relocation to North American frontiers. Responsible for coordinating settlement was an autocratic king, who since the conquest of the Aztecs had passed along royal orders to political bureaucracies responsible for the day-to-day affairs in Spain's respective New World colonies. Although these field officials tended to mold royal directives and laws to fit local circumstances, they implicitly recognized the king's right to set policy and their duty to acknowledge his decisions.

The king, however, did not act haphazardly in bringing Indian lands under the Spanish flag. To the contrary, he oversaw an orderly process of expansion and settlement by employing those agencies already proven effective against the Muslims or tested on the frontiers of the New World. The military garrison and fort called the *presidio*, the roots of which lay in the Roman concept of *praesidium* (meaning a militarized region protected by fortifications), for example, was initially employed in the last half of the sixteenth century as protection against the Chichimeca Indian nations that inhabited the north-central plateau of New Spain. From the Indian frontier north of Mexico City, the core government deployed the presidio into other regions, each fort under the direction of a presidial commander acting on behalf of the governor and whose authority outweighed that of local civilian officials. The presidio served many functions. It was a place for prisoners to complete their sentences, and it provided a walled courtyard in which to conduct peace talks with representatives of restive Indian tribes. More important, as a garrison for soldiers trained and equipped for frontier warfare, the presidio protected another frontier institution—the mission—guarding the friars in the mission compounds as they attempted to pacify and instruct newly converted congregations of Native peoples.

The practice of conducting missionary activity among the Muslim occupiers had been used in Spain during the reconquista, and it evolved into the system found in the Mexican north in the 1580s. Priests of different Catholic religious orders (such as the Franciscans or the Dominicans) staffed the missions, performing various functions relevant to exploration, conquest, and Christianization (Figure 1.6). The missionaries sought to convert the Indians to Catholicism, establish friendly relations with hostile tribes, and, by their fortified presence at the mission, assist in retaining conquered territories for the Crown.

Missionaries acted for the government in a tradition traceable to medieval times, when the reconquista became a joint enterprise between the Crown and the Church. As Ferdinand





**Figure 1.6** Mission San José, San Antonio. Source: Texas Prints and Photograph Collection CN 08004, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

and Isabella acquired the right to make appointments to religious positions (the *patronato real*) in the 1480s, the alliance between the king of Spain and the pope became even closer. By the time of the conquistadores, the Crown had won the right to regulate the Church in its American colonies (including making such decisions as to where Church edifices would be erected), sponsor evangelical forays into pagan lands, and decide which religious order would take priority in missionizing particular regions. With these powers, the Crown controlled the pattern of Church activities in the New World, though doctrine and dogma remained strictly the domain of the clergy.

In their further efforts to Europeanize new lands, the Spaniards also used the civilian settlement, another institution employed during the reconquista to hold recently reconquered territory. As the Spaniards advanced northward from Anáhuac, they used civilian settlements to populate frontier regions and integrate the hinterlands and their resources into the kingdom. By this time, the Spaniards had devised extensive laws governing the location, layout, and defense of urban outposts. Again, these laws generally derived from previous experiences in urban settlement during the reconquista. According to these plans, the town plat was square and included one or more rectangular plazas, the main one constituting the town center, with outlying streets crossing one another at right angles. The east side of the central plaza was designated for church edifices, the west side for government and public buildings. This arrangement facilitated daily routines: the idea was to use the morning light for mass and other church operations, and then allow government officials to work late into the evening using the afternoon sun. Lots allocated to residents also conformed to the pattern of perpendicular streets oriented to the four cardinal directions. Lands surrounding the new urban sites were designated as public property that all residents

could use to sustain themselves and their livestock. Other ordinances stipulated that sites for new municipalities be chosen only after thought had been given to matters of sanitation, the proximity of food resources, local weather patterns, and the prospects afforded for self-defense against raids by hostile Indians. *Pobladores* (settlers) made every effort to adhere to these regulations, but the contingencies of the moment many times dictated otherwise. In Texas, therefore, plans did not always follow the letter. Officials who belonged to a bureaucratic structure, the roots of which went back to the reconquista, governed these new municipalities.

The Spaniards also utilized the *rancho* (ranch) to help them claim unsettled areas. Stockmen and farmers invariably accompanied frontier expeditions, and, over the course of time, they played supportive roles in the Christianizing of the Indians and the defense of settled territories. *Rancheros* (ranchers) provided settlements with resources otherwise absent on the frontier, such as beef, pork, and wool, along with useful byproducts such as hides and tallow. This helped the missionaries retain Indian convertees who otherwise might have chosen to run off in search of wild game more palatable to their diet than the friars' normal fare. The ranchers also helped presidial soldiers, not only by providing them with meat but by furnishing them with live animals necessary for farm work, freighting, and, of course, military expeditions of all kinds.

These, then, were the traditional institutions that the Spanish employed, albeit in a modified form, to settle the contemporary American Southwest, while the Dutch, English, and French sought footholds in the region east of the Mississippi River. Spain renewed its efforts to colonize New Spain's Far North because of the prospects of finding wealth, a persistent desire to Christianize the settled Indians reported by Coronado, and the need to protect the expanse from foreign encroachment, for by the late 1570s and 1580s, English pirates such as Sir Francis Drake began sailing along the California coast. In 1598, therefore, Don Juan de Oñate led an expedition into what would become Nuevo México; the operation resulted in the founding of Santa Fe in 1609. The establishment of this permanent settlement initiated the Spanish government's quest to impose its imperial authority over Texas.

Spain's initial and strongest competition in the colonization of Texas came not from rival European empires but from indigenous nations of the region. As of the late seventeenth century (and later for that matter), Native American peoples comprised the land's political and economic (as well as demographic) powers. In actuality, several Indian nations vied to claim the wide expanse, all of them competing for its natural (animal and plant) resources, material bounties (such as captives, guns, and livestock), or for the control of trade networks or potential intertribal coalitions. In their aim to settle Texas, therefore, the Spaniards found themselves one player among many—all intent on gaining dominion of the province's resources.

## Western Texas

For years, Jumano Indians had traveled to the Pueblo country in New Mexico to conduct trade. In 1629, the Jumanos asked the Spaniards they met there to visit them in their West Texas lands and instruct them in the religion to which they had been introduced by the "Lady in Blue." According to some church historians, this personage was the Spanish nun Madre María de Ágreda, who asserted that she had spiritually visited New World lands through miraculous bilocation. Whatever the truth to the mystery surrounding this figure,

the Spaniards responded to the invitation with an expedition to Jumano country in 1629 commanded by Fray (Father) Juan de Salas, and another one in 1632, led by the Franciscans.

Their desire to proselytize Native Americans notwithstanding, the Spaniards also held interests in more mundane things in Jumano country: namely, freshwater pearls (found in mollusks living in the western tributaries of the Colorado River) and the countless buffalo on the West Texas plains. Also appealing to them was the possibility that Jumano country might become a base for trading with the Caddo Indians; the eastern tribes, according to the Jumanos, comprised a wealthy population of many villages. In 1654, therefore, Diego de Guadalajara returned to Jumano country in search of pearl-bearing *conchas* (shells) in the present-day forks of the Concho River of West Texas. At that time, however, Spanish officialdom lacked the resources to pursue their plans to trade with East Texas Indians through the Jumanos.

Finally, approaches to West Texas were made in 1683 and 1684. By now, the Spaniards resided a bit closer to the Jumanos, for the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, in which the Pueblo tribes attacked and destroyed the Spanish settlements of the upper valley of the Rio Grande, had caused much of the Spanish population of New Mexico to take refuge in El Paso (modern-day Juárez), where a Franciscan mission, which sheltered a small band of Jumanos, had existed since 1659. From this distressed and impoverished civilian settlement the Spaniards returned to West Texas when the Jumano Chief Juan Sabeata asked that priests be sent to his land in West Texas and, parenthetically, for assistance in countering threats from the Apaches. Responding to Sabeata's request, Spanish authorities dispatched an expedition led by Juan Domínguez de Mendoza and Fray Nicolás López down the Rio Grande from El Paso to today's Ruidosa, Texas, then into the San Sabá River area, where they established themselves at Mission San Clemente. From temporary quarters there, the expedition's men slaughtered some 4000 buffalo. In fact, Sabeata's primary motive in luring the Spaniards into Jumano country may have been to get the Spaniards to protect his people from the Apaches while the Jumanos hunted buffalo. The Jumanos then planned to carry Spanish goods and trade them with the Caddos of East Texas. But the Spaniards' motivations went beyond converting Indians and shielding Sabeata from the Apaches. Aside from the previously mentioned desire to find pearls, acquire new sources of food or raw products (such as hides), and establish trading links with the Caddos, they sought to bring relief to the starving civilian community in El Paso. They also surmised that exploring West Texas might lead to an alternative site for settlement, for the El Paso region seemed unable to produce basic necessities. Whatever the motives for all involved, the Spaniards left after six weeks of hunting in San Clemente, returning to El Paso with a bounty of buffalo hides, promising the Jumanos to return at a later date.

### Eastern Texas

The Spaniards did not revisit the Jumanos in West Texas, for they became preoccupied with increased French activity close to the Gulf of Mexico. By the early 1670s, the French were actively exploring the middle of the North American continent from their bases in Canada, and now they planned to install a string of trading stores and forts to stretch all the way from the Great Lakes to the mouth of the Mississippi. They made important headway in doing so when in 1682 René-Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle, traveled down the Mississippi and asserted title to all of the lands drained by the great river for France.

Promptly, La Salle made plans to lay more than symbolic claims to the Mississippi River basin. Intending to found a warm-water port for the French fur trade at a site above the mouth of the Mississippi River (or perhaps, as some historians contend, plant a post there to help France capture some of the gold mines in northwestern New Spain), he left France at the head of four ships (the *Aimable*, the *Joly*, the *Belle* and one seized by Spanish privateers in Haiti). La Salle and his colonists, which included some women and children, arrived in the Gulf of Mexico late in 1684 (the same year that the Spaniards were active among the Jumanos in West Texas). Charting his course on the limited navigational knowledge of the seventeenth century and a reliance on hypothetically drawn maps, La Salle supposed that the Río Escondido (the modern-day Nueces River in South Texas) was actually the celebrated Mississippi River, so in February 1685 he ended up on the Texas coast at Matagorda Bay. Following the wreck of the *Aimable*, his crew sailed back to France on the *Joly*, leaving La Salle in unknown territory with only one ship and his original 180 colonists rapidly diminishing.

On Garcitas Creek (in today's Victoria County), La Salle founded a temporary colony. While his remaining ship (the *Belle*) lay at anchor in Matagorda Bay with the supplies destined for his Mississippi venture, the Frenchman undertook an exploration in late 1685 into the Texas interior to determine the reaches of Spanish settlements. This expedition brought his party toward the Rio Grande and into the trans-Pecos region, with disastrous results. To La Salle's dismay, the *Belle* had wrecked during this absence, and to salvage something for his ambitious enterprise, the tired explorer, at the head of a seventeen-man party, decided to turn northward in the hope of reaching Fort Saint-Louis on the Illinois River (which he had established earlier) and from there send word of his plight to France. This gambit also proved unsuccessful, and in March 1687 La Salle died near the Trinity River at the hands of his own frustrated men, five of whom in 1688 succeeded in reaching France via Quebec. In early 1689, Karankawa Indians wiped out the survivors (about twenty-three) at La Salle's fledgling settlement (known erroneously in Texas history as Fort St. Louis; in actuality, there never did exist a site or garrison in Texas that went by that name), sparing only a few children whom the Spaniards later recovered.

As unimpressive as it was, the French activity in the area nonetheless alerted the Spaniards to the danger of losing Texas and prompted them to initiate the exploration of the eastern periphery of the northern frontier of New Spain. Starting in 1686 and continuing until 1690, the Crown dispatched Alonso de León (north from Nuevo León) on several expeditions, his fourth one in 1689 taking him to the remains of La Salle's ill-fated colony on the Garcitas. The next year, the Spaniards explored past that location and made contact with the Caddo world, long regarded by the Spaniards as "the great kingdom of the Tejas" due to legends extolling the prosperity and magnificence of the Caddos.

Actually, the Caddos of what is now East Texas (Caddo communities spread into modern-day northwestern Louisiana) consisted of about 10,000 people; among those belonging to the Caddo nation were the Hasinai Indians, whom the Spaniards referred to as the *Tejas*, the Spanish rendition of the Hasinai word for friend, from which the state of Texas is named. Encircled by tribes hostile to their way of life, the Caddos stood prepared to defend their territory against any group that might try to encroach on it. The Caddos, however, confidently accepted the Europeans upon their arrival, for they saw them as potential allies and trading partners. The fact that the image of the Virgen de Guadalupe accompanied de León and the Spaniards as they approached Caddo villages helped introduce them as friends, for in the Caddo kinship gender-based system, women symbolized peaceful intent. The Caddo leaders responded by sending parties of men, women, and children to greet the Europeans

(such was their standard ritual whenever outsiders neared their communities) as their own indication of friendship. Following this reception, the Caddos invited the visitors into their village, where women (in exercise of their matrilineal roles) brought to the ceremonial courtyard foodstuffs—the fruits of their toil as agricultural laborers. The Spaniards, for their part, reciprocated with gifts such as garments, blankets, and tobacco.

With trust thus established, Caddo and Spanish expedition leaders set about discussing matters of mutual benefit. The Caddos offered no resistance when de León and Fray Damián Massanet moved to set up two missions (one of them being San Francisco de los Tejas, the first Spanish mission in Texas, 1690) among the Caddos. The Spanish perceived the Tejas (Caddos) as a particularly stable tribe that adhered to religious beliefs that recognized the existence of but one supreme being. Moreover, they ascertained that the Caddos traded widely, exchanging their bows and pottery, as well as salt and other goods, with representatives of other bands, among them the Jumanos. So many Indians from such great distances arrived in the Caddo villages in order to barter that the priests quickly envisioned the Caddo kingdom as the ideal setting for disseminating the Christian message in New Spain's Far North.

Despite these seemingly auspicious circumstances, the Caddos did not prove to be willing converts nor indulgent hosts. For one thing, Christianity actually clashed with their religious beliefs and spiritual traditions. For another, the Spaniards had disrupted their traditional way of life. When Domingo de Terán, who had been named governor of what became the province of Texas, visited the Caddos in 1691 intending to found additional missions, his livestock indiscriminately trampled and fed upon the Caddos' new farm harvests. This, along with the soldiers' degrading treatment of women and imprudent overtures by the missionaries who violated Caddo protocol, made the Caddos resentful, leading the tribes' members to retaliate by attacking the interlopers' domesticated stock. Finally sensing hostility, the Spaniards retreated to Coahuila, leaving behind only a few missionaries to continue the work of Christianizing. But those few persons—who obviously resisted the Caddo convention that “outsiders” acceptance into their society entailed marriage—could not convince the Caddos of their good intentions, so by 1693 the Spanish had departed East Texas.

The departure proved temporary, for events from within and outwith New Spain forced a return to Caddo land. Father Francisco Hidalgo, who had worked with Massanet among the Tejas, desired to resume the work he had helped begin in East Texas. In addition, the French renewed their activity along the mouth of the Mississippi to thwart English plans to move westward from the Atlantic to the middle of the continent. When the French established themselves at Mobile Bay in 1702, then farther west at Natchitoches, in what is now western Louisiana, it gave the Spaniards cause for alarm.

Although several motives had brought the French to the border of Texas, trade ranked high on the list. This became evident when in 1713, a French Canadian named Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, who had been trading successfully with Indians in Louisiana, appeared in Natchitoches with an array of merchandise and a determination to seek markets among the Spaniards.

Setting out across Texas, St. Denis and a small detachment of French and Hasinai headed for New Spain proper. They arrived at San Juan Bautista on the Rio Grande (some thirty miles downriver from today's Eagle Pass on the Mexican side) on July 19, 1714, where Captain Diego Ramón quickly arrested them, detaining the encroachers until word arrived from the viceroy early the next year that the Frenchmen should be taken to Mexico City for official interrogation. Once in New Spain's capital, St. Denis gave a revealing account of his

purpose: the French had received a letter from Father Francisco Hidalgo the previous year describing the Tejas and asking if the French would support a mission for the Indians. St. Denis disclosed that the Tejas yearned for a continuation of Christian missionary work, especially that of Father Hidalgo. As for trade, St. Denis declared that he saw no legal bans against commercial intercourse between French and Spanish territorial possessions.

Whatever the pretext, the viceroy saw no real justification for the French intrusion, so he immediately ordered Captain Domingo Ramón (the son of Diego Ramón) to make preparations to convert East Texas into a buffer zone by rebuilding the Spanish missions there. Assigned as second-in-command of this expedition was none other than St. Denis, who had adroitly persuaded the Spaniards that he now planned to set up stead on the Texas frontier and assist the Spanish in the work of Christianizing the Tejas. Although room for distrust existed between the Spanish viceroy and the Frenchman, both found mutual benefit in their alliance. The Spaniards hoped to take advantage of St. Denis's knowledge of the Texas terrain, his command of Indian languages, and his knack for befriending certain Indians nations so as to repair fractured terms with the Caddos and establish a prosperous trade in East Texas. According to some historians, however, St. Denis's subsequent marriage to Captain Diego Ramón's step-granddaughter at San Juan Bautista lay at the heart of his defection from the service of France.

### **Settlements**

Such was the course of events in the early eighteenth century that placed the Spaniards permanently in Texas. In February 1716, Captain Domingo Ramón and St. Denis crossed the Rio Grande headed for East Texas at the head of about seventy-five people, among them twenty-six soldiers and several Franciscan priests (including Father Hidalgo). Upon the Europeans' arrival, the Tejas and other Caddos greeted them warmly, for they regarded St. Denis as their friend, and consequently believed the Spaniards would, as did the French among them, abide by Caddo custom of entering their kinship system by marriage (with Caddo people) and establishing family residence within the village proper. In late June, therefore, the explorers set up base at a site close to the Neches River. They immediately constructed a temporary presidio, then four missions close by it, among them Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de los Nacogdoches, situated near present-day Nacogdoches. With the erection of the missions and presidio by the summer of 1716, the Spaniards had succeeded in accomplishing two objectives: revitalizing missionary work among the East Texas Indians, which Father Hidalgo had sought; and laying claim to the region, the objective pursued by the Spanish government in order to ward off French encroachment.

But this was not the end of New Spain's Texas enterprise, for now New Spain's central government pushed ahead with plans to solidify the Spanish position on the northern periphery. At the beginning of 1717, Captain Ramón and Fray Antonio Margil de Jesús established two more missions farther east of the original foundations, inching the missionaries closer to the French post of Natchitoches. These settlements struggled. The missionaries and soldiers faced stark conditions, receiving little help from the Crown in the way of supplies, food, clothing, and weapons, and then getting practically no assistance from the Caddos they had been dispatched to convert, for the Spaniards were still not inclined to establish residence among Caddo society as custom mandated. Another expedition, led by Martín de Alarcón, marched from Mexico City toward the Río San Antonio in 1718 to found a military post called San Antonio de Béxar and a mission they named San Antonio

de Valero. The new presidio and mission would serve the purpose of Christianizing the Coahuiltecan Indians, who had long eked out a marginal existence in their ancestral territories and were presently under attack by marauding bands of Apaches coming down from the plains. Additionally, the presidio-mission complex midway between the Rio Grande and the East Texas frontier line would become a supply station. The result was the peopling of what became the original municipality of San Antonio. Around this site, the Spaniards constructed the Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo in 1720 and three others in the 1730s. In 1721, the Spaniards secured control of the Bay of Espíritu Santo (or La Bahía) by building a fort that they hoped would serve as a Gulf Coast deterrent to Frenchmen desiring to initiate sea trade west from Louisiana. They also reasoned that the garrison would temporarily store provisions to be brought into Texas from Vera Cruz by ship. In 1749, however, the Crown moved the presidio and mission (built in 1722) of La Bahía inland toward the San Antonio River at the site of modern-day Goliad (the site kept the name of La Bahía) as part of a plan to found two civilian communities there. The towns did not thrive, but the presidio-mission-settlement complex of La Bahía remained.

Despite the entrenchment, the French chased the Spaniards out of East Texas in 1719, when war broke out in Europe between Spain and France. In a countermove, the Spanish Crown dispatched the governor of the province of Coahuila and Tejas, the Marqués de Aguayo, to regain the lost East Texas lands. The governor discharged his assignment by restoring the old missions among the Tejas and establishing a new presidio in July 1721 named Nuestra Señora del Pilar de los Adaes, just fifteen miles west of Natchitoches, near the present-day town of Robeline, Louisiana. Los Adaes, as the site came to be known, did well, as its friars, soldiers, and civilian residents of necessity adapted to Caddo patterns of village living and rules of comportment, and in the process became more accepting of the Caddos, upon whom they depended for survival. Returning to San Antonio in early 1722, Governor Aguayo issued directions for finishing the San Antonio de Béxar presidio started in 1718, then headed for La Bahía, where he established a mission to protect and Christianize the Karankawas and other coastal tribes. By the time Aguayo returned to his home in Coahuila in May 1722, he had increased the number of military posts and missions in Texas, repopulated the region with civilians, and established a much stronger Spanish hold on the entire province.

A new reconnoitering expedition in 1728 partly undermined Aguayo's work when it ascertained that the French were no longer the threat they had been once and concluded that a reduction in the number of Texas presidios, missions, and civilian settlements would make sense financially. But the friars remained committed to working among the Indians; hence some of the missions continued functioning as before. Moreover, the imperial government still desired to reinforce the halfway station at San Antonio. A *villa*, or civilian settlement, called San Fernando de Béxar, was built there in 1731, when sixteen families (between fifty-five and fifty-nine individuals) arrived from the Canary Islands. In that same year, the friars from East Texas relocated to San Antonio. Therefore, before the end of the 1730s, a presidio, a municipality, and five missions constituted the San Antonio (or Béxar) complex. Additionally, small Indian communities sprang up in the vicinity of San Antonio as Indian families gathered there, relying on Béxar for protection and material help.

The Spaniards also pushed to settle the country along the Rio Grande. Don José de Escandón took charge of this expedition, and by the early 1750s he had colonized the south bank of the river and also planted the seeds of modern-day Laredo, Texas. The lands of the lower Rio Grande Valley proved conducive to farming and ranching, and the region up to the Nueces River became pastureland for feral cattle and horses. The settling of this territory

on both sides of the Rio Grande proved to be one of Spain's most successful ventures in the Far North.

Church efforts to win converts also begot expansion, although attempts to broaden the mission system proved disappointing. In 1746, the Church established a mission (and the viceroy authorized the construction of a presidio in 1747) on the San Gabriel River (near present-day Rockdale, Texas) to assist the Tonkawas, who were then being victimized by the Apaches and Comanches, and it added two more missions in the vicinity in 1749. But the Crown never fully attended to these assignments. Demoralization among the presidial soldiers and even the missionaries set in, and the Indians became dissatisfied due to what they felt was a lack of proper attention. The project on the San Gabriel thus died in 1755.

An attempt to convert the dreaded Apaches also failed. Since the establishment of the San Antonio complex, these Indians had made periodic attacks on the settlements there, but by the 1740s their own hostilities with the Comanches had made the Apaches receptive to an alliance with the Spaniards. In turn, attacks by the Comanches and their allies upon Spanish settlements prompted the Spanish to make appeals to the Apaches for mutual defense plans. Given this opportunity to Christianize the Apaches, the Spaniards in 1757 established a mission and fort along the San Sabá River (near modern-day Menard, Texas); prospects of finding silver deposits also encouraged the enterprise. It did not last long. In March of 1758, a broad group of tribes allied against the Apaches (led by the Comanches) attacked the new mission and destroyed it completely. In addition, the Apaches showed indifference to the Spaniards' proselytizing overtures. Following a series of futile attempts to carry out imperial and missionary objectives there, the viceroy abandoned the San Sabá enterprise in 1769.

## Incorporation

What Spain sought by its efforts at settlement and missionization in Texas was the annexation of its far northern territory into the national core. Incorporation would involve transplanting the attributes of Spanish civilization to the frontier and ensuring the defense of the region from foreign threats by linking it to social and political systems in the interior of New Spain. Ideally, such a move would establish ties to the center of Spain's New World empire, which would be maintained through the presidio, the mission, the rancho, and the villa, institutions that had been successful in the process of incorporating former frontier regions throughout New Spain. But, as in all such efforts, settling the periphery of the empire entailed dealing with the indigenous peoples, who by their numbers, military prowess, and economic and political support systems controlled all of Texas except for the San Antonio to La Bahía wedge.

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## Spaniards in a Far Northern *Frontera*, 1721–1821

The king's plans to solidify control of New Spain's Far North do not fully account for the development of Spanish settlements in Texas. Although the new communities may have acted as buffers against possible French and British incursions into the province, other motives prompted frontierspeople to make their way into the Far North. The expanding *frontera* (frontier) gave some an outlet for escape—from natural disasters, ecological hardships, or unemployment in another province of New Spain. In addition, pulling up roots offered common folks restrained by ethnic prejudice a fresh start, for social distinctions tended to blur on the *frontera*. Frontier living also gave respite from oppressive taxation and miscellaneous duties imposed on the lower classes in some well-established communities. Moreover, the cattle and mining industries that thrust outwardly from New Spain held out the prospects of improvement through gainful employment. The northern lands even extended the possibility of achieving a livelihood in landholding or some modest business venture. Finally, unsavory types visualized the frontier as a wide-open place in which to escape the authorities and continue to engage in smuggling and banditry.

Such motives have propelled migratory movements in other places and times, and they played themselves out in New Spain. By no means, however, did *pobladores* inundate Texas. Several factors explain why the migrational flow northward never swelled beyond a trickle. Epidemic diseases had so severely reduced New Spain's population in the sixteenth century that the overcrowding pressures that generally uproot people did not build for quite some time thereafter. Even in the early eighteenth century, European immigration was so slight that few people already in New Spain felt crowded enough to brave adventure by relocating to the unknown hinterlands. Landowners in New Spain, furthermore, faced a severely reduced labor supply and fought hard to retain control of their workers. In addition, concerted efforts by royal officials to populate Texas entered a lull during the last half of the eighteenth century. After Spain acquired Louisiana in November 1762, Texas no longer had to serve as a frontier defensive outpost. Accordingly, the Crown shifted its concerns to other, more pressing problems.

At the same time, Texas was hardly a place with many immigrational “pull” factors. The region lacked an infrastructure, hostile Indian tribes threatened the lives of many settlers, and fruitless searches had convinced people that no great deposits of precious metals lay in the land to fulfill their hopes. Indeed, at the close of the eighteenth century, Texas remained one of the least-inhabited territories of New Spain.

Never, however, did isolation degenerate into imperial neglect. Orders from the viceroy and lesser officials filtered down systematically to colonial officials, primarily the governor of the province. As the king’s appointee, the governor (his assignment was to reside in the *presidio* of Los Adaes, but he sometimes took up residence in Béxar) held a range of duties that included overseeing the military, dealing with the Indians, and tending to law enforcement and various other civic affairs. Settlers were expected to abide by the governor’s commands, benign neglect permitted *Tejanos* (Mexicans living in Texas) to carry out the Crown’s directives in their own way, modifying royal mandates to meet the demands of frontier life. Therefore, society in Spanish Texas emerged as a compromise between policy prescribed by imperial and national goals and the survival instincts that served the colonists trying to build decent lives in an uncompromising land.

After the 1730s, the Spanish Crown made no concerted effort to recruit and dispatch new settlers to Texas. Population increases in the province derived instead from the voluntary arrival of more settlers (and the periodic assignment of soldiers to the province), most of whom arrived from Coahuila and Nuevo León. On the frontier, the newcomers joined their predecessors in a process of demographic change, cultural growth, and economic activity revolving around the centers of socialization: the missions, presidios, ranchos, and civilian settlements.

## Frontier Institutions

### Missions

In the Far North, Catholicism remained the sole religion, disseminated by missionaries belonging to ecclesiastical orders (regular clergy) who labored both for the Crown and the Church in the tradition of the *patronato real*. The king provided the clergymen with government subsidies; the priests reimbursed the monarch by guarding the frontier line and ministering to the un-Christianized Indian flocks, whom the king wanted brought into “civilized life.” In such an accord, the king retained title to the plots of land upon which the friars (also known as fathers, or *padres*) built their missions. The Church, in turn, owned the mission compounds, which comprised the structures the friars erected, the surrounding gardens, the mission pasturelands and livestock, and the *campo santo* (holy burial ground). In the mission compound, the friars introduced the Indians to Christianity and instructed them in “acceptable” behavior, using the Indians’ own language at first before gradually switching to Spanish. The friars held their charges to a rigid routine that included daily mass, the recitation of prayer and the rosary, as well as lessons on the mysteries of the holy faith. The friars also forced the Indians into assisting with the maintenance of the mission: men worked the fields or tended to the livestock, while women spun cotton or wool and made clothes. The friars often used corporal punishment—involving the lash, torture, or other abusive practices—to enforce religious and temporal responsibilities. Once the so-called neophytes had been deculturized and converted into faithful subjects (and, incidentally, tax-paying citizens), the state-subsidized missionaries left for new grounds, turning responsibilities for the preservation of the faith over to parish priests (secular clergy). Figure 2.1 shows the frontier institutions in Texas.

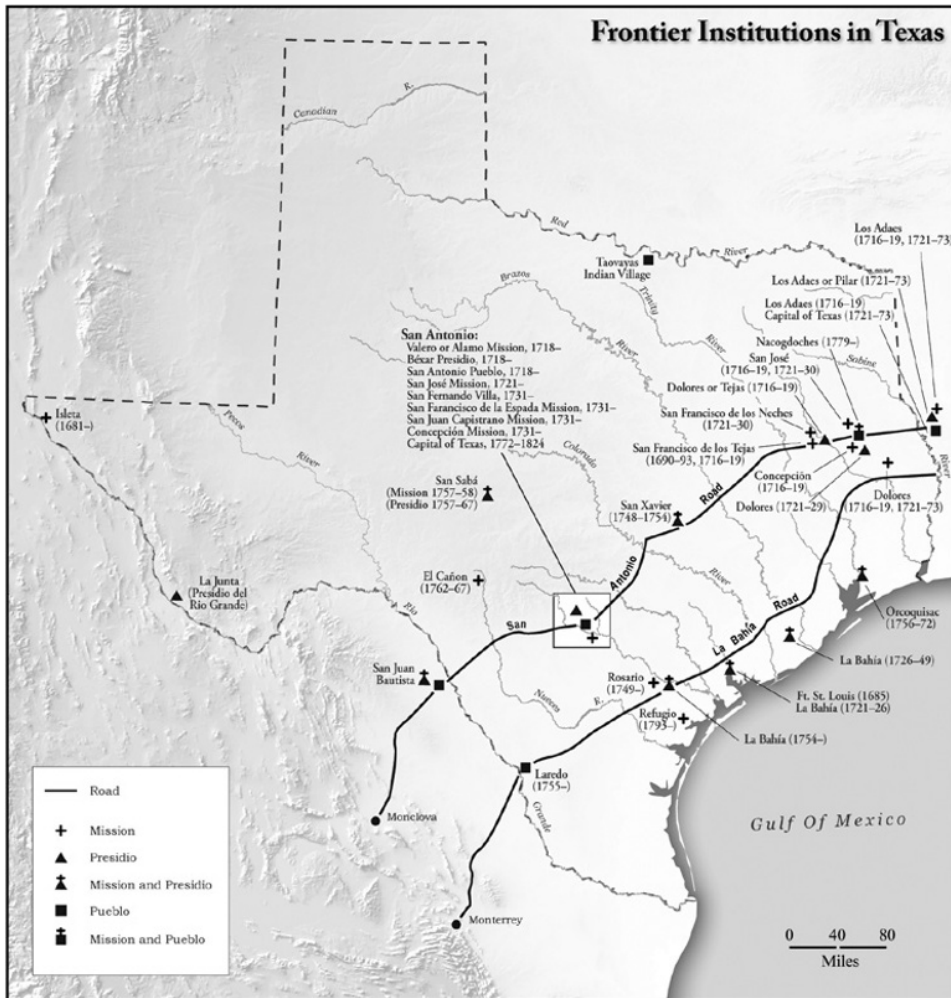


Figure 2.1 Frontier institutions in Texas.

For the *gente de razón* (literally translated as “the people of reason” but meaning members of Spanish colonial society), the missions also served as surrogate agencies that administered religious rites, the friars tending to the people at baptism, marriage, and death. These responsibilities were actually carried out primarily by diocesan priests appointed to Texas from the interior of New Spain. To them fell the duty of ministering to the civilian faithful, especially toward the late eighteenth century as the Church reassigned Franciscans elsewhere due to a diminishing commitment to Indian conversion. By the waning decades of the 1700s, most of the Spanish population centers in Texas (i.e., San Antonio, Goliad, and the Laredo area) had a priest (or priests) tending to the spiritual needs of the pobladores. Devotion to Catholicism thus persisted throughout the settlements, as witnessed in popular and private expressions. Colonists organized community and religious fiestas during specific holy days (such as on December 12, the day of the Virgen de Guadalupe), and engaged in individual worship: reciting home prayer, erecting family altars, and observing the Lenten season.

A range of religious expression existed among the pobladores. Whereas some Tejanos displayed fidelity and piety, many others practiced a type of popular religiosity, as did other

villagers living on the frontier, where the institutional church did not exert much influence. These nominal Catholics slighted the more restrictive tenets of their faith and violated certain of its scriptures, as evidenced by the government's enactment of laws designed to curtail blasphemous behavior. In the town of Nacogdoches, for example, authorities arrested a citizen in 1805 for publicly criticizing the Church by placing "indecorous" posters on trees. Notwithstanding such irreverence, throughout the colonial era missionaries sought to minister to families, soldiers, and government representatives.

### **Presidios**

Presidios functioned as agents for defense by extending the velvet glove to hostile Indian tribes, such as the Apaches, or serving as trading centers and camps where friendly tribes might take refuge among their new Spanish allies. The frontier garrisons also assisted with missionization. Presidio troops tracked down runaway mission subjects, such as the Karankawas in La Bahía, and even undertook expeditions to replace runaways by kidnapping Indians to work in the missions' households and fields. In such a role, the presidial staffs helped discipline the Indians and keep them in submission, thereby helping the missions maintain a sufficient labor force.

The presidio also served as the scene of much economic and social development. The presidial payroll influenced local economies. Moreover, the forts provided work for common laborers; purchased produce and finished goods from farmers, ranchers, and merchants; and hired the services of artisans. Furthermore, they helped entice people to the frontier by holding out prospects for steady employment and upward social mobility, especially for the poverty stricken or the lower castes. Many of the important Tejano families in the early nineteenth century were descendants of presidial servicemen. Those presidios built in territories far remote from civilian settlements attracted pioneers seeking refuge from an isolated or dangerous life. Sometimes extralegal (unofficial, or unauthorized) settlements sprang up near the more remote forts.

### **Ranchos and the cattle trade**

On the frontier, civilians made their living off the land, with ranching becoming the principal livelihood of settlers in Texas. The amount of acreage the pobladores worked varied, for the size of a parcel given to an individual varied according to how the property owner planned to use it. For the keeping of large range animals and beasts of burden, the king granted one league of land, or 4428.4 acres. Those grantees intending to raise sheep, goats, or hogs received approximately 1920 acres. Cattle breeders received a unit of approximately 1084 acres. Normal procedure for land concessions called for the completion of an application and the payment of a fee. But in Texas, as in other regions of the Far North, more flexible standards prevailed, as well as a tradition of informal land granting. In Nacogdoches, for example, families acquired land simply by making a verbal agreement with a local official.

The assets of the frontier ranches stemmed from the first *entradas* (expeditions) into Texas. According to records, in 1689 Alonso de León brought to Texas 200 head of cattle, 400 horses, and 150 mules for the sole purpose of propagation. As he returned to Coahuila, he left a male and a female of each species on the bank of every stream he crossed in between the Neches River and the Rio Grande. In 1716, Domingo Ramón's expedition imported 64 oxen, 500 horses and mules, and more than 1000 sheep and goats into Texas. Aguayo's

entourage had included nearly 4800 cattle, some 2800 horses, and about 6400 sheep and goats. José de Escandón and his colonizers marched toward the Rio Grande in 1748 driving herds of equine and bovine stock. Over the years, the animals that survived these entradas roamed throughout Texas, their numbers augmented over time through natural reproduction and unintentional release, such as during a stampede.

The first people to enter the ranching industry were the missionaries, those who had received the first land grants in Texas. But their stock soon multiplied beyond their control, with many individual animals straying off mission lands to join free-ranging herds. The frontier people referred to all unclaimed wild stock as *mesteños*. And just as they had laid claim to the roving herds descendent from the animals imported through the early entradas, the settlers were quick to claim the missionaries' livestock as soon as the animals had wandered into open pastures. As time passed, civilians who received land grants started their own ranches, often stocking their new enterprises with these "found" cattle.

The plains west of San Antonio to the Guadalupe River proved ideal for raising stock—one scholar refers to the area as the "cradle of Texas ranching"—and the mission ranches in this area enjoyed success. At La Bahía, the number of cattle increased from 3000 head in 1758 to 16,000 head by 1768. In the 1760s, the five San Antonio missions herded close to 5000 cattle, 1100 horses, and 10,000 sheep. Naturally, Bédareños residents of the San Antonio/Bexar area engaged in the livestock business to provide for numerous local needs, among them mounts for the military, sheep and goat products, and draft animals, including oxen. The settlers of Nacogdoches (a community surrounded by rich grasslands) after the 1780s also turned to ranching for their sustenance, and they earned a reputation throughout Louisiana and Texas for breeding fine horses. South of the Nueces River to the Rio Grande roamed another concentration of thousands of cattle, sheep, goats, mules, and horses. At the end of the eighteenth century, livestock raising flourished in Texas, the seeds of future, large-scale cattle raising already sown.

The proliferation of the cattle ranches disguises the tremendous amount of energy that people exerted to wrest a living from a harsh environment. Generally, ranchers made their own corrals and other ranching necessities with the assistance of only their immediate families. They lived in homes better known for their function than their good looks. And because frontier people made their living working the land, they placed little emphasis on indoor living space. Typically, they built small houses with few modern amenities. Furnishings were homemade and often of an improvised design, among them furniture, bedding, and modest decorations. These conditions applied equally to the wealthier members of Tejano society, who also lived a fairly plain material existence. Although they had beef, poultry, and pork, most pobladores still cultivated a garden plot to supply their households with vegetables and fruits; usually, gardening fell to the women of the family.

Although most ranches amounted to no more than one-family ventures, some had paid servants and slaves—in some cases, Indians served as virtual slaves. The notion that the colonial ranching elite was composed of romantic gentlemen of leisure is misleading. According to lore, these grandees refused to perform any work they considered demeaning, devoting themselves instead to gambling and the chase. In reality, the *rancheros*, as well as their wives and children, labored long, hard hours.

Nevertheless, the ranchos displayed the Spaniards' ability to adapt to the topography of the new land. The ranchos were well suited to the semiarid plains, where farming was difficult. Furthermore, even with a shortage of labor the rancho might be very productive. Lastly, the *rancheros* could move their source of livelihood (their livestock) on short notice in order to save it from an impending raid or attack, a feat that a farmer with a field full of crops could not even contemplate.

During the early 1750s, livestock markets developed in the neighboring provinces of Nuevo León and Coahuila. Before long, Tejano settlers annually journeyed to the fair in Saltillo (in Coahuila), taking with them cattle and horses, suet, and tallow, which they bartered for supplies, implements, and manufactured goods that were scarce in their own settlements.

In the 1770s, Texas ranchers entered into a fairly regular commercial association with markets in Louisiana. When, in 1780, the Spanish Crown issued a concession permitting Tejanos to trade cattle with merchants in Louisiana (which, though acquired by Spain in 1762, was tied to the administrative structure of Cuba), it proved fortuitous for the stockmen. In the next ten years, Tejanos drove countless herds of cattle east. But because this newly legalized trade required a tax on cattle and horses exported from Texas, smuggling continued alongside the extensive legal trade. Furthermore, rancheros established a pattern of marketing animals in the United States, taking their stock from Béxar or Goliad through the Piney Woods of East Texas. Such trade with the outside world strengthened the province's capitalist orientation, for it encouraged the concentration of private property, contributed to varying degrees of individual wealth, and abetted the division of labor. This interstate commerce eventually forged Texas's ties to the capitalist economy of the United States.

### Farms

Although settlers on the frontier planted a number of crops, in Texas, farming did not flourish. Most grantees intending to farm received relatively meager parcels of land, usually as a *labor*—approximately 177 acres—and too many other factors worked against farming at this time to make it a major means of support. The setbacks included the Tejanos' reliance on ranching and commerce in livestock; the lack of available workers to undertake the labor-intensive tasks of clearing land, digging irrigation ditches, and tending crops; the scarcity of farm equipment and the difficulties in transporting it to the frontier; the threat of Indian raids on standing crops; the constant battling of insect infestation; the worry brought on by bad weather conditions; and, perhaps most important, the absence of accessible markets that might have fostered commercial agriculture. Ordinarily, then, farms in colonial Texas were of a hardscrabble, subsistence type that enabled their owners to eke out a living.

In the San Antonio settlements, farmers used the waters of the San Antonio River and San Pedro Creek to irrigate their fields. They raised cotton, pumpkins, melons, corn, beans, and peppers—crops raised by the Béxar mission Indians as well. Whereas some in the East Texas community of Los Adaes undertook farming, early settlers there constantly faced natural disasters, usually in the form of crop-destroying floods, so that they often called on the nearby French settlements in Louisiana or the Caddos for needed provisions. In Nacogdoches, farmers nurtured small town lots or harvested a variety of vegetable products from nearby fields. La Bahía was located in an infertile area before 1749; and its permanent site in modern Goliad (to which it was moved) did not lend itself to farming—the local garrison was forced to rely on San Antonio for its grain supplies.

### Towns

As the eighteenth century waned, only four civilian settlements dotted the ranching province. In East Texas, Nacogdoches held 350 settlers as of 1783. South toward La Bahía, approximately 450 pobladores lived in and around the mission and presidio that year (Figure 2.2). San Antonio, meanwhile, counted 1248 inhabitants. On the Rio Grande, the





**Figure 2.2** The pobladores turned to the environment for materials with which to build homes in the Texas frontera. Source: *Mexicans in San Antonio, Texas, 1887* series E. K Sturdevant, photographer, Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library (SC9995.4.15).

population of Laredo comprised 700 residents as of 1789. Attempts to establish other civilian units in the early nineteenth century faltered.

These (relatively) urban sites acted in concert with the other frontier institutions, but they were civilian settlements. Townsfolk included the families of presidial soldiers, Indian neophytes, and even persons on the dodge or those engaged in contraband commerce. Those in charge of town government came from the civilian sector; the *alcalde* (mayor) cared for the many needs of a *municipio* (the settlement proper plus outlying areas) through the *ayuntamiento*. The ayuntamiento further held responsibility for executing imperial directives, building government structures, protecting the urbanites' property, maintaining law and order, boosting town growth, enforcing morality, and organizing community functions. Like other administrative bodies on the frontier, the ayuntamiento often interpreted royal directives loosely, bending them to meet local and immediate considerations.

Townsppeople made a living in a variety of ways. Artisans served presidios and missions, *vaqueros* did seasonal work on ranches, teamsters transported goods and materials on carts pulled by livestock (horses, mules, donkeys, or oxen), and day laborers performed a range of unspecialized tasks. Merchants, bakers, tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, and barbers met the needs of an urban populace. But rancheros also took residence in towns, diversifying and changing the economy. In B exar, some rancheros used their livestock to produce essential commodities—soap and candles, but also hides, from which leatherned body armor and shields were fashioned. In Laredo, rancheros exchanged livestock products and horses for tools and garments brought in from the interior of New Spain. People in other Rio Grande settlements also exported south a wide selection of products native to the area, from fish to mutton to hides. Money remained scarce throughout the province, but urban-based economic activity, like that on the ranchos, contributed to the nascent Texas economy.

Town living posed numerous problems, but the pobladores managed a crude survival. To make homes, they took advantage of materials readily available in wilderness areas, their

domiciles ranging from the undistinguished to the attractive. Masons quarried stone for use in the construction of important buildings. Common people living around San Antonio and southern Texas constructed homes of mud, the type of soil essential for adobe found locally. Mesquite trees, grass, and other natural products were used to build *jacaes* (huts): slender mesquite posts placed in vertical rows served as walls, thatched coverings as roofs. Waterworks to serve a town and its adjacent fields had to be constructed communally. In B exar, citizens contributed their tools and materials to this end. By their own labor, they built the dams, *acequias* (irrigation canals), and aqueducts for the town and the neighboring network of missions. As time progressed, even the Canary Islanders, who had once sought to remain aloof from the rest of B exar society, came to terms with fellow residents; community and family ties impelled them to pull their own weight and deal cooperatively with the adversities of life on the frontier.

Although town living was in some ways safer than life in a rural setting, numerous blights plagued the urbanites. Lack of proper sewage facilities and the concentration of rotting animal waste and carcasses and other litter contributed to the spread of deadly epidemics (such as smallpox and cholera), as did muddy streets (good breeding grounds for mosquitoes during rainy weather). Doctors, drugs, and hospitals rarely made their way to the Far North (the only hospital, which operated for less than ten years, was founded in San Antonio in 1805). Crime committed by vagrants, smugglers, prostitutes, and other social nonconformists became an undeniable aspect of urban life. Finally, attacks by Comanches and other Plains Tribes remained ever possible.

Despite such difficulties, townspeople managed to live reasonably well. Diversions, often in the way of cultural traditions brought from the interior of New Spain, took several forms. In leisure time, family members gathered to tell folktales or sing *corridos* (story-telling ballads). Religious holidays were observed with a combination of Catholic solemnity and frontier-charged enthusiasm, and they afforded welcome opportunities for entertainment. These and other special occasions might see the holding of a *fandango* (festive dance), those with a talent for playing the guitar or the fiddle providing the music. In a ranching culture, favorite amusements included horseracing and the *carrera del gallo*, a contest that took several forms; in one, mounted vaqueros raced at full gallop to be the first to reach down and pull off the head of a rooster buried up to its neck in the ground.

Though sparse, intellectual life existed on the frontier. A few books made their way there, though only the well-to-do could afford them. Writing was the domain of the literate, which certainly included government officials and the clergy, but most communities comprised a few settlers and soldiers with the necessary skills. Indeed, much of the earliest knowledge of the Texas landscape and its original inhabitants comes from the diaries and chronicles of the conquistadores. Missionaries also told their accounts of working with the neophytes and left to posterity careful records of early Native American civilizations. Historians have used these writings to enhance their knowledge of the colonial era. Especially valuable for this is Father Juan Agust n Morfi's *History of Texas, 1673–1779*, written by the clergyman after an official visit to Texas.

Some of the province's leaders sought out, albeit with mixed success, good teachers within the community to instruct the young. Factors such as poverty, the uncertainty of frontier life, a belief in the general "uselessness" of an education in the hinterlands, and the dearth of books partly account for the absence of an educational system. But by the early nineteenth century, all the urban settlements had established some type of rudimentary educational facility.

Communications, however crude, connected Texas with Mexico over the *Camino Real* (the King's Highway, also called the San Antonio Road). This artery traversed the province

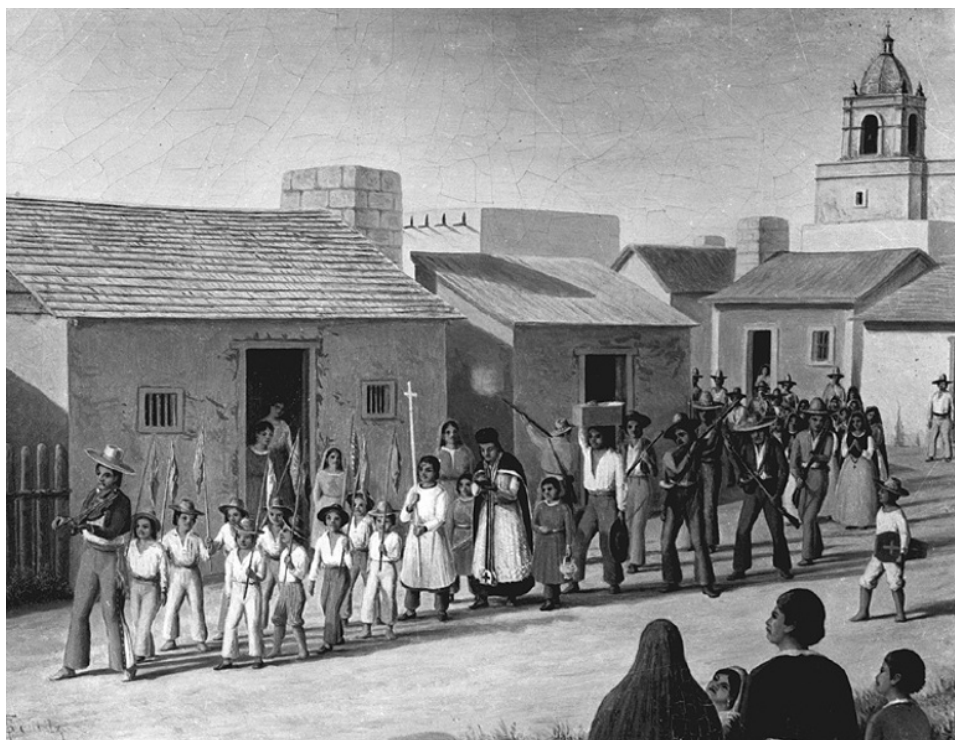
from San Juan Bautista, on the Rio Grande, to Béxar, and up to the East Texas settlements. A second route extended from Laredo to La Bahía, then connected to the Camino Real at the Trinity River. Mounted couriers regularly carried mail from throughout New Spain to Texas towns.

## Frontier Society

### Mestizaje

The nonindigenous population of Texas stood at about 500 persons in 1731. It grew to about 3000 during the 1770s and 1780s, and then leaped to about 4000 in 1800. Despite high birth rates, many factors kept this population from growing rapidly. The adversities of frontier life included a high infant-mortality rate (Figure 2.3), continual warfare with the Indians, farming methods that yielded only a paucity of agricultural foodstuffs, traditional (and by modern standards improper) notions of diet and hygiene, a lack of doctors and hospitals, and periodic waves of virulent diseases. Epidemics such as cholera, which swept through San Antonio in 1780 and took the lives of three people daily, also kept the population's growth in check.

Other forces, nonetheless, do account for demographic growth. Immigration from the interior of New Spain, much of it sporadic, played a part, as resolute settlers struck out for the Far North. In addition, convicts were occasionally dispatched to the region to help build



**Figure 2.3** The funeral of an “angel” or baptized infant. Infant mortality rates were high on the frontera. Source: Theodore Gentilz, *Entierro de un Angel*, Yanaguana Society Collection, Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library.

presidios; in time, the former inmates intermixed with the indigenous population. Still, natural propagation accounted for most of the Tejano population growth.

Those who peopled Texas in the eighteenth century had a range of ethnic makeups, and they lived with a degree of sexual imbalance, with men outnumbering women. This led presidial soldiers and *mestizos* (mixed-bloods who descended from European-Indian parents) to mix with assimilated Indians, especially those around San Antonio. The process of *mestizaje* (racial and cultural union involving Europeans, Indians, and some Africans), which dated back to the earliest years of Spain's contact with the New World civilizations, continued in Texas unabated.

Although the censuses of the 1780s show that *españoles* (Spaniards) made up about one-half of the population of the province, those figures are misleading, for the term did not designate undiluted Spanishness. Rather, it served as an all-embracing label that described relative wealth, social and occupational standing, degree of cultural assimilation, and even the attitudes of the census takers. In reality, few European Spaniards lived in Texas, and those classified as such really belonged in the mestizo category. Even the Canary Islanders had mixed with the rest of the Tejano population within two generations of the founding of San Fernando de Béxar, so that none of them could truly speak of their own racial purity.

Classification regarding "Spanishness" derived from the accepted feeling on the frontier that people of darker skin hues and of mixed blood could "pass" as Spaniards, especially when they had achieved some sort of social standing as ranchers, government officials, or military personnel. Thus, on the frontier, economic success tended to override racial makeup in one's classification. Lower-class mestizos and other people of color such as mulattoes and slaves, however, almost always encountered difficulties in achieving the more prestigious status of "Spanish." However, it was possible for Hispanicized Indians, people of African descent who had attained their freedom, and mulattoes to break through the mestizo stratum.

### Social differences

The social structure of Texas, therefore, did not mirror the stratified order of New Spain's interior, which placed the *peninsulares* (European-born Spaniards who dominated the higher political offices) at the top, ranked the *criollos* (American-born Spaniards who ordinarily inherited their European-born parents' possessions) next, and relegated the mestizos, Indians, and Africans to the bottom. In Texas, as in other frontier regions, the routine mixing of races mitigated ethnic divisions.

Degrees of wealth nonetheless separated some Tejanos from the majority. Government officials and military commandants enjoyed more secure incomes, although they hardly earned enough to claim prosperity. Entrepreneurs in towns and rancheros and farmers working peons or slaves constituted part of the emerging capitalist sector in colonial society. This group owned the nicer homes, and they had the capacity to derive a better standard of living from their tracts of land. But this upper stratum represented no corporate interest or any attempt to perpetuate and protect specific privileges of a social order. Moreover, their distinction from other Tejanos remained tenuous. In education, racial makeup, cultural heritage, speech, and dress, the "upper class" largely resembled the rest of society. Their status hinged mainly on their material holdings and not on deference owed them because of their skin color, place of birth, or noble family background. These qualifications applied equally to the Canary Islanders, who eventually became part of the overall Texas population, although some of them did manage to remain at the top of the social hierarchy.

Beneath the small upper crust representing the well-to-do in Tejano society lay the remainder of the Tejano population, comprising common laborers, semiskilled workers, and Hispanicized Indians. Once again, their social categorization had less to do with their ethnic makeup than their lack of material assets.

### Slavery

The nature of slavery in colonial Texas has yet to be studied adequately. According to the censuses conducted in the latter part of the eighteenth century, the number of black persons in the province (excluding the offspring of black and mestizo/indigenous people unions) barely exceeded fifty, the majority of which resided in East Texas, the region closest to Louisiana, from which some had run away. Most blacks were not slaves; whether they had arrived in Texas as fugitives or as free persons, they integrated themselves into colonial society, adopting Spanish surnames and learning the Spanish language. At least a few Tejano rancheros, however, did acquire slaves in New Orleans, exchanging cattle for bond-people or acquiring them through barter with the French living in neighboring Louisiana communities. In the latter years of the century, some farmers living around Nacogdoches held slaves. Although Spain did not follow a pattern of exporting Africans to New Spain's Far North, the Crown did extend its official policy on slavery to Texas. This prohibited Africans from congregating, lest they plan insurrection, and from possessing firearms. Given the dire need for free laborers to perform so many menial tasks on the frontier, however, doubt exists that colonials stringently enforced such slave codes. More plausibly, Africans worked alongside other day laborers in an integrated workforce.

### Tejanas

Women's place in Spanish Texas probably resembled that of other women in similar colonial societies. Living far from the interior, Tejanas escaped some of the sexual limitations more strictly outlined in New Spain proper. The rigors of frontier life tended to soften gender discrimination, as they did that of race, and women engaged in such duties as fighting Indians, helping with ranch and farm chores (including herding), and conducting mercantile activity. Still, women's chief role was that of providing the best possible domestic setting in an isolated place. The drudgery of dragging in water and wood, preparing food, making, repairing, and washing clothes, cultivating local plants, making household necessities such as soap, and passing on to the children the morals and values of Spanish-Mexican culture all crammed their way into a woman's busy life.

Although frontier life may have had certain democratizing tendencies, it posed severe problems for women. Isolation limited social mobility—improvement for women could occur only through fortuitous changes, such as marriage to a rising businessman or rancher. The region offered little opportunity for women to establish their own vocations, though some women practiced midwifery as a profession. Indeed, most of the responsibility for taking care of the ill (such as treating snakebites, setting bones, or tending to rheumatism) fell on the shoulders of women. It was women who primarily practiced *curanderismo* (folk healing). In addition, on the frontier, women were often treated as objects. Fathers might arrange marriages for their young daughters, unscrupulous military officers sexually exploited their subordinates' wives, and shameless husbands abused their spouses with impunity.

The law denied colonial women certain rights. Women could not vote or hold elective office. Moreover, a man could legally prevent his wife from leaving him. On the other hand, Tejanas could use the judicial system and be parties to suits under Spanish law, either as plaintiffs or defendants. Tejanas could prepare wills for themselves; this right gave them the freedom to override patriarchal restraints on gender. Women, therefore, left material possessions to family and friends, such as clothes, personal articles, or household goods, although in the case of women who had amassed meaningful assets or had become widowed, beneficiaries could inherit savings, home, or ranch property. In short, women in Spanish Texas enjoyed more legal rights than did their contemporary counterparts in French or British North American colonies.

The historical record shows that women played constructive roles in colonial society. Doña María Hinojosa de Ballí, sometimes hailed as Texas's first cattle queen, enlarged the South Texas ranch she received upon her husband's death; the estate eventually covered much of the lower Rio Grande Valley as well as Padre Island. Other women similarly experienced success as ranch managers, among them Ana María del Carmen Calvillo, a single woman from San Antonio who during this era (and continuing until the 1850s) also made a going concern of inherited ranchland. Doña María achieved success despite a series of setbacks in life: a failed marriage, the death of her children, and the untimely murder of her father.

### **Indian Accommodation and Resistance**

No one knows exactly how many Native Americans lived in Texas during the colonial era, for government officials found it difficult to ascertain a correct count of unsettled tribes. One census in the late 1770s placed the number of Indians (excluding those in the missions) in excess of 7000, whereas modern researchers offer a higher figure, perhaps 20,000 for the late eighteenth century. Figure 2.4 shows the distribution of Indian tribes in colonial Texas.

The Indians who came from the hunter-gatherer bands inhabiting the areas east and south of San Antonio to the Gulf Coast displayed the most interest in the teachings of the missionaries. In many cases, however, reasons other than a true desire for conversion to Catholicism explain their cooperation. For the Coahuiltecas, a move to the mission conformed to their traditional transitory lifestyle and they relied on the institutions for protection from neighboring tormentors. For other Indian bands, missions acted as temporary shelters for families during times of stress; the transients would leave once conditions for them improved. For those afflicted with disease or starvation, the mission centers simply offered an alternative to death. Whatever the reason for their arrival at the missions, their stays there afforded Indian families an opportunity to develop kinship connections or alliances with other groups. Furthermore, once under the tutelage of the friars, the neophytes learned numerous usable skills; prospective converts learned to farm, herd stock, manufacture cotton and woolen products, and make useful items such as bricks, soap, adobe, and footwear. Those in San Antonio helped erect the town's complex of missions by digging irrigation ditches, building beamed bridges and other structures, planting vegetables and cotton, and pasturing horses, sheep, goats, and pigs that the friars then sold locally at modest profits. By the end of the eighteenth century, Indian converts had accepted aspects of Catholicism into their lifestyle, as well as new attitudes toward work and certain other tenets of European civilization. Some in Béxar had even intermarried or become Hispanicized

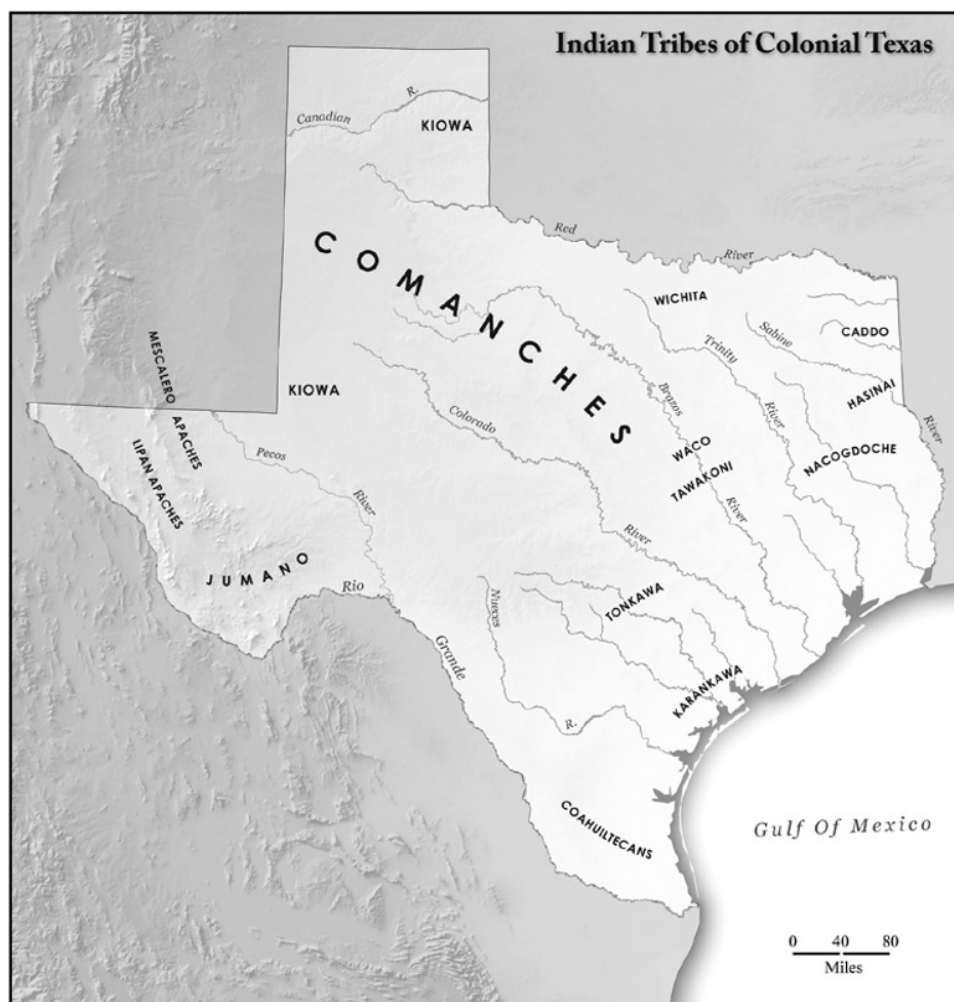


Figure 2.4 Indian tribes of Colonial Texas.

to the point that they became part of the local labor force. Tribes such as the Coahuiltecan, on the other hand, ceased to exist as a distinct people during the eighteenth century due to displacement by Spaniards, the unceasing hostilities of warlike tribes, and the scourge of Old World plagues.

But most other Texas tribes had no desire to submit themselves to the disciplined life that was the mission routine. This fierce independence was displayed by the Karankawas of the Gulf Coast, whom the curates had once seen as likely recruits for conversion. Certainly, the Karankawas visited the missions, not so much because they wished to convert, but because in the course of the tribespeople's regular migratory cycles they came to see the missions as sources of subsistence. The members of other tribes also failed to assimilate to mission life, and they, too, remained faithful to their traditional way of life by maintaining economic independence. The Jumanos, for all their clamoring for Christian teaching, sought to use the Spaniards as temporary guards who might protect them as they conducted trade with the Caddos of East Texas. The Caddos also resisted missionary overtures, due to their ability to provide for themselves, both as skilled farmers and traders, the commerce that they had developed with the neighboring French in Louisiana proving favorable.

Ultimately, Native American peoples in Texas suffered irreversibly from such factors as frontier warfare with Europeans, intertribal power struggles, waves of epidemic diseases introduced by the Europeans, population losses, and climatic changes over which they had no control. For instance, the shortage of people to work garden plots, form effective hunting parties, and prepare products for home use and the trade circuit led to disaster for many tribes. Then, early in the eighteenth century, came another hardship to the plains people of Texas, one that posed dire consequences. Whereas buffalo had once roamed in great numbers throughout many parts of Texas, drought that plagued the plains during the early decades of the 1700s decimated the herds in South Texas as well as in the Jumano home bases in West Texas—or at least drove the animals northward. Without as many buffalo grazing traditional hunting grounds, the Indians faced starvation, sickness, and other hardships.

The Jumanos, among others, suffered from a combination of the above factors as well as from changing economic patterns. Their old trading partners, the Caddos, by the 1690s preferred instead to develop business ties with French Louisiana. In addition, incessant intertribal warfare (involving most if not all of the area's Indian nations) throughout the course of the eighteenth century made conducting commerce across Texas a highly dangerous undertaking. By the late seventeenth century or the early eighteenth century, most of the Jumano people had been absorbed by the Apache.

The Karankawas, on the other hand, remained at odds with the Spaniards until the last decades of the eighteenth century—bitter toward the Europeans over the diseases they imported and the attacks the outsiders made upon Karankawa camps (in retaliation, it must be noted, for the cattle rustling undertaken by the Karankawas). The Karankawas made common cause with the Apaches by supplying them with arms acquired from Louisiana. During the last decades of the eighteenth century, the Karankawas came under constant attack by other tribes, namely the Comanches, and the former experienced rapid population losses because of warfare and pestilence. From 8000 in 1685, the Karankawa population had been whittled down to approximately 3000 by 1780. It was, therefore, in the 1790s and early 1800s that the Karankawas finally turned to the missions (at least to Nuestra Señora del Refugio Mission, in present-day Calhoun County, established for them in 1793) and integrated the religious institutions into their survival patterns. Missions provided them shelter from the Comanches and extended them sustenance, at least during those seasons of the year when fishing and foraging throughout the coastal areas yielded insufficient foodstuffs to maintain the tribespeople.

The Caddo civilization in East Texas weathered the calamities of the colonial era better than the Coahuiltecan, Jumanos, and Karankawas did. Although suffering a decline in numbers due to the destructive forces mentioned previously, Caddo society remained stable. In the latter decades of the eighteenth century, the great chief Tinhouen (the Elder) played an influential role in the international trade conducted in Caddo country, with Spanish, French, and Indian traders seeking his favor. Commercial links with the French became so intimate that they modified Caddo society during the eighteenth century. In exchange for their own farm goods as well as buffalo hides, bear fat, and mustangs acquired in bartering with nearby tribes, the Caddos received weapons, work tools, hunting equipment, blankets, and clothing from the French. This symbiotic relationship made the Caddos more successful hunters and improved their standard of living, but it had a downside. Old skills atrophied as tribe members no longer needed to produce bows and arrows, traditional crafts, or weave clothing. Their close relationship also brought the Caddos new diseases and an overreliance on the French for protection. When France turned Louisiana over to the Spanish after the conclusion of the French and Indian War in 1763, the Caddos were left on their own to face



hostile Indian tribes from the north, the encroachment of Spaniards from the west, and the threat of American settlers from the east. At the end of the colonial era, the Caddos struggled for their very survival, but they managed to remain in their homelands until the 1850s.

Many other tribes known to Europeans as out-and-out hostile, belligerent, and nomadic (whom the Spanish referred to collectively as the *indios bárbaros*) survived well into the latter years of the nineteenth century. They did so by pursuing several imaginative strategies, devising new tactics to combat European outsiders, engaging in protracted do-or-die struggles among themselves, and adapting to changing circumstances.

The *Norteños* (that is, the Wichitas, the Comanches, and the Caddos, whom Spaniards collectively called the Nations of the North), openly rejected the presence of the Europeans in their domains. Since the early eighteenth century the Caddos had come to regard the Spaniards as outsiders because kinship relations had not bonded the two peoples, as they had Caddo and French families, or for that matter, Caddo and Spanish families at Los Adaes. In addition, since that time, the Caddos had entered into an economic network that included the Wichitas, the Comanches, and French traders. For the *Norteños*, moreover, the Spanish–Apache alliance (evident in the establishment of the San Sabá mission in 1757) by default made the Spanish their bitter enemies. The Comanches and Wichitas, for their part, responded with vicious attacks on the foreign settlements. The Comanches stole livestock, horses, weapons, tools, and supplies—items useful for living off the land and waging war. With firearms and other supplies acquired from the Mississippi region, the Wichitas kept up their raids on enemy tribes, livestock ranches, and Spanish missions.

The Plains Indians also survived the colonial period by winning bloody turf fights with competitors. Most successful in defeating challengers in such territorial wars were the Comanches (Figure 2.5). Along with their allies, the Wichitas and the Caddos, the Comanches engaged in bitter disputes with their mortal enemies, the Apaches. At stake in these clashes were the buffalo-hunting grounds, valuable assets that the enemy possessed (among them horses), and, equally important, control of the trade of an empire that stretched from East Texas to New Mexico and into the Great Plains.

Still another factor that contributed to the survival of Plains Indians was adaptation to a rapidly changing scene wrought by the effects of the European traffickers, fights over natural resources, ecological change, and the need to dominate the bartering network. Pressed by the Comanches and their *Norteño* allies, the Apaches, for one, suffered devastating losses in personnel and material belongings as they retreated deeper into South Texas and then into the wilderness of the trans-Pecos. As a recourse strategy for survival, the Apaches in the last decades of the eighteenth century honed old economic practices, adapting them to their new circumstances. They turned to rustling livestock, having quickly learned that mules, horses, and cattle could be traded for finished products that the Spaniards possessed. At the same time, the Apaches turned to kidnapping and adopting individuals of other Indian tribes with whom they had trade contacts in order to replenish demographic losses. They brutally attacked vulnerable Native American groups (and even some Spanish/Mexican villages) and made off with captives, but they also employed more peaceful means. As stated earlier, Jumano population decline was due in part to their absorption by the Apaches, as marriage between the two groups became somewhat common by the mid-1700s. Similarly, the Apaches used marriage between their women and Indian men in missions (such as the ones in San Antonio) to forge defensive pacts (through kinship associations) with Spanish officials responsible for security in Texas. This act of reshaping old survival methods and reconciling them to flux is referred to as *ethnogenesis*, something that all Indian peoples in Texas (not just the Apaches) practiced during the Spanish colonial period.



**Figure 2.5** Buffalo Hump, Comanche Indian. Source: Caldwell Papers, CN 10934, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

Furthermore, in their struggle for survival, the Plains Indians during the eighteenth century escalated their reliance on women to achieve the suspension of hostilities with the Spaniards (as well as with competing Indian nations). During the 1770s and 1780s, the Comanche, Wichita, and other bands used captive Mexican women as hostages in their efforts to extract supplies and horses from the Spaniards or to propose political truces—sometimes in return for native women whom the Spaniards held hostage. The Plains Indians further utilized the time-tested custom of having women, the traditional representatives of reconciliation, act as peace mediators in formal talks of conflict resolution. As noted, gender diplomacy anticipated kinship connections with adversaries and, subsequently, mutual commercial and defensive agreements. Given the disadvantages they faced on the hinterlands of their empire, the Spaniards readily accepted such arrangements.

### **The Bourbon Reforms**

In the second half of the eighteenth century, New Spain's fear of the invasion of Texas by foreign powers diminished. The French threat to the province dissolved when, in 1762, France ceded Louisiana west of the Mississippi River to Spain during the War for the Empire, known in Britain's New England colonies as the French and Indian War (1754–63), hoping

to prevent the province from falling into British hands. Though the 5700 Frenchmen in Louisiana did not welcome the prospect of becoming Iberian subjects and sought to undermine Spanish rule by forcing their first Spanish governor to depart for Cuba in 1768, the next year, a Spanish fleet reestablished Spanish sovereignty over the new acquisition. The British settlements situated along the Atlantic Coast were too far away to cause many problems for Texas. And after 1783, even the new nation of the United States suffered from too many internal problems to pose much of a menace. It was the *indios bárbaros* who continued to present the *pobladores* and Spanish officials with the most immediate difficulty.

But dramatic changes, with potentially adverse implications for New Spain and its northern frontiers, were taking place in Spain under the new Bourbon king, Carlos III (r. 1759–88). An admirer of the Enlightenment philosophies then current throughout Europe, Carlos moved to bring about important reforms to make the Crown's administration of the American colonies easier and to restore Spain's diminished great-power status. To Mexico, Carlos dispatched José de Gálvez to investigate the colony and recommend reform policy. Gálvez's fact-finding tour, which lasted from 1765 to 1771, produced a series of changes. The Crown replaced native Mexican lower-level administrators (who allegedly were guilty of institutionalized graft, inefficiency, and flouting the laws) with trusted and efficient officers from Spain who would preside over intendancies, or districts, in the interest of better government. Other edicts lowered the amount of taxes but ensured their collection by an efficient corps not known for corruption, as the old tax collectors had been. Free trade was established in 1778 within most of the Spanish kingdom. Subsequent directives opened more New Spanish ports for trade and lowered custom duties to encourage intercolonial commerce. These "Bourbon" reforms brought about a fabulous development within the empire.

In the meantime, the king entrusted the Marqués de Rubí with carefully inspecting the military organization and the state of defenses of the Far Northern frontier. Rubí spent from 1766 to 1767 gathering information for his report, touring the frontier from the Gulf of California to East Texas. In the process, he entered Texas from San Juan Bautista, on the Rio Grande, first inspecting the fledgling presidio complex at San Sabá. From there, his party headed for San Antonio, then to Los Adaes, the designated capital of the province, and to other stations in East Texas, thence to La Bahía, and from there back to San Juan Bautista. After this 700-mile swing, Rubí submitted his recommendations for presidial system reform.

Rubí's recommendations laid the groundwork for the New Regulations of Presidios of 1772. In consideration of the post-1762 conditions, in which Spanish-owned Louisiana now shielded Texas from European enemies, the new regulations directed several maneuvers: pulling back the military and missionary presence in East Texas; the relocation of the settlers of East Texas to San Antonio, so as to strengthen the latter city (the provincial capital would also be moved to Béxar); and the implementation of a velvet-glove policy toward the Comanches and other northern tribes and an iron-fist one toward the Apaches. The last suggestion derived from Rubí's understanding of Indian affairs. The Norteño attacks upon Spanish institutions were not directed at the whites specifically; instead, the Comanches and their allies sought retaliation for the Spanish practice of coddling, through missionization, their common Apache enemy. Rubí reasoned that peace in Texas might be achieved through an alliance with the Norteños against the Apaches, a partnership that (in addition to trade) the Norteños also desired.

Whereas the new policy against the Apaches alienated few Spanish colonists, such was not the case with the directives to uproot the people of East Texas. The East Texas *pobladores* living around the presidio and mission—approximately 500 persons, including Spaniards, Indians, blacks, and some French-descent people who had transferred from Louisiana—were

enjoying relative prosperity and had no wish to leave their homes. The governor of Texas, Juan María de Ripperdá, sympathized with the pobladores but had his orders to oversee the evacuation. In June 1773, the departure of 167 Los Adaes families, along with soldiers and friars, began. The group reached San Antonio after three months of suffering en route due to illness, floods, poor equipment, and few mounts. Within a few weeks after arriving in Béxar, some thirty Adaesaños had perished from the hardships they had endured on the march.

Once in San Antonio, the Adaesaños asked the governor for the right to return to their homes, which they already missed. The governor, still sympathetic to their situation, received their supplication without protest and gave them his personal approval to return as close to their former home sites as the Trinity River. Later, the viceroy approved the governor's decision, as there now seemed to be a need to defend the East Texas region from land-hungry British settlers pushing west.

A momentous march in the fall of 1774, led by Antonio Gil Ybarbo, who longed to return to his ranch, resulted in the founding of Bucareli on the Trinity River in September. Named after the viceroy, the little settlement increased in population (347 in 1777) but faced numerous problems, among them dismal harvests, rampant disease, and attacks by Comanches. Consequently, in the spring of 1779, some 500 people left Bucareli and pushed farther east, closer to where their homes had once been. Settling near the abandoned mission Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de los Nacogdoches, they founded a new town that they logically named Nacogdoches.

Nacogdoches survived to become the only successful civilian settlement in East Texas. Significantly, it owed its origins to actions other than those that had determined the establishment of San Antonio de Béxar and La Bahía. In violation of official settlement policy, the Tejanos had trusted their own instincts and successfully launched what is today one of the oldest municipalities in Texas history.

Throughout Texas, the settlers continued to have their hands full with fighting the Apaches and Comanches. Gálvez thus pursued strong measures, in accordance with the New Presidio Regulations of 1772. Now assuming the powerful post of minister-general of the Indies for Spain, Gálvez created in 1776 the *Provincias Internas* (the Internal Provinces), an administrative entity that comprised the present-day north Mexican states as well as Texas, New Mexico, and California. The commandant-general who headed this unit oversaw its military and civil administration. He answered to the king, and the governor of Texas reported to him.

Teodoro de Croix, an experienced military man in Europe and a veteran administrator in New Spain, was designated as the first commandant-general of the *Provincias Internas*. He received instructions to give priority to Indian pacification. Carefully considering which tribes posed the principal threats, which alliances with which tribes would prove most effective, and what troop strength would be needed in the overall campaign, Croix concurred with Rubí that the Apaches were the main enemies and that collusion with the Comanches and other Norteño bands would best serve Spain's purposes. But just as Croix was about to implement his offensive initiative in 1779, higher authorities recommended a new plan to contend with the Apache foes. Spain was, at the time, readying for renewed warfare in Europe and found it difficult to allocate precious resources for frontier campaigns. Croix was thus forced to forego his planned military drive against the Apaches and instead offer them small commissions and inexpensive presents in an effort to conciliate them, a strategy that hardly induced the Indians to cease their raids.

## **Texas Toward the End of the Spanish Era**

Toward the late eighteenth century, the Crown began the secularization of the Texas missions. Secularization involved converting the missions from financial dependency on the government into parishioner-supported institutions; the process assumed that the Indian converts had been transformed into productive citizens who could now function adequately as Spanish subjects. Although a couple of missions remained under the care of the friars toward the end of the Spanish period, the process of secularization proceeded, not culminating until the 1820s.

Several factors contributed to the desertion of the missions. Certainly, the last years of the eighteenth century had sorely tried Spanish tenacity. Carlos III was succeeded by a son lacking in wisdom, and political affairs on the European continent, starting with the French Revolution of 1789, soon engulfed Spain in shifting alliances with France and England. War with both Great Powers distracted attention from Spain's commitment in the New World and diverted monies from New Spain back to the mother country.

Working alongside these developments were newer philosophical trends that questioned the program of missionization. Since the sixteenth century, Christianization had posited the equality of Indians with the rest of humankind. On that premise, Spain had sought to convert indigenous New World populations. The antichurch sentiment buoyed by the Enlightenment, however, wrought bad times for the missionaries. By the late eighteenth century, the Franciscans and the other regular clergy found themselves facing new demands for the secularization of missions. Despite protests from the friars, the intellectual currents of the late eighteenth century undermined efforts to continue missionary work in the name of the state.

Even at the local level, several factors worked against missionary activity in Texas. First, the economic stability of the province depended on a steady, marketable commodity, and livestock seemed to fit the bill closely. As their numbers grew, the pobladores began to covet the mission cattle, and government officials simultaneously saw the potential for increased tax revenue in transforming mission lands into private property. Second, the neophytes played a part in the breakdown of the religious institutions. From the beginning, the mission concept did not make for a happy arrangement between Europeans and Native Americans. Priests and presidial soldiers lorded over literally hundreds of charges, disciplining them with intimidation and cruelty. Confinement to the compound increased the chances of falling victim to everyday illnesses, as the pileup of rubbish and the accumulation of human waste served to breed germs responsible for diseases such as influenza. Mission life for the Indians further meant dehumanization and the abandonment of traditional lifeways and religious beliefs, not to mention their shameless exploitation at the hands of ranchers and presidial officials. Assimilation offered little hope, as it never entailed full acceptance into Spanish society. Some mission Indians rebelled by resisting the work expected from them by the missionaries, responding as other forced laborers have by feigning illness, turning to gambling or abusing alcohol, sabotaging work implements, intentionally showing up late for work, destroying sacred articles, and deriding the priesthood. Others only pretended to comply with Christian teachings, all the while putting on a front and retaining their loyalty to time-honored customs and old religious precepts. Escape seemed the best alternative to their discontent, and it became the most visible sign of resistance. By the late eighteenth century, few potential Indian converts remained. As the program of secularization ended, the friars, despite all their work and numerous accomplishments for the Church and the

Crown, could claim to have Christianized or Hispanicized only a small fraction of the total Native American population in Texas.

As for the *indios bárbaros*, they gave the settlers little respite. The presidial soldiers, upon whose shoulders lay the responsibility of maintaining the peace, never devised truly effective measures to ward off the Texas Indians. In many ways, their inability to carry out their purpose emanated from the design of the presidio system itself. Troops in command of large forts were not effective against such highly mobile enemies as the mounted Comanches and Wichitas, who attacked farmers in the fields, struck civilian settlements, raided ranches for horses (which they exchanged for guns available from westering US citizens), and harassed the neophytes who took refuge among the Spaniards. Moreover, many presidial installations were in constant need of repair, and their commanding officers often lacked good administrative skills. Militarily, the posts were understaffed, underequipped (with weapons not upgraded regularly), and often outfitted with horses unfit for service. Shortages of food and proper uniforms and the meager salaries awarded soldiers became perennial problems. Amid such conditions, morale among presidial personnel understandably remained low.

Finally, in the 1780s, the Crown returned to its earlier policy of trying to appease the Apaches by giving them gifts and rewards, also applying this to the Comanches and the other Norteños. Actually a tactic to divide and rule by playing one tribal band against another, this official bribery aimed to reduce the Indian forces, create animosity among them, and waylay intertribal alliances. For a time it worked, as a relative peace, albeit one punctuated by destructive clashes, ensued for roughly the next three decades.

The Comanches, in particular, ruthlessly attacked the settlements into the early decades of the nineteenth century. They did so determined to preserve the viability of their extensive trade system. Now, as Americans pushed westward from the Louisiana Territory, the Comanches could barter stolen livestock from Texas for dependable goods manufactured in the United States. Through this trade with the Americans, the Comanches came to see them as their allies, the Spanish as their enemies. Through their gift giving and other considerate gestures, the American frontier traders and merchants won acceptance into the Comanche cultural kinship world, one that associated charitable acts with friendship. Whereas Americans, as expressions of kinship commitment to foster trade, willingly gave the Comanches functional weapons and various articles deemed by Indian leaders as status worthy, the Spaniards generally rejected any such considerations, maintaining their policy of not trading firearms to Indians. Thus, the Comanche enmity toward the Spanish only grew, and the Indians continued their vicious assaults upon settlements in the Texas colony.

Notwithstanding the tribulations on the eastern, northern, and western frontiers, the three civilian settlements in south-central Texas that traced their origins to the 1710s remained in place as the nineteenth century dawned. San Antonio, now the provincial capital, had a population of 2500 near its chain of five missions and in the town of Béxar. Some 700 persons lived in Goliad's surroundings, and about 800 lived in Nacogdoches. A few more pobladores populated two new towns established to counter the threat of Anglo American aggression from the United States: Salcedo, founded in 1806, was situated on the Trinity River, near the old outpost of Bucareli; and San Marcos de Neve, founded in 1808, was located north of today's city of Gonzales. Neither community thrived. Salcedo's population was listed as ninety-two inhabitants in 1809, but no one lived there by 1813. San Marcos de Neve had a population of sixty-one in 1808, but a flood in June of that year, followed by Indian attacks, persuaded the luckless settlers in 1812 to relocate.

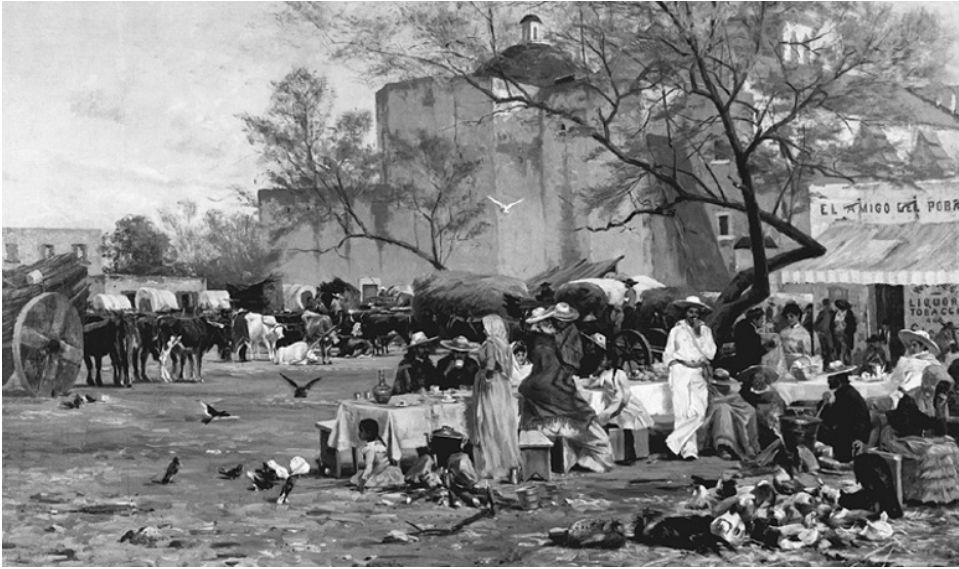
Trade with other frontier areas remained brisk, giving a needed boost to the province's fledgling market economy. Residents of Nacogdoches continued to violate government trade regulations, swayed by the demand for their goods east of the Sabine River; indeed, contraband trade seemed a necessary mode of survival for the isolated community. Natchitoches, Louisiana, was scarcely one hundred miles away, which seduced men like Antonio Gil Ybarbo, who carried on such a lucrative extralegal business that the government ultimately investigated and arrested him. Military troops dispatched to Nacogdoches in the mid-1790s hardly discouraged the contraband ventures. Neither were commandants able to prevent foreigners from migrating into the area. Soon after its founding, Nacogdoches had a population composed of various ethnic groups engaged as merchants, Indian traders, and ranchers, many of whom took Spanish wives and acclimated themselves to Spanish-Mexican culture. It was there that the only American trading company in Spanish territory functioned. With the endorsement of the royal government, the enterprise of Barr and Davenport, having commercial connections to close-by New Orleans, sought to pacify the neighboring Indians and supply the needs of local soldiers.

For people in the interior, economic activity remained agrarian based, with ranching persisting as the most secure means of making a living. The business of trading horses and mules picked up within the province as well as between Louisiana and Texas during the 1770s, in part due to the success of the British colonies in their struggle for independence. Texas rancheros around San Antonio and La Bahía engaged in illegal intercolonial trade by exchanging their livestock for tobacco and other finished goods that made their way into Louisiana from the newly independent United States or from European countries. A new opportunity for those on the make appeared when the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory from France, a move that brought Anglo American settlers to the New Orleans region. The proceeds of clandestine commerce were not equitably distributed among all segments of Texas society, however, as the large rancheros were the primary beneficiaries.

The king had ever prohibited such international trade, but during the 1770s he passed decrees regulating access to wild herds (including the levying of fees upon those rounding up *mesteño* stock), cattle branding, and the exportation of livestock. Then he appointed governors who proved unduly strict in enforcing these laws. Furthermore, legal restrictions upon the rancheros and the reduction of the wild herds due to slaughtering and exportation by Tejanos produced economic difficulties, further angering the ranching elite. Over the years, the *pobladores* of Texas had developed an identity tied more to their daily necessities than to the imperial designs that the authorities sought to implement. During the colonial era, the Tejanos had survived almost on their own, living by their wits, ignoring the king's decrees when they conflicted with immediate concerns. They had come to appreciate their semiautonomous relationship with the heartland, and now they resented what seemed an unnecessary intrusion into their personal affairs.

## **Independence from Spain**

The Bourbon Reforms of the Enlightenment, which helped Spain make a remarkable recovery, produced resentment and discontent toward the mother country in New Spain. Over the centuries, Mexico had come to perceive itself as something greater than a mere colony. Thus, Mexicans resented the newly appointed peninsular administrators who practically monopolized the intendancy and tax-collection positions enacted by the reforms. Furthermore, they disliked the arrogant attitudes of the *peninsulares*, who insisted upon



**Figure 2.6** The marketplace was the center of life in frontier towns. Source: Courtesy of the Witte Museum, San Antonio, Texas (#1936–6518 P).

deference and even subservience to their positions. Naturally, the people resented these developments, but vexation did not signify a wish to overthrow the system, rather a desire to replace a bad government that denied them full participation with a more democratic one (Figure 2.6).

It was, then, an imperial crisis that ultimately led the people of Mexico, already alienated by the Bourbon Reforms, to talk of doing something about their dependent status. Spain's European wars after 1789 sapped the Spanish treasury, which in turn, exhausted the colonies; stepped-up taxation and other forced contributions to the Crown produced financial distress throughout Spain's New World holdings. Mexicans denounced the injustices but continued to pay homage to the king.

The drive for Mexican autonomy mounted following Napoleon's conquest of Spain in 1808. Spaniards resisted the French occupation on May 2 (*Dos de Mayo*), then organized a *Cortes* (parliament) to hold the land while the deposed King Ferdinand VII remained in exile. Copying the Iberian example, the Latin American colonies established *juntas* (committees) to protect the New World empire until Ferdinand could reassume the throne.

In New Spain, criollos in Querétaro (in the state of Querétaro) established a similar junta. Most colonists had felt the pinch of Spain's money-raising measures during the era of the Napoleonic wars, among them a priest from Dolores, Guanajuato, named Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla. Suddenly exposed as a plotter to overthrow the peninsular officials who had been running Mexico since Napoleon's invasion of the Iberian Peninsula, Hidalgo opted for a war against bad government. Skirmishes broke out in Hidalgo's parish at Dolores on September 16, 1810 (*Diez y Seis de Septiembre*) and developed into the unexpected: a social revolution between the colony's elite and the downtrodden lower classes, many of the former being the criollos who themselves had planned to gain their independence from the peninsulares.

The revolt rippled into far-off Texas. Despite the distance between the core government and the frontier, the province was never so isolated that political winds blowing in the interior



did not earn the notice of Tejanos. In Texas, one Juan Bautista de las Casas, a military veteran, took up Hidalgo's *grito* (cry, or yell) for independence, garnering the support of some of the soldiers in the Béxar presidio, members of the lower class in the city, and local rancheros who had been alienated by recent Crown policies. On January 22, 1811, Las Casas displaced the few official representatives of royalist government still living in Béxar. From the capital, the insurrection widened to other parts of the province. But Las Casas's rebellion had not gained the support of all Bédareños, and it soon encountered opposition from proroyalist forces in the city who ousted Las Casas on March 2, 1811. Given a trial in Coahuila, Las Casas received a death sentence and was shot in the back for treason; to remind would-be rebels of the penalty for challenging the status quo, royal officials sent his head to Béxar for public display. Meanwhile, Father Hidalgo, who was defeated in battle on March 21, 1811, also suffered execution.

The sympathy Tejanos displayed for the limited independence movement brought destruction to the province, for civil war did not end following the defeat of Las Casas. One Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara, from Nuevo Santander, assumed Hidalgo's revolutionary mantle. Apparently encouraged by US officials wanting to develop an appropriate foreign policy toward New Spain once that country had achieved its independence, Gutiérrez de Lara worked to wrest Texas from royalist control, rejecting like other liberals in New Spain, the Bourbon belief in the divine right of kings. He encouraged Tejanos, in documents he and his supporters introduced into Texas in early summer 1812, to discard the royal authority under which they had long lived and through revolution, create a political world granting sovereignty to the mass of people (or in the Spanish tradition, to the *ayuntamiento*). Accompanied by Augustus W. Magee, a former US Army officer at Natchitoches, Louisiana, whose design and those of 130 volunteers was on Texas land, Gutiérrez forded the Sabine River in August 1812 at the head of the Republican Army of the North and captured Nacogdoches. Soon, the expedition exceeded 700 in number, attracting recruits from among Anglo volunteers in Louisiana and members of the local militia. From East Texas, the expedition marched toward Central Texas, captured La Bahía and San Antonio, and proclaimed Texas as an independent state in the spring of 1813. But in August, a royalist force led by José Joaquín Arredondo crushed the rebels (sans Gutiérrez de Lara, who by then had lost favor among the republicans and had been replaced as commander) south of San Antonio at the Battle of the Medina River. It was the bloodiest battle ever fought on Texas soil, with some 1300 rebel soldiers killed. Soon thereafter, the royalists shot 327 suspected rebel sympathizers in San Antonio, and Nacogdoches became the scene of another bloody purge committed by one of Arredondo's lieutenants. The royalists now ravaged the ranchos, compelling many Tejanos to flee across the Sabine River into Louisiana. For the next several years, these agents of peninsular and criollo power dominated the region, living off the land and harassing the frontier people, most of whom sympathized with the insurgents. By 1821, Spanish rule ended when New Spain achieved its independence. Nacogdoches, with much of its populace having fled, faced extinction as a community.

## Resilience

Throughout the colonial era, the number of people who lived in Texas fluctuated, reaching the aforementioned figure of about 4000 early in the nineteenth century, then dwindling to 2240 (excluding soldiers) by 1821. Remarkably, these few thousand pobladores succeeded in transporting traits of their heritage into the next era. Numbers by themselves, therefore,

are deceptive: they do not testify to enduring aspects of the Tejanos, among them a unique character as a people of the frontier. As already indicated, the central government of Spain did not strictly dictate life in the Far North. Relative isolation had always guaranteed a modicum of independence and honed the development of attitudes and skills necessary for survival in an unforgiving environment. Even the governor and other royal officials pursued a compromise with viceregal rule, adhering to the old dictum of *obedezco pero no cumpro* (I obey but do not comply). Military officials behaved no differently. And the Church, burdened as it was with debt and commitments to missionary work, could hardly have acted as an arm of the state.

The atmosphere in colonial Texas, therefore, encouraged informal community building. Tejanos sought their own economic ends by selecting the most convenient and profitable markets for their livestock; this meant turning to Louisiana and even to the United States to engage in contraband trade. The ayuntamiento at times acted as a legitimizing agent when local necessities clashed with imperial dictates. Such adjustments to circumstances at hand permitted Tejanos to survive quite well as a community after the end of Spain's presence in their land.

The Far North also produced traits of ruggedness that traversed cultures and nationhoods. Spaniards in the hinterlands carried the task of establishing roots and the responsibility of perpetuating their civilization hundreds of miles from previous settlements. On the range, settlers had to perfect their skills in handling horses to exact a livelihood from a predominantly ranching culture. The "Norteno" variety of Mexican culture, some historians hypothesize, resulted from these experiences. The north fostered egalitarianism, the will to work, an implied strength and prowess, as well as determination and courage in the face of danger.

At the end of its war for independence, which ended in 1821, New Spain effectively preserved traditions with origins in the Iberian Peninsula, which Tejanos transmitted past 1821. Some customs applied to the ranching economic order. Spanish-Mexican terminology, riding gear, and methods of working the range became etched into Anglo American culture. Among familiar ranch terms are "buckaroo" from *vaquero*, "cinch" from *cincha*, "chaps" from *chaparejos*, "hoosegow" from *juzgado*, and "lasso" from *lazo*. The *rodeo*, a semiannual roundup of livestock to determine the ownership of free-ranging animals, evolved into a highly competitive sport in the Anglo period (Figure 2.7).

Also perpetuated were legal practices that had derived from Spanish precedent. Iberian laws, revised for application to frontier situations, allowed outsiders to become part of a family unit. Long-standing rules applicable to community property also lingered: couples shared jointly any assets they had accumulated while married; a woman could keep half of all financial gains the couple earned; and a husband could not dispose of the family's holdings without his wife's consent. Women also retained the right to negotiate contracts and manage their own financial affairs.

Furthermore, the Spanish tradition protecting debtors prevailed. Over the centuries, neither field animals nor agricultural implements could be confiscated by creditors, and in the subsequent era, this safeguard applied to a debtor's home, work equipment, and animals, and even his or her land.

The legacy of Spain to the Texas experience thus makes for an extensive list that runs the gamut from the esoteric, such as legal influences concerning water laws, to the prosaic. Among the latter are contributions to a bilingual society in various sections of the modern State of Texas, Spanish loan words (for example, *mesquite* and *arroyo*), delectable Spanish-Mexican foods, styles of dress, geographical nomenclature (every major river in Texas bears a Spanish name, for example), and architecture. Empires might wane, but their cultures endure.



**Figure 2.7** *Corrida de la Sandía* (Watermelon Race) by Theodore Gentilz. Part of the Celebration of the Día de San Juan. Source: Yanaguana Society Collection, Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library.

Although Spain's rule over Texas left a lasting imprint on the outpost, few Tejanos mourned its replacement in 1821 by an independent Mexico. Communities had valued their relative autonomy on the hinterland, but they had wanted better administration and military protection. Simultaneously, Tejanos resented the bureaucratic restrictions they believed discouraged profit making in ranching, farming, and other forms of commerce. Spain had not convinced many people to relocate into the wilderness region; a hard enough task given the fact that frontiers hold out few migrational pull factors, nor did sufficient population pressures exist in the interior to push Mexicans northward. Yet some Tejanos saw the solution to their myriad problems—among them Indian depredations and economic underdevelopment—in the arrival of new settlers, in the spread of urban settlements, and in the growth of the pastoral industries. Thus, although Spain retained sovereignty over Texas for 300 years and Hispanic culture endured there well past 1821, Spain had left a community of people still groping to devise their own survival strategies, political and otherwise. Therefore, in the era of Mexican rule in Texas, 1821–36, the pobladores would continue to pursue political solutions more appropriate to their local conditions and less relevant to the political aims of their national government.

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## Mexican Texas, 1821–1836

The execution of Miguel Hidalgo in 1811 by royalist forces did not end New Spain's rebellion against the mother country. Another priest, José María Morelos, assumed command and committed the movement to a repudiation of the Spanish past. In Spain, meantime, the liberal *Cortes* (parliament) that had fought off Napoleon turned its attention to reform. Heeding the ideals of the Enlightenment, Spaniards penned the Constitution of 1812; the document forced King Ferdinand to acknowledge the will of the Cortes and provided the means by which people could gain better representation at all levels of government. An absolutist, Ferdinand suspended the constitution upon returning from exile in 1814, and Morelos's capture and execution in 1815 spawned a royalist resurgence. Guerrilla bands carrying the Hidalgo/Morelos banner went underground for the next five years. Then, surprisingly, in 1820, liberalism returned to Spain when a military revolt coerced the king into reinstating the Constitution of 1812.

Alarmed, conservatives in New Spain—who had envisioned a nation retaining the basic foundations of the colonial era, but with themselves presiding over the society—considered independence preferable to living under a liberal rule that might well encourage the lower classes to challenge the social order. Agustín de Iturbide surfaced as the leader of this conservative faction, but he successfully recruited among the liberal resistance fighters who shared with him and the other conservatives the belief that liberation would be for the common good. In 1821, New Spain's viceroy, realizing that the power of this expedient conservative/liberal coalition prevented the further subordination of the colony, recognized Mexico's independence.

Finally free from the yoke of the Old World, Mexico confronted the task of forming its own kind of government. Liberals wished to mold a republic based on the liberal precepts of the Enlightenment and the Constitution of 1812. The conservatives, however, disliked the egalitarian ideas that Enlightenment thinking put into the minds of the lower classes. In a conservative countermove, Iturbide, who had been responsible for uniting all classes and political elements in Mexico behind the rallying cry of independence, centralized rule by establishing himself as emperor of Mexico. No sooner had he taken the throne, however,

than he was denounced in the *Plan de Casa Mata* (issued in February of 1823), a liberal edict issued by a young military commander named Antonio López de Santa Anna. After successfully removing Iturbide from power in March 1823, the liberal supporters of the Plan de Casa Mata sought to solidify their victory by establishing a federalist republic.

Besides ideological differences over class distinctions, several other issues plagued the newly independent Mexico. These included economic chaos, the desire of military and Church officials to preserve their traditional standing alongside government, and the political inexperience of the nation's new leaders.

Equally pressing was the need to defend the Far North from the United States and the Comanche nation. Texas, especially, had been the scene of an increased amount of activity by American adventurers since the close of the eighteenth century. In 1801, Spanish soldiers caught the mysterious Philip Nolan, an American who claimed to be looking for mustangs for subsequent sale in Louisiana. Nolan had no official permission to be in the area (present-day Hill County, historians believe), and the Spanish soldiers, suspecting Nolan of conspiring to acquire Texas and perhaps other parts of the Crown's northern empire, killed him. In 1806, the Spaniards repelled two US encroachments into East Texas. One was a scientific expedition dispatched by President Thomas Jefferson to clarify the boundaries of the Louisiana Territory acquired by the United States in 1803; royal troops turned back the small party at Spanish Bluff in today's Bowie County. The second was an intrusion made by General James Wilkinson over the same disputed eastern boundary of Texas. Wilkinson and a Spanish commander avoided a major dispute when they mutually agreed to recognize a neutral ground between the Arroyo Hondo (a branch of the Red River close to where the presidio of Los Adaes once stood) and the Sabine River.

Then, in 1819, the Spaniards faced an attempt by Dr. James Long and a force of fellow filibusters to wrest Texas from Mexico. This endeavor apparently had the backing of a group of Natchez entrepreneurs who were upset over the passage of the Transcontinental Treaty of 1819. Under the terms of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, many Americans believed the United States had bought lands that extended west from Louisiana into Texas. But the Transcontinental Treaty established the Sabine River as the dividing line between the United States and Spanish Texas. The agreement led many land-hungry southerners to make the argument that the United States had "surrendered" Texas in order to acquire Florida from Spain. Taking it upon themselves to "reclaim" Texas from Spain, Long's small army of filibusters penetrated into eastern Texas. The invasion was quelled in October 1821 when Spanish troops apprehended Long and took him to a prison in Mexico City. The whole Long incident created enormous distrust of Americans by Spanish (and later Mexican) officials.

## Immigration

These incidents were portents of threats to Texas, forebodings of forces pushing landholders westward from the US Gulf Coast slave states. An ascending cotton revolution in England during the early nineteenth century, along with other motivating impulses, stirred Southern expansionism into Mexico's northeastern borderlands. In England, cloth manufacturers were rapidly shifting from wool to cotton in a drive to gratify public preference for cloth. The US Slave South emerged as the largest cotton producer, supplying England's booming industrial plants as well as emerging textile mills in the US northeast. But purchasing new cotton lands in Mississippi and Alabama to meet orders came at prohibitively high costs. Southern plantation owners thereupon fixed their sights on Texas, as cheap

farmland there offered prospects for cotton yields enabling growers to accommodate manufacturer demands. Allied in designs upon Texas were ordinary folks harboring their own individual and personal motives (often to flee creditors) for starting fresh in a new frontier.

Texas appeared vulnerable to US intentions given circumstances in the province. Comanches and other Indians regularly swooped into Texas settlements to rustle livestock that they intended to exchange for firearms in markets Americans set up along the Louisiana/Texas border. Southerners readily assented to the Indians' motives, eager to acquire mules and horses increasingly needed for the heavy work of cotton cultivation. The turbulence of the raids weakened the province, leaving Tejanos contemplating opening Texas to foreign settlement as a countermeasure to Indian devastation.

The material shape of the region further made Texas vulnerable to foreign encroachment, but as in the case of Indian hostilities, outside immigration presented a remedy to the weakened state of the province. Arredondo's campaign to eliminate all opposition to Spanish rule during the 1810s had left the outpost in ruins. His men had killed so many people or forced entire families to flee to Louisiana that the province struggled for plain survival. Colonists who remained struggled for life essentials, lacking food, clothes, and medical attention. Buildings on the eve of Mexico's independence stood in a state of disrepair and many fields lay fallow. Anglo immigration posed dangers, but it also extended possibilities for economic deliverance.

Tejanos and local officials appealed to the motherland for help and Mexico searched for answers. Peopling Texas offered a solution to the region's myriad difficulties, but previous plans for colonization, among them relocating people north from the interior, had failed. With about six million inhabitants settled over an expanse reaching from California to Central America, Mexico lacked the necessary personnel to occupy its vast territory. A government-directed colonization of the area by foreigners offered an alternative course of action. Immigrants from the United States and Europe would act as buffers in preventing determined US expansion. New communities would form a barrier wall against persistent Comanche raids upon established Texas settlements—Anglo villages and farmsteads forming a cordon to buffer the western outpost of San Antonio would serve such a purpose. Industrious pioneers would help reclaim Texas from its economic plight. After careful consideration, the short-lived Iturbide government turned to plans that would entice European and Anglo American settlers into Texas.

Actually, Spain had addressed the desperate situation in Texas just before Mexico gained its independence. In January 1821, the Spanish government agreed to a proposal by Moses Austin to let him oversee the settlement of American citizens in Texas. According to the contract, Austin was to relocate 300 Catholic families from the United States to Texas in exchange for a huge personal grant of Texas lands. Since the start of the nineteenth century, Austin had prospered in lead mining in Missouri (once part of Spanish Upper Louisiana). Then the War of 1812 and the subsequent Panic of 1819 had wiped him out, and now he hoped that the Texas venture would help him recover financially.

Upon Moses Austin's death (in Missouri) on June 10, 1821, his twenty-seven-year-old son, Stephen F. Austin (Figure 3.1), assumed the Austin contract, the Spanish-born governor of Texas, Antonio Martínez, having recognized its legality. Prospective colonists (some of them slave owners) began to arrive in the settlement by the end of 1821, as authorized. In March 1822, however, the national congress informed Martínez that independent Mexico no longer recognized Moses Austin's colonization contract. As the legislature prepared to draft its own law, Austin journeyed to Mexico City to press his claim.





**Figure 3.1** Stephen F. Austin. CN 01436, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

He arrived there in late April 1822. He witnessed Iturbide's coronation as emperor in July, then for the next five months waited for the new government to act. He, along with other prospective *empresarios* (immigration agents) also in Mexico City soliciting land contracts, pressed congress to legally embody into any colonization program the use of slavery, insisting that only through the application of slave labor could the rich Texas lands be converted into productive units. An oligarchy composed of leading families, merchants, and *rancheros* long living in Texas supported these outsiders in their petitions seeing, in the legitimization of slavery, benefits to economic growth but also the founding of settlements to shield them against the Indians. But the congress thought slavery in Texas problematic; most legislators opposed human bondage. An Imperial Colonization Law passed on January 3, 1823, did open Texas to settlement but it decreed that slaves brought into the province would gradually be freed. Although disappointed that the government had not endorsed the Anglos' and Tejanos' call for the broad legalization of the peculiar institution, Austin left partially satisfied, for his contract had been approved that March. However, with Iturbide's overthrow that same month, a new congress was called, all acts of the previous government were annulled, and Austin had to restart his petition. Finally, on April 14, the new congress confirmed his grant, authorizing him to proceed with his plans to import families under the original agreement made between his father and the Spanish government.

His right to locate the full complement of 300 families in Texas finally established, Austin left Mexico City in April 1823 and returned to his colony to find the settlers he had left there

in a state of uncertainty. Attacks by the Karankawas, food shortages, and other misfortunes had convinced many of the first wave of settlers to depart. Those who had “toughed it out” awaited word on the recognition of the Austin contract. Others who had moved into the colony since early 1822, when Mexico had ceased to recognize Austin’s right to settle families, similarly hoped that Austin would get his concessions officially sanctioned by the government in Mexico City, so that their presence in Texas might be legalized. Austin regrouped and renewed his call for colonists to fill his contract’s allotment. By the end of the summer of 1824, the land commissioner, Baron de Bastrop, who had originally helped Moses Austin get his contract, had approved most of Stephen F. Austin’s remaining land titles. Some historians refer to the settlers who helped Austin complete his first contract as the Old Three Hundred. San Felipe de Austin, on the Brazos River, became Austin Colony’s principal settlement; it lay some eighty miles from the Gulf, or about sixty miles from today’s Houston (and should not be confused with Austin, the present-day capital of Texas).

### **The colonization laws of Mexico**

Although several prospective American empresarios had been in Mexico City at the same time as Austin was trying to secure his colonization contracts, only Austin managed to win approval from the provisional congress that succeeded the Iturbide regime. The peopling of Texas, therefore, occurred mainly under the National Colonization Law of August 18, 1824, which the Mexican congress passed while still debating the details of a new national constitution. Though establishing certain restrictions for colonization, the Colonization Law left the individual states of Mexico with complete control over immigration and the disposal of public lands. The legislation instructed the states, however, to remain within the limits of the national constitution. Even though general sentiment in Mexico scorned human bondage, the law did not directly prohibit the importation of slaves or outlaw slavery.

The National Colonization Law of 1824 emanated from a developing federalist-liberal philosophy advanced by men who planned the creation of a republic based on the principles of the American Revolution and the Spanish Constitution of 1812. The Federalists, so called because their party advocated concentrating government power in the states, included leaders such as Valentín Gómez Farías of Zacatecas and Lorenzo de Zavala of Yucatán. They were opposed by conservatives, whose support came from the clergy, major landholders, and the military, and because they favored a strong central government, were called Centralists. Using the unfulfilled dream of establishing a republic and the abdication of Iturbide to their advantage, the liberals created the Federal Constitution of the United States of Mexico on October 4, 1824. (Measures such as the National Colonization Law that the congress passed in the months preceding the constitution’s adoption were not superseded by the new document.) The republican constitution sought to satisfy regional interests by giving states control over their internal affairs and by diluting the power of the national government. As its framers had hoped, the new document resembled the US Constitution in many ways as well as borrowing items from the Spanish Constitution of 1812. Among those who signed the new constitution was a forty-two-year-old Tejano ranchero, Erasmo Seguín.

In the north, the national government united the old Spanish provinces of Coahuila and Texas into one state, Coahuila y Texas. Via a decree issued in early 1825 by the state constitutional congress at Saltillo, which functioned as a legislature while it drew up a constitution for the new state, Texas from the Nueces to the Sabine River became a *departamento* (called

the “Department of Texas”). It was to be presided over by a *jefe político* (political chief) appointed by the governor of the state. The jefe político was responsible for overseeing the defense of Texas (including the command of local militias), education, taxes, censuses, and elections, as well as for enforcing the laws and supervising the *ayuntamientos*. When, on March 11, 1827, the congress finally promulgated the new constitution, this agreement was incorporated into the Coahuiltecano government. Furthermore, the legislature allowed two deputies for Texas, with provisions to add more as the population of the province grew.

Also decreed by the provisional state constitutional congress was the State Colonization Law of March 24, 1825. Through this measure, the legislature sought to achieve several goals, namely the peopling of Coahuila and Texas, the encouragement of farming and ranching in the state, and the stimulation there of commercial activity. The plan permitted the immigration of Anglo Americans into Coahuila and Texas, but it also sought to prod Mexicans into moving north by giving them priority in land acquisition. For modest fees, heads of families qualified to obtain a league or *sitio* (4428.4 acres) of grazing land and a labor (177.1 acres) of farming land. Immigrants were temporarily exempted from paying tariffs or custom duties. Provisions required all new residents of Coahuila and Texas who were not already Mexican citizens to take an oath declaring that they would abide by the federal and state constitutions and promise to observe the Christian religion. The legislature made no explicit mention of Catholicism: it was simply understood that the people of Mexico practiced no other religion. After agreeing to said conditions and establishing residence by obtaining lands, the land grantees were regarded by the government as naturalized Mexicans. The wording of the Colonization Law of 1825 was so vague that it did not immediately prohibit the importation of slaves.

The Constitution of 1827, on the other hand, more precisely addressed slavery in Texas. Abolitionists from Coahuila opposed the institution vigorously, but an alliance of Anglo slave owners, Tejano oligarchs, and entrepreneurs from Coahuila, arguing that barring slavery would stifle US immigration and destroy the labor force essential to Texas prosperity, succeeded in preserving it under the law. But the concession was temporary as the constitution nonetheless mandated that children of slave parents were to be born free and that six months following the constitution’s publication, no new slaves were to be brought into Texas.

## Empresario Contracts

Negotiations for land titles under the State Colonization Law could be handled individually or through immigration agents, or empresarios, who acted on behalf of the state government to select colonists, allocate land, and see to the enforcement of the laws in the colonies they helped to found. As compensation for their work, empresarios qualified personally to receive five leagues and five *labores* (a total of 23,027.5 acres) for each 100 families they settled in Texas.

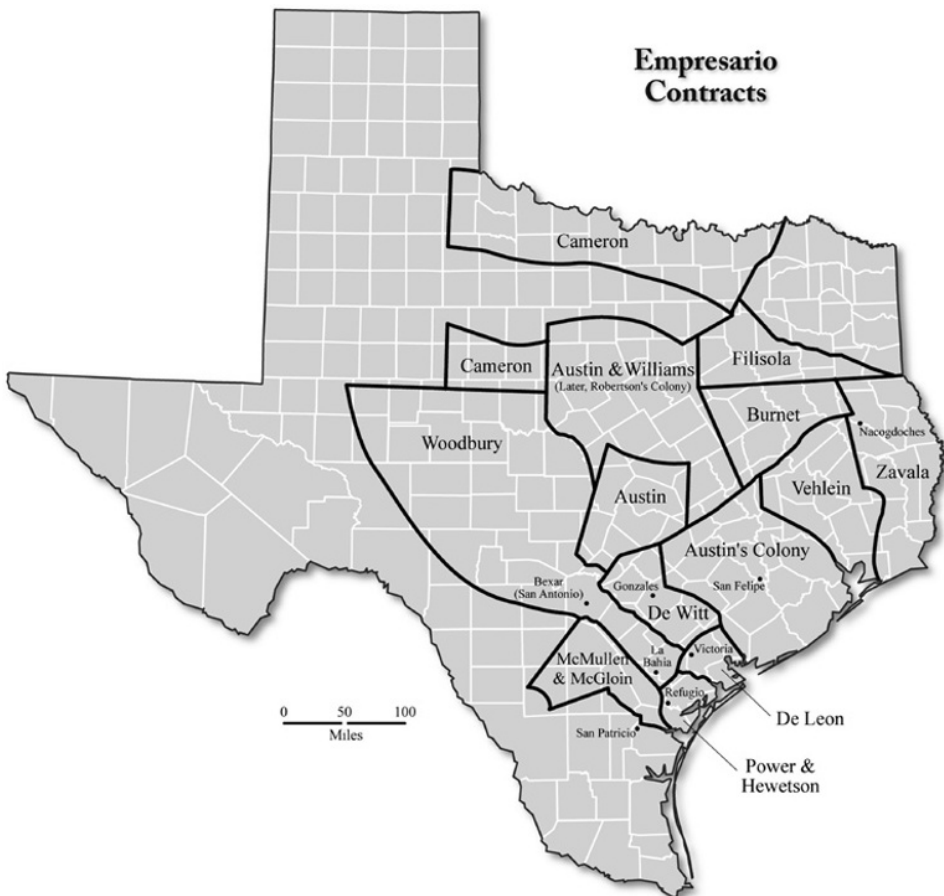
As of 1835, a total of forty-one empresario contracts had been signed, both under the National Colonization Law of 1824 and the State Colonization Law of 1825, permitting some 13,500 families to come to Texas. Anglo Americans from the United States entered into most of these contracts.

By 1825, Stephen F. Austin had nearly completed the terms of his first contract, and that year the government made a second agreement with him to settle 500 families. Two years later, he negotiated to locate another one hundred families in what are today Bastrop and Travis counties. In 1828, Austin obtained another land deal, and in 1831 he received his last

contract. Actually, Austin only complied fully with his first contract and never came close to meeting his obligations on the other four. He used part of his grants for speculating purposes, profiting by selling parcels of his property to new arrivals. But for that matter, so did the other land agents (and even some settlers) part with portions of their holdings, thus gaining financially from the Mexican government's generosity.

To the west of Austin's original lands, between the Guadalupe and Lavaca rivers, Green DeWitt planted a colony with its center at Gonzales. This contract expired in 1831, however, by which time DeWitt had settled only about one-third of the 400 families he had pledged to bring. Bordering the DeWitt colony to the southeast lay the tract belonging to the rancher Martín de León. Issued at San Antonio in 1824 (even before the enactment of the Colonization Law of 1825), this grant had ill-defined boundaries, which caused some disputes between de León's and DeWitt's settlers, at least until DeWitt's land became part of the public domain in 1832. De León's colony, with its principal settlement at Victoria, remained small, though titles had been issued to 162 families by 1835. Figure 3.2 shows the extent of the empresario contracts in the region.

Most other empresarial colonies achieved only moderate success in the 1820s. In 1825, Robert Leftwich received (on behalf of a cooperative venture called the Texas Association of Nashville, Tennessee) a contract to settle lands situated northwest of Austin's lands, but no one colonized them until the early 1830s, when a Tennessean named Sterling C.



**Figure 3.2** Empresario contracts.

Robertson took over as empresario for the Texas Association. Farther east, Haden Edwards's colonization contract called for 800 families to settle around the Nacogdoches region, but following his armed uprising in 1826 against government officials (the so-called Fredonian Rebellion, discussed later) his vacated land reverted to the state. Part of Edwards's tract went to David G. Burnet, and another portion of it went to a German merchant named Joseph Vehlein in 1826. Lorenzo de Zavala, one of the framers of the Mexican Constitution of 1824, received land along the Sabine River in 1829, but he never colonized it.

## The Native Mexicans of Texas

As Anglo settlers arrived in East Texas, the native Mexicans were, according to historian Andrés A. Tijerina, experiencing a resurrection in fortunes following the devastation of the war for independence. Ranches between Béxar and La Bahía (the latter called Goliad after 1829—from an anagram of the name Hidalgo) were reestablished in the mid-1820s along the entire stretch and on both sides of the San Antonio River and its tributaries. These ranches belonged to Texas Mexicans of wealth and status, men like Martín de León of Victoria, Erasmo and Juan N. Seguín of Béxar, and Carlos de la Garza of Goliad. In Nacogdoches, a few brave souls had held the town together throughout the upheaval of the 1810s, and by 1823 a steady flow of the Mexican population into Nacogdoches and the surrounding district was apparent. In the 1830s, Nacogdoches consisted of a small town surrounded by approximately fifty founding ranchos. In South Texas, the Trans-Nueces ranching frontier spread northward from the Rio Grande in the 1820s to cover the present counties of Willacy, Kenedy, Brooks, Jim Hogg, Duval, Jim Wells, and Kleberg, with its northern point at Nueces County. Ten years later, approximately 350 *rancherías* (small family-operated concerns) existed in this region, many of which provided the foundations for future Texas towns.

## Anglos and the Mexican Government

Anglos, whether they had entered Texas legally or illegally (most of those fleeing debts or the law in the United States arrived in Texas independently rather than under the guidance of an empresario), began to worry the Mexican government. For one thing, many of the Anglos were not taking their Mexican nationality seriously. Although some of the Anglo newcomers had built homes in the predominately Tejano settlements and ranchos of San Antonio and Goliad, most preferred living a good distance away from Comanche hunting grounds, in the hope of avoiding Indian attacks. Concentrated in the eastern sections of Texas, they lived a semiautonomous life, conducting their affairs in ways that made the Mexican government uneasy: squatting on unoccupied lands; engaging in forbidden transactions with commercial establishments in New Orleans; applying American practices to local situations; speculating with their properties; working slaves in the cotton lands around the Brazos and Colorado Rivers; and otherwise disregarding the conditions (and oath) under which they had been allowed to settle. Their decidedly independent attitude manifested itself at Nacogdoches as early as 1826, when the empresario Haden Edwards proclaimed the independence of the region, his so-called Fredonian Republic. For months, disputes had developed between the old settlers in Nacogdoches and Edwards's colonists

over land titles; a break from Mexico, thought Benjamin Edwards (Haden's brother and the actual leader of the insurrection), would resolve the conflict in favor of the newcomers. But the armed revolt collapsed when more successful, foreign-born colonists denounced the affair and Austin led his colony's militia, along with Mexican officials, to Nacogdoches to suppress it. Nonetheless, the episode heightened concerns in Mexico that further American immigration might dissolve Mexico's hold on Texas. Meanwhile, in Texas, immigrants became distrustful of a government that had just voided an empresario contract without due process of law.

In order to evaluate how the national government might best deal with the troubles in Texas, Mexican officials dispatched Manuel de Mier y Terán, a high-ranking military officer and trained engineer, to the north. Crossing into Texas in 1828, Mier y Terán reported that the province was flooded with Anglo Americans, that Nacogdoches had essentially become an American town, that prospects for assimilation of the Anglos into Mexican culture appeared dim, and that the Anglo settlements generally resisted obeying the colonization laws. Once back in Mexico, his concerns over American immigrant loyalty mounted, and his fear that Mexico might indeed lose Texas to the newcomers intensified. Mier y Terán's recommendations spurred the drafting and implementation of the new law of April 6, 1830.

The Law of April 6, 1830, intended to stop further immigration into Texas from the United States by declaring uncompleted empresario agreements as void, although Mier y Terán let stand as valid those contracts belonging to men who had already brought in one hundred families. Thus, Americans could still immigrate to Texas legally but only into the colonies of Austin or DeWitt: the only two empresario grants that met the general's requirement, neither of which was filled to capacity. Furthermore, future American immigrants must not settle in any territory bordering the United States. New presidios, garrisoned by convicts serving out their prison sentences through military service, were established to check any such illegal immigration. Finally, the new law banned the further importation of slaves into Texas.

Actually, on September 15, 1829, President Vicente Guerrero had issued a directive abolishing slavery throughout the nation. (Guerrero's gesture notwithstanding, slavery in Mexico would continue until the 1850s, though never as a legal institution.) Concerned about an immigration policy that seemed to be going astray, Guerrero had sought to dissuade Anglos from further colonization altogether by depriving them of their enslaved workforce. Political resistance from various quarters in Coahuila and Texas, however, ended up persuading Guerrero to exempt Texas from his national emancipation decree. Now, only seven months later, the Law of April 6, 1830, reinstated the ban on bringing human chattel into Texas—a point not lost on the American immigrants.

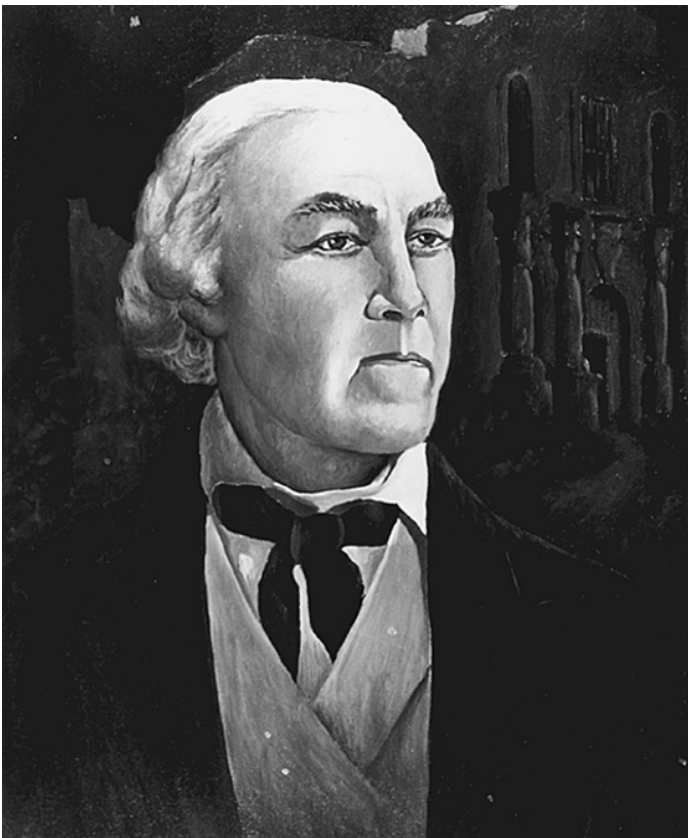
### **Mexican and American Capitalists**

It was a rising class of capitalists from Coahuila and Texas who, along with Stephen F. Austin, had convinced Guerrero to excuse their state from the antislavery law. Leaders of this coalition were the statesmen from Parras and Monclova in Coahuila, José María Viesca and his brother Agustín. In the 1820s, the Viesca faction belonged to the liberal Federalist party struggling to maintain control in Mexican politics. Their leaders at the national level were revolutionary veterans such as Guadalupe Victoria, Lorenzo de Zavala, and Vicente Guerrero, as well as intellectuals like Valentín Gómez Farías. Their antagonists were

members of the Centralist faction, who were usually conservatives bent on securing the traditional power of the military and the Catholic Church.

According to Tijerina, the Viesca faction was committed to achieving economic prosperity through the state colonization program of 1825 and other means. Through legislation, they obtained exemptions from taxes on cotton, foreign imports, and domestic items for use by colonists and residents of Coahuila and Texas. They granted citizenship and special concessions to many Anglo Americans, among them the entrepreneur James Bowie, who acquired a textile-mill permit. These liberals posited that slave labor was necessary for the economic advancement of the state.

Meanwhile, Stephen F. Austin's plan for developing the cotton industry in Texas paralleled the ambitions of the liberal Coahuiltejanos, who, seeing their own prosperity in the cultivation of cotton, worked strenuously to have slavery legitimized. An early victory came in a decree passed on May 5, 1828, that validated contracts of servitude made in foreign countries by immigrants to Coahuila and Tejas. Sponsored by the Texas delegate José Antonio Navarro (Figure 3.3), the new law provided for Anglo American colonists to bring slaves into Texas as permanently indentured servants. Support for passing this legislation was generated by the same coalition of Coahuiltejanos and Anglos that had mobilized in 1829 to have Texas exempted from the Guerrero decree.



**Figure 3.3** José Antonio Navarro. Painting by Dee Hernández. University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 68-465).

## **The Law of April 6, 1830, Resisted**

The Law of April 6, 1830, passed by Centralists following a conservative coup in late 1829, posed a dilemma for the liberal Coahuiltejanos, for they now fell out of step with both national and state politics. Committed to stopping Anglo American immigration and slavery, the Centralists preferred counter-colonization from the Mexican interior or from Europe. Stepping up their initiative, the conservatives reinforced presidios at San Antonio, Goliad, and Nacogdoches and commissioned the building of more garrisons, among the most important of which were Velasco, at the mouth of the Brazos River, and Anahuac, founded just above Galveston Bay. Situated near the Gulf Coast, these two forts were built to discourage the infiltration of illegal immigrants by sea.

The liberals resisted these conservative policies. When the state congress expelled one of the Texas delegates in September 1830, the ayuntamientos of Béxar, Goliad, and San Felipe de Austin proclaimed that only the appropriate constituents could determine whether their deputy would serve. In this way, the Tejanos were committing themselves to the liberal, Federalist standard and the Viesca faction.

Among Anglos, a radical faction of the Federalists, which has come to be known in Texas history as the “war party,” emerged from the outrage over the Law of 6 April. In the summer of 1832, friction between settlers and authorities trying to enforce recently instituted policies regulating commerce in the Gulf ports and the collection of new tariffs (to which they were previously exempted) reached a high pitch at the military post in Anahuac. Colonel Juan Davis Bradburn, an Anglo American adventurer who had joined the Centralist cause in Mexico, arrested the lawyer William Barret Travis when the latter attempted a ruse to secure the release of two runaway slaves that Bradburn had in protective custody. In response to Travis’s arrest, vigilantes gathered to call for his release. When Bradburn refused to surrender his prisoner, the colonists, accustomed to the Anglo American tradition of the separation of military and civilian law, and to trial by jury, labeled Bradburn a despot.

Consequently, in June of 1832, a party of Anglo Texans from around Anahuac and the port town of Brazoria marched on Bradburn’s garrison. A full-scale battle seemed imminent, but, while waiting for reinforcements, the Anglos issued a document known as the Turtle Bayou Resolutions on June 13, 1832, which cleverly argued that their actions at Anahuac were not an uprising but a demand for their constitutional rights as Mexican citizens, adding that their cause was in sympathy to that of the Federalists and their leader, Antonio López de Santa Anna, then attempting to overthrow the Centralists, the party to which Bradburn belonged. Higher military officials avoided further bloodshed at Anahuac by replacing Bradburn and releasing Travis and others whom Bradburn had arrested.

At this time, however, the radical war party failed to garner popular endorsement; indeed, many Texans condemned the group as adventurers. Most Texans belonged to a “peace party,” led by Austin, which preferred to work for solutions to settlers’ grievances via established political channels. Hence, on October 1, 1832, delegates from several Anglo settlements met at San Felipe de Austin and drafted petitions requesting certain concessions from the national government, among them, the removal of the article in the Law of April 6, 1830, that severely limited immigration.

This meeting, or consultation, was not legal; under Mexican law, such protests had to originate with the ayuntamientos. Although he sympathized with the protesters, Ramón Músquiz, the political chief in Béxar, followed the law and refused to forward the peace party’s petitions to the governor. The convention of 1832 bore no fruit.



In late 1832, leading citizens of Béxar, among them Juan N. Seguín and José María Balmaceda, met in San Antonio to express their own grievances to the state government in Saltillo. They complained about the constant intervention of the national government in the state colonization program and contended that the Law of April 6, 1830, threatened to dissuade useful capitalists from moving into Texas. They further demanded bilingual administrators, more judges, better militia protection from hostile Indians, and certain tax exemptions for businesses. These complaints, along with the October petition from Austin's group, were part of the groundswell of federalism pervasive throughout Mexico in 1832.

The ayuntamientos of Goliad, Nacogdoches, and San Felipe endorsed the Tejanos' petition, and Political Chief Músquiz submitted it to the governor, explaining that the Tejanos' boisterous tone was designed to remedy a situation that might otherwise lead the Anglos to try to separate Tejas from Coahuila. What the Tejanos wanted, he assured the governor, were reforms, not the creation of their own state. The Tejanos understood that should Texas become a separate state with its own legislature, Anglo Americans, who already outnumbered the native Mexicans, would dominate politics.

Because little had come out of the Anglos' 1832 consultation, another was held at San Felipe de Austin in April of the following year. But those attending the second meeting included new leaders who opposed Austin's position of caution and conciliation with Mexico. Among the new group were the brothers William and John Wharton, David G. Burnet, and the former governor of Tennessee, Sam Houston, who had arrived recently in Texas. Scholars attribute different motives to Houston's immigration, from attempts to buy up all the stock remaining in the Leftwich contract (he had been among the investors in the Texas Association in 1822), to an honest desire to start anew in Texas, perhaps as a landholder, lawyer, or politician. Overall, this second consultation desired the division of Coahuila y Tejas, maintaining that a separated Texas would enjoy political autonomy to make decision affecting its own well-being. Uppermost, Texans and Tejanos wanted confirmation that slavery and colonization would continue uninterrupted. As things stood during that time, the rivalry for power between the Federalists and Centralists in Coahuila muffled clamors by Anglos and Tejanos for legislative action on slavery and immigration. Only if Texas stood apart from Coahuila could it implement a program with provisions favorable to economic progress in the region. Upon adjourning, the second consultation entrusted Erasmo Seguín, Stephen F. Austin, and Dr. James B. Miller of San Felipe with taking the grievances to Mexico City where any decision about separate statehood would be decided. Of the three, only Austin made the long journey to the capital.

### **Liberals in Power**

In January 1833, Santa Anna ushered in a brief liberal era in Mexican politics when he was elected president as a Federalist. Back in favor, the liberals in Coahuila y Tejas and the Viesca brothers immediately arranged for the state legislature to petition the national government for the repeal of the Law of April 6, 1830. Now they had more helpful allies in Mexico City, among them Gómez Farías, whom Santa Anna appointed as his acting president before retreating to his hacienda in Vera Cruz, and Lorenzo de Zavala (Figure 3.4), the legislator from Yucatán who still held interests in Texas lands for which he sought settlers from the United States. Working alongside the Federalists in Mexico City was Stephen F.



**Figure 3.4** Lorenzo de Zavala. University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 76-31).

Austin, who had arrived there following the consultation of April 1833. Ultimately, effective May 1834, Mexico's senate revoked the section in the Law of April 6, 1830, that had curtailed the immigration of Anglos into the Mexican nation.

Austin failed, however, to gain the separation of Coahuila and Texas. And when officials discovered letters between him and the San Antonio ayuntamiento encouraging Texas's separation from Coahuila, they threw Austin in prison (early in 1834). Nonetheless, the state and national governments abided by their previous stand on colonization, and liberal legislation continued to emanate from Coahuila. New acts recognized the acceptance of English as a legal language of the state, permitted the extension of empresario contracts, expanded the number of local courts, and provided for trial by jury. The Coahuilan legislature also raised Texas's representation in the state congress and increased the number of departments in Texas to three. Actually, the district of Nacogdoches, which extended from the watershed between the Brazos and the Trinity rivers to the Sabine, had been created in 1831 to accommodate the rise in the Anglo population. In order to allow more self-autonomy in the province, the legislature in 1834 established the Department of Brazos, with its capital at San Felipe de Austin, which extended from the Nacogdoches district to a north-south line from the coast to the Red River, just east of the B exar and Goliad settlements. The third zone, the Department of B exar, included San Antonio and extended to the Nueces River.

## The Ineffectiveness of the Law of April 6, 1830

These changes point starkly to the ineffectiveness of the Law of April 6, 1830. Because Mexican officials had not been strict in interpreting the provisions of the decree, Anglos had continued to come into those colonies whose empresarios had imported the minimum one hundred families by the time the Centralists enacted the law. In addition, two empresario groups from Ireland persisted in their efforts to complete contracts they had acquired in the late 1820s; Centralists, after all, looked favorably upon European immigration as a way to people Texas. James McGloin and John McMullen brought several Irish families to the Nueces River area and founded San Patricio in 1831. Three years later, James Power and James Hewetson located colonists in the place that became modern-day Refugio, Texas.

At the same time, the Galveston Bay and Texas Land Company, a land-speculating corporation from the eastern United States that the empresarios Vehlein, Burnet, and de Zavala had commissioned to complete their contracts, continued to advertise the availability of its properties in Texas, even though the Law of April 6, 1830, had prohibited the further disposal of such lands. Thus, the company sold invalid land certificates to buyers. Despite the company's fraudulent activities, it brought several European families into Texas in the early 1830s. Because the new arrivals were not Americans, Mexican officials ultimately accepted and resettled them elsewhere in Texas.

For his part, Sterling C. Robertson continued to claim ownership of the original Leftwich/Texas Association contract. Though Stephen F. Austin contested the contract, convincing the legislature at one point that the Robertson contract was invalid and that it should therefore be allotted to himself, Robertson persuaded the authorities in 1834 that he had brought to Texas the required one hundred families before the Law of April 6, 1830, had been effected. Despite the dispute, Robertson successfully settled numerous families while the Centralists remained in power.

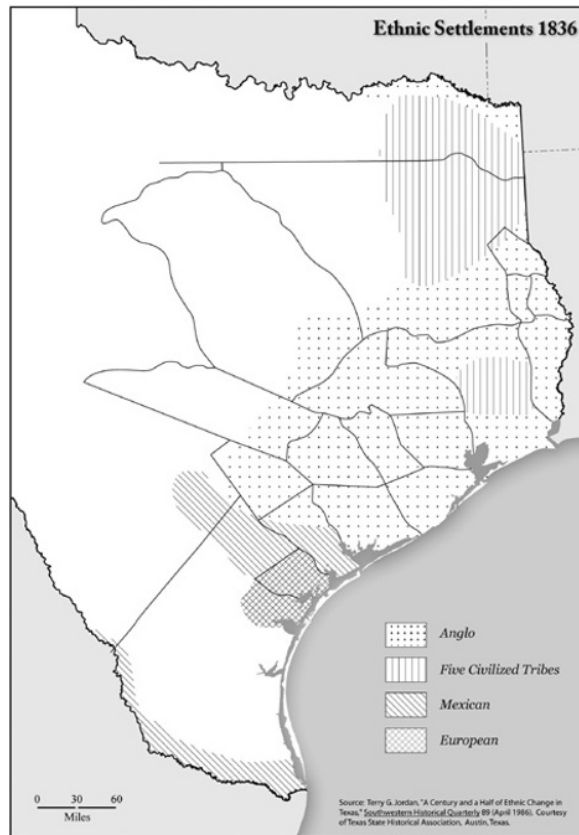
Finally, many immigrants had arrived in Texas illegally during the early 1830s, hoping to start afresh as merchants, lawyers, land speculators, politicians, squatters, trappers, miners, artisans, smugglers, or jacks-of-all trades. But with the dilution of the Law of April 6, 1830, the stream of Anglo American immigration into Texas became a torrent. By 1834, it is estimated that the number of Anglo Americans and their slaves exceeded 20,700. This figure might well have represented the doubling of the number of Americans in Texas just since 1830.

## Multicultural Society

### Anglos

As one would expect, the number of towns in Texas increased—from three in 1821 to twenty-one by 1835—most of them inhabited by the Anglo newcomers. The principal towns included San Felipe de Austin, in Stephen F. Austin's first colony, Gonzales, in Green DeWitt's grant, Velasco, on the Brazos (near present-day Freeport), and Matagorda, on the mouth of the Colorado River. Figure 3.5 shows the settlements in 1836 by ethnicity.

For all Texans, life consisted of a battle for survival, largely against the same odds the *pobladores* had faced before 1821. Basic goods such as clothing, blankets, and footwear were not readily available in Texas, but many immigrants had known enough to bring such items with them. Material for homemade apparel came either from animal skins or from cloth



**Figure 3.5** Ethnic settlements, 1836. Terry G. Jordan, “A Century and a Half of Ethnic Change in Texas,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 89 (April 1986). Courtesy Texas State Historical Association, Austin, Texas.

made on spinning wheels, devices some people had managed to import. Necessarily, the colonists used local resources such as stones, mud, or timber to construct log cabins or other types of shelter that ordinarily consisted of no more than two rooms (with dirt floors). Pioneers similarly lived off the land, hunted wild game, fished, planted small gardens, and gathered natural produce such as nuts and berries.

Anglos managed to convert parts of their grants into farmsteads, though agriculture as a gainful enterprise in Texas developed sluggishly. Early on, farming earned one barely the minimum standard of living, but by the late 1820s, cash-crop farming in Austin’s colony and sections of East Texas began to reap better rewards. With slaves and imported technology at their disposal, some Anglos planted and processed cotton for new markets outside the province. One prominent scholar estimates that Anglos’ farms by 1834 shipped about 7000 bales of cotton (to New Orleans) valued at some \$315,000.

Because hard currency did not circulate in the province, people bartered to obtain needed commodities and services, using livestock, otter and beaver pelts, and even land to complete their transactions. Improvising, Anglos found numerous ways to earn an income, among them smuggling. The tariff laws that exempted Anglo products during the 1820s had not applied to all imports (generally, codes excluded household goods and implements), so Anglos brought merchandise illegally into Texas. From there, some even brazenly shipped the products south to Mexican states or west to New Mexico.

Goods moving out of the province included corn, the skins of deer and bears, salted meats, and even timber from East Texas. The latter enterprise amounted to little more than a local activity undertaken to meet the needs of the people around Nacogdoches, but some of the lumber found its way to buyers as far away as Matamoros.

To further their education, the foreigners established numerous schools in the 1820s and 1830s. They patterned the schools after institutions similar to ones they had known in the southern United States. Private enterprise provided the funds for children's education (public schooling did not exist during that era), both at the elementary and secondary levels. Older students attended academies or boarding schools, which were private institutions established by religious groups, local residents, immigrant teachers (often women) of certain communities who wanted a place in which to practice their profession, or by individuals seeking a profit. In Texas, education suffered the limitations of the frontier. Instructors were never plentiful, private homes usually had to serve as makeshift educational facilities, and schoolhouses, where they existed, were often little more than simple structures constructed from pine logs. Colonists who could afford to do, so sent their children to schools in the United States.

Printing in Texas had started in the 1810s with the first and probably the only issue of *La Gaceta de Tejas*, printed to spread republican ideas that might help Mexico liberate itself from Spain. But the first successful press in Texas was established in 1829 in Austin's colony by Godwin Brown Cotten. His newspaper, named the *Texas Gazette*, served Austin in his determination to assure the host country of Anglo American loyalty and to remind the colonists of the gratitude they owed to Mexico. The *Gazette* ceased publication in 1832, but other papers continued to spread the news to Anglo Texans.

Although Anglos had agreed to observe the Catholic religion in order to qualify as Mexican citizens, the Church neglected them because of, among other things, a shortage of priests. Hence, many Anglo settlers held illicit church services and (religious) camp meetings. Lacking priests, the people in Austin's colony conducted their own civil ceremonies when necessary, though in 1831 and 1832 the Irish-born Father Michael Muldoon did tend to the community as the resident clergyman. He reported the colonists as faithful to Catholicism, but he wed couples who had already been living together outside of church-sanctioned marriages. For a brief time after 1834, the settlers did not have to be so cautious about their religious practices, for the state government conceded them freedom of conscience.

Anglos defended themselves by organizing local militias, ready volunteer companies authorized by the Mexican government as alternatives to standing armies. These were necessary, given the government's inability to provide the settlers adequate protection. In 1825, the garrisons at San Antonio and Goliad had only fifty-nine men; by 1832, the government had managed to raise that number to about 140, but only half of these Texas soldiers were formally prepared for military action. Unlike Austin's, most of the colonies failed to establish their own militia as was prescribed by law. Instead, they relied on volunteer companies of a temporary nature; such units evolved into the Texas Rangers, so organized in July 1835.

## Blacks

For black people, life on the Mexican frontier differed radically from that of their counterparts during the Spanish colonial era. As already noted, Anglos had, in the guise of contract labor, been able to perpetuate slavery despite Mexican disapproval. Neither the Law of April

6, 1830, nor a state decree issued in 1832 to weaken negotiated servant contracts deterred some of the immigrants from bringing black slaves into Texas surreptitiously. Anglos argued that the economic development of the province depended on slave labor, and both Tejano oligarchs and liberal politicians in Coahuila seconded this position. Although many Mexican officials genuinely believed in the cruelty and immorality of the institution, they somehow consistently accepted the argument that the province could not grow and prosper without it.

By 1836, the number of slaves in Texas numbered about 5000. Most slaves lived on the Anglo plantations located in the productive lands adjacent to the Brazos, Colorado, and Trinity rivers, although slavery did exist around Nacogdoches and in other fledgling Anglo communities along the Red River.

The peculiar institution arrived in Texas with all its southern trappings, for whites sought to recreate it just as it existed in the United States. As in the South, where society delineated strict roles for the disparate races, in Texas many Anglos considered blacks a racially inferior people suited to a life of strenuous labor and servitude. As far as these people were concerned, black persons could be bought and sold, hired out, counted as part of one's assets, and bequeathed to relatives. To control the slave population, whites followed tried and tested policies, including the liberal use of the lash. Slaves attempted to alleviate their condition by running away when possible, often seeking refuge among the Indian tribes of East Texas or in the Mexican settlements of the nation's interior.

## Tejanos

Hispanic Texans, many of them descendants of the first colonizers and presidial soldiers assigned to garrisons throughout the Spanish period, lived in the ranching areas of Central and South Texas. In the latter area, they occupied lands granted to them since the 1770s but also ones acquired from the state of Tamaulipas as late as the early 1830s. Most Tejanos, however, continued to live in the older cities established in the eighteenth century. The Tejano urban settlements included: San Antonio, which had a Hispanic population of 2500 in 1835; Goliad, with 700 in 1834; and Nacogdoches, reporting a figure of 537 Mexicans in 1835. Additionally, Tejanos resided near Goliad, in the nascent town of Victoria founded in 1824 by the empresario Martín de León. By 1830, the population of Victoria had grown to 248, and to 300 four years later. On the Rio Grande, Laredo consisted of about 2000 predominantly Hispanic residents in 1835.

In the towns, people tried to make a living in a variety of ways. Merchants, especially in San Antonio, sojourned to the Mexican states below the Rio Grande to acquire finished goods such as clothing and household items for resale in the province. Tradespeople met both civilian and military needs as tailors, blacksmiths, and barbers. Poor people, most of them *peones* (commoners), did whatever task people would pay them to perform, including work on nearby ranches.

In the countryside, rancheros still took to the open range to round up *mesteños*, though by this time government regulation impeded efforts to make a profitable living in this way. Nonetheless, the rancheros around San Antonio clandestinely captured wild horses and cattle and invented clever ways to sell the stock to soldiers, fellow Bédareños, and even Anglo Americans. Alternatively, as rancheros had done in the Spanish era, they drove their stock into other Mexican states or Louisiana.

Generally, farming continued to provide only a subsistence-level existence. The people in San Antonio generally limited themselves to working family plots, though larger landowners

tried harvesting vegetables and fruits on a grander scale. Some of the farmers in Béxar and Goliad who possessed irrigable lands experimented with growing cotton. Farming did at times yield slight surpluses, most of which were consumed locally.

As was the case before Mexico gained independence, Mexican society in Texas remained a divided one, the emerging opportunities in commerce, ranching, and politics during the 1820s and 1830s fueling the fragmentation. Government bureaucrats, successful merchants or rancheros, and others who came from prominent families made up a small elite. Among its members were Erasmo and Juan N. Seguín, José Antonio Navarro, Ramón Músquiz, and retired soldiers such as José Francisco Ruiz and José María Balmaceda.

The status of Hispanic women reflected both liberties and restrictions. Women sued for military survivors' benefits and engaged in the sale of lands, from which some achieved financial standing equal to or surpassing that of some men. But women also suffered from serious disadvantages. Law and tradition barred them from voting or the holding of political office. Religion discouraged divorce, dooming many women to endure unhappy marriages. Furthermore, societal conventions at the time demanded the ostracism of adulteresses, while turning a blind eye to the philandering of men. As was common practice in other western societies at the time, women often ate their home-cooked meals apart from (and sometimes only after) their spouses.

As in the Anglo sector, education was an area of concern for the Hispanic community, and in the traditional Mexican way, Tejanos supported it locally through fundraising drives. In Laredo, citizens opened a school in 1825. In Nacogdoches, Mexicans began a determined drive in 1828 to establish a similar facility, and by 1831, they had a school building and a teacher. San Antonio had two teachers in the late 1820s and early 1830s, though education there seems to have had its ups and downs according to prevailing economic conditions. Béxar and Nacogdoches boasted the highest proportion of students per capita in Texas. Generally, education declined with the turmoil of the mid-1830s.

Militia units remained the primary form of defense, as had been common during the period before 1821. Different from the Anglo volunteer companies, which were basically retaliatory, the Tejano militia, led by locally elected officers, followed an offensive strategy that conducted forays into Indian camping grounds. By the early 1830s, militia squadrons had developed into highly efficient, ranging cavalry units with the capacity to strike and pursue the enemy. Leaders of these companies included Martín de León, Juan N. Seguín, and Carlos de la Garza.

Catholicism remained the primary religion among the Mexican Texans. As during the Spanish era, Tejanos carried on the practices of their colonial forefathers. The Church had all but given up its work in the Far North during the period, and the two priests responsible for Texas Catholicism during the period had earned disgraceful reputations. Displaying their own independence from religious dictates, Tejanos pleaded poverty and refused to pay the fees that the clergymen requested for performing the sacraments and other priestly functions.

## **Indians**

The Indian peoples of Texas, still seeking to maintain their independence, now contended with Tejano militias and Anglo rifle companies instead of Spanish priests and royal armies. Those tribes that the Spanish had targeted for conversion had by the 1820s, either perished due to wars and (European) diseases, been displaced from their native lands and driven into

the western regions, or integrated successfully into Spanish/Mexican communities. Only vestiges of the tribal Coahuiltecas remained by the 1830s, some of them having managed to meld into Goliad's population following the last phase of mission secularization in the 1820s.

With the Nuestra Señora del Rosario Mission no longer operative, the Karankawas lost one of their last sources of refuge near their old hunting grounds; at the same time, they became the targets of Anglos who coveted Karankawan lands. In 1824, settlers from Austin's colony launched hostilities to drive nearby Karankawas from the vicinity. By 1827, the antagonistic whites had succeeded in forcing the tribe to relocate farther south along the coast. The move, however, only produced new problems for the Indians, as it placed them closer to the Tejano settlements at La Bahía, where local rancheros tolerated no threats to their livestock. During the 1830s, the Karankawas numbered less than 800 persons but desperately clung to survival by preying on Tejano-owned cattle or, in the case of those who gradually drifted back to their previous homeland, "hiring out" to Anglo settlers as casual laborers or domestic servants.

Meanwhile, the Indian tribes of the plains—such as the Comanches, Apaches, and Norteños—remained faithful to their traditional lifeways. Norteños and Apaches still relied on a combination of the hunt and small-scale farming, with women cultivating and harvesting corn, pumpkins, and beans. As to the Comanches, warriors continued to sabotage settlements in an effort to halt the encroachment on their land. Developing new entrepreneurial skills, some Plains bands traded with unscrupulous Anglo Americans in the United States, exchanging horses, mules, and other property they had stolen from the Texas settlements for desired American-made weapons. The Comanches, for their part, continued to rely on the old dependable custom of extorting gifts from the Mexican government in exchange for peace. But with national leaders unable to raise money for tribute, the Comanches—making use of Texas as a virtual stockroom—by the mid-1830s had arrested farm and ranch development in a line extending from San Antonio to Goliad.

The Caddos of East Texas, who had long lived in farming communities, now contended with problems that threatened to unravel their civilization. Alcohol, provided them by American traders, enfeebled many tribespeople almost at the same time that outsiders began penetrating long-held Caddo territory. Interlopers included other Native American peoples from the US South as well as Anglo empresarios bearing contracts to establish colonies in Caddo land. By the late 1820s, the Caddos numbered no more than 300 families; they attempted to survive by farming but also by trading beaver, deer, and otter pelts for weapons and household and other personal items in Louisiana.

The cultural diversity of Indian society was enhanced in 1819–20 when a band of Cherokees, bowing to legal and extralegal pressure by Anglos to abandon their homelands in Georgia and Alabama, arrived in northeastern Texas near Caddo land. Other southern tribes, including Kickapoos, Shawnees, Delawares, and Alabama-Coushattas, also emigrated to East Texas. The Cherokee leader Duwali (known also as Chief Bowles) originally located the Cherokees on the Trinity River, in the proximity of present-day Dallas. Friction with the Plains Indians soon forced the Cherokees to relocate in today's Van Zandt, Cherokee, and neighboring counties. During the late 1820s, the Cherokee settlement in Texas included about eighty families that made their living from a combination of farming, livestock raising, and trade with nearby Nacogdoches. From the time of their arrival until the mid-1830s, Duwali and his people actively sought to acquire legal title to their new homeland from the Mexican government, but they never received anything more than vague promises.



## **The Centralists Back in Power, 1834–1836**

Santa Anna returned from retirement in May 1834 to remove Gómez Farías, his acting president, whose liberalism had thoroughly alienated the Church and the established military. Resurfacing as a reactionary, Santa Anna abolished the Federalist Constitution of 1824 and held elections for a new congress composed of conservatives: that is, Centralists and others supportive of the powers of the military and the Catholic Church. In October 1835, the new congress took steps to create a Centralist state in Mexico. It dissolved all state legislatures and turned the former states into military departments, over which presidential appointees would now govern.

The dissolution of federalism produced revolts in several states. Zacatecas opposed the new order most resolutely, but Santa Anna crushed an uprising there unmercifully. The people in Yucatán broke with the government at this time, managing to retain their separatism until 1846. Meanwhile, in Monclova (which had become the capital of Coahuila y Tejas in 1833), liberal politicians denounced Santa Anna's new government in the summer of 1834. The legislature refused to obey Centralist orders and in March and April of 1835, it passed two laws designed to raise money for resisting the Centralists. The decrees authorized the governor to sell up to 400 leagues of public land in order to meet the "public exigencies" that the state then faced with Santa Anna, and they designated another 400 leagues with which to compensate militiamen willing to take up arms against hostile Indians.

Many in Texas disapproved of investors acquiring real estate for the sake of profit, but Anglo Texans present in Monclova acquired grants during the crisis by promising to raise and equip 1000-man companies on these lands, though most of these agents beat a swift retreat back to Texas to try to sell their newly acquired property. Fearing that some of these speculators might in fact raise a militia to be used against the central government, Domingo de Ugartechea, the principal commandant in Béxar, called upon General Martín Perfecto de Cós to muster reinforcements. Cós, the commanding general of the northeastern Mexican states, relayed the request to President Santa Anna.

Responding to reports that Mexico was preparing to send troops into Texas, a band of men (historians provide different numbers, anywhere from twenty-five to fifty) led by William Barret Travis and armed with cannon descended on Anahuac on June 30, 1835, forcing the surrender of the forty-four Mexican troops stationed there. The immediate cause behind the assault on the Mexican installation dealt with the old grievance regarding import tariffs, which people could ill afford to pay on needed goods. But the war party, which traced its origins to 1832, banked on the assumption that the episode would rally people in support of their cause of seeing Texas achieve its independence from Mexico. However, committees of (political) correspondence, which had organized by the early summer of 1835, still held divided views on what stand Texas should take in its relationship with Mexico. Some even assured Mexican officials that Texans, overall, had nothing to do with the acts that had induced troop movements into Texas.

But to Mexican political and military figures long wary of the Texans, the Anahuac incident represented the beginning of a revolt, and the refusal of Texan authorities to arrest the Anahuac agitators (primarily Travis) as the government wished, pointed to a widespread opposition. Moreover, the speculators stayed at large, mainly because by August they had either left Texas or gone into hiding. Among those lying low was Lorenzo de Zavala, once one of Mexico's most prominent Federalists, who had fled to Texas not only to escape the Centralist regime but to be closer to his East Texas land possessions, which he had been using from afar for speculative purposes.

Meanwhile, other, more radical committees of correspondence called for another consultation but resolved not to surrender the fugitives to the authorities. By August, stories circulated that Mexico's troops were on the move into Texas; communities reacted by calling general meetings to decide their best course of action: reason with the government, or openly resist it. Then, in early September 1835, Austin, newly freed from jail in Mexico City, arrived back in Texas and threw his prestige behind the ideals of the war party. On the twentieth of that month, Cós landed with men and materiel at Cópago Bay, whence they marched into the interior, reinforcing Goliad before heading toward Béxar. Reports that the Centralist forces intended to free the slaves, oppress Texans, and lay waste to the region influenced communities to take necessary measures for an expected confrontation. Even before the Centralist armies from Mexico skirmished with the Texans, the first episode between Anglos and the Mexican military occurred at Gonzales, where Lieutenant Francisco de Castañeda arrived on September 30, 1835, to request the transfer of a cannon that the Mexican government had given to the colonists four years earlier to help them protect themselves from Indians. Because he feared provoking a fight should he cross the Guadalupe River into Gonzales, Castañeda found himself negotiating for the surrender of the artillery piece in a rather awkward manner—he on one side of the river and local officials, determined to retain possession of the cannon, on the other. Without much hope of success and still reluctant to start a conflict, Castañeda retreated. Then, on the morning of October 2, the rebels fired upon the government forces in their camp, some four miles upriver from Gonzales, using the very cannon in question: on the artillery piece the Anglos had draped a white banner bearing the combative phrase “COME AND TAKE IT.” A brief and minor encounter ensued. Shortly, the Anglos called for Castañeda's surrender, resuming their fire with the cannon when the lieutenant refused. With orders from his superior to withdraw “without compromising the honor of Mexican arms,” Castañeda left Gonzales without further ado, and the Anglos proclaimed victory.

The insurgents claimed another triumph a week later when Goliad fell to them. With the capture of the presidio and the soldiers Cós had left there, the Texans obtained a new cache of military goods recently brought in by Cós; more important, they could now prevent the general from using the Gulf to import additional troops or to escape in case of an impending defeat.

By the end of the month, Texas volunteers under the command of Stephen F. Austin began moving into San Antonio. In late October, they quarantined the city, which was by then under the control of some 800 to 1200 troops under Cós. In mid-November Austin was sent on a diplomatic mission to the United States, and the men elected Edward Burleson to command the army. Burleson decided to abandon the siege for the winter, but Ben Milam convinced him to allow volunteers to attempt to take the town. On December 5, some 300 men (several of whom were Texas-Mexicans) led by Milam and Frank Johnson attacked. Isolated from reinforcements and re-supply for his army, Cós, having tried to defend Béxar in door-to-door combat, succumbed to the assault on December 11. Now the attackers, less Ben Milam, who had been killed by a Mexican sharpshooter, forced Cós to promise to respect the Constitution of 1824 and begin a retreat into the interior of Mexico.

Meanwhile, fifty-eight delegates from a dozen Texas communities had assembled in what is called the Consultation of 1835 at San Felipe de Austin. Meeting between November 3 and November 14, they elected Branch T. Archer president of the Consultation and, after lengthy discussion, declared their commitment to federalism as embodied in the Constitution of 1824. By this strategy, the delegates hoped to win support from liberals in Mexico and gain time in which to acquire assistance from the United States; in fact, Texans

already wanted independence from Mexico, as did the corps of Tejano oligarchs who had seen advantages in Anglo immigration early. Delegates further created a provisional government and elected Henry Smith as governor, James W. Robinson as lieutenant governor, and established a general council (a legislative body like a parliament) to be composed of representatives from the various settlements. Among other things, the Consultation empowered the new government to seek funds to finance the expected war (to that end, it dispatched Austin, Archer, and William H. Wharton to the United States) and selected Sam Houston as commander of the regular army.

By early 1836, President Santa Anna himself was on the move toward Texas to crush the rebellion. In February the Mexican army, consisting of some 6000 soldiers, among them trained infantrymen and cavalrymen but many others conscripted for the Texas campaign, crossed the Rio Grande. Draftees included farm and ranch hands, poverty-stricken city dwellers, heads of families more concerned with the safety of their loved ones than a distant war, and political opponents of the Centralists.

Texas troops in the field, meantime, proved difficult to manage. Officers faced problems imposing order and discipline. Enlisted men tended to show more allegiance to their immediate leaders, as opposed to those higher up the chain of command. For the most part, the Texan army consisted of volunteers willing to fight when needed but ready to leave the ranks in order to care for their families and property once an immediate crisis had passed. It soon became apparent that the Consultation had blundered badly in not giving Sam Houston (who commanded the mostly nonexistent regular army) command over the volunteers as well.

The disorder in the military was symptomatic of problems besetting Texans in general, for into the winter of 1835–36 they still faced much political division. Their own individualism inhibited agreement on the best path to pursue toward independence. Some still held conflicting feelings about their relationship to Mexico and agonized over whether to join the peace or the war party. Others took issue with their fellow Texans over land claims or denounced them for shirking military duty.

As to the government, it faced such confusion and dissension that in December 1835, the general council called for the election of men to meet in early March 1836 for the purpose of adopting an ad interim government and framing a new constitution. Before the convention could meet, however, the government virtually collapsed. In January Governor Smith suspended the general council, which retaliated by removing Smith from office. Neither recognized the legality of the other's action, and for all practical purposes Texas ceased to have a government. When delegates to the convention convened at Washington-on-the-Brazos (a townsite located a few miles from Austin's head center at San Felipe) on March 1, sentiment had crystallized in favor of independence from Mexico. On March 2, the delegates endorsed a committee document, a declaration of independence, stating that Santa Anna had overthrown the Constitution of 1824 and substituted it with tyranny, that the Mexican government had subjugated Texas to Coahuila and thereby had diminished the voice of the people of Texas, that it had denied them the right to trial by jury, the right to religious freedom, and the right to bear arms, and that Mexico had failed to establish a system of education. It further denounced Santa Anna's regime for employing the military to enforce the law instead of utilizing civilian justice, for inciting the Indians against the colonies, and for mustering an army of mercenaries which was even then on its way to exterminate the colonists. All fifty-nine delegates to the convention signed the document, among them three Mexicans: Lorenzo de Zavala and the Tejanos José Antonio Navarro and José Francisco Ruiz, the latter two belonging to that group of Coahuiltejano capitalists who had profited from Anglo American colonization.

## The War for Texas Independence

### Causes

How can this move for independence be explained when, just fifteen years earlier, Anglo American immigrants to Texas had pledged their loyalty to Mexico and agreed to conform to Mexican custom? Traditionally, historians viewed the Texas rebellion as a courageous act of liberty-loving Anglo Texans against the intolerant and undemocratic government of Mexico: in this light, Anglos were simply following in the footsteps of their ancestors who had rebelled against the autocratic British. Over time, other interpretations gained acceptance. One depicted the Texas rebellion as part of a conspiracy of southern slaveholders to take control of Texas. Another cited collusion between President Andrew Jackson and Sam Houston. Nevertheless, the original democracy versus tyranny thesis remained the most tenacious.

Recent interpretations, however, depart from the earlier explanations. One analytical viewpoint places the uprising within historical currents underway in the Mexican interior where the Centralist and Federalist parties had since 1821 vied for political control. Anglo Texans and leading Tejanos (several from the San Antonio area) favored federalist republican principles. The Federalists advocated state sovereignty, defended individual liberty, pledged protection of private property ownership, and actively promoted economic progress. Anglo Texans and their Tejano allies perceived Mexico's Centralists, on the other hand, as threats to these convictions, and the consistent discriminatory attitude the Centralists had taken against the Texans, and ultimately their abolishment of the Constitution of 1824, sparked the movement for independence.

A related premise broadens the conflict between Centralists and Federalists by placing it in a global context. This scholarly assessment contends that the worldwide revolution in cotton framed the manner in which Centralists and Federalists confronted each other over which system of governance best determined the destiny of Texas. For the Centralists, the cotton revolution and slavery had led to great influx of Anglos into Texas, and only strong Centralist control would curb increased immigration, abolish slavery, and halt possible secession. But these were subversive policies to Anglos and Tejano oligarchs. They saw in federalism, on the other hand, a shield from Centralist policies and protection from threats that potentially sabotaged slavery, arrested immigration, and interrupted the further development of the cotton economy. Cotton and slavery mixed in shaping the approach each side took in dealing with the other. The disagreement between Mexico's Centralists to check immigration and undermine the institution that undergirded cotton in Texas, and the conviction of Texans and Tejanos that federalism as a method of governance best served their aim in defending the agricultural revolution, caused the Texas war for independence.

Another alternative view asserts that economic incentives, such as land speculation, underlay the revolt. The land-trafficking thesis sees several of the influential men in Anglo Texas having migrated from the United States to the Mexican north with the intention of turning a profit in land transactions. This argument links these individuals to speculators in Texas, Coahuila, and Mexico City, as well as to financial centers in New York and Philadelphia. When Mexico moved against Texas in 1835, the leading men in the colony threw their influence behind rebellion in an effort to maintain opportunities in land speculation.

Other historians attribute more subtle economic reasons for the uprising, seeing the rebellion as one launched by Texans to preserve recently achieved economic gains. For years, Anglos had lived under the auspicious climate created by the Constitution of

1824—federalism had fostered further immigration, slavery, and economic progress. In eastern Texas, Anglo Texans had benefited favorably from cotton production, finding markets for the staple in US markets. Santa Anna's effort in 1835–36 to impose stricter rule over the province threatened the Texans' notions of an individual's right to make a living through inventive entrepreneurship. The rebellion, then, intended to protect the agricultural and commercial advances Anglos had made in Texas, as well as slavery.

Still other historians focus on Anglo American contempt for Mexico's rule. According to this view, Anglo Americans throughout the 1820s and up to the outbreak of the war faulted the Mexican character for a number of defects, among them the Mexicans' unenlightened politics: they tolerated military intervention in government, centralist rule, and the violation of individual and states' rights, and seemed unenlightened on such fundamental republican tenets as the right to due process. In short, the Anglos scornfully viewed Mexicans as a politically and culturally inferior people, one incapable of governing Texas and thus undeserving of the province.

Similarly contemptible, they contended, was Mexico's cowardly policy toward the *indios bárbaros*; Anglos grieved that politicians preferred retrenchment against the Comanches instead of a manly resistance to them in the American manner. This allegation, however, conveniently ignored several realities. First, Spaniards and Mexicans had not timidly retreated from openly engaging the Indians. Spain and subsequently Mexico saw Texas as a region designed to buffer and protect the wealthier northern states from foreign interlopers (including those from the United States by the 1820s); fighting Indians in Texas simply had held low priority. Nor had Anglo communities been any more successful in restraining the powerful Comanche nation from attacks on the province. It was myth, of course, to maintain that the United States produced a more courageous breed of men than did Spain or Mexico; in point of fact, Anglo men launched no major offensives against the Comanches, as Anglo settlements up until the mid-1830s were situated in eastern Texas, remote from the bison-hunting grounds of Plains Indians.

It follows, therefore, that ethnocentrism or racism as a cause of the conflict has also received attention from scholars, with some arguing strongly that racial prejudice acted as a guiding force (though not the sole one) in the break with Mexico; others adamantly contest this analysis. The first school would note that Anglo Americans arrived in Texas already conditioned to think negatively of Mexican people: the Mexicans' darker skin and adherence to Catholicism helped Protestant, racially biased Anglos view Mexicans as biologically inferior and morally flawed. Believing, as past generations of Anglos did (and future ones would) that the United States had a special purpose in the world (a "Manifest Destiny" to bring order and discipline to "untamed" and "uncivilized" hinterlands), they arrived in Texas bent on "rescuing" the underdeveloped region from a backward people and an unstable government.

Critics of such an interpretation argue that racism truly was not manifest in Texas before 1836, and thus should be discounted as a primary cause in the independence movement. In fact, Anglos and Tejanos coexisted fairly well, sharing similar economic and political interests. Frontier settlements were so remote that large-scale contact between the two peoples hardly aroused ill feelings. But once it started, the war itself, one group of scholars observes, spurred anti-Mexican prejudice. During the conflict, Anglos came to see Mexicans as decadent, brutal, and subhuman, the reality of the events that transpired during it hardening such perceptions. Still other scholars note that not until after 1836, when new factors emerged, among them a desire to turn Mexicans into a controllable labor force and stepped-up competition for land, did feelings that may be classified as racist develop. Prejudice

evolved from a need to justify the violent domination of the Tejanos, in short, from anxiety, distrust, fear, conflict, and competition.

Scholars also find the United States economy a contributing factor leading to the breakup of Texas with Mexico. Anglo American immigrants had facilitated closer economic ties between Texas (and other parts of the Far North for that matter) and the United States, so that by the 1830s, even Tejanos (both oligarchs and some plain folks) and entrepreneurs in Coahuila were forging connections to US commerce. When events pushed Texas toward separation from Mexico, many Texans (both Anglos and Mexicans)–driven by the human instinct for survival–sided with rebellion, seeing greater opportunity in an independent Texas tied to the robust economy of the United States.

Finally, after decades of relative neglect, the Revolution has come under the examination of historians from Mexico. Writing from a nationalistic perspective, they have tended to view the conflict as an expression of US imperialism—a shameless American land grab perpetrated against a weaker neighbor. In this view, the Texas War for Independence was simply the first step in the United States’ acquisition of Mexico’s northern territories, a process that started in Texas and then culminated in the US-Mexican War of 1846–48. The Texas rebels, in other words, were simply surrogates for the US government, fully intending to detach Texas from Mexico and add it to the United States.

Whatever the immediate causes of the Texas War for Independence, the conflict must be considered in the larger social, political, and economic context of Mexican and American history. Texas by the 1830s was an isolated, peripheral region of the weak, incompletely formed Mexican nation. The events of the 1820s and 1830s had drawn Texas increasingly into the dynamic, rapidly expanding capitalist economic system of the United States, and those ties proved stronger than all of Mexico’s inadequate attempts to foster a Mexican identity and bind the northern frontier province more tightly to the national core. Shortly before the outbreak of the Revolution, Stephen F. Austin had described Texas as “a ripe peach” simply waiting for a “gentle breeze” to cause it to drop from its Mexican tree. The events of 1833–35, culminating in Santa Anna’s turn to Centralism, whipped up more than a breeze—it was more like a storm that had been brewing quietly for many years but finally broke.

### **Independence won**

Santa Anna arrived in Béxar on February 23, 1836, to find the Alamo (the popular name of the old mission of San Antonio de Valero) fortified by a contingent led by William Barret Travis and James Bowie. Laying siege to it, Santa Anna prepared for a final assault, as those inside mobilized for defense.

On March 6, sometime around the break of dawn, some 1100 of Santa Anna’s 2600 troops began a trot toward the walled compound as the *degüello*, a bugle call signaling to take no prisoners, sounded. The old mission would not fall easily; its location on a slight rise afforded those inside it a clear view of their attackers. Moreover, the defenders (historians now place their number in the range of 240 to 260) had already armed the compound with twenty-one heavy artillery pieces, and many of those inside were expert riflemen, including foremost the Tennessee marksmen led by the recently arrived volunteer Davy Crockett, a nationally famous former US congressman. Using cannon fire and long rifles, the Alamo’s defenders felled the lead soldiers responsible for positioning the ladders that would allow the attackers to scale the mission’s defenses; thus officers and more-seasoned fighters

rushing behind the first wave could only try to claw their way up and over the compound's eight- to nine-foot walls. Now fighting for their lives, the Mexicans contended with bayonets and Bowie knives. Within minutes of its start, the assault appeared to have miscarried, and Santa Anna committed 400 reserves to the engagement. As this new wave of soldiers dashed toward the fortress, their bullets hit many of the hapless conscripts who still lay bunched up at the base of the walls. Frantic effort finally took the attackers over the walls of the Alamo, where the volunteers fell back to find cover within the compound (Figure 3.6). The battle itself ended within thirty minutes, but the carnage followed for some time after, as the Mexicans ferreted out soldiers still resisting from makeshift secondary lines of defense. The assault had cost Santa Anna more than 200 deaths and total casualties of about 400.

Even though Santa Anna gave orders to spare no one's life, several who had stood in the Alamo survived. Among them were Susannah Dickinson, her small child, and a black slave belonging to Travis. Many of the survivors were Mexicans, most of them family members of (what recent research reveals were) nine Tejanos who had chosen to stand and fight with those inside the Alamo. About six or seven volunteers—Davy Crockett probably among them—were captured and executed within minutes after the battle by orders of Santa Anna.

While Santa Anna was waging his costly victory at Béxar, Texans under the command of Colonel James W. Fannin were preparing to defend the old presidio at Goliad from Mexican forces advancing up the coast from Matamoros under the command of General José de Urrea, who had already disposed of Anglo resistance his forces had met at San Patricio, Agua Dulce, and Refugio. Fannin decided on the morning of March 19 to abandon the garrison and make a run for Victoria, reasoning that the lack of adequate provisions at Goliad undermined a capable defense. As Fannin and his men retreated, Urrea intercepted them, deterring the Texans from taking refuge at Coletto Creek, the ravined terrain of which might have allowed Fannin to dig in to mount a spirited resistance. Therefore, at the “battle of the prairie,” some two miles from the timber of Coletto Creek, Urrea forced Fannin to surrender on the morning of March 20, and then marched the enemy force back to Goliad. A week



**Figure 3.6** *Dawn at the Alamo*. This romantic painting is exhibited at the Texas State Capitol Building. Accession ID: CHA 1989.081; Courtesy State Preservation Board, Austin, TX; Original Artist: McArdle, Henry A. 1836–1908.

later, despite Urrea's personal pleas for clemency for the prisoners, Col. Nicolás de la Portilla (whom Urrea had left in command at Goliad) slaughtered the Anglos at Santa Anna's insistence. Some 312 persons met their death, but close to 30 men who had not been fatally wounded by the executioners' first volley managed to escape into the woods.

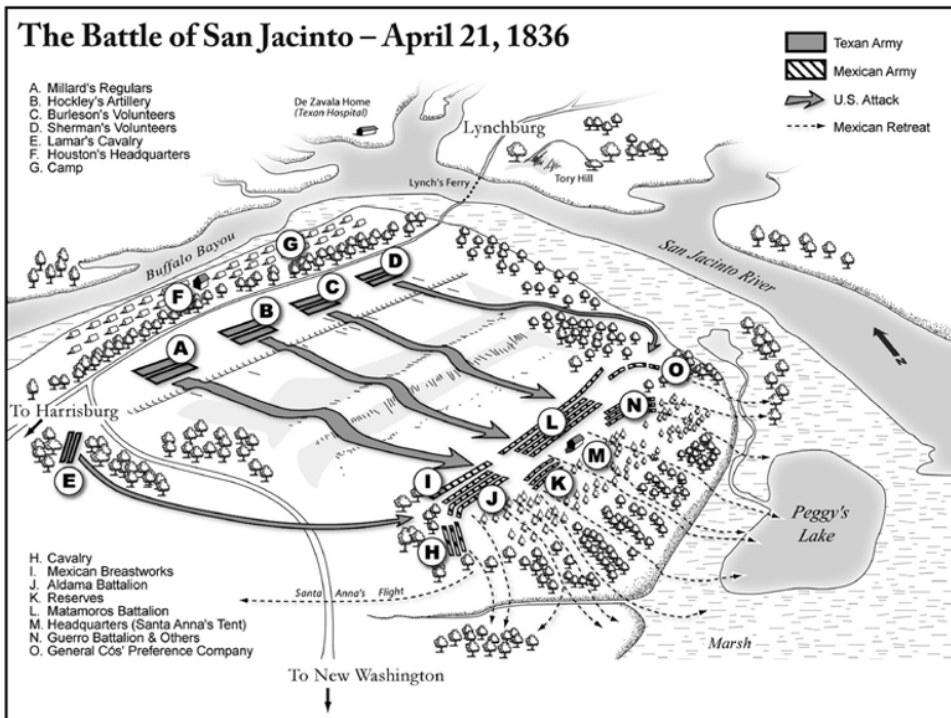
The March convention had finally given Houston command of all Texan troops—volunteers as well as regulars—creating unity of command, an element essential to fighting a war. Moreover, the defeats at the Alamo and Goliad had eliminated the soldiers' narrow allegiances to their immediate leaders. Houston arrived at Gonzales on March 13 to take command of 374 troops gathered there, only to hear of the fall of the Alamo. Two days later, following the arrival of more men, which increased his force to around 500, Houston headed away from Santa Anna's advancing army, toward more familiar territory in East Texas. Although he might have undertaken this maneuver in order to engage the Mexican army on the Texans' own ground, many believed that Houston intended to retreat all the way to the Louisiana border, where the US Army might then intervene on the Texan side. Indeed, throughout the retreat, Texan officials stayed in contact with US General Edmund Gaines, who was stationed with an American force just across the Sabine River. Whatever Houston's intentions (and he never fully revealed what they were), many Texas settlers perceived it as a mindless retreat and panic spread quickly among the plain folk of the area—a panic made worse by unfounded rumors of an alliance between Mexicans and Indians. Consequently, an exodus Texans called the "Runaway Scrape" ensued as people fled their farms and communities, seeking refuge along the Texas–Louisiana border. A sense of mortal terror propelled them forward, despite cold weather and a driving rain that turned dirt roads into quagmires and common streams into mighty rivers.

By this point, Santa Anna felt confident that his conquest of the Texan army was near at hand, and he committed a major military blunder by detaching himself and some 1300 troops from the main body of his army to pursue the rebel government near Galveston Bay. Now the pursuer became the pursued, as Houston caught up with Santa Anna at the San Jacinto River on April 20. The Mexican general audaciously made camp in a location that defied the rules of engagement; although he had the Texans boxed in, he, too, was shut off on three sides, with the enemy less than a mile in front and already poised for an attack. The San Jacinto River on Santa Anna's right and swampy terrain behind him would make a disciplined retreat impossible (Figure 3.7).

When no attack had come by midday on April 21, Santa Anna became convinced that Houston did not intend to fight. Therefore it came as a complete surprise when, sometime around 4 p.m., Sam Houston's forces of approximately 1000 troops (made up of volunteers from the Anglo settlements, recent arrivals from the United States, as well as a detachment of Texas Mexicans led by Juan N. Seguín) advanced on Santa Anna's camp. Caught off guard, Santa Anna's forces attempted to beat back the Texans, even killing a horse out from under Sam Houston and wounding the general, but their resistance amounted to little. Within eighteen minutes after the first shot had been fired, Houston's men had full control of the enemy camp. The Mexican army, by this time already deserted by Santa Anna, had become disorganized and gave ground, with the Texans chasing Mexican troops as they fled into the river and the marsh, killing them as they came upon them. The slaying of Santa Anna's men continued past dusk. Casualty figures showed 650 Mexicans dead and 208 wounded. Additionally, the victors took numerous prisoners. The Texans had suffered only eight or nine killed and somewhere between seventeen and thirty injured.

Captured the day following the Battle of San Jacinto, Santa Anna succeeded in negotiating an agreement whereby Houston spared his life in return for a concession that the





**Figure 3.7** The Battle of San Jacinto. Adapted from Stephen L. Hardin, *Texian Iliad: A Military History of the Texas Revolution*, University of Texas Press, 1994.

Mexican leader order the retreat of his three armies into Mexico. The small Texan navy had succeeded in preventing Mexican forces from being resupplied, and the remaining Mexican forces under the command of General Vicente Filisola—short of provisions and further weakened from foundering in a “sea of mud” for two weeks due to heavy rains—obeyed Santa Anna’s orders, which Filisola, second in command, relayed to a bitterly reluctant Urrea and his forces as well.

On May 14, in the Treaties of Velasco, Santa Anna acknowledged Texas independence, vowed again to remove all of his forces into Mexico, accepted Texas’s southern boundary as the Rio Grande, and promised to see an independent Texas receive full diplomatic recognition by the Mexican government. Although the Mexican congress refused to accept the general’s accords, by this time, Mexico lacked the means to attempt a reconquest of the lost land. Texas’s independence had been won.

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## Launching a Nation, 1836–1848

At Washington-on-the-Brazos, the men who declared Texas independent from Mexico on March 2, 1836, also established an interim government under a constitution drafted by the time they adjourned on March 17. They also selected as leaders of the infant nation men who had been in the vanguard of critical attacks against the Centralists—among them David G. Burnet, who was chosen president, and Lorenzo de Zavala, the new vice president. To carry on the independence movement, the framers of the Constitution of 1836 empowered the temporary government to solicit loans, issue promissory notes, negotiate treaties, develop a navy, and recruit men and provide supplies for the army. This ad interim government would serve until constitutional elections scheduled for December 1836.

Santa Anna's defeat at San Jacinto had solved one of the new nation's problems, but many remained. First, the fate of the Mexican commander became a source of discord. Many Texans demanded his execution in retaliation for the slaughters at the Alamo and Goliad. Others counseled holding him hostage until Mexico complied fully with the Treaties of Velasco, so-called because the seat of the ad interim government had been moved from Galveston Island to Velasco. After Santa Anna signed the treaties on May 14, Burnet made plans to release him, hoping the general would honor his pledge of returning to Mexico and working to ensure Mexico's recognition of Texas independence. However, angry Texan troops returned Santa Anna to captivity as he was about to sail for the United States in June, and he was not released until November.

The military displayed a similar divisiveness. As before independence, volunteers remained faithful to their own company commanders—many of whom thirsted to inflict further vengeance on (any) Mexicans for the atrocities committed at the Alamo and Goliad and resisted acknowledging the new commander of the army, Thomas Jefferson Rusk. (Sam Houston had left for New Orleans to seek medical assistance for a leg wound suffered at San Jacinto.) Worse yet, the government languished in dire financial straits, much of the land was devastated, and the Plains Indians still roamed the hinterlands preying on settlements. Furthermore, the fear of a Mexican invasion to regain the lost territory haunted the nation.

In an effort to speed up the institution of a permanent government, Burnet in July 1836 implemented plans to hold a general election in September, instead of December as previously planned. Citizens were to vote on the constitution drafted during the March convention at Washington-on-the-Brazos, express their feelings on the possible annexation of Texas to the United States, and elect officials for their new government. Sam Houston's victory at San Jacinto had made him immensely popular, and in the September contest he won easily for president with 5119 votes to Henry Smith's 743 and Stephen F. Austin's 587. Voters chose Mirabeau B. Lamar as their vice president.

In the plebiscite, Texans also approved the constitution (which specifically recognized slavery) overwhelmingly and gave a mandate for annexation to the United States. By so doing, the majority revealed the deep-seated connection they felt to their country of origin. They wished to keep part of what they had left behind them (the Texas constitution resembled the one written in Philadelphia in 1787 and those of other American states) and their vote exhibited an unmistakable endorsement of the transplantation of US institutions to a region that for generations had been dominated by Native Americans, then by Spaniards, and then by Mexicans.

## **Republicanism**

Exactly what type of culture came to the forefront in 1836? Although people of different backgrounds inhabited the republic, the Anglo American way of life dominated all others, and English became the nation's primary language. As Protestants, Anglo Texans subscribed to the notion of religious toleration, though they harbored a mistrust toward Catholics. The right of free enterprise—the freedom to compete in the marketplace without governmental interference—was taken wholesale from the United States and reigned as Texas's chief economic tenet. Just “redeemed” from the Mexicans and Indians, frontier Texas offered boundless opportunities—to be pursued, perhaps, on the backs of the people deemed unworthy of the republican triumph.

Politically, Texans believed in a republican system of government like the one many of them had known in the United States. Unlike the more aristocratic forms of government that existed in Europe, republicanism bestowed sovereignty upon the masses. In this political model, a constitution stipulated the duties of government, carefully divided the government into three branches, which regulated one another through a permanent system of checks and balances, and ensured the rights of citizens before the law. Regularly scheduled elections of public officials guaranteed that the will of the people would be paramount.

The political figures who took office to lead the Republic of Texas on October 22, 1836, were themselves products of the Anglo American political tradition. The president, Sam Houston, was a veteran of American politics, most prominently serving as a US congressman from 1823 to 1827, then as governor of Tennessee from 1827 to 1829. The vice president, Mirabeau B. Lamar, had served in the Georgia legislature. Stephen F. Austin, appointed to the post of secretary of state, had been a member of the Missouri territorial legislature for several years before coming to Texas, while Henry Smith, assigned the position of secretary of the treasury, had acted as provisional governor following the Consultation of 1835. Other important figures who served as architects of the young nation include Thomas J. Rusk, as secretary of war, and William H. Wharton, as minister to the United States; both men had lengthy credentials as political activists.

Houston's first administration included a mixture of political allies and opponents, a development Houston relished for at least two reasons. First, he sought to create national harmony by integrating the most prominent prewar political factions into the

government—Austin had led the peace party, whereas Wharton represented the war party. Second, displaying further political insight, he had determined to have his political enemies in the capital, where he could keep an eye on them.

## **The Politics of Caution**

One of President Houston's most immediate concerns was securing diplomatic recognition of the Republic of Texas by foreign powers. Without it, Texas was no more than an errant province within a legitimate nation (for Mexico still had not recognized Texas's independence), and as such it could not secure credit in order to seek financial aid from other nations, sell land, or even legislate its own affairs with any kind of credibility. Since the days of the Consultation of 1835, leaders of the independence movement had taken steps toward legitimizing their government; lobbying efforts in Washington, DC, had been underway since the spring of 1836. With independence won and a mandate for annexation to the United States already expressed, recognition by President Andrew Jackson was a necessary first step toward joining the country from which so many Texans had descended; the United States could annex an independent country, but it could not even consider annexing a part of Mexico. In the fall of 1836, however, Jackson feared northerners' reaction to a simmering but potentially explosive issue: abolitionists, whose influence during the 1830s grew forcefully simultaneous with British coordinated attacks on North America, saw talk of annexing Texas as part of a southern conspiracy to add new slave states to the Union. Washington, therefore, rebuffed the overtures of the Texas minister, and Jackson delayed appointing a chargé d'affaires to the republic until the last day of his term in 1837. The United States thereby became the first country to recognize the Republic of Texas; it would be another two years before any European countries did so.

Aside from the question of recognition, Houston's government grappled with numerous internal problems, among them financial distress. The Texas Congress, which had assumed power with the September elections of 1836, lacked the resources to pay its bureaucrats and elected officials, its army, or any part of the \$1.25 million debt that had accrued since the formation of the provisional government. To raise money, congress passed acts to impose taxes on imports, property, and livestock and levied other types of duties, but such gestures yielded little revenue because most Texans had very little cash and faced high obstacles to economic development. The government's efforts to borrow money largely met with failure.

President Houston attempted to alleviate the financial crisis through a policy that combined gamble with austerity. So desperate was congress to pay the governmental bureaucracy, foreign diplomats, the military, and sundry creditors, that in June 1837 it commenced printing paper money in the form of promissory notes. As ordinarily happens when governments take such chances, depreciation quickly set in and weakened the currency. Houston believed strongly in a strict economy, however, and his politics quickly turned toward frugality. Along with other essentials, defense became a major target of budget reductions. In May 1837, Houston dealt with the problem that the army of volunteers posed to civilian order and to the budget by furloughing all but 600 soldiers (the others could be recalled to duty upon notice), offering them a paid return to New Orleans if they wished to leave for the United States or 1280 acres of land apiece if they opted to make the republic their home. Houston also saved money by avoiding campaigns against the Indians whenever possible. But even with the budget cuts in place, when Houston left office in 1838, the public debt stood at close to \$2 million.

Despite its problems, the Houston administration set the new country on its feet and pushed it away from the Mexican past and into an American future. The First Congress fixed the boundaries of the Republic of Texas at the Rio Grande, from its mouth at the Gulf of Mexico to its source in the Rockies, then northward to the forty-second parallel (Figure 4.1). It also began to readjust the (Mexican) political hierarchy at the local level into one more in keeping with the US tradition. The Mexican *municipios* became county units, and the district courts assumed the function of the *alcaldes*.

The Houston administration also passed legislation to encourage immigration and raise revenue; for this it turned to land, the government’s most tangible resource. The interim government had provided headrights (grants of land that obliged grantees to comply with certain conditions, such as improving the land) in order to entice volunteers into the Texas army. Laws passed by the congress now established a similar land policy to reward veterans and to populate the vast region of the republic—under the least generous of these headrights, heads of families received entitlements as large as 640 acres; single men qualified for 320 acres. Officials hoped to attract other colonists to Texas who would purchase the public lands and thereby provide needed revenue for the treasury, but few people could afford to



Figure 4.1 The Republic of Texas and boundary claims.

buy real estate. Therefore, the government continued to populate the republic by holding out offers of free land. Generally, provisions of the grants required citizens to live in Texas for three years and make improvements on the land before their titles to it became official. This measure obviously was an attempt to attract well-intentioned settlers as opposed to speculators or shady newcomers fleeing the law, creditors, or familial responsibilities elsewhere. Between 1836 and 1841, the government apportioned close to 37 million acres.

Another accomplishment of the Houston government was the development of new forms of defense. Congress allocated funds for the establishment of a small navy, and local militias composed of citizen-soldiers now replaced the disbanded volunteer army. To protect the settlements, congress in May 1837 created a law enforcement corps that would later take on the name "Texas Rangers." During the period of the republic, however, most of the Texas Rangers were ordinary citizen-soldiers who volunteered to complete a specific mission and, upon accomplishing it, usually returned home to resume their private lives. Some of these men, however, did patrol the range for prolonged periods. In concept and in practice, these roving companies duplicated the "strike and pursue" tactics of the Tejano militia, upon which defense of the frontier had rested in the 1820s and 1830s. Not until later did a law enforcement outfit constituted of "elite" recruits take on the official name of Texas Rangers. By then, the unit was perceived as a unique Texas invention.

## **The Politics of Action**

The Constitution of 1836 stipulated that chief executives of the republic were to serve three-year terms, except for the first president, whose initial term was limited to two years. Furthermore, although presidents could serve alternate terms, they could not succeed themselves. Thus, in 1838 Houston searched, with limited success, for a candidate (and possible successor) whose politics resembled his own.

During this period in Texas history, formal political parties did not exist, but factions, mainly pro- or anti-Houston and his policies, had already formed. Vice President Lamar (Figure 4.2), who expressed dissatisfaction with many of the president's programs, headed the opposition to Houston. Whereas Houston counseled acceptance of a treaty he personally had negotiated in February 1836 for the provisional government's recognition of Cherokee claims to Northeast Texas lands, in return for a pledge of neutrality during the upcoming war for independence, Lamar recommended that the republic's senate reject the treaty and denounced Houston for failing to eliminate the Indian danger on the western frontier. Furthermore, Lamar faulted Houston for his lack of success in foreign relations: the president had not gained Mexican acknowledgment of the independence of the republic, and he had pursued US annexation as a major goal. Lamar, on the other hand, rejected incorporating the republic into the United States, for he envisaged Texas remaining an independent republic that might one day be a great power. Lastly, the vice president blamed the financial condition of the republic on Houston's fiscal ineptness. Campaigning on remedies for the incumbent's mistakes, and with little opposition from the Houston faction, Lamar easily took the presidency.

Lamar's politics differed from those of his predecessor, especially in his management of the nation's finances. The new president sought to alleviate the republic's financial woes through a \$5 million loan, which he never managed to secure. Undaunted, he issued nearly \$3 million of non-interest-bearing promissory notes. Other forms of legal tender followed, but with little reserves in the treasury and only the public honor and the public lands to





**Figure 4.2** Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar. From a painting by C. B. Norman. Courtesy of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

back it, Texas money cheapened. By one estimate, a dollar of the republic's paper money in 1841 equaled no more than twelve to fifteen cents in US currency.

Despite such setbacks, Lamar spent extravagantly. Relying on the new currency the government had printed, what credit was still available, revenue from business licenses (such as those levied on taverns), taxes levied on the owning of slaves, the expectation of acquiring a \$5 million loan in Europe, and \$457,380 that the republic had managed to borrow from a bank in Philadelphia in 1839, Lamar built up the navy and increased the ranks of frontier garrisons in order to launch a campaign against the Indians—an effort that cost the nation \$2.5 million. In addition, he relocated the capital, at considerable expense, from Houston to a small settlement (renamed Austin) on the Colorado River; the move made in 1839 sought to lure people to the west but also to lash out against Sam Houston's power, as his political following lay along the Houston–Galveston axis. Furthermore, under Lamar, the cost of maintaining the postal service increased, as did the expense of expanding the bureaucracy. Lamar pursued the recognition of the republic in Europe with vigor, and his plans to transform Texas into a leading power in North America led him to subsidize a military excursion into New Mexico in 1841–42 to try to expand the republic, a fiasco that became known as the Santa Fe Expedition.

The president foresaw the republic emerging as an empire prospering on a cotton-based economy. As a staunch and committed slave nation, the republic would open new opportunities to slaveholders pledged to Texas greatness. As a sovereign state, it would stand capable of fending off assaults from English and northeastern abolitionists.

In steering the republic along the road to stability and prominence, Lamar supported numerous effective policies. The Homestead Act passed in 1839 protected citizens from seizure of their homestead, tools, and work animals for any debts they might have incurred; this legislation had its antecedents both in the Hispanic tradition and in a decree passed by the congress of Coahuila y Tejas in 1829. An empresario system instituted in 1840–41 and modeled on the Mexican colonization program of the 1820s and 1830s called for issuing contracts to immigration agents entrusted with settling colonists in specified areas within a stipulated number of years; this initiative sought to replace the less than effective land policy that used headrights as inducements. Here, again, the congress attempted to attract upstanding families to the republic. In respect to education, Lamar in 1839 and 1840 signed bills credited with laying the groundwork for the system of public education in Texas. The provisions set aside four leagues (17,714 acres) of land in each county for the establishment of a primary school, and they designated that a good amount of the public land be retained for the establishment of two colleges. Funds generated from the sale or rental of these lands or profits derived from the sale of minerals extracted from them would fund the institutions of higher learning. Again, Lamar's programs had precedents in a plan laid out by the Coahuiltejanos. In 1826, Béxar and Saltillo had submitted a proposal by which the state would donate land to create two colleges, and in 1832 Nacogdoches had proposed that the state set aside four leagues of land in that municipality for the establishment of a permanent fund to erect a school. The Coahuila y Tejas legislature had in fact decreed these proposals in 1833.

## **Retrenchment**

By 1841, the republic's debts amounted to nearly \$7 million, and the country seemed to be on the verge of a complete financial collapse. The Houston partisans had watched much of Lamar's doings with dismay, none more so than Houston himself, who as a congressman from San Augustine County had continued to perpetuate political factionalism. Deciding to recapture the office he had yielded by law in December 1838, he publicly attacked Lamar for the woeful economic standing of the nation. But Houston raised other salient political points for the Lamar faction to answer as well. On the stump, he criticized Lamar's relocation of the capital from Houston to Austin as too expensive, and he claimed that the new site was too vulnerable to Indian depredations. He reproached Lamar for the unsuccessful, costly, and embarrassing Santa Fe Expedition. The issues, however, soon took a second stage to negative campaigning, as both sides stooped to gossip, charges of scandal, and invective. At election time, Houston easily defeated David G. Burnet, the Lamar camp's candidate, and he served as president for the second time from December 1841 to December 1844.

With Houston back in office, bureaucratic retrenchment ensued. Congress terminated dozens of offices, lowered the salaries of public officials, and reduced the republic's military forces to a few companies of Rangers. Peace initiatives with the Indians again replaced a policy of active confrontation. Fiscal policy also changed course. Houston's government overturned laws passed by the Lamar administration authorizing the printing of money and the pursuit of foreign loans. During his second term, only about \$200,000 of new money was printed, and Houston spent less than \$600,000, borrowing from the future—when, presumably, tax revenues would be greater, the public lands would be sold, and better and larger loans would be negotiated.

In December 1844, Anson Jones, secretary of state under Houston, won the presidency on a platform to stay the course his predecessor had set. He did just that but, like Houston, could never rein in the republic's debt; since the government had yet to make any repayments on it, by 1846, it had swelled to more than \$10 million.

## **Demographic Growth**

Fundamental to the stability of the republic was an increase in the number of its citizens. Though difficult to determine precisely, the population grew rapidly during the republic's existence. Scholars estimate the overall population towards the end of 1836 as standing at slightly above 50,000 inhabitants (about 30,000 of them Anglo Texans and the rest minority groups), and increasing to about 162,500 in 1848. At this time, most Texans made their homes in the eastern sections of the republic. The majority of Texas Mexicans continued to reside in the more familiar cultural milieu of what had been the Department of Béxar, but also in settlements founded by the Spaniards along the Rio Grande in the 1750s.

Several factors explain the population growth. Natural reproduction accounted for part of it, but more substantial was a renewed flow of immigration. From the United States came plantation owners assured of slavery's safeguard under the republic's constitution. Then there arrived people enticed by the republic's headrights. Others arrived to escape the depression of 1837 then gripping the United States; in the late 1830s and 1840s, Texas offered limitless opportunities to start afresh. Equally responsible for population increases during the period of the republic was the *empresario* system introduced by the Lamar administration in 1840–41.

## **The Texians**

Until relatively recently, before scholars began applying more innovative and creative approaches to the writing of Texas history, works on the period of the republic tended to mischaracterize its general population. Such accounts depicted Texans as being largely European American folks connected geographically and culturally to the Slave South. More saliently, these older studies maintained, Texans considered themselves exceptional and in consideration of that spirit adopted the self-designated moniker of "Texians."

*Texian* was a term that expressed the people's identity with and pride in the new land, and the republic was fertile soil for the emergence of a strong nationalism. Texans, after all, had a revolutionary past to glorify, one replete with war heroes who symbolized a tradition of fighting against tyranny. By the 1840s, the Alamo emerged as a symbol of the Texian valor and martyrdom for liberty, and citizens toasted its place in Texas lore on appropriate occasions. Independence Day and San Jacinto Day became dates for firecrackers, patriotic speeches, parades, and all sorts of outdoor festivities. Leaders of the era proclaimed the nation's uniqueness and encouraged the perpetuation of the values and ideas expressive of "Texian culture," traits such as resiliency, self-reliance, courage, and faith in the promise the future of the republic held.

In reality, however, some new arrivals from the United States and Europe were not exactly upstanding and law-abiding citizens. Consequently, in its early years, the republic was a more-or-less undisciplined society in which individualism was often expressed without much inhibition. In the fledgling towns, rowdy, vulgar, sometimes even violent behavior flourished, the substantial consumption of alcoholic beverages only fueling the general

lawlessness. Bowie knives were commonly toted by folks whose habit of swearing constantly seemed to reinforce their ruggedness, and “gentlemen” turned to the duel to settle insults and disagreements.

In cases where Texans hailed from remote wilderness areas of Kentucky, Alabama, or Tennessee, states in which violence was a survival mechanism, they brought with them a heritage of fending for themselves. These people often chose to settle private quarrels without the assistance of legal authorities, who mostly resided a long way from the frontier anyway.

Social pressures emanating from the persistent threat of danger, under which many Texans lived, further fed the population’s general belligerence. Texans valued manly prowess and displays of courage in the face of danger—a destructive storm, Indians, Mexican soldiers or bandits, the dueling opponent, a wild animal, or whatever hostile force came their way. Not surprisingly, the most highly esteemed members of society were military heroes.

But the very bravado that led people to stand up and fight against their enemies also nourished a disorderly society. A violent feud involving the so-called “Regulators” and “Moderators” (labels traceable to feuds that originally started in Appalachia) erupted in East Texas over land titles in the late 1830s. In 1840, there was a series of public shootings and murders, and a reign of terror spread over Shelby County until President Houston sent in the militia to end the lawlessness. Smaller feuds, however, continued to spin off from this disorder for the rest of the nineteenth century.

Of course, there were honest, principled citizens to balance those of violent temperament; and the vast majority of immigrants were decent, law-abiding folks who basked proudly in the “Texian” label.

## **Cultural Regions**

Historians now know that most Texans did not fit neatly into the portrait early scholars presented of people living in the republic. Instead of a typical “Texian” figure, there actually existed cultural variance throughout the land. Whereas people with roots in the United States continued subscribing to a social framework comfortable to them, ecological features particular to geographic zones often led to regional distinctions throughout the republic. People came from diverse parts of the United States if not other countries, implanting original home-grown customs and traditions, as well as economic patterns and political ideas into select areas they colonized. Further, Texas was a land of assorted physical environments so that a region’s ecology, flora, and fauna influenced people’s thoughts, behavior, and the manner by which they sought survival. Easier access to broader markets allowed some domains to make economic advances more speedily than others, such as those existing in the hinterlands. In some sections, immigrants came in contact with people with already deep roots therein, among them Tejanos and Indians who adhered to their own lifeways. At the local setting, then, variables that included the intermingling of subjects with different racial/ethnic backgrounds, the natural surroundings in which people interacted, and the type of economy that proved the best source of gain all hastened regional heterogeneity and gave impetus to cultural diversity.

## **The Lower South**

What scholars label the Lower South region embraced a belt of counties abutting the Louisiana border and extending southward where they merged with another grouping of counties clustered around the Brazos and Colorado Rivers. Immigration from the US South

fed this section so that it came to more closely resemble the Slave South in relation to other parts of the republic. Ideal for the raising of cotton, slavery had taken root there by the 1820s, and during the years of the republic surfaced as the bastion of the peculiar institution. The northernmost Lower South counties' use of the Red and Mississippi Rivers, and Galveston's location on the coast, gave the entire plantation region easy access to US loci such as New Orleans, Louisiana, if not reaches in European and Latin America where slaveholders could engage in commercial transactions that spurred their cotton-based economy.

Cattle and horse ranching also thrived as a commercial enterprise in the Lower South. The most successful ranches in that section of the republic lay in the Coastal Prairie, a physiographic pocket that extended from the Texas coastline, north toward the lower reaches of the Sabine River, west to the Brazos and Colorado River plantations, and south to the Guadalupe River. Throughout this grassland zone grazed bovine stock imported by Anglo immigrants from the US South. These Southerners, mainly from South Carolina, implanted homegrown ranching habits, giving livestock raising in that section of the republic attributions distinguishable from Spanish-Mexican ranching techniques in place since the eighteenth century.

But it was cotton that regimented life in the Lower South. With impediments to slavery removed following independence, Texans moved expeditiously to define the institution precisely. The Constitution of 1836 guaranteed the legality of human property by providing that enslaved persons at the time of the document's writing would continue in that status. Subsequent laws passed by the republic's congress augmented constitutional provisions. Legislation specified various punishments for those found guilty of stealing slaves, encouraging slaves to run away, giving refuge to fugitive slaves, or abetting slave insurrection. With such official support, the number of plantations increased, as did the slave population, from 5000 black persons (all but a handful of whom were enslaved) in 1836, to 38,753 in 1847, according to a state census taken that year.

The forlorn lot of blacks in Texas rested on racial prejudices and discrimination that went all the way back to Elizabethan England, and plantation owners saw blacks as innately inferior. Slave codes carefully defined the status of blacks as chattels in perpetuity. Laws imposed the most severe penalties on blacks found guilty of assaulting or murdering a white person, sexually assaulting a white woman, or committing arson, though the white community easily could and often did turn to lynch law to avenge anything it considered an unacceptable act against a white person. Because of the inherent cruelty of slavery, whites desperately feared slave plots against them, and companies of volunteers patrolled the countryside to try to squelch any possible trouble and to keep a lookout for runaways. Most slaves lived out their days without the possibility of relief from arduous fieldwork, which in Texas usually meant the planting, care, and harvesting of cotton, corn, and sugarcane. Furthermore, slaves could expect beatings and even death as punishment for failing to meet the work expectations of their owners, for being insolent, or for attempting to escape. The slave system made no exception of women. Slave women worked wherever ordered, often fulfilling domestic duties for part of the day then sent to the fields to clear land, plow acreage, and pick the crops. Alongside men, they cared for the horses and mules, milked cows, and fed hogs. At day's end, they turned to cabin chores, including cooking, cleaning, sewing, gardening, and whatever new tasks demanded attention. Cruelty beset them as it did men folk, and even came in more fearsome forms, as in the loss of their children to sale or in rape by men in authority, among them the white master or overseer.

Although a failed escape would bring them severe penalties, many slaves attempted to gain their liberty in the 1830s by fleeing and then joining the East Texas Indians, such as the

Cherokees. In the 1840s, however, other runaways turned south, finding assistance from Texas Mexicans who escorted them through the sparsely settled, semiarid frontier between Central Texas and the Rio Grande, and on into Mexico. That country soon became a haven for runaway slaves; an estimated 3000 fugitive slaves found refuge in Mexico by the early 1850s.

Not every black person in the republic was a slave, for there was a very small number of free blacks, about 300 according to the aforementioned census of 1847. These people held a tenuous status, however, for both the government and society refused to acknowledge their freedom. Whites discouraged free blacks from living as full citizens of the republic, applying the same negative attitudes and laws toward them that they did to bondpeople.

### **The Upper South Region**

North and west of the Lower South in Texas lay what may be described as the Upper South region. It engulfed the countryside bordered by the Red River on the north, the western fringes of the Lower South counties that adjoined Louisiana, the Colorado and Brazos River slave enclaves to the south, and the frontier on the west. Several characteristics differentiated it from other identifiable cultural concentrations in the republic. Mainly, migrants came from the Ohio River Valley, Tennessee, and Missouri, but some arrived from the northeastern United States. The soil in the Upper South region of the republic did lend itself to the production of cotton, but the settlers preferred farming wheat, oats, and corn much as they had at home, consigning the white staple to somewhat of a supplementary crop. The absence of adequate transportation necessary to carry their harvest to market further deterred them from growing cotton. Consequently, slavery did not take root in the Upper South, and in any case, people originated from sections of the United States where the labor force was generally free, not one of servitude. Settlers complemented their livelihood by planting side plots of vegetables and fruit trees. With the assistance of the entire family, they attended to work-related tasks, such as blacksmithing.

Newcomers to the Upper South region also found the setting effective for livestock cultivation so that cattle and horse ranching soon came to characterize this expanse as much as farming. Ranch owners tapped into outlets north, driving their stock to the reservations in the Indian Territories.

Representative of this free labor and farming connection to points of US origin was the Peters colony, the most enduring colonization project founded under Lamar's new immigration program. The organizers, the empresario W.S. Peters and his associates, in 1841 transplanted people from the Ohio Valley to the upper fringes of the republic, west of a line from the modern-day counties of Grayson and Dallas. They founded successful towns such as Dallas and through continued migration, the settlement grew to some 10,000 to 12,000 people by the early 1850s.

### **A Western Colony of Immigrants**

On the western periphery of the republic (in what today would be Comal and Mason counties) at least two colonies of European immigrants struggled to start afresh amid new terrain. Their links to a far-off land gave that distant section a cultural air that differentiated it from the environs of the Lower South and Upper South regions. The topography in that distant setting diverted living to forms distinguishable from the eastern pockets of the

republic, for the soil lent itself mainly to farming and cattle ranching. The western frontier did not encourage prospects for cotton cultivation so that no essential need existed for slavery; in any case, the immigrants were advocates of free labor.

Bringing people to western Texas under the republic's plan for European settlement were Henri Castro (a US naturalized Frenchman) and members of a German benevolent company called the *Adelsverein* society. Castro received a contract first; President Houston in 1842 had approved an agreement permitting him to settle Europeans in land west of San Antonio. Castro was to offer each family 320 acres and single males 160 acres and he was to bear the expense of colonization. He recruited mainly from residents of Alsace and Lorraine in the eastern France–Germany border region, many of them financially strapped Alsatian-speaking Catholics. The first of a wave of Castro's immigrants step onto Texas soil in late 1843—most in pitiful condition, but with the expectation of acquiring land in Texas. In September 1844, Castro began building Castroville (in modern-day Medina County), eventually bringing about 2000 people to the town and to three others.

Almost at the same time, Castro negotiated his contract, members of the *Adelsverein*, a philanthropic society of German nobles, met in Biebrich, Germany, to consider plans for settling Germans in Texas. Among those taking an interest in the colonization enterprise was Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels, who became the commissioner general for the project. In this capacity, Solms-Braunfels traveled to Texas to find desirable land for German immigrants. He located such suitable tracts at the confluence of the Comal River and the Guadalupe River and bought the property from its two owners. There, he founded a new town, christening it as New Braunfels (after his family's name). With immigrants—mainly from the laboring stratum and the ranks of political dissenters—moving into New Braunfels by spring 1845 and with his mission accomplished, Solms left for Germany leaving John Meusebach (his replacement as commissioner general) to finish the task of consummating the project. New arrivals kept coming in during subsequent years, and in 1846, Meusebach settled them in Fredericksburg. In total, the *Adelsverein* sent about 7000 Germans to the central Texas hill country, but by 1847, it determined to end the venture, which had proven costly. The settlers remained permanently in Texas.

Other Europeans sailed to Texas on their own. Tired of facing economic distress at home and lured by the seemingly boundless opportunities in North America, an array of groups responded to the glowing accounts of Texas as a land of promise. Illiterate peasants mixed with literate political refugees and skilled artisans as Irish, French, English, Scottish, Canadian, Swiss, Scandinavian, Czech, and Polish arrivals established colonies in Texas in the 1840s and 1850s.

### **The Indian Homeland**

Approximately 14,500 people of Indian origin lived in Texas as of 1836. As had been the case for ages, Texas Indians belonged to many Native American nations, differentiated from one another by particular languages, cultural backgrounds, and even attitudes toward people of European descent who since the sixteenth century had encroached on their homelands. Some of the Indian nations after 1836 sought to negotiate for peace with Texans, but others committed themselves to resisting trespassers on their traditional territories.

No matter their tribe, the land they occupied, or adjustments made to new circumstances, the Indians' fate during the period of the republic's grew more precarious. As of 1836, the government of the republic of Texas had no standing treaties to honor, as old ones

made between Mexico and the hostile tribes were now void. The Constitution of 1836 said nothing of recognizing Indian rights to the land, and the government was too new to have judicial precedent to guide it.

During this time, many of the Indians in eastern Texas faced destruction or banishment. The Karankawas, for one, suffered tribal setbacks as Anglo pioneers founded new towns and ranches along the coastal lands that once had been Karankawa hunting grounds. Debilitated by sickness, alcoholism, and malnutrition, the Karankawas seemed unable to stop the encroachment or the attacks leveled against them by the settlers during the mid-1840s. By then, the Karankawas teetered near extinction as a recognizable tribe. The Caddos, meanwhile, saw only a slight interlude from their own misery of poverty and displacement. Lamar's plan to expel Indians had led several Caddo bands to retreat into Oklahoma, but Houston's reelection as president had prompted them to return to Texas and establish themselves along the northwestern stretches of the Brazos River. As of 1845, the Caddos believed they had found safety in their new camps located some distance away from the westernmost Anglo settlements.

As early as 1823, a delegation of Cherokees had journeyed to Mexico City seeking land titles for their people. Mexico had never honored their requests, but, as noted, the Cherokees and Sam Houston consummated a treaty in February 1836 acknowledging Cherokee rights to certain lands in East Texas. The First Congress rejected the agreement, reasoning that the treaty had been negotiated by the ad interim government and thus did not obligate the republic to honor it, that the lands inhabited by the Cherokees had never been awarded by the Mexican government, that the Indian lands actually belonged to the empresario contract given to David G. Burnet, who had already settled several families therein, and that Indian attacks on the settlements had continued despite the treaty.

Duwali, the Cherokee leader, had expected approval of the treaty, for Houston had supported it unswervingly, but with the election of Lamar, the Cherokees were soon disappointed. The new president harbored fixed attitudes against Indians. He had been in Georgia when whites there had expropriated Creek Indian lands, and the persistent attacks on settlers committed by the most hostile tribes, combined with his belief that some Cherokees were part of a multirace conspiracy to destabilize the republic, produced his hard-line policy toward all American Indians and, most prominently, his push for the expulsion of the Cherokees. Despite Duwali's logical argument outlining the Cherokees' legitimate claims to the East Texas lands promised them, Lamar pressed his demand for their removal: either the Cherokees would leave peacefully or they would be forcibly evicted. The Indians chose to resist, and at the Battle of Neches, in present-day Van Zandt County, regular troops and two volunteer companies defeated the Cherokees and killed Duwali on July 16, 1839. Cherokee resistance died with the chief, and the remainder of his people departed across the Red River into the Indian Territory (Oklahoma) or dispersed into Mexico.

Left resisting encroachment on their frontier space were Indians who for centuries had inhabited western Texas where living derived from hunting buffalo, deer, and small game. The Kiowa, Comanche, and Lipan Apache nations controlled this tract of land, and their nomadic way of life and expertise in the use of the horse marked the region as singularly unlike those sections of Texas to the east. From their strongholds in western Texas, Indians raided ranches and settlements spread throughout different corners of the republic and northern Mexico. In the Laredo area, Kiowas and Comanches looted thousands of horses and mules. Between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande, they caused so much destruction of homes and fields that within a year of the war for independence the area had experienced an abrupt decline in population and an abeyance of economic development. In Central and



North Texas, these Plains Indians were just beginning to feel pressure from land-hungry whites, and Anglos soon enough started establishing farmsteads close to Comanche hunting grounds, a foreshadowing of wholesale intrusion.

In their first encounters with the Plains Indians, Anglo Texans had found them every bit as formidable as had the Spaniards and Mexicans before them—the Texans' Kentucky rifles proving largely ineffective against mounted warriors on the open plains. But by the late 1830s, the Texans began to develop better methods of fighting the Comanches. The "strike and pursue" tactic of the ranging companies, endorsed by Lamar, was one such technique.

By 1840, it seemed as if both sides might be ready for a truce; several Comanche bands expressed a willingness to talk in order to end the Ranger strikes, while numerous other problems plagued Lamar's government. Comanche raids, furthermore, had left property destroyed, settlers dead, and a pattern of captive taking in their wake.

In March, twelve Comanche chiefs, along with eighteen other men and thirty-five women and children, arrived in San Antonio to negotiate for the release of captured white women and children. The Indians brought with them a young white prisoner by the name of Matilda Lockhart, who reported that several other captives remained behind. Meeting in the Council House (a room in the local jail), Texas authorities informed the chiefs that they were to be taken into custody and held ransom until all the white captives were returned. The chiefs made a break for freedom, whereupon the Texans opened fire, killing many of the Indians as well as two of the Texans. The fighting soon spilled into the street, where the carnage continued. When the shooting finally stopped, thirty-five Comanches, including five women and children, and seven or eight Texans had lost their lives.

The so-called Council House Fight (which the Indians considered a treacherous massacre) poisoned relations between the Texans and the Comanches, and it soon led to an all-out war between the two peoples. In August 1840, nearly 1000 warriors plundered Victoria and Linnville. Texan volunteers and Texas Rangers under Ben McCulloch gave chase, and upon engaging the Indians they served them two punishing defeats.

Subsequently, the Rangers kept the Indians on the run. Among the leaders in these campaigns was John Coffee "Jack" Hays, a Tennessee immigrant in charge of a San Antonio outpost. In 1843, when Houston reduced the military force, Hays obtained the surplus of Colt Paterson revolvers left over by the navy. These firearms, patented by Samuel Colt in the eastern United States in 1836, would become a Ranger staple in subsequent years as the weapons allowed for fighting with greater efficiency in mounted action. Hays now pursued a tactical war that used the element of surprise and a policy of giving no quarter.

Hays's tactics combined with Houston diplomacy ultimately brought a semblance of peace to the western settlements. To negotiate with the Indian nations, the president selected a frontiersman and experienced peace mediator named John Conner. Of Indian descent (a Delaware chief to be exact), Conner had earned a continental (continent-wide) reputation as a peacemaker, a skilled arbiter and diplomat, an interpreter (he spoke several Indian languages as well as English and Spanish), and a tested frontier survivalist. Upon his reelection in 1842 and in the wake of Mirabeau Lamar's efforts to purge Texas of all Indians—even those who had established peaceful relations and alliances with the nascent republic—President Sam Houston called upon Conner to come to Texas and act as his primary diplomatic agent in a mission to negotiate with the Indians on behalf of the republic. Specifically, Houston sought to restore peace with all Texas tribes—including the indomitable Comanches—and gain arbitration on a frontier line that would separate white communities from Indian camps and to establish trading arrangements between the two peoples. Houston's plan to trade with the Indians rested on the assumption that Indians

would now acquire needed products through peaceful exchange instead of through deadly attacks launched against the settlements. Starting in March 1843, Conner and accompanying delegations met, in a series of councils, with a number of Indian leaders. Satisfied with the progress made at the councils, Houston authorized a trading post at Tehuacana Creek (in modern-day McLennan County). In April of the next year, Conner again met with other of the western tribes at Tehuacana Creek, and talks that continued until October with member of the Comanche nation yielded a treaty of peace and commerce which the Texas Senate ratified in January 1845. To reward Conner for his success, the republic of Texas and later the government of Texas granted him a headright grant of land—the only person of Indian descent to have so been honored.

The trading post at Tehuacana Creek proved beneficial to both parties. The Comanches and other Indians needed weapons, ammunition, blankets, metal knives, clothing, and an assortment of items for cooking, hunting, and even leisure, and in return, they exchanged (as they had in earlier decades) horses they stole from Mexico, rival Indian nations, and even from Anglo Americans. White traders could easily dispose of the livestock in the United States (the demand came from the military, from Americans trekking west to Oregon and needing draft animals to pull their wagons, and western farmers needing horses and mules to clear lands). Despite such efforts at bringing tranquility for the republic, conflict with the Indians never stopped completely so that the western frontier remained throughout most of the years between 1836 and 1845 a home range distinct from other such cultural regions in the republic.

### **The Trans-Nueces**

During the years of the republic, the area from the Nueces River and extending south to the Rio Grande remained the domain of Mexican-descent land grantees and a supporting workforce of fellow Mexicans. The settlements owed their presence to the mid-eighteenth century when New Spain attempted, through José de Escandón, to colonize parts of the Far North. Despite ethnic homogeneity, economic differences divided society in these scattered communities along the Rio Grande. Landowners who had inherited their ancestors' possessions or elite families who had acquired grants more recently from either Spain or Mexico presided over the general population of *vaqueros* and *pastores* (shepherds). Over the years, the frontier had spread northward from the Rio Grande so that by the 1830s and 1840s it had reached a line in the proximity of what today is the Nueces River Valley.

As opposed to the other settled regions that existed during the republic's period, the trans-Nueces was culturally Mexican (today, many perceived it as a "Tejano cultural zone"). Only a few Anglo Americans had penetrated that stretch of territory as of the late 1830s. No major towns had yet taken root there (except Laredo); survival depended almost wholly upon what ranching operations yielded, as well as on corn, beans, and peppers that families raised in small gardens. The ambient there obtained from the work rhythm of *vaqueros* and *pastores* and the traditions and skills they brought to bear on managing cattle and sheep. Ranchers found markets for their herds, as well as for their hides and wool, in northern Mexico or in the outside world, exporting their stock and merchandise through the port of Matamoros. During the period between 1836 and 1845, Mexico claimed the Nueces River as marking the northern boundary of the state of Tamaulipas while the republic argued its southern boundary to be the Rio Grande. The disputed ground became the scene of recurring skirmishes between the two nations.

Living some distance away from other parts of the republic, South Texas *pobladores* escaped the fate (at least for about a decade) that befell their fellow Tejanos living in the pre-1836 communities of central and eastern Texas. During the war for independence, residents of Béxar, Goliad, Nacogdoches, and Victoria had found themselves caught between two worlds. A few had assumed prominent roles alongside Anglos, and their presence had been conspicuous at Washington-on-the-Brazos, the Alamo, and San Jacinto. Whereas some had envisioned their destinies tied to the capitalist economic order fostered by Anglo Americans in the 1820s, others were cautious toward a people who expressed disgust and contempt for them as Mexicans.

For Tejanos in these old settlements, the post-1836 reality presented a departure from a way of life rooted in the Spanish-Mexican *frontera*: they were now at a numerical disadvantage, business was conducted in a different language, and they were not completely familiar with the new form of politics. Despite guarantees in the Constitution of 1836, Tejanos seemed defenseless against a people who freely expressed their dislike for them and openly desired retribution against their race for Santa Anna's carnage at the Alamo and Goliad. The wrath of whites was strong and swift: throughout the old Department of Béxar, Mexican families were banished from their homes immediately after the Battle of San Jacinto, and rancheros later had great difficulty recovering their scattered stock. Whereas the Tejano community numbered some 4000 before the war for independence, that figure diminished to about 3400 by the end of 1836. The Mexicans of San Antonio by the late 1830s felt like "foreigners in their native land," as increasing numbers of Anglos moved into the area. According to Juan Seguín, who served as mayor of the city (1841–42), Béxareños came to him seeking protection from harassment by white antagonists. "Could I leave them defenseless, exposed to the assaults of foreigners, who on the pretext that they were Mexican, treated them worse than brutes?" he asked. By the summer of 1842, Seguín had become a refugee in Mexico, seeking to flee the enmity of whites who considered him an accomplice in Mexican efforts to reconquer Texas.

Notwithstanding their quandary, Tejanos molded a place for themselves within the new society. While remaining faithful to the tenets of their cultural past, they adopted many of the new customs and habits. Anglo American institutions with which they interacted, moreover, eventually acculturated them into embracing many of what would become mainstream concepts, values, judgments, and patterns of behavior.

Therefore, in the Tejano communities continuity accompanied change. The old upper class, which traced its origins to the colonial era, endured, albeit precariously. It was most visible in the Béxar area, where the Navarros, the Seguíns, and other prominent families had been entrenched—some of these oligarchs went on to serve as members of the Texas congress; Navarro, as the representative from the Béxar district to the republic's House of Representative, fought fervently to protect those of his Tejano constituents who lacked titles to lands granted them by Spain (and which Anglos coveted), but to little avail. The majority of Tejanos were less fortunate in finding a niche in Anglo society; most supported themselves by carrying on, as their people had done for many years, in the ranching and freighting enterprises.

### **A Culturally Mixed Corridor**

Lacking any exclusive features was a corridor extending from Houston and Galveston on the coast to San Antonio and Austin in the interior. This cultural wedge consisted of a mixed population of Anglos, various ethnic groups, and black slaves living on urban and

ranch sites along the way, and a diversified economy that encompassed banking, small-scale manufacturing, and trade that reached far into Atlantic commercial systems. Entrepreneurs, merchants, and industrialists could choose from a work pool of slaves and free persons. Many business owners opted for paid laborers in places such as Houston and Galveston; they found free employees more skilled and efficient in operating the cotton presses, processing farm goods brought in by Mexican cart men, and undertaking urban development. Their counterparts in the brewing industry and other manufacturing ventures in the interior town of San Antonio also turned to wage workers.

Several factors shaped labor arrangements in this province of mixed cultures. Inhabitants, among them Anglos from outside the US South and various ethnic groups, already knew free labor, coming from places where it existed out of habit or necessity. The economy in the region, embracing agricultural enterprises and urban-based commerce and industry, functioned more reliably on a free labor basis. The corridor's geographic position exposed it to influences from capitalist centers far beyond Texas, encouraging entrepreneurial innovation that dissuaded human bondage. Then, businesspeople reasoned that compensating citizens with subsistence pay brought a better financial return than purchasing slaves and maintaining them.

The free labor sector included citizens of the republic, European immigrants, and Texas Mexicans residing in their native land. Most visible (by their presence) of the ethnic groups engaged in wage labor were German Texans and Tejanos. Each went about earning their keep in different occupations within the area's economic system, yet there occurred common interaction and borrowing between them as well as with Anglos—on the work site, the streets, or the marketplace. Both groups gradually became accustomed to life in Texas and adjusted to it as practical. Adaptation caused them to become neither German nor Mexican, but cultural compromises did not transform them into Anglos either. People hung to old customs, consumed traditional foods, retained their native language, opted to live in enclaves with those of their own, and overall took pride in being Mexican American or German American.

### **Cultural Continuity and Change**

In Texas during the republic's era, social, political, and economic conventions traceable to US life persisted and acted as unifying tenets upholding the broader American culture many Texans valued. Most people adhered to republicanism, capitalism, and Protestant religions (a southern brand of those) and sought to preserve them in the new land. Even at the regional level, Texans were never so separated by borderlines that they strayed from their allegiance to these inherent doctrines.

Bound by such a common sense of community Texans worked across borders sharing old or new habits, exchanging yeomen and professional services, and engaging in commercial transactions, including trading goods and capital that benefited the greater society. Lower South people, who relied on old methods to cultivate cotton, passed on their knowledge to Texans living in neighboring regions (cotton planting did not attract all regions, of course, as many farmers preferred family or free labor or settlers recognized the land around them simply lacked the soil for cotton cultivation). Likewise, Tejanos in southern Texas imparted the techniques of livestock raising to people in adjoining sectors. German communities in western Texas borrowed from Anglo cotton planting methods (although they rejected slavery) while incorporating cattle raising techniques from both Tejanos and

Anglos. The Comanches yielded to new realities, now venturing to barter horses (most of them captured) for functional goods (such as knives, guns, and firearms) that their white adversaries accessed through markets outside of Texas.

Although longstanding customs, economic systems, and political conventions tying Texans to their homeland persisted during the period from 1836 to 1845, historical forces throughout the republic simultaneously played upon Texans obliging them to make concessions to the times and accept change. The utility of the local soil for harvesting crops or raising livestock, the stage of social progress in a particular locale, the cultures jockeying for space in any meeting grounds, as well as the interaction and contacts settlers in Texas had with the outside world, including Europe and Mexico, brought about a transformation, one evident in the construction of discrete cultural regions wherein, respectively, people came to be different not only culturally, but in the manner by which they earned their livelihood and the political stands they began to take.

### **Women in the Republic of Texas**

In a frontier setting, such as found in Texas during the republic era, long-accepted standards of male dominance dictated women's place in society. Whereas men's or husbands' task was to protect the family, women's role was to maintain home life in good order: this entailed looking after everyone's care through sickness and tragedy and discharging household duties, among them preparing the raw cotton and wool for homemade clothing. But circumstances often compelled women to transgress domestic lines and leave the indoors. It fell upon women to help prepare the land for planting, to harvest the crops, to tend to work animals, and when necessary, to protect their land and domicile from intruders. Relief from the drudgery of frontier life came mercifully in occasional family gatherings, in visits to neighbors, in participation in community events (both secular and religious), or in public observances such as the Fourth of July.

Aside from society-endorsed scriptures that relegated them to second-class beings, women of Texas dealt with legalities that constrained ambition and individual progress. Although women enjoyed certain rights based on US legal history as well as the (more equitable) Hispanic tradition, changes after 1836 limited their privileges. During the republic's era, the old Spanish system granting women certain rights became increasingly blended with English common law traditions. The law now required a woman to get a husband's approval to sell her own accumulated property, enter into contracts, or make out wills. Like their sisters in the United States during that period, women could not use the courts nor could they vote.

Still, the legal system and social customs were not so inflexible as to prevent some women from pursuing personal improvement. Nothing dictated that girls be deprived of an education, and so where feasible, frontier people accommodated young women by schooling them at home or perhaps at a local makeshift building. Girls who came from well-to-do families received learning in female academies, also known as "seminaries." These were numerous but usually short-lived; they emphasized courses designed to provide the "appropriate instruction" for young women—basic reading and writing skills with a smattering of math, history, or geography. Women possessing financial resources ventured into the world of business. Generally single women or widows constituted this element, although women of all marital standings could be found owning and managing hotels, boardinghouses, trading posts, and even ferrying stations.

Much more disadvantaged were minority women. For Indian women, life was ever uncertain as circumstances after independence disrupted their roles in the family, the household, and workforce. Further upsetting stability were immediate fears of attacks by Rangers, land grabbers, or soldiers and being uprooted to unfamiliar grounds.

Tejanas faced a society that now regarded them as members of a subaltern class with few of the rights and benefits extended to Anglo Americans. Within their own communities, they dealt with double oppression, further subordinated to males and destined for household duties as well as outdoor chores such as hauling water or attending to the family's vegetable garden. Respite for them came when the community held church functions (such as baptisms and weddings), when people publicly commemorated Mexico's national or religious holidays, or when friends and neighbors gathered for public merrymaking, commonly at dances or balls. But serious issues like racial injustices always lingered to interrupt any good times and there seemed present those Tejanas daring to circumvent gender (and racial) limitations to confront societal wrongs. Among these was Patricia de León, who in 1845 presided (assisted by her son Fernando) over years of legal efforts to eventually succeed in regaining the landed property her family had lost to Anglo squatters when forced into exile in the aftermath of the war for independence.

## Religion

Religious activity during the period of the republic, although lacking the force of the religious movements that overtook the northern United States during the 1830s and 1840s, sustained an evangelical impulse. Since the 1820s, Protestant preachers had seen in Texas a society of sinners in dire need of spiritual liberation, a place ripe for the establishment of institutions to carry on the struggle against Satan.

On the forefront of the crusade to fight evil and rescue souls were the Methodists, Baptists, Cumberland Presbyterians, and Episcopalians, none of whom took much interest in redeeming minorities from their unholy condition. Protestants identified Mexicans with Catholic superstition and regarded them as priest-ridden pagans. Ministers viewed slaves as people in need of religious instruction, but they preached the gospel of the Slave South: to wit, obedience to the master class as fundamental to obtaining eternal salvation. Like most Christians of that period, Protestants considered Indians beyond salvation and hardly bothered to proselytize among them.

Protestant priorities, instead, aimed at improving the spiritual life of the white community, establishing Christian order, tempering transgressions such as the drinking of alcohol, and promoting education. Battling evil necessitated deploying multiple strategies, many of them mirroring ones tested elsewhere on the American frontier. Where possible, church leaders entrusted the care of the local flock to resident ministers. As they steadily established themselves in the republic, churches structured their work by holding conferences and conventions and by convoking assemblies and organizing parishes. To reach isolated hamlets or remote villages, the Protestants relied on tenacious circuit riders, many of them trained ministers willing to endure the weather, hunger, or Indian threats in their resolve to preach the gospel. Popular among the Protestants, but especially the Methodists, Baptists, and Cumberland Presbyterians were the camp meetings, generally convened in the countryside during early fall. The populace looked forward to attending these outdoor revivals—which might stretch for several days—not solely for the privilege of listening to an ecumenical assemblage of ministers preach the good news, but

for the chance to socialize with neighbors and friends and to savor a respite from a sometimes monotonous life.

As part of their work in Texas, churches established Sunday schools and other educational institutions, some of which emphasized both religious and secular learning. The Methodists appeared to have led the movement for establishing such facilities for older students, founding Rutgersville College in 1840 and McKenzie College in 1841. Most of these early colleges had short lives, but some survived into the era of statehood, most notably “Old Baylor,” opened by the Baptists in 1845 in the small town of Independence and then moved in 1887 to its permanent site in Waco. Subsequent to 1845, the Presbyterians established Austin College in 1849 in Huntsville (but then relocated it to Sherman in 1878). St. Mary’s University, a Catholic facility that began operation in 1852 in San Antonio.

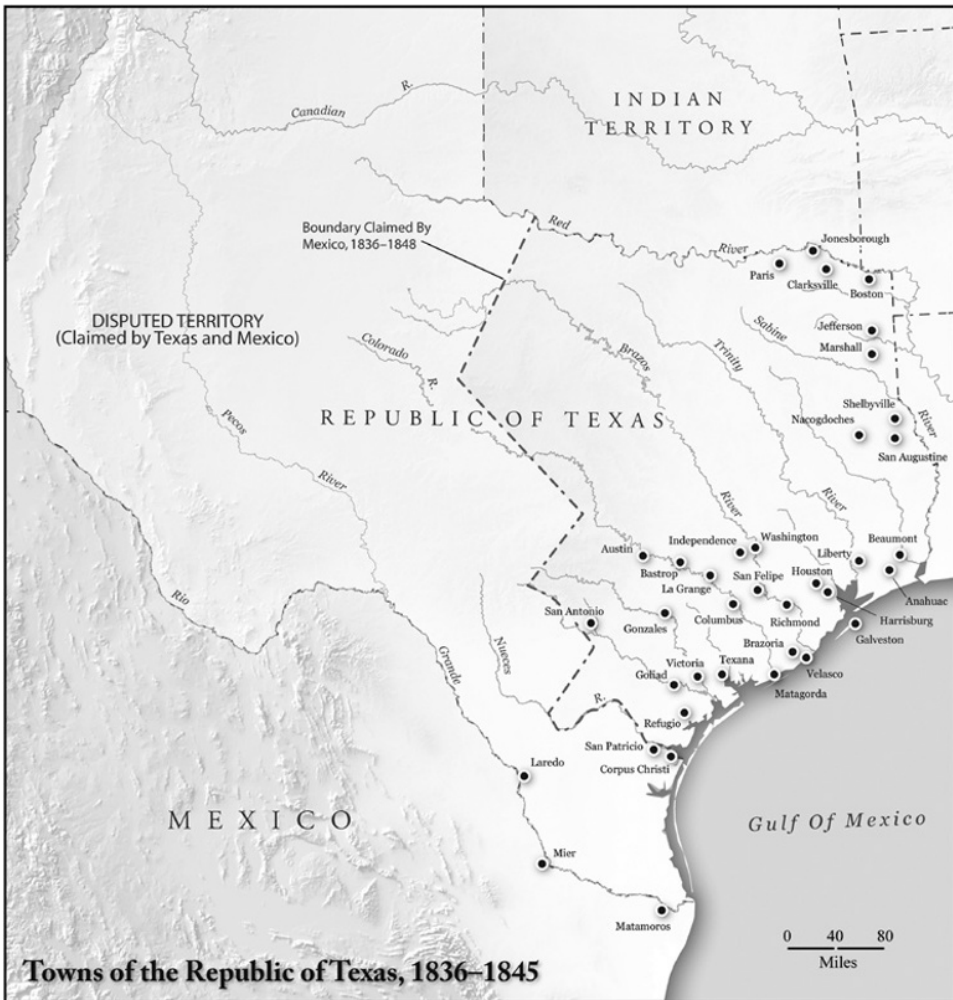
By the time of annexation, the Protestants were well entrenched in Texas, with the largest denominations in terms of size of congregations being (in descending order) the Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Catholics, and Episcopalians. Also present but not as strong as these denominations were the Disciples of Christ, Jews, Mormons, and Hebrews. As to the Catholic Church, its standing rested on the strengths of its faithful—most of whom were Tejanos concentrated in the San Antonio and Goliad areas. For the most part, the Catholic Church was not effective in providing the republic with enough priests, and especially Spanish-speaking *padres*.

### **The Rise of Towns**

New prospects for the republic, new and different types of immigrants, and new venues of commerce acted as stimuli for the growth of existing towns and the birth of new ones. Preindependence communities such as Gonzales, Victoria, Brazoria, Velasco, Liberty, Nacogdoches, Goliad, Washington, Refugio, and Jonesborough kept their vitality, while new cities such as Shelbyville, Richmond, La Grange, Columbus, Independence, and Clarksville grew with the republic (Figure 4.3).

This list includes the “lesser” towns of the republic—the major cities during the period were Houston, Galveston, Austin, and San Antonio (Figure 4.4). Of the four, Houston had an edge in historical importance. Its origins lay in the grand plans of two brothers, Augustus C. and John K. Allen, who had scrupulously searched for a strategic town site in the rich cotton and timberlands between the Brazos and Trinity rivers, where transportation by water would be convenient. Having located the spot at the confluence of Buffalo and White Oak bayous, the founders of Houston energetically laid out streets and reserved plots for a school, churches, a courthouse, and even the nation’s capitol. Through shrewd lobbying, the Allens convinced lawmakers that Houston was the ideal spot for the seat of government, and on November 30, 1836, an act of the legislature so recognized the city. Although its tenure as the capital of the republic lasted only until 1839, the city evolved into a commercial entrepôt. Steamboats navigating Buffalo Bayou brought travelers, entrepreneurs, prospective settlers, and goods and supplies directly into town; the ships departed with raw materials from the area’s plantations and farms. By 1845, some 14,000 bales of cotton left Houston on steamships and sloops bound for outside markets.

The nearby community of Galveston, blessed with one of the best natural harbors on the Gulf of Mexico west of New Orleans, similarly grew out of its prospects as a center for trade. Established by the Galveston City Company of Colonel Michel B. Menard, Samuel May Williams, Gail Borden, and others, the town by the late 1830s rivaled Houston as a distribution point. It exported cotton hauled in from the plantation counties of the Lower



**Figure 4.3** Towns of the Republic of Texas, 1836–1845.

South as well as hides and livestock transported from other parts of the republic. To meet consumer demand, Galveston requisitioned raw materials and manufactured merchandise from world metropolises that included New Orleans and far-away places like New York and western Europe.

The town of Austin originated under unique circumstances. Planned by President Lamar as the capital of the fledgling republic in 1839, the government laid out the settlement on the Colorado River, and by October of that year republic officials occupied crudely built structures. After its shaky start, Austin began to gain acceptance as the capital site, despite its location in what in those years represented the westernmost line of the frontier.

Whereas Houston, Galveston, and Austin sprung directly from Anglo American enterprises, the fortunes of San Antonio and Laredo differed. In the 1830s and 1840s, B exar was still recovering from the destruction caused by the sieges of 1835 and 1836, and it remained vulnerable to Indian attacks and reoccupation expeditions from Mexico. Laredo, meanwhile, faced periodic occupations by Mexican armies and Texas volunteers. Both towns remained isolated from the Anglo settlements, though Anglo outsiders began drifting into San Antonio in the late 1830s, creating friction with the dominant population of Mexicans.





**Figure 4.4** Six o' clock a.m., Military Plaza, San Antonio. Photo by F. Hardey, 1884. Courtesy of Capt. T. K. Treadwell. Source: University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 83–85).

Despite the ruggedness of frontier living and the hard economic times, urbanites appreciated the advantages city living offered them: as a marketplace, the city brought people, resources, and ideas together. For the literate public, the larger cities featured professional theatre performances, social organizations, newspapers, and opportunities to obtain a private education. Businesspeople, lawyers, and doctors walked alongside blacksmiths, gunsmiths, wheelwrights, tanners, saddlers, tailors, and carpenters. Some urban workers agitated for improved conditions in their trade. In 1838, printers in Houston formed the Texas Typographical Association and, in what is considered the first work stoppage in Texas, struck that year and won a slight wage increase. Conversely, businesspeople in Houston, Matagorda, and Galveston founded organizations that they termed “chambers of commerce,” apparently for the purpose of settling legal disputes among themselves without resorting to litigation.

### **Learning and Plain Folks**

As colonists, Anglo Texans had complained, somewhat unjustifiably, of Mexico’s failure to provide them with adequate educational opportunities. Once independent, Texans faced so many problems in improving the general welfare that they themselves failed to remedy the same situation they had decried on the eve of independence.

Education, therefore, did not improve much during the years of the republic. Even Lamar's ambition to attain educational grandeur produced but one public school—this in Houston during the 1839–40 school year—but citizens improvised in creating informal institutions of learning. In rural areas, mothers taught their children in makeshift classrooms. Whenever possible, communities employed teachers, many of whom received payment in produce and most of whom lacked proper training, seeing teaching more as a way to supplement their livelihood than a profession. Education thus remained rudimentary, the unpredictable weather, the demands of tending to livestock and crops, and raids by the Indians all interfering with the routine of structured learning. Well-to-do families were able to educate their children by sending them to private schools or to schools in the United States. Educational reforms such as calls for universal public education that were gaining in popularity in the United States at the time hardly reached Texas.

The lamentable condition of education and the travails of living on a frontier naturally impeded the advancement of the arts, and few artists of merit emerged from the days of the republic. One who did so was Jefferson Wright, who achieved recognition as the semiofficial painter of the short-lived nation. Among other notable works, Wright painted famous portraits of President Sam Houston. Literary pieces, some of them historical, found their way into print, but citizens of the republic produced little literature they could claim as their own.

What frontier people did have was a knack for relating a genre of folksy literature—namely, colorful tall tales and yarns of exaggerated humor. The literature of the republic, thus, was largely in the oral tradition of common folks, a difficult genre for scholars to trace and preserve. Typical themes included humankind's struggle with nature and exploits of heroic men like Davy Crockett and even "Old Sam" the president. Houston's affinity for whiskey, his unhurried drawl, and his fondness for whittling made him a subject with whom plain people could identify.

Still, there existed enough of a reading public that newspapers prospered. *The Telegraph and Texas Register*, founded during the days of independence, led the way in respectability and staying power. From its headquarters in Houston, it kept citizens of the republic abreast of the issues of annexation, real-estate promotions, immigration, presidential campaigns, and local politics.

Competition for the Houston paper came principally from Galveston, but a number of papers also developed in the interior. When Austin arose as the new capital, at least two significant newspapers started publication to cover political matters at the seat of government and carry the news of frontier affairs. Once settlement spread to northeastern Texas in the 1840s, newspapers emerged there also, covering such episodes as the ongoing local feud between the Regulators and the Moderators.

## **Transportation**

The intellectual condition of the citizens of the republic—indeed just about everything that touched the lives of people, including the economy—was hampered by the poor state of transportation. During the period, Texans remained dependent for mobility on existing waterways and crude roads. People commonly traveled down the several rivers to the Gulf, but with great difficulty, because boat captains had to navigate around numerous obstacles and seasonally contend with water levels that were alternately too low or too high. Outlets into the Gulf presented similar problems—river mouths could be shallow, erratic (because silt and sandbars can shift), or simply impassable. Land travel was no less inconvenient. Because dirt

roads did not drain well, downpours could hamper commerce for months, the standing water and thick mud stalling stagecoaches, freight wagons, and mail service and shutting down trade between the interior and Gulf ports. Consequently, different parts of the republic remained isolated from one another, and practically no funds to subsidize improvements in the infrastructure were forthcoming from the financially strapped government.

### **Recognition in Europe**

At the same time that Texans were pursuing annexation to the United States, their agents in Europe petitioned for diplomatic recognition and loans that might assist the republic with its monetary shortfall. Eminent among the envoys was James Pinckney Henderson, who tempted the English with the opportunity to acquire prime access to Texas cotton and the chance to sell British manufactured goods in the republic. But England wished to maintain cordial relations with Mexico, and hesitated recognizing a nation committed to nourishing slavery. In the latter years of the eighteenth century, there ascended in Great Britain, a powerful anti-slavery movement that by the 1830s succeeded in pressuring Parliament to pass legislation abolishing slavery across the British empire. Antislavery forces grew so in that era as to exert international influence, condemning slave-based nations such as the Republic of Texas. When Texas representatives approached England for support, British abolitionists successfully lobbied their government to refuse diplomatic legitimacy to a slave power and to reject the republic's request for loans. The British, therefore, could only consent to a trade agreement in 1838. The French balked at formally recognizing a slave country whose independence might be short lived, and they, too, would concede only to a temporary commercial arrangement availing them of the republic's cotton and its purchasing potential.

With the all-important European recognition eluding the republic, Lamar commissioned James Hamilton, a former governor of South Carolina and an enthusiastic backer of the Texas experiment, to assist Henderson. Hamilton also had the assignment of negotiating Lamar's desired \$5 million loan. With a need to acquire new friends in North America and the prospect that Texas would remain independent of the United States, the French government directed the secretary of the Washington legation, Count Alphonse de Saligny, to inspect the young nation. The count's favorable impression, verified by other observers, finally led France, on September 25, 1839, to become the first European nation to recognize the Republic of Texas. His work accomplished, Henderson returned home, but Hamilton traveled to other nations seeking similar treaties. In September 1840, he convinced the Dutch to acknowledge Texas's sovereignty.

In due time, Hamilton returned to Britain, where he reminded his hosts that friendly relations could indeed produce mutually beneficial commercial windfalls; diplomatic ties might also give England the clout it needed to thwart the westward expansion of the United States. Convinced that a treaty would serve their interests, the British in November 1840 also extended diplomatic recognition to the republic.

However commendable Hamilton's achievements, he had not been able to secure the \$5 million loan desired by President Lamar to buoy the Texas economy. The traditional story, that Hamilton failed in France due to the "Pig War" in Texas, is a colorful one. According to this oft-repeated explanation, while in Austin, the Count de Saligny engaged in an undignified altercation with his innkeeper after the count's servant shot and killed some pigs eating corn reserved for the count's own consumption. When the Texas government failed to support the

count against the enraged innkeeper, the owner of the derelict hogs, Saligny left in a huff and advised his government not to extend the loan. Actually, this trifling episode had little if any bearing on France's decision. The French had their own money problems, and they could ill afford to risk a large sum on an economy as unsteady as that of Texas. Indeed, Hamilton never blamed Saligny for the failure to get the loan approved, and Britain rejected Hamilton's financial appeals for the same reasons as had France.

### **Friction with Mexico**

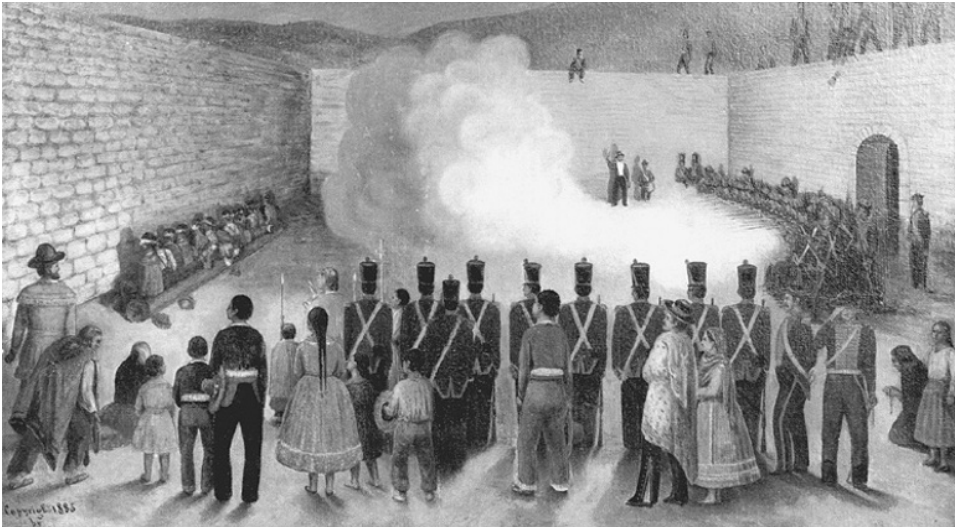
Mexico still refused to honor the Treaties of Velasco, so even as European nations recognized the sovereignty of Texas, Mexico sought to return its wayward province to the fold. To that end, it assigned saboteurs to Texas to try to undermine the government. An alliance discovered in 1838–39 between Vicente Córdova and Manuel Flores—two Tejanos with ties to Mexico's military in Matamoros—and the Cherokees seemed part of a design to prevent Texas from maintaining its independence. Equally plausible, Córdova and Flores now acted as leaders of discontented Tejanos in the Nacogdoches area who turned to the Mexican government in a desperate gesture to alleviate their oppressed status under the new Anglo-led government.

Houston had tempered his policy toward Mexico—militarily and economically, he reasoned, Texas could not afford another war with the erstwhile mother country. Lamar, however, risked provocation by talking up his plans for expansion to the south and the west. Diplomatically, he offered to buy the disputed region between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande, but privately he prepared to carry out his grand illusions of empire. Such dreams led to the ill-fated Santa Fe Expedition of 1841.

Lamar posited that if Texas were to incorporate New Mexico (he merely assumed that the New Mexicans would prefer to live under the Texas flag than that of Mexico), the acquisition would enhance Texas's destiny in several ways. First, it would help the nation share in the trade between Santa Fe and Missouri (such commerce had begun in the 1820s), collecting specie at customhouses that would aid the struggling economy. Second, it would give Texas persuasive leverage in its position in the middle of the continent. Lastly, it might even be a stepping-stone for further expansion toward the Pacific. Along this train of thought, if Texas were to annex California, it would enjoy strategic and commercial benefits on two oceans.

Without the consent of congress, Lamar assembled an expedition of 320 armed men for his expansionist campaign and dispatched them to Santa Fe, New Mexico, on June 20, 1841. After a trying and desperate march of about 1000 miles, the Texans, under the command of Hugh McLeod, arrived in New Mexico in October only to be intercepted by soldiers who subdued them without difficulty. The invaders quickly realized that the people of Santa Fe did not welcome their proposal of annexation, and the Texans were escorted all the way to Mexico City, where they were promptly imprisoned. Back in Texas, the congress did not take Lamar's blunder lightly. It censured him and might have commenced impeachment proceedings against him had his three-year term not been drawing to a close.

Mexico responded daringly to Lamar's gamble. In February 1842, President Santa Anna ordered General Rafael Vásquez across the Rio Grande and into San Antonio. The Mexicans captured the city on March 5, in an apparent gesture to reassert Mexico's claim to territory as far north as Béxar (or, conversely, to negate the Texans' insistence that the republic extended to the Rio Grande). Though Vásquez lowered the Mexican flag and returned to



**Figure 4.5** *Shooting of the 17 decimated Texians at El Salada, Mexico.* Painting by Theodore Gentilz. Courtesy of Mr. J. Laurence Sheerin, San Antonio, Texas.

Mexico after only two days of occupation, San Antonio fell to the Mexicans once again in September, this time to troops under the command of General Adrián Woll, who took some sixty prisoners with him when forced to retreat by Texan volunteers arriving at the scene. Texans, who had been on edge since the Vásquez raid, felt inspired to vindicate their nation's honor. Houston, now ten months into his second presidential term, commanded General Alexander Somervell to lead a volunteer expedition of about 750 men toward the Rio Grande: its mission was to patrol the border to prevent further invasions. The general reached the river without incident in early December and took Laredo. Part of his force then marched downriver in the direction of the Mexican village of Guerrero, where Somervell decided to go no farther.

Approximately 300 of the volunteers ignored the general's decision, opting to press a counteroffensive deeper into Mexico. At the little town of Mier, on Christmas Day 1842, Mexican infantrymen who had been occupying the town for the previous two days overpowered some 260 of the intruding Texans. The surviving members of what became known as the "Mier Expedition" were taken prisoner and then marched toward Mexico City. On February 11, 1843, the Texans managed to escape, though only four of them actually made it back to the republic, for Mexican troops recaptured 176 of them. At this point, the would-be escapees were forced to draw from a pot containing 159 white beans and 17 black ones. The unfortunate ones who had drawn a black bean were lined up against a wall and shot to death (Figure 4.5). The Mexican authorities confined the remaining prisoners in the capital.

## Annexation

The Mier Expedition jarred Texans into rethinking their Lone Star status. Annexation to the United States, though loudly rejected by Lamar, had ever been the dream of most Texans, and the ignominious defeat at Mier now heightened many people's preference for statehood. Joining the Union, as Texans saw it, would bring benefits in the form of financial and military security. People's distrust of the republic's currency and the ever-increasing

public debt seemed to be taking Texas toward bankruptcy. Militarily, the republic stood vulnerable to Mexico's hostilities—some feared a massive invasion from the south—and the Plains Indians continued to threaten settlers on the frontier. Several regions of the republic remained either lightly populated or not at all; new population movements would secure those areas. Many in the United States also found the annexation of Texas an appealing prospect. Those with an eye for Texas lands, among them real-estate speculators and southern slaveholders who hoped to profit from an increase in land values once Texas entered the Union, displayed particular interest.

Public debate in the United States during 1843 and 1844 revived hopes of the annexation of Texas. Following the Mier Expedition, Houston had begun making overtures toward England and France regarding closer commercial ties, especially if they persuaded Mexico to concede independence to Texas. Diplomatic recognition by Mexico, Houston hoped, would end Mexico's harassment of the republic. By early 1844, sentiment in the United States was shifting toward annexation. Some US citizens worried that Britain (which now offered Texas assistance, ostensibly in defense of its commercial treaties) might gain undue influence in North America; others actively embraced the spirit of Manifest Destiny—the concept that it was the intended fate and duty of the United States to occupy the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

In the southern United States, advocates for the annexation of Texas advanced reasons similar to those offered by Texas Anglos back in 1836: Americans had, through intrepidity, industriousness, and farsightedness, transformed Texas into a region of flourishing farms, ranches, and villages. Texas's vast lands held out seemingly unlimited prospects for economic development and must be absorbed into United States, lest they fall back into the clutches of the Mexican government. Of course, the real reason behind Southerners' keen interest in the matter was slavery: the South's foremost spokesperson, John C. Calhoun, had argued publicly for the annexation of Texas so that slavery could be expanded.

But the annexation of Texas faced solid resistance from Northern abolitionists and Free Soilers (those who opposed the expansion of slavery) who argued vehemently against adding another slave state to the Union, as well as from members of the Whig party, who direly predicted a war with Mexico should the United States acquire Texas. Among all the contention, an annexation treaty negotiated in April 1844 proved abortive, the US Senate rejecting it by a vote of thirty-five to sixteen. Meanwhile, Houston renewed his courtship of the British and the French while simultaneously sympathizing with the pro-annexation camp. He later likened his strategy to that of a woman playing off two suitors in order to gain a commitment from the one she loved.

When James K. Polk, the Democratic party candidate for US president, won election on an expansionist platform in November 1844, the US Congress again took up the matter of incorporating Texas into the Union. The next month, outgoing president John Tyler proposed the annexation of the republic through a joint resolution. This maneuver required only the majority consent of both houses of Congress, instead of the approval of two-thirds of the Senate required for a treaty. Congress expedited the annexation resolution, and on March 3, 1845, President Tyler signed the bill. According to the terms of the act, Texas won admission to the Union as a single state (though it was agreed that as many as five states could be carved out of the former republic) and retained title to its public lands, as a means of repaying its debts. Annexation helped neutralize British influence in the middle of the continent, satisfied US voters' endorsement of continental expansion, and opened new opportunities for more people who wanted to speculate with the vast lands of Texas.

When the new (and last) president of Texas, Anson Jones, called a special session of congress in June 1845, the offer of annexation met little resistance. Meantime, a constitutional



**Figure 4.6** *The Republic of Texas is no more—President Anson Jones conducts the Annexation Ceremony, February 19, 1846. Drawing by Norman Price, CN 03085-A. Source: The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.*

convention drafted a state constitution that the voters approved overwhelmingly in October; a few weeks later, the US Congress accepted it as well. President Polk signed the Texas Admission Act on December 29, 1845, officially making the republic a state in the United States. On February 19, 1846, James Pinckney Henderson was inaugurated as the first governor of Texas (Figure 4.6).

## The War with Mexico

As many had feared, Mexico expressed indignation that the United States dared to annex land that it considered part of its sovereign territory. The Mexican minister in Washington immediately protested the approval of the joint resolution, and diplomatic relations between the two nations deteriorated rapidly. The Mexican minister prepared to return home, as did his American counterpart in Mexico City. War seemed imminent.

Polk aimed to pressure Mexico into formally ceding the coveted lands in its Far North. To this end, he assigned General Zachary Taylor and his forces to a post near the Rio Grande, but he also made a last effort to reconcile differences through diplomacy. The most crucial issue preventing compromise was the disputed territory between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande. Throughout New Spain's colonial era, the Nueces River had been considered the northern boundary of the state of Tamaulipas and the southern border of Texas, but the Texans argued that the Treaties of Velasco had recognized the Rio Grande as the republic's southern border. (Asserting the Rio Grande as being the dividing line between

Texas and Mexico, Texas had since 1836 also claimed the region stretching from the source of the Rio Grande in southern Colorado, thence north and east to the western boundaries established by the Transcontinental Treaty of 1819—see Figures 4.1 and 4.3.) John Slidell, the US special envoy sent to Mexico City in December 1845 to resolve the issue, was to press for the Rio Grande as the boundary line, but also to offer the Mexican government \$5 million for the New Mexico territory and \$25 million for California. Mexico rejected his offers, and by March 1846, Slidell was homeward bound.

As Slidell traveled back to Washington, Polk pondered his next move. Fate seemed to favor the president, for on May 9, 1846, news arrived from Taylor that he had skirmished with Mexican cavalry near present-day Brownsville on April 25 and incurred casualties of sixteen men killed or wounded. At this point, Polk delivered a war message to Congress, reasoning that “Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory, and shed American blood on American soil. She has proclaimed that hostilities exist and that the two nations are now at war.” Congress approved the war resolution a few days later.

### Causes

Historians traditionally offer two broad interpretations to explain the causes of the US war with Mexico. One school of thought sees Mexican officials as belligerent and irrational in failing to act in good faith toward resolving the boundary question, thereby compelling Polk to declare war. In 1846, the Centralists, the same party that had issued the Law of April 6, 1830, and had expressed anti-American feelings on numerous occasions, were back in power in Mexico. Holding out the Centralists as irreconcilable Anglophobes, this first group of historians posited that the Centralists had initiated the hostilities by ordering troops across the Rio Grande to attack Zachary Taylor’s camp on the north bank of the river. A counterview holds that Polk simply manipulated the United States into the war. In this interpretation, the United States provoked the conflict as a means of acquiring Texas and California. Expansionist fervor, with capitalism as its driving force, motivated ambitious Americans to take whatever steps necessary to acquire Mexico’s Far North: even initiating war with Mexico. Naturally, most scholars from Mexico subscribe to this point of analysis, seeing their nation as a pawn in a game of US imperialism.

Recent historiography, however, presents a more objective treatment of the war with Mexico. One body of thought maintains that national preservation forced Mexico to fight. The Mexican people would have revolted against any leader who had not resisted US designs on their territory. Thus, politicians of every persuasion in Mexico publicly advocated war with the United States—to do otherwise would have invited popular censure and internal rebellion. Revisionist historians from Mexico suggest another motive for the *bravado*: a military victory would have permitted the prevailing political party to maintain power for many years to come. Whatever the case, Mexican leaders considered retreat impossible, so the government opted to face the United States head-on rather than risk self-destruction.

In the same vein, yet another recent interpretation says Polk pursued a provocative plan of bluster and intimidation. In the United States, Mexicans were regarded as a degenerate Indian race unable to exert a stable influence over their own land. It was, therefore, Americans’ providential duty, some in the United States believed, to occupy the Far North and redeem it from Mexican ineptitude (as well as from hostile Indians). Once the more deserving American nation possessed the expanse embracing New Mexico, Arizona, and



California, its citizens would transform it into a prosperous garden, just as their enterprising predecessors had done in Texas. Polk's administration hoped to annex all of Mexico's Far North without resorting to military force. But when Mexico was ultimately backed into a corner at the Rio Grande, the president's hand was forced to play the war card.

## War

The US offensive involved a three-pronged attack: the invasion of New Mexico and California, northern Mexico, and central Mexico through Vera Cruz on the Gulf Coast. Although some 6000 Texans participated in the US campaigns, it was the mounted volunteers who gained the most notoriety. The Texas Rangers, as they preferred to be called by this time, became the "eyes and ears" of Zachary Taylor's army. Led into battle under such figures as John Coffee "Jack" Hays, Ben McCulloch, William A. "Big Foot" Wallace (Figure 4.7), Mustang Grey, and Samuel H. Walker, Ranger companies and regiments earned a reputation as being second to none, prompting Taylor to single them out for commendation. But the activities of the Rangers in certain campaigns created bitter memories in Mexico, for in many cases, the Rangers carried their frontier individualism to extremes: they wreaked havoc on innocent civilians and cold-bloodedly disposed of anyone whom they suspected of abetting the resistance movement. When Texas Rangers went



**Figure 4.7** William A. "Big Foot" Wallace in San Antonio. Source: Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries (Rose 352).

on expeditions in search of Mexican guerrilla forces, they brought back no prisoners, shooting the guerrilleros on the spot. After Taylor won a decisive victory at Buena Vista in February 1847, the Rangers received orders to reinforce General Winfield Scott's command, already in Mexico City by September 1847. Assigned to protect Scott's supply line from the coast, the Rangers cleared the jungles of guerrilleros and again earned praise for their courage. But their reputation for committing atrocities preceded them when they arrived in Mexico City on December 6 to join Scott. People murmured their fears of *Los Diablos Tejanos* (the Texas Devils), and the Rangers did little to allay such dread, continuing their practice of abusing Mexicans—including random shootings, looting, lynching, and the hurling of insults—until war's end, which came with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848.

The treaty confirmed the United States' title to Texas and turned over California and New Mexico to the *norteamericanos*. Under the agreement, the United States paid Mexico \$18.25 million for these regions, which constituted almost half of the Mexican nation. The treaty also stated that those of Mexican descent living on the newly taken lands would enjoy the full rights of US citizenship and that their property rights were to be respected inviolably.

The conflict left a hostile legacy between Mexico and the United States. Mexico began to blame all of its ills on the imperialists and vigorously condemn all things Yankee. For the United States, the war brought the issue of slavery's expansion to the forefront: would the new territories be organized on a "slave" or "free" basis? In this issue, Texas would play a vital part, for its acceptance into the Union had strengthened the South's hand in the fiery debate over the future of slavery in the United States.

## **End of the Lone Star Republic**

Swift and significant changes had transpired in the course of Texas history between 1836 and 1848. During this time, the claim over Texas once held by Native Americans, then Spaniards, and finally Mexicans ended. For those who had lived through the transformation, a look back showed a world at once different and familiar.

Most markedly distinguishing the mood of people in 1848 from that of the preindependence period was the conviction that they now commanded their own destiny. An unpopular dictatorship had been removed, "backward" rule had been replaced by "enlightened" politics, and a "wilderness" had been tamed for "civilized" humanity. Texans toasted their triumph on national holidays and other patriotic occasions, their beliefs in American ideals reinvigorated now that they were US citizens. Could anyone question the success of the government founded by Washington, Adams, Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe?

Other differences were not difficult to discern. A new population had largely replaced Texas's old inhabitants, though Anglo Americans had outnumbered the native Tejanos as early as the mid-1820s. By 1836, Texas was home to only a few settlers from overseas; by 1848, European colonies dotted the terrain. Cities had taken different forms. New urban layouts resembled the typical American city of the day, with the developers largely abandoning the old Spanish traditions of urban planning. Cultural influences now defined the state's geography: Eastern and southeastern Texas contained transplanted folks from the Old South who counted on the peculiar institution and the planation for their livelihood; Northern Texas, embracing the Red River area and anchored by modern-day Dallas, traced its societal ways to Missouri, Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Illinois; the republic's western periphery became home for European, especially German, colonists; South Texas

remained the stronghold of Tejanos, especially the San Antonio surroundings and the Rio Grande border area; while Indians still contested the western flank of the republic. Occupations, leisure-time activities, and styles of architecture and dress were only a few of the many things that now set apart the world of Texans in 1848 from that of Mexicans in 1836.

During its nine-year experiment as a republic, the new state had evolved into nearly becoming an empire for slavery. It exemplified, at such a historical junction, a feasible model for hopeful Southerners who might consider creating a powerful slave confederacy fortified against abolitionist condemnation and capable of standing politically and commercially on its own.

But the Texas of 1848 was too closely tied to the preceding historical era to have rejected the Mexican legacy completely. However much Texans might associate Mexico with ignorance, their fifteen-year experience under Mexico had left its imprint on them, and Anglos had carried that influence into the period of the republic. The Hispanic tradition persisted in the laws the Texans decided to keep, the empresario systems of Mexico and the Republic of Texas, the approach toward financing education, and even the strategy behind the organization of law enforcement groups such as the Texas Rangers.

Material conditions were more or less the same in 1848 as they had been a dozen years earlier. Obviously, the Texans had not been exceptionally successful in creating a vibrant economy (although they did ensure its capitalist basis), workdays still lasted from sunup to sundown in rural regions, the state of transportation was only slightly better than it had been in Mexican days, and daily hardships of struggling against diseases and hostile Indians, of fetching water and disposing of waste, remained just as severe.

The general class structure of the republic also had carried over from the 1830s. Anglos dominated society, of course, relegating ethnic minorities to nonstatus: Mexican largely dwelled in the lower stratum, Indians subsisted outside the social order, and the majority of black Texans remained as chattel. African American bondage gave a huge edge to society's upper crust, certainly cotton farmers, affording them—as new members of the union—status and protection from antislavery agitators. Slaveholders now would benefit generously, as US citizens, from their inclusion in the international cotton trade.

As the 1850s began, all who resided in the State of Texas were caught up in the same historical currents as were other Americans. People disagreed over the meaning of republicanism, had different material ambitions, and each of the various cultural groups desired to retain its special identity even as it enjoyed the benefits of being American. The electoral process gave Americans an avenue for arriving at some consensus, but conflict and violence remained alternatives for defending deeply held convictions. Indeed, within a dozen years after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Texans found themselves seceding from the Union they had fought so hard to join.

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## Statehood, Secession, and Civil War, 1848–1865

Annexation marked a milestone in the history of Texas. Freed from any realistic threat of Mexican reconquest, and bolstered by the economic, military, and diplomatic benefits that flowed from American statehood, Texas enjoyed greater latitude to chart its own course. In the years between annexation and the Civil War, the state became more closely aligned with the culture, politics, and economy of the Deep South. Slavery and cotton assumed greater importance, setting the stage for Texas to follow a distinctly Southern path in the decades after the war.

Following annexation, Texas remained a magnet for immigrants seeking new beginnings. The first federal census taken in Texas in 1850 revealed that 212,000 persons (including slaves) inhabited the state. This population was ethnically and culturally diverse, but as Table 5.1 on population origins shows, Anglo Americans from the southern United States accounted for more than half of all Texas residents.

Actually, the US South provided two different streams of immigrants. People from the Lower South—the states from South Carolina west to Louisiana along the Gulf Coast—clustered in eastern and southeastern Texas. Not surprisingly, this section of the state hosted commercial farms that used slave labor to grow cotton, sugar, and rice. In contrast, inhabitants from the Upper South—the border states separating the Deep South from the North, ranging westward from Virginia to Missouri and Arkansas—gravitated toward the north and north-central counties of Texas. Most of these people ran family farms, depending less on cotton and more on the production of foodstuffs, primarily corn and wheat.

The 1850 census also listed Anglo Texans who had come from states outside the South—some 10,000 of them. The largest number of these persons hailed from the Midwest; fewer had arrived from New England or the mid-Atlantic states (Table 5.1).

Ironically, Texas Mexicans already found themselves relegated to numerical insignificance, constituting only about 5 percent of the total population in 1850. They remained concentrated in their original cultural strongholds of the B́exar-Goliad region and South Texas (on the *rancherías* along the Rio Grande).

The Germans who had arrived in Texas in the mid-1840s as part of colonization programs sponsored by the Adelsverein Society added to the diversity of the state's population.

**Table 5.1** Origins of the Texas population, 1850.

| <i>Group</i>                         | <i>Number</i> | <i>Percentage of state total</i> | <i>Percentage of group living in urban areas<sup>a</sup></i> |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Southern Anglo American <sup>b</sup> | 114,040       | 53.7                             | 3  |
| Northern Anglo American              | 9965          | 4.7                              | 11   |
| Negro <sup>c</sup>                   | 58,558        | 27.5                             | 3  |
| Spanish surname <sup>d</sup>         | 11,212        | 5.3                              | 13   |
| French surname <sup>d</sup>          | 1071          | 0.5                              | 29   |
| German element <sup>e</sup>          | 11,534        | 5.4                              | 32   |
| Other foreign elements               | 3900          | 1.8                              | 23   |
| Other <sup>f</sup>                   | 2312          | 1.1                              | —  |

<sup>a</sup> “Urban” includes towns of 1000 or more population that were listed in census.

<sup>b</sup> Includes the Texas-born children of northern Anglo Americans.

<sup>c</sup> Includes both slave and free colored.

<sup>d</sup> Includes American-born persons with Spanish or French surname.

<sup>e</sup> Includes foreign-born persons and their American offspring.

<sup>f</sup> Includes all persons who were born in California and the Territories or whose origins could not be determined.

Source: Terry G. Jordan, “Population Origins in Texas, 1850,” *Geographical Review*, 59 (January 1969), p. 85.

Other Germans had come to Texas on their own initiative, and by 1850, the German-descent population stood at around 11,500. By this time, German rural communities stretched along an ethnic corridor extending from the coast, at Galveston, through the towns of San Antonio and Austin, and on to western counties such as Gillespie, Mason, and Kerr.

Other European groups added to the growing pluralism of the state’s population. Irish settlements along the coastal counties of San Patricio and Refugio, which traced their origins to Mexican land grants, were prospering as of 1850. Immigrants from the United Kingdom at midcentury totaled approximately 2900. Norwegians, numbering about 100 in 1850, lived in north-central Texas in counties such as Kaufman, Van Zandt, and Henderson, and in a little colony they founded in Bosque County in 1854.

On the eve of the Civil War, the total Texas population had tripled to more than 604,000. Its growth since 1850 had been dramatic, and the cultural diversity and ethnic regionalism of the population were marked. During the same era, however, slavery and the politics of sectionalism fused the diverse elements of Texas society to life in the Deep South. Despite their disparate group affiliations, in 1861, the majority of Texans would side with the seceding Confederate states.

## The Texas Economy at Midcentury

### Rural growth

Under Mexico, Texas had been shaped by the basic premise of Mexican federalism: the state and not the federal government should administer the state’s public domain. Desiring to preserve that tradition, Texas had insisted upon retaining its public lands under the terms of annexation. As a US state, therefore, Texas perpetuated the land policy of the republic and thereby continued to attract immigrants. In 1854, the legislature passed the Texas Preemption Act, through which the state offered homesteaders 160-acre parcels of land for as little as fifty cents an acre (as compared to the concurrent US price of \$1.25 an acre).

Throughout the 1850s, Texas remained primarily an agrarian society. In 1850, there were 12,107 farms in the state; this number leaped to 35,563 by 1860. During that same decade, the number of improved acres rose from 639,821 to 2,590,895. The production of cotton increased from about 58,000 bales in 1849 to 431,463 bales in 1859. Although sugar and wool increasingly became cash commodities raised in Texas, cotton remained the state's staple.

Cotton thrived on plantations, the largest units located in the area extending from the lower valley of the Colorado River to the Sabine, a region populated by settlers from the Lower South. Between 1848 and the eve of the Civil War, lands worked by slaves produced lucrative returns for planters, the profits auguring the westward expansion of cotton and slavery. It must be understood, however, that only about one-third of all Texas farms at midcentury had slaves as part of their workforce and that Texans constituting a planter elite (landholders who owned more than one hundred slaves) amounted to a small minority. In reality, the 20 percent of planters heading the list of slave owners held 96 percent of the entire Texas slave population. Most Texas slave owners held fewer than five bondpeople.

Not all of those who wrested their living from the soil relied on cotton. As mentioned, north and north-central Texas farmers grew wheat, oats, and other foodstuffs, an agricultural pattern resembling that of the US Upper South. In the part of the state extending from the Brazos River west to the frontier beyond San Antonio, Anglo landowners using slave labor coexisted with small farmers (mostly European) who cultivated vegetables, grains, and fruits, engaged in viticulture (wine making), and delved into ranching. Over time, many of the small farmers of this region, among them some Germans, slowly accepted the nuances of Southern culture and began to support chattel slavery.

The ranch retained its economic importance, primarily along the Coastal Prairie but also in the southern portions of the Piney Woods and northeastern counties. Tejanos continued to ranch along the Rio Grande border, but as Anglos drifted into the area in the wake of the war with Mexico, disputes over the ownership of cattle and ranchlands arose between the two peoples. Among the newcomers who built cattle-ranching empires in the region were H. L. Kinney, Richard King, and Mifflin Kenedy.

From the early settings of Anglo cattle ranching in eastern Texas, ranchers during the 1850s migrated southwest toward the Guadalupe, San Antonio, and Nueces river valleys—rich pasturelands dominated by Tejano ranchers as late as 1836. Ranching also pushed into the central-western frontier of the state toward the counties of the western Cross Timbers, among them Eastland, Erath, Comanche, and Palo Pinto, as well as into the Upper Hill Country counties of San Saba, Lampasas, Llano, and Mason. With this spread, ranching traditions originally imported from the southeastern seaboard of the United States made their way westward.

### **Urban industrialization**

As of 1850, only ten percent of Texans lived in towns with a population greater than one hundred people. Galveston was the largest town in Texas, with a population of 5000. Its location on the Gulf made it a natural center for shipping, storage, and wholesale commerce, though the port city also sustained itself through manufacturing, banking, and cotton compressing. Only four other towns had a population of more than 1000 at this time. In order of size they were San Antonio, which acted as a point of departure for passenger stagecoaches and freight-company wagons heading for Mexico and California; Houston, an inland port



that acted as a conduit to the Gulf; New Braunfels; and Marshall. Austin, the seat of government, had barely 600 inhabitants at midcentury. But even the largest Texas towns lacked the comforts and conveniences generally associated with urban living. Crudely built or improvised one- or two-room structures acted as stores or municipal buildings, and such urban amenities as libraries, theaters, and recreational facilities were conspicuously absent.

By 1860, the number of Texas communities boasting a population of more than 1000 had increased to twenty, and San Antonio, with 8000 inhabitants, had surpassed Galveston as the state's largest city. North Texas still had no major city by the onset of the Civil War; not even Dallas showed prospects of its eventual role as a commercial and financial center.

Urban economics reflected the state's agrarian basis. Cotton, sugar, and wool constituted the main urban exports. Industry was in its infancy. The iron foundries of Galveston and Houston ranked among the major industrial employers in Texas, yet neither employed more than forty people. At the beginning of the Civil War, therefore, the state's economy more closely resembled that of the rural, agrarian South than that of the urbanized, industrial North. In comparison to New York and Pennsylvania, each of which boasted more than 22,000 manufacturing establishments, Texas had few industrial plants—only 983, which averaged about four workers each.

### **Transportation**

Travel throughout Texas generally remained as difficult as it had been during the period of the republic, a factor that slowed the growth of the economy (Figure 5.1 shows the land forms of Texas). The state government entrusted internal improvements to the counties, but inadequate resources compelled local authorities to let bad roads languish. Besides the sorry shape of the roads, few bridges existed. Water travel remained problematic, for the rivers were shallow and narrow in sections and often clogged with debris; as before, navigation into the Gulf remained treacherous.

Travel by stagecoach was not much better. In the early period of statehood, it continued mostly as an intrastate mode of transportation, moving passengers, mail, and light freight. By the onset of the Civil War, thirty-one lines handled stage traffic within Texas. After the discovery of gold in California in 1848, entrepreneurs founded stagecoach lines between San Antonio and far-off El Paso, but not until 1857 did the first interstate line, the San Antonio–San Diego (California) Mail Line, begin business, though its coaches usually experienced horrendous difficulties along the way to the West Coast. To cross the one hundred miles of the Colorado Desert (in southeastern California), for example, passengers had to transfer from the coaches to mule back. For obvious reasons, the company soon became known as the “Jackass Line.” Between 1858 and 1861, the Butterfield Overland Mail, a stage line originating in St. Louis, Missouri, began mail traffic through Texas. Its stages entered the state at the Red River north of modern-day Sherman, followed a path westward to El Paso, where just north of that settlement, they exited toward their destination of San Francisco. Passengers, ordinarily four people per stage, had to tolerate inconveniences for the company's celerity wagons—coaches designed for moving light loads and for fitness to bear up under grueling road travel and hazardous weather (ordinarily not much more than leather screens on the sides and a canvas cover shielded passengers from outside vexations)—were contracted to convey the US mail, not human cargo. During the Civil War, stagecoach operations between Texas and the West Coast ceased regular service.

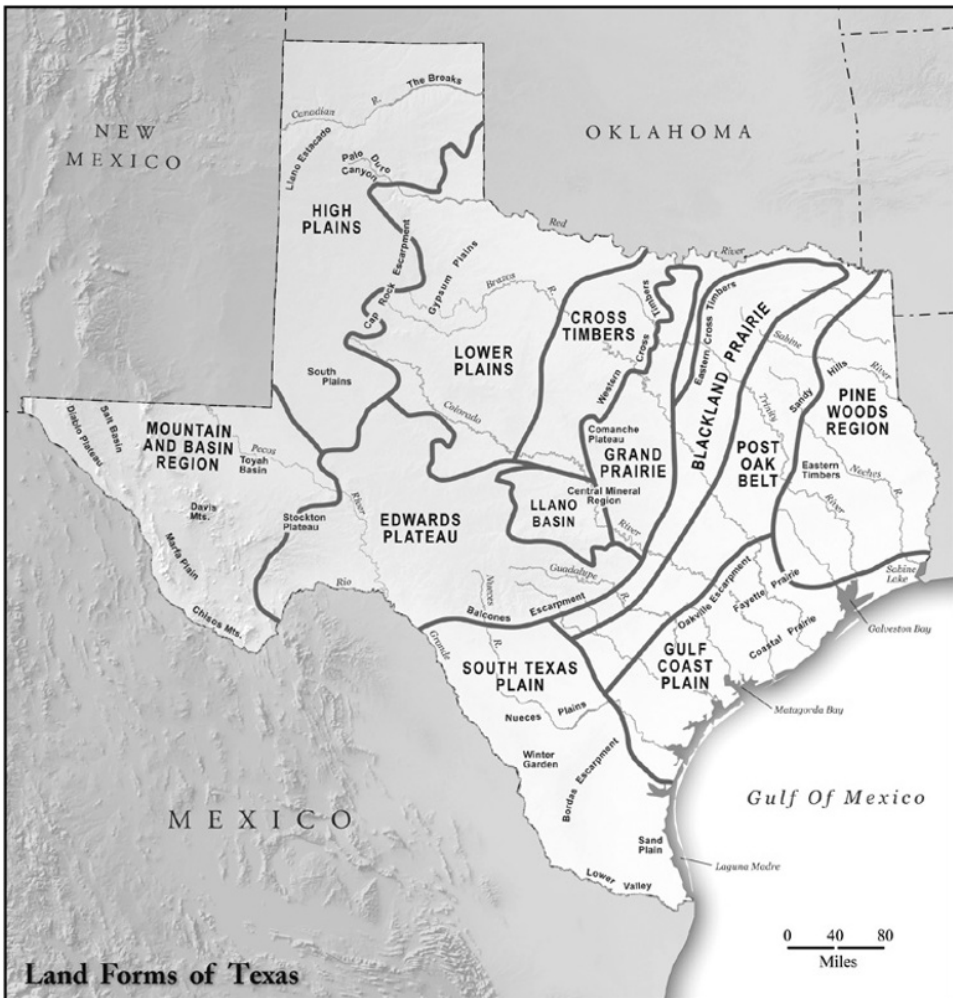


Figure 5.1 Land forms of Texas.

Freight haulers battled inclement weather and other obstacles as they attempted to move goods on their mule- or ox-drawn wagons between San Antonio or Austin and the Gulf Coast. Nonetheless, hundreds of freighting teams operated during the 1850s, many of them handled by Tejanos who earned a reputation as excellent *arrieros* (teamsters). Because of their excellent service and lower rates, Tejanos briefly dominated the transportation of food and merchandise between the interior and the Gulf.

Railroad building in Texas lagged behind that of other states in the 1850s. At midcentury, when the total railroad mileage of the United States stood at 9021, Texas had virtually no tracks. A modest start was made in 1853, when the Buffalo Bayou, Brazos & Colorado Railway Company commenced operation on thirty miles of track between Harrisburg and Richmond in central Fort Bend County; the line continued expanding until 1861, by which time it had reached Brazoria County. Then, in 1854, the state government sought to further railroad building by passing a law that offered railroad construction companies sixteen sections of public land (or 10,240 acres) for every mile of track they laid. This effort proved ineffectual. By 1860, the state still only had about 400 miles of track, much of it stretching from Houston to inland terminals along the Brazos, Colorado, and Trinity rivers. By then, Houston had emerged as the primary hub of the state's railroad infrastructure.

## Texas Society at Midcentury

### Inequality

Judging from the pace of immigration and the increase in population, many people perceived Texas as a land of opportunity, but not everyone's expectations were fulfilled. Figure 5.2 shows the ethnic distribution in Texas in 1850. Recent studies on antebellum Texas indicate that the egalitarian ideal in Texas was mythical, although the same could be said for the South or the nation in general.

The census of 1850 disclosed a sharp inequality in the distribution of wealth among the free population of Texas, and the pattern persisted throughout the next decade. At midcentury, most of the state's real and personal property (including slaves) and total wealth lay in the hands of a small elite that constituted less than ten percent of all Texans; this group seems to have expanded slightly by 1860. On the eve of the Civil War, 7.1 percent of the population held 56 percent of state's wealth. Slave owners in particular were among the wealthiest Texans, given their high investment in cash-crop farming. Moreover, they exerted undue political influence, for they held a disproportionately large number of political offices.

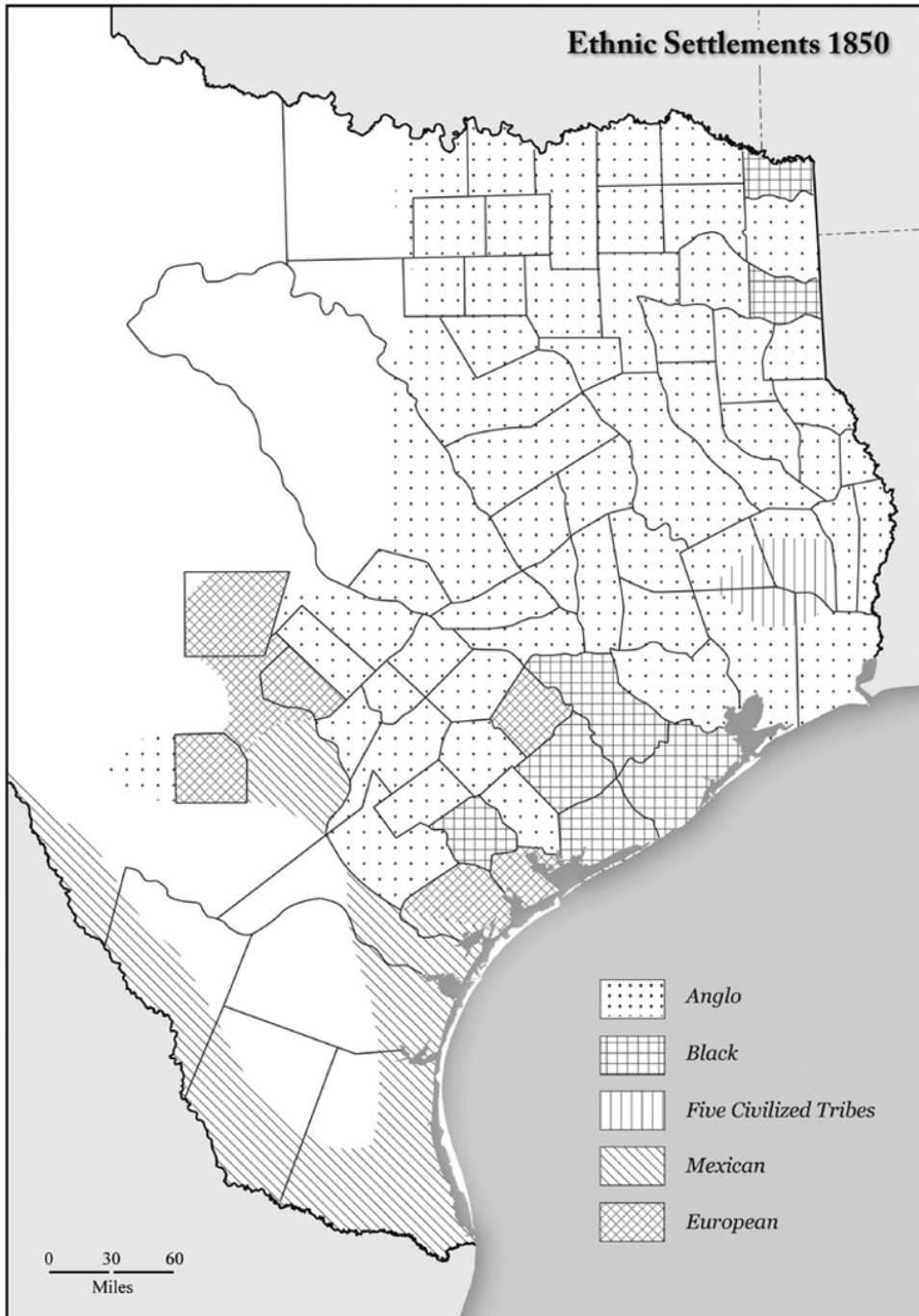
Obviously, there also existed a large body of Texan plain folk who did not share in the available wealth. Protest against economic inequalities was apparently neutralized, however, by opportunities for upward advancement, the ability of free adult (Anglo) males to express opinions at the ballot box, and the equalizing forces of the frontier, which, as mentioned, tended to deemphasize class consciousness.

Labor organizations, one traceable indication of widespread discontent, surfaced only faintly. Several workingmen's associations appeared during early statehood, but no labor unions were founded in the state between 1838 and 1857. Then, in 1857, pressmen employed by two Galveston newspapers unionized and asked for pay increases. In 1860, Galveston carpenters organized Carpenters Local No. 7, but they primarily concerned themselves with altruistic activities such as mutual assistance, as did the printers' union (which had not received its requested wage hike). Otherwise, labor unionism hardly existed in Texas by 1860. The relative absence of industrial development, the small number of workers concentrated in manufacturing enterprises, and the faith that many workers had in upward mobility made Texas infertile ground for the growth of labor unions.

Finally, at this time, Texas was also still home to groups of people whom modern-day social scientists would classify as minorities, many of whom found their opportunities to acquire property restricted, chances for upward mobility limited, and avenues for legitimately expressing their discontent firmly blocked. Blacks, slaves and free blacks, Mexican Americans (Tejanos), and the people of the Indian nations being forcibly removed from their ancestral lands comprised the state's minorities.

### Black Texans

Free blacks enjoyed no better standing during the early era of statehood than they had during the days of the republic. Only about 350 free blacks resided in the state according to the 1860 federal census, though one newspaper put the figure unofficially at about 1000. The status of these people remained ill defined: they possessed no civil rights before the law, and for the white majority their presence continued to be unwelcome.



**Figure 5.2** Ethnic settlements, 1850.

Although only a handful of blacks lived as free persons, the number of blacks in Texas increased rapidly. In 1850, the US census counted 58,161 blacks in Texas; the next one listed 182,566. The increase made slaves the fastest-growing segment of the population; indeed, slaves constituted more than 30 percent of the state's inhabitants by 1860. Most enslaved persons lived in eastern Texas, an area inhabited predominantly by people who had moved

there from other parts of the South. This Lower South section of the state—embracing the Brazos and Colorado River country and merging with a parcel of counties stretching along the length of the Sabine River—contained large concentrations of slaves on the eve of the Civil War.

In the fifteen years before 1860, slavery in Texas persisted for various reasons, primarily because it proved profitable. Indeed, Texans during the 1850s considered slavery as essential to the economic survival of the state and even predicted a future for Texas as a slave empire. Throughout the state, slaves were considered a form of capital. Texas society recognized these persons as valuable assets, to the extent that they could be converted to cash even more readily than could real estate. Planters used slaves to earn extra income (by hiring out their labor), negotiate loans (by using them as collateral), acquire currency in emergency situations, pay off debts, exchange for land, or bequeath to heirs. The state government, moreover, turned to slaves as a source for raising revenue. Because the law considered slaves a species of property, masters paid taxes on their slaves, just as they would on their land and range animals.

Slave labor brought planters great wealth during the 1840s and 1850s. In the eastern third of the state, slaves annually picked cotton crops that yielded substantial financial dividends, and cotton production as part of the state's market economy far exceeded the value of other commodities such as corn, wheat, oats, vegetables, cattle, hogs, mules, and horses. At the same time, slavery and the cotton harvest stimulated related sectors of the economy, for planters needed grains, slaughter animals, and certain manufactured goods to run their plantations. Cowboy labor fetched further income for slaveholders. Some plantation owners invested in livestock, and where ranching supplemented cotton growing, black men possessing fundamental range skills broke horses and performed duties as needed in the pasture fields of the estate.

But Texans, like their counterparts in the Lower South, also saw slavery as a necessary means to restrain a people of color. Whites in antebellum Texas viewed themselves as virtuous, compassionate, and pious; they viewed slaves in the other extreme, as a people inclined to be dirty, evil, lascivious, pagan, depraved, and bestial—connotations associated with the color black in European culture. These attitudes, reinforced by racist thinking that Africans were an inferior and inassimilable people, helped slave owners rationalize the need for a system of repression and justify their abhorrent treatment of other human beings. In the eyes of many Texans (and other Southerners), slavery even benefited the enslaved, by uplifting them from the “primitivism” of life in the African homeland. Hence, slavery necessarily fueled racism as long as it existed.

As to the legality of slavery, the state Constitution of 1845 considered slaves personal property that could be bought, sold, and separated from their families at the will of their owners. The document defined slavery as a perpetual condition, and it forbade blacks from marrying or forming a family, bearing arms, assembling, or using the courts in a case involving a white person. To control slaves, the law specified the allowance of whippings for those found guilty of crimes such as petty theft or violating the rules of “proper” public behavior, such as insulting a white person. If a slave committed a heinous crime, the law called for the administration of the death penalty, and whites often used lynch law in retribution for a host of real or suspected infractions.

Although bondage revolved around the exploitation of human beings, the peculiar institution was never, neither in urban areas nor on the plantations, so totalitarian that it denied slaves the ability to develop their own social identity. Conversely, African American culture evolved even in the face of the cruelty of slavery. From Christianity, slaves borrowed those

tenets that assured them that all humankind was equal before the Lord and worthy of God's forgiveness and redemption. The hope that they, along with the white master, had an equal chance for achieving God's reward lessened the worldly burden that slavery cast upon them. In death, at least, they would find the freedom that eluded them in life.

In their family structure, slaves arranged social units. Although not recognized by law, family ties were legitimized within slave society in a variety of ways, including the common ritual of having an engaged couple symbolize their marriage by jumping in unison over a broomstick. The slave family was an important source of defense (offering individuals love, kinship support, and self-worth) against the dehumanizing evil of slavery, including the physical and sexual abuse of their family members by white masters. And blacks were quick to take advantage of slave owners' attitudes toward certain facts of the human condition: planters allowed informal marriages and encouraged the creation of families, for this led to reproduction (and hence to more valuable property for the owner), gave masters greater control over their slaves (by instilling in them the fear that something bad might befall—at the master's behest—a loved one should they disobey), and made workers tractable, dutiful, and more productive (because familial relationships naturally made them happier). Within slave family arrangements, fathers and mothers sought to assert their respective roles. Husbands supplemented the family meal by hunting and fishing, or taking on odd jobs when the master permitted it. Wives tended to the many (and demanding) domestic duties in the slave household, although only after having finished their assigned work.

Many in slavery did not resign themselves to complete submission. To be sure, some coped by not resisting at all, even accepting the scriptures of slavery and respecting the wishes of their masters. Others compromised with the institution but worked out personal understandings of life that helped them preserve a sense of self-worth. Most bondpeople, however, displayed their discontent in several ways, both blatant and subversive. Thousands ran away from their owner's plantation, some of them heading south to Mexico, some to the southern states (typically their place of birth) to seek loved ones. Others sabotaged the institution by causing mischief, purposely breaking tools, burning sheds, maiming or killing the plantation's domesticated animals, or simply slowing down on the job.

The most visible display of slave discontent was the slave rebellion. Although no record exists of major slave uprisings in antebellum Texas, a wave of insurrection hysteria passed over the state in the 1850s, culminating in 1860 with what is known as the "Texas Troubles." This episode, instigated during a period of prolonged hot weather in the summer of 1860 by a string of suspicious fires in northern Texas (including blazes in Dallas and Fort Worth), led whites to fear that slaves, encouraged by abolitionists, were fomenting a widespread insurrection. Scholars have yet to prove the actual existence of an organized plot, but about ten white men (many of them from the northern United States) and more than thirty African Americans were executed for their alleged roles in the so-called conspiracy before the statewide paranoia subsided.

### **Mexican Americans**

Also largely excluded from wealth and opportunity in midcentury Texas were persons of Mexican descent, who, according to some estimates, numbered anywhere from 13,900 to 23,200 (including those in the El Paso area). No solid information exists to calculate the volume of midcentury immigration from Mexico. However, thousands of Mexicans trekked northward into Texas following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Most were escapees from

the state of Coahuila absconding from semifeudal servitude in *haciendas* where under the system of debt peonage they endured physical abuse, miserable housing, poor nutrition, and hopelessness of ever clearing themselves of perpetual debt. Passing through the town of Guerrero, Mexico, the fugitives headed toward places like San Antonio, Austin, Gonzales, Bastrop, Refugio, and Goliad, hoping to find freedom, jobs, and possibly prospects for starting a new life there. Their coming reinforced already existing urban and rural Tejano communities.

Since 1836, Tejanos had tried to find a niche in Anglo Texan society by accepting elements of the new order. But because of racial prejudice and the dominant group's need to maintain them as part of a pliable and inexpensive labor force, Tejanos faced constant obstacles in their quest for equality. From several towns of Central Texas, Mexicans (many of them recently arrived peons fleeing hacienda indebtedness in northern Mexico) were banished on suspicion of having assisted runaway slaves in reaching freedom in Mexico. In 1857, Anglo American freighters launched hostile action against Mexican American teamsters, their major competitors in transporting goods from the interior to the Gulf. In what became known as the Cart War, Anglos destroyed the arrieros' carts, confiscated their cargo, sabotaged their equipment, and murdered some of the drivers. The violence ended only after the Mexican government, the US secretary of state, and volunteer Texas companies interceded to restore order. Following the episode, the Mexicans recovered a share of their old business (Figure 5.3), although the technology of the post-Civil War era would soon make traffic by cart an outmoded concern.

Similar episodes of interracial friction occurred in South Texas between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande, an area that ambitious Anglos began entering in force following the war with Mexico, displacing Tejanos from their lands and traditional positions of influence. Resentment against the interlopers finally produced violent conflict in Brownsville, sparked by an encounter in 1859 at a city cafe between the town's marshal and Juan Nepomuceno Cortina, a local ranchero and the descendant of old grantees on the border. Cortina resented whites for their racist sentiments toward Mexicans, for the way they used the courts to dispossess Mexican Americans of their rightfully owned land, and for their



**Figure 5.3** Leñeros, Tejano wood haulers with their donkeys. Photo by Duncan. Courtesy of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (#73-1028).

determined drive to supplant the local Mexican American leadership of the South Texas political structure. When on the morning of July 13 the marshal hurled racial epithets at Cortina as he came to the defense of an elderly ranch hand whom the marshal was in the process of beating, the rancher drew his gun and shot and wounded the lawman. Things simmered down for a while, but Cortina returned to Brownsville on September 29, bent on avenging old wrongs inflicted on the Mexican people. He killed two whites (whom Cortina believed had been involved in the deaths of Mexican Americans), then, in two proclamations issued from his mother's ranch upriver from Brownsville, denounced all those engaged in persecuting Tejanos. Mexican Americans rallied to his cause (and others to his banner), viewing Cortina as a champion fighting the injustice of the whites. Texas Rangers and federal troops finally suppressed the so-called Cortina War early in 1860. Before it ended, the incident resulted in a number of tragic deaths, some property damage, and an enduring trend of racial distrust and antagonism.

### **American Indians**

Also existing on the fringes of white society were the state's Native Americans. Although all Texas Indian groups maintained an interest in trading with whites, they also expected to be left alone to farm or hunt in their traditional territories—something that became increasingly difficult as settlers continued to encroach upon their lands. By the late 1840s, whites had pushed the line of settlement so far west that the federal government, now responsible for protecting what had become US frontiers, established in 1849 a cordon of military forts stretching from modern-day Tarrant County to Eagle Pass in southwestern Texas. Westward expansion moved so swiftly, however, that in the early 1850s the military established another line of defense even deeper into Indian lands, this one composed of Forts Belknap (in Young County), Phantom Hill (north of Abilene), Chadbourne (in today's Coke County), McKavett (in what is now Menard County), Terrett (midway between the present-day towns of Junction and Sonora), and Clark (near Brackettville). In order to guard travelers en route to El Paso, Forts Lancaster, Stockton, Davis, and Quitman were built in extreme West Texas (Figure 5.4). As of 1860, the westernmost boundaries of the state extended for more than 500 miles, from the Red River (the settlement of Henrietta) to the Rio Grande border (the village of Eagle Pass).

To guarantee Indian autonomy on parts of the Comanche land, the US Indian agent in Texas, Major Robert Simpson Neighbors, recommended establishing reservations; this, he reasoned, would allow westering settlers to bypass the Indian farm communities. The state legislature concurred, and in 1854 it made as much as 53,136 acres available to the federal government for the foundation of two such reservations that were to become the new "homelands" for about 1500 Texas Indians. The Brazos (or Lower) Reserve was established in present-day Young County (close to Fort Belknap) for some of the *Norteños*, such as the Caddos, Tawakonis, Wacos, and Tonkawas. The Comanche (or Upper) Reserve was founded farther west, on the lower Clear Fork of the Brazos River in what is now Throckmorton County, for the Comanches.

The reservation plan met with mixed success. On the Brazos Reserve, the *Norteño* tribes willingly and successfully farmed, attended school, raised livestock, and frequently assisted the military authorities in campaigns against the Comanches. The idea of living on a reservation appealed to some Comanches, but most of them had no desire to live penned up as the whites' dependents, and they continued to raid farmsteads. The settlers' encroachments



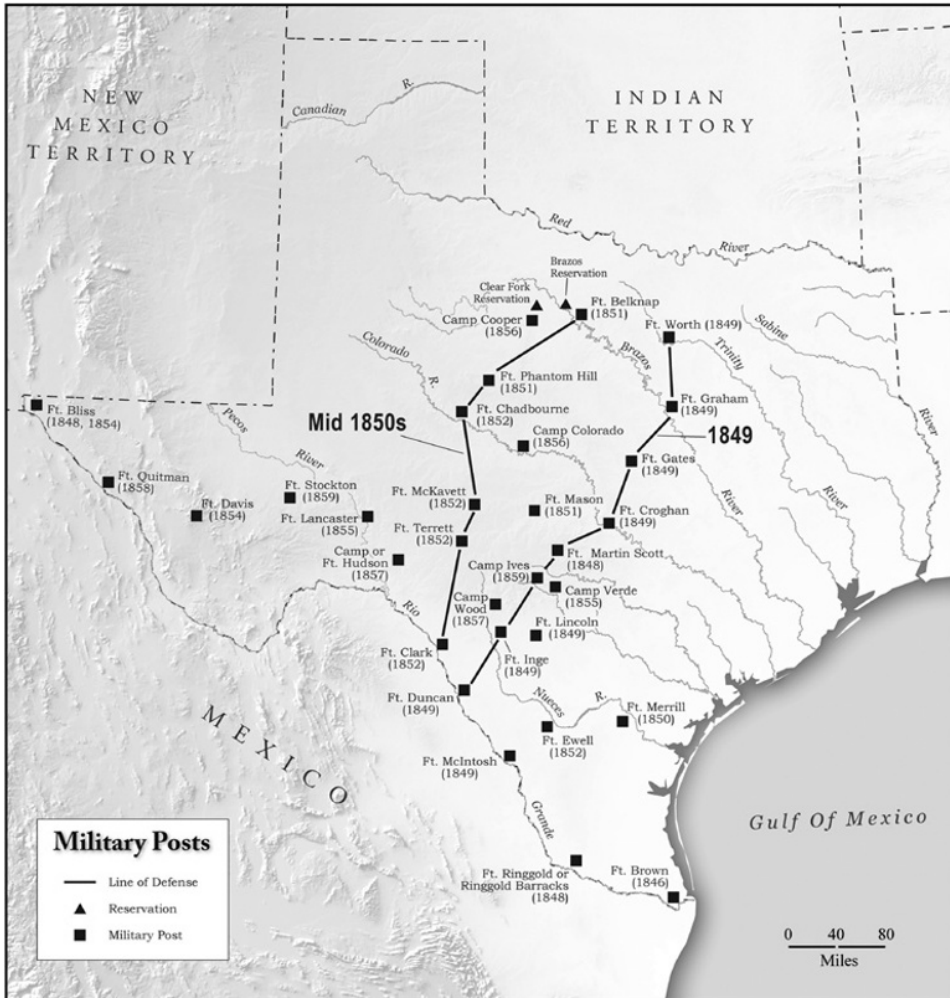


Figure 5.4 Military posts.

(which were fast ruining Comanche hunting grounds) threatened the way of life to which these Indians clung. Angry at the holdouts, the state and the federal governments pursued a more aggressive policy toward the marauders, mustering Texas Rangers and civilian volunteer units for a new Indian offensive. These forces took the fight north of the Red River, to the very camping grounds of the Plains people. Captain John S. “Rip” Ford, for one, led an expedition into the Comanche strongholds in northwestern Oklahoma, his forces decisively winning a battle at the Canadian River on May 12, 1858. The victory, the first in which whites had shown the power to damage the Comanches, infuriated the warriors and only hardened their resolve to resist. Subsequently, Texas settlers experienced frightening retaliation for Ford’s triumph and other battles won by federal troops in the Comanche ranges north of the Texas border.

Clashes between Indians and whites continued even more frequently throughout 1858 and into 1859. Some of the Indians found it difficult to adjust to changes from their traditional nomadic lifestyle. Whites, suspecting the nearby reservation Indians—instead of the hostile northern tribes—of stealing their horses and livestock and scalping and murdering whites on the western and northern regions of the state, began to call for the eviction of the

Indians from the reservations. Carrying their threats further, they waylaid and killed those Indians who ventured out of the sanctuaries, even when the Indians had the permission of US military authorities to be off reservation. In May 1859, a band of some 300 Anglo vigilantes led by former Indian agent John R. Baylor, an inveterate Indian-hater, attacked the Brazos Reserve. Baylor's actions convinced the military authorities that the experiment with reservations had failed. Its hand forced by the wave of lawless hostility, the federal government closed down the Texas Indian reservations in 1859 and transferred the internees to western Indian Territory (Oklahoma). Shortly thereafter, not satisfied with having driven the Indians from Texas, Baylor's ruffians assassinated the sympathetic Indian agent Robert Neighbors in the village of Belknap.

On the eve of the Civil War, the only Indians allowed to maintain an official presence in Texas were the peaceable Alabamas and Coushattas, for whom the legislature provided a small reservation in southeast Texas. Meanwhile, the north and western frontier line of settlement continued to scorch, as Kiowa and Comanche raiding parties stepped up their strikes, inflicting more attacks on Texans than they had in the prior decade.

## Women

The Texas population at midcentury consisted predominately of youthful individuals, a characteristic generally associated with frontier environments; some 77 percent of resident Texans were under forty years of age according to the census of 1850. Also indicative of a frontier setting were skewed sex ratios: men in 1850 outnumbered women by 15,704, and in 1860 by 36,000. This sexual imbalance, along with the lax social controls of a sparsely settled frontier, could not help but influence the nature of midcentury Texas society. Many marriages were, in large measure, the product of economic necessity. But with women in such short supply, Texas was less patriarchal than the older states "back east." In Texas, women found it easier to dissolve or abandon unhappy unions. A greater spirit of male-female cooperation often existed, and women, who worked to ensure such things as the efficient functioning of the farm, were often permitted to cross into decidedly male roles. Influenced by Hispanic legal precedents, the laws of antebellum Texas enhanced the economic autonomy of women.

These same factors also help to explain why interracial mixing between white men and women of color occurred more commonly in the antebellum period than it did after the Civil War. Although an 1837 law voided marriages between blacks and whites, sex between partners of the two races was not made a felony until 1858. Pairings, legal and otherwise, between white men and Tejano or Indian women remained common and generally tolerated.

Still, women of all races faced a hard lot that included starting a family at a young age and then caring for it through all manner of affliction. Aside from tending to household chores (Figure 5.5), women helped perform those tasks essential for frontier survival, including the construction of the family dwelling (which at midcentury generally consisted of little more than four makeshift walls, a roof, dirt floors, and improvised accommodations), hunting and fishing, working stock, clearing fields, cultivating crops, and fighting off raids by Indians and desperadoes.

Despite the liberating tendencies of the frontier, the Texas heritage remained basically masculine and discriminatory. The male-dominated culture held firmly to the belief that women should remain subordinate to men, and thus it restricted women's political, legal,



**Figure 5.5** Batting cotton. Frontier women were responsible for every step of the clothes-making process. Source: Prints and Photograph Collection CN 00939C, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

social, and economic activities. In addition to being deprived of the vote or the right to sit on juries, women could not take the pulpit or speak in public forums. Nonetheless, a handful of women during the 1850s participated in such reform causes as the abolitionist and women's rights movements, among them Melinda Rankin, a New England Presbyterian missionary working in South Texas, whence she denounced slavery, and Elise Waerenskjold, an immigrant from Norway who became an activist for abolition and the rights of women. Married women could not be assured of the guardianship of their children in cases of divorce, and they lacked full control of their own earnings, though the Constitution of 1845 did sustain old understandings that properties acquired by women before and after marriage were theirs—and not their husbands'—to claim. Texas law during this period also upheld existing accords that property and income accrued by a couple during marriage became community property. Consequently, a few Texas women went on to amass sizable fortunes during the antebellum period.

### Education

Public education in Texas at midcentury remained in its nascency, with no overwhelming improvements having been made since the period of the republic. The Constitution of 1845 entrusted the legislature with reserving one-tenth of tax revenues for a “perpetual” school fund, but efforts toward carrying out the constitutional mandate of establishing a statewide system of free public schools moved slowly. Finally, in 1854, Governor Elisha M. Pease

(1853–57) signed into law an educational measure with several provisions. One created a permanent education endowment of \$2 million to be derived from the \$10 million that the United States had given Texas as a part of a settlement in 1850 whereby the state surrendered its claim to territory in New Mexico. Another section of the law provided that schools be made available to all Texas children in common (from which concept the label “common schools” derives) and mandated the creation of schools for the hearing and visually impaired in 1856. Another act of the legislature in 1858 provided for the creation of a university (which ultimately became the University of Texas) by appropriating for the institution, among other things, 3 million acres of public land.

Little of substance came from these efforts. The permanent fund grew slowly and never amounted to enough to pay teachers’ salaries and construct school buildings. Although the facilities for the handicapped opened in 1857, these institutions progressed but slowly. The government maintained the university endowment, but it took little action to establish a university campus until much later.

### **Newspapers and literature**

Although the condition of public education remained weak, newspapers, at least, helped perpetuate literacy, keeping the public abreast of political controversies and current events. Indeed, the number of presses increased measurably during the 1850s. Although only nine papers actively reported before 1845, the US census of 1860 counted eighty-nine Texas-based newspapers and periodicals. The *Telegraph and Texas Register* remained the state’s best-known newspaper, but few frontier communities lacked access to a local newspaper. In the ethnic communities, German and Spanish presses published papers in the native language of their readership. Among these were the *New Braunfels Zeitung* and the *San Antonio El Bejareño*.

Literature produced in the 1840s and 1850s mirrored the rural and frontier nature of the state. Instead of the Romanticism that characterized the literature of the Northern United States, mundane themes marked Texas writing: travel logs, histories, and journals of personal adventure are thus overrepresented. Out of this era, however, came the state’s first major resident historian, Henderson K. Yoakum. In his *History of Texas* (1855), Yoakum portrayed Texans as a people nourished by American democratic institutions and possessed of an industry and energy then breaking a path for civilization and republican institutions. In his view, Texans were ably helping to fulfill the United States’ manifest destiny.

Ethnic and women writers also contributed to the early development of Texas literature. Melinda Rankin’s *Texas in 1850*, Juan N. Seguín’s *Personal Memoirs of John N. Seguín, From the Year 1834 to the Retreat of General Woll from the City of San Antonio, 1842*, and Ferdinand Roemer’s *Texas*, first published in German in 1849, all possess historical significance. Several Europeans also wrote books about their impressions of mid-nineteenth-century Texas.

## **Texas Politics at Midcentury**

### **Sectional troubles**

For Texans in the 1840s, there was reason for confidence and optimism. Their state had been newly accepted into the Union, the former diplomat James Pinckney Henderson had been elected governor, and no less than Sam Houston served as one of their two US senators.

Furthermore, Texas had reason to share in an expanding national pride: the United States now stretched to the Pacific Ocean and gold from California swelled the national money supply.

But annexation also held pitfalls, for the issues that threatened to tear the Union asunder in the late 1840s also roiled the new state. Many in the northern United States wanted the federal government to abolish slavery and the slave trade in Washington, DC, whereas most southerners demanded the passage of a stronger fugitive slave law that would permit slave owners to retrieve runaways who had fled to the North. Issues created by the war with Mexico burned more portentously. Was slavery going to exist in the vast territories newly acquired from Mexico? Southerners said yes, Northerners said no. The expansion of California following the gold rush of 1849 forced another related question. Should California join the Union as a free or a slave state? Connected also to the aftereffects of the war with Mexico was the question of the western boundary of Texas. Was it to be the Rio Grande, as Texans and Southerners argued, or was much of New Mexico to be excluded?

In January 1850, Henry Clay, a senator from Kentucky, proposed a compromise bill in the US Congress. According to Clay's settlement offer: the slave trade would end in the nation's capital; the legislature would pass a strong fugitive slave law; the territories acquired from Mexico would be organized without prohibiting the importation of slaves into those regions; and California would be admitted into the Union as a free state. On the issue of Texas and New Mexico, Clay recommended that Texas be denied claims to lands extending westward to the Rio Grande in New Mexico, but that it be compensated for relinquishing those claims. At first, Texans denounced the idea of giving up any part of New Mexico, but reason replaced misgiving when negotiators proposed that Texas's western boundary would extend due east from the Rio Grande along the thirty-second parallel to the 103rd line of longitude and up along this meridian to the 36° 30' line. (This plan established the state's modern boundaries in that area.) To indemnify the state for relinquishing its New Mexican claims, the federal government would give Texas \$10 million. In this offer, the state saw the opportunity to receive money that would finally erase the public debt incurred during the period of the republic. Texans endorsed the plan in a referendum in November 1850, thus supporting the measures that President Millard Fillmore had signed into law in September as part of Clay's Compromise of 1850.

Throughout the first half of the 1850s, at least, Texans had reason to expect a sanguine future. Removed from the rest of the nation by a long-distance traversable only by a rudimentary infrastructure, and preoccupied with their own internal problem of defense against the Indians, Texans did not feel as keenly the turmoil of the era as did the other slave states. Location, demographic diversity, and other factors distinctive to Texas acted to blunt the severity of the sectional issues sizzling throughout the rest of the United States.

### **Whigs, Democrats, Know-Nothings, and Republicans**

Although the controversies of the 1850s influenced the Deep South more than they did Texas, the state was by no means free of political conflict. Traditionally, Texans had adhered to the principles of the Democratic party, though before 1848 candidates ran more on their personality and reputation than on party platform. Texans had always associated the Democrats with Andrew Jackson and Sam Houston, both war heroes who embodied the ideology of the triumph of the common man.

Although the Democratic party would remain well entrenched as the party of the majority in Texas, in the mid-1850s it began to depart from its Jacksonian foundation. This

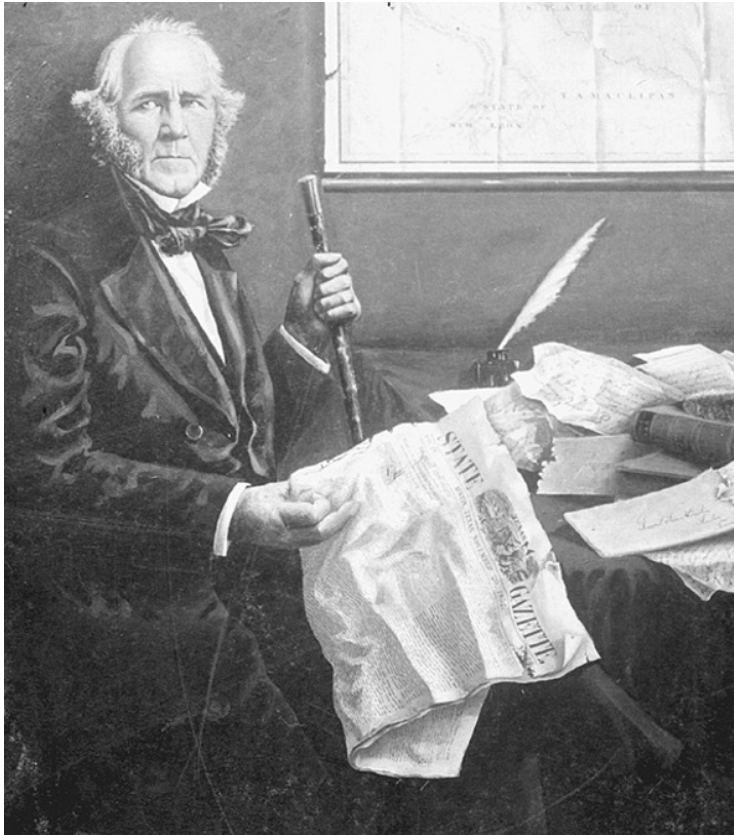
restructuring stemmed from numerous factors, the foremost of which was the reaction to the establishment of the Whig party in Texas. Though active only temporarily in the late 1840s and early 1850s, the Whig party's strength lay mainly in urban counties, where Southern Whiggery found support among the planter, mercantile, and professional classes. Economic expansion, internal improvements, banking to enhance a business climate, loyalty to the Union, an emphasis on nationhood, and a call to heed core American and Protestant values served as the rallying points for Texas Whigs.

Although successful in local elections, doing well in 1848 and 1852, the state Whig party was handicapped by the stand the national party had taken against annexation and the war with Mexico, by President Zachary Taylor's and then President Millard Fillmore's (both Whigs) hostility to the claims Texas made to territory in New Mexico, and by the Northern wing's support for abolition. Indeed, the slavery issue of the 1850s ultimately undid the Whig party. Though it declined, the party had for the moment mobilized those Texas Unionists fearful of the Union's breakup.

A second factor prodding the restructuring of the Democratic party was the appearance of an upstart organization called the Know-Nothings. Like the national American party to which it belonged, the Texas wing of the Know-Nothings (a sobriquet that had lingered from earlier times when many Know-Nothings had belonged to a secret fraternal order that admonished them to reply "I know nothing" when asked to divulge the order's secrets) drew its backing from nativists, anti-Catholics, Democrat-haters, Unionists, and other nationalistic elements. Obviously, natural opponents of the Know-Nothings included Mexicans and Germans, whom the nativist party perceived as culturally un-American because of their Catholic religion and foreign origins. (The Know-Nothings also saw these groups as radicals due to their stand against slavery.) The Know-Nothings also distrusted Democrats, whom they believed had threatened the structure of the Union by inflaming sectional passions in the territories following passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854). Viewing itself as the defender of the Union, the Know-Nothing party painted the Democrats as perpetrators of the sectional conflict.

Other, disparate groups, alarmed by the events of the 1850s, found elements of the Know-Nothing platform attractive. Many persons in the commercial centers of East Texas switched over, for businesspeople feared that the current partisan rivalry would imperil the region's economic stability. Furthermore, Know-Nothing support for state banks and federally subsidized programs of internal improvements appealed to planters, lawyers, and merchants. The presence of the federal military in such western areas as San Antonio financially benefited local businesspeople and added strength to Know Nothingism, for if Texas left the Union, the federal troops would be withdrawn. Finally, others sympathized with Know-Nothing sentiments without formally joining the party. In the election of 1854, the party won mayoral offices in San Antonio, Austin, and Galveston. Even Sam Houston, concerned over increased talk of the breakup of the Union, came to endorse and support some of the party's beliefs in 1855. But Know-Nothingism proved to be a temporary phenomenon, for the issue of the future of slavery divided the national Know-Nothing party, just as it had the Whigs. Actually, the Know-Nothing party limped along until 1860, although it was not very effective after its defeat in the presidential election of 1856, a blow from which it never fully recovered.

A third factor splintering the Democratic party at the time related to the increased influence of the Lower South culture in Texas. Know-Nothings had siphoned off Unionist Democrats such as Sam Houston (Figure 5.6), thereby leaving Southerners in control of the state party. This, in part, had allowed Hardin R. Runnels, who favored reopening the slave



**Figure 5.6** Sam Houston in the latter years of the 1850s. Elected governor in 1859, it was Houston's last political position. Boris Bernhard Gordon photograph. Source: De Shields Collection Gift, Dr. William E. Howard, The Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library (CN 96.101).

trade, to overcome Houston's challenge to the governorship in 1857. Deep South Democrats, a few of them "fire-eaters" advocating immediate, unconditional secession from the Union, defended slavery as essential to the preservation of the Southern way of life, championed white supremacy as a standard of race relations, guarded the doctrine of states' rights, endorsed the ambitions of the Knights of the Golden Circle (a group based in Texas but committed to founding a slaveholding empire in the United States, the Caribbean, and parts of Latin America), and condemned the upstart (Northern) Republican party.

The growing vigor of the national Republican party further weakened the Texas Democrats' cohesiveness—not because white Texans disagreed over the danger that an anti-slavery party posed to the South, but rather because they disagreed over the best way to counter the republican threat. Born from the controversy surrounding the passage of the Kansas–Nebraska Act—which in 1854 opened the question of expanding the Southern lifestyle into Kansas and Nebraska by allowing settlers there to decide whether their respective territories would permit slavery—the Republican party assailed the legislation for having produced "Bleeding Kansas," a regional civil war wherein pro- and antislavery forces inflicted violent acts on one another. The Democrats, the Republicans contended, were responsible for the bloodshed. Stern Republican opposition to slavery in the new territories and heated rhetoric about the immorality of the peculiar institution aroused fears that the Republicans had only Northern (i.e., abolitionist) interests at heart and therefore might stop

at nothing to overturn slavery and disrupt Southern society. In response, many Texans turned to the ultra-Southern wing of the Democratic party, seeing it as a vehicle for defending cherished traditions.

For all these many reasons, a growing number of Texas Democrats drifted from Jacksonian nationalism, believing that the best interests of the state lay in protecting slavery at all costs. Their voices increasingly drowned out those of leaders like Sam Houston, who feared that the radical proslavery wing of the Democratic party would precipitate secession and bring on a potentially catastrophic war that might destroy slavery even as it sought to preserve it. As a consequence, by 1858 the Democratic party in Texas had edged closer to the Secessionist Democrats of the plantation South.

### **1859: A tumultuous year**

Despite this realignment, Texans worried about disunion—and many of them were put off by the rhetoric of the Secessionist Democrats. The extent of disaffection allowed Unionist Democrats (that wing of the Democratic party committed to the preservation of the Union) to defeat the Secessionists in the election of August 1859, installing Sam Houston as governor. In the campaign, Houston put Runnels on the defensive by criticizing his inadequate protection of the frontier, highlighting Runnels's wishes to see the slave trade renewed, and reminding voters of the governor's preference for secession. Houston now distanced himself from the Know-Nothings and claimed to be the same staunch supporter of national democracy that he always had been. By so doing, Houston gained the support of non-slaveholding voters in the Rio Grande country, western Texas, and North Texas. Yet he still appealed to former Know-Nothings and Whigs and successfully enticed into his camp several thousand voters who had not participated in the election of 1857. Furthermore, he won the support of two other elements: those eligible to cast ballots for the first time and voters recently arrived in Texas. Houston's 1859 victory was hailed as a tribute to Unionism, but it turned out to be only a partial success, for the Secessionist Democrats, determined to redeem the party from the Unionists, selected Louis T. Wigfall, a fire-eater, to represent them in the US Senate.

In the fall of 1859, political differences gave way to tumultuous events. John Brown's attempted slave rebellion at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in October of that year reaffirmed Southern fears that Northerners would employ violence to curtail or even end slavery. Juan Cortina's attack on Brownsville in South Texas, at about the same time, made many Texans question the federal government's willingness and ability to defend the border region; stepped-up Comanche attacks on the northern and western settlements raised similar questions. Then, when members of the House of Representatives in Washington, DC, wasted two months debating the selection of a Republican Speaker between 1859 and 1860, thereby delaying defense measures for the Texas frontier communities, many Texans grew convinced that the Republicans held the immediate concerns of their party above those of all others.

### **Disintegration**

On April 23, 1860, the Democrats met in Charleston, South Carolina, to nominate their candidate for the upcoming presidential election. Failing to agree on a platform, the party reconvened in Baltimore, Maryland, in June but again failed to reach a consensus. In frustration,



Southern Democrats split from the national party and held their own nominating convention, in which they chose John C. Breckinridge as their presidential candidate. In their own convention, the Northern Democrats picked Stephen A. Douglas. Afraid that the splintering of the Democratic party signaled disunion, a border states' coalition of Unionist Democrats, former Whigs, and ex-Know-Nothings fused to form the Constitutional Union party, running John Bell as their standard-bearer on a patriotic platform emphasizing the preservation of the Constitution and the Union. Meanwhile, the Republican party, meeting in Chicago, turned to Abraham Lincoln of Illinois; Lincoln felt that slavery was morally wrong and should be kept out of the territories, although he did not advocate its abolition where it already existed.

Texas Democrats faced an excruciating decision over which Democratic nominee to support. By summer, however, most Texans began to swing over to Breckinridge, who most closely mirrored the sentiments of pro-slavery Texans and seemed most likely to win. But the election returns brought grim news to all Texas Democrats: a Republican, Abraham Lincoln, would be the next chief executive of the United States. They feared that as president, Lincoln would ignore the state's frontier problems, push for tariffs and internal improvement programs that Southern states resisted, campaign to bar slavery from the territories (and future states), and, notwithstanding his assurance that he would respect slavery where it already existed, agitate for its dissolution. News of South Carolina's secession from the Union on December 20 helped to advance the cause of Texan secessionists. Democratic party leaders now requested that governor Houston convoke a special session of the legislature in order that the body might move to convene a secession convention.

Texas Democrats by no means unanimously chose secession, and Unionists within the party, such as Sam Houston, fought to avert the disintegration of the nation, but one after another, states from the Lower South issued ordinances of secession, and even moderate politicians in Texas came to support the trend. The very preservation of the state's way of life seemed to make secession essential, and the deep-seated understanding many held of republicanism only committed them to the belief that their way of life should be run as they, and not the federal government, defined it. Secession, therefore, received broadening popular support. Recent historical thought discounts the belief that the Knights of the Golden Circle (KGC) engaged in a conspiracy to effect the secession of the state, but members of the KGC did actively participate in secessionist events once the movement gained momentum.

Although Governor Houston resisted scheduling a special legislative session, Democratic party leaders responded to the growing public pressure by summoning Texans to a People's Convention. On December 17, Houston finally called for the legislature to meet in a special session on January 21, 1861, thereby legalizing the secession convention; still, he asked that the decision of the secessionists be submitted to a public referendum. Meeting on January 28, 1861, delegates to the so-called Secession Convention voted overwhelmingly to sever ties with the North: 166 for, 8 against.

### **Who wanted war?**

Scholars disagree on the reasons for secession, but they have offered a lengthy list of explanations. Among the causes they cite are alleged conspiracies by a Southern Slave Power and perceptions of a plot by Northern Republicans to overturn Southern culture; the denunciation of slavery as immoral or its defense as a positive good; constitutional issues of states' rights versus the inviolability of the Union; the incompatibility of the economic systems of the South and the North (the former more agrarian and primitive, the latter more industrial,

urban, and modern); and conflicting value systems that revolved around religion, immigration, cultural conformity, or sectional prejudices. In Texas, certainly, the increased economic viability of slavery from 1850 to 1860, the racial prejudices and fears upon which slavery rested, and the increased connection of the state to the Lower South linked all of the causes together, explaining the fervor for secession in the state and why Texans chose to fight with the Confederacy. Texans' justification for leaving the Union, enunciated by the Secession Convention in a "declaration of causes," was in part a response to the Republican party's opposition to slavery in the territories and its alleged advocacy of the doctrine of racial equality. Texas intended to go to war, the declaration stated, to protect "their beneficent and patriarchal system of African slavery" against "the debasing doctrine of the equality of all men, irrespective of race or color—a doctrine at war with nature, in opposition to the experience of mankind, and in violation of the plainest revelations of the Divine Law."

One last step to secession remained following the vote cast by the delegates to the Secession Convention, the public referendum Houston had requested: the people would have their say on the issue. To reach as many voters as possible, the delegates had the secession resolution printed in Spanish and German as well as in English. On February 23, by a statewide referendum, Texas ratified secession, with 46,188 votes for and 15,149 against. Generally, Texans chose to leave the Union because they feared that Northern Republicans viewed the South as the principal obstacle to the growing abolitionist movement, and because secession seemed their last chance to uphold their preferred social and economic institutions.

As the vote totals revealed, cultural pluralism and economic reality shaped Texans' views. Expectedly, eastern and southeastern Texas voted heavily for secession. By 1850, people residing in the Lower South region of the state had been largely steeped in the culture of cotton and slavery and immigrants from the South supportive of the peculiar institution reinforced that ethos. As with the slave states, furthermore, the region's links to the world economy spurred it to grow potentially lucrative crops, such as cotton and sugar, both of which required slave labor. Its relationship to the US Gulf Coast axis and the Southern way of life within it drove plantation owners and their supporters to vote for secession.

Elsewhere throughout the state, regions displayed less enthusiasm for the breakup. Voters living in the Upper South counties of the state strongly rejected the call for disunion, mainly because this cultural province had few slaves. On the West Texas frontier, the residents of four largely German-populated counties were overwhelmingly opposed to secession. To a large extent, the vote reflected western fears, similar to those prevalent in the northern counties, of the cessation of federal protection from Indians should Texas leave the Union for the Confederacy. But the German Texans also foresaw economic hardship should the US Army withdraw its troops from West Texas posts, for a symbiotic relationship had developed. The military personnel relied on the local German farmers for food and supplies, whereas the Germans counted on military contracts and on soldiers spending their pay locally. At the same time, this vote may have pointed to an inherent cultural bias that Germans had against slavery, though by the 1850s many of them had become indifferent to the peculiar institution or even defended the right to own slaves. In any case, the fact remains that where the demographic composition did not resemble that of the Lower South, Texans noticeably opposed secession.

Shortly after the referendum, the secession convention reconvened, announced the withdrawal of Texas from the Union, and pursued the necessary protocol to enter the Confederate States of America, including writing a new constitution (the Constitution of 1861). But Governor Houston refused to concede, proposing that the state instead restore

the Republic of Texas and in that way avoid entering the Confederacy. When he declined to swear allegiance to the South, the convention proclaimed the office of governor vacant and replaced Houston with Edward Clark, the lieutenant governor. Refusing to stay in office through the use of force, Houston rejected President Lincoln's offer to dispatch federal troops to Texas to try to keep it in the Union. Rather, the sixty-eight-year-old Sam Houston relocated with his family to Galveston. He died in Huntsville in 1863.

## **Texas and the Civil War**

### **The Texas front**

Texans took up the Southern cause without hesitation. Acting under the instructions of the Secession Convention, Ben McCulloch on February 16 went to San Antonio, compelled Brigadier General David E. Twiggs, commander of the Department of Texas, to surrender all US forces there and evacuate federal property in Texas, then raised the Lone Star flag over the Alamo. A few days later, Colonel John S. "Rip" Ford, with some 500 volunteers, captured Brazos Island, at the mouth of the Rio Grande, from its twelve US Army defenders. By the time that news of the shelling of Fort Sumter arrived in South Texas, Ford had taken Fort Brown and secured the lower Rio Grande country, gaining a foothold on the Mexican port city of Matamoros across the Rio Grande.

A glorious remembrance of the past drove the will to enlist in the Confederate cause. Texans recalled the more noble aspects of their rebellion against Mexican tyranny in 1836 and what they hailed as the majestic days of the Republic. Now, in 1861, they saw fellow Southerners similarly assailing despotism and in secession another oppressed community embroiled in a struggle for liberation. Texas nationalism, therefore, thrust the state into secession and, once committed, Texans made the call of the Confederacy an echo of the one (as they remembered it) of their illustrious past, one of liberty, freedom, and independence.

With the withdrawal of federal troops from posts on the northern and western frontiers, the responsibility of protecting citizens from Comanche hostility fell upon state and special volunteer companies. By the summer of 1861, these units appeared in Indian country along the Red River, chasing away Comanche war parties. By 1862, Texas forces occupied eighteen military stations roughly from the 97th meridian at the Red River, thence southwestward toward Eagle Pass in South Texas. But the Comanches were too masterful and resourceful to be deterred from conducting their raids, and throughout the Civil War they continued to wreak havoc upon settlers. By war's end, the line of settlement in West Texas had receded conspicuously eastward toward the interior of the state, running from today's counties of Cooke to Uvalde.

As the westward wing of the Confederacy, Texas served as a launching point for campaigns against Union forces along the upper Rio Grande. An expedition under Lieutenant Colonel John R. Baylor subdued Fort Bliss in El Paso in July 1861, and the next month Baylor's men assumed control of southern New Mexico. Another campaign under Henry Hopkins Sibley left San Antonio in November 1861, marched through the El Paso Valley, and moved into New Mexico, where it met up with Baylor and his men. Then, on February 21, 1862, the Sibley Brigade, temporarily under the command of Colonel Tom Green, encountered Union soldiers at Valverde, and in an all-day battle defeated the Unionists. Sibley then continued toward Upper New Mexico and brought it, too, under Confederate rule. In late March, the Union launched a counteroffensive and repelled the Southerners,

forcing them back to Fort Bliss. Sibley and what remained of his force retreated to San Antonio by the summer of 1862. After this time, most of the trans-Pecos region fell to Union control.

The Texas coast had ever remained vulnerable to Union attacks, but in late 1862 John Bankhead Magruder took steps to secure this vital area. Of extreme value was the port city of Galveston, which had fallen to Union guns in October of that year. In a daring night assault on New Year's Day 1863, Magruder's unit (which included troops under Colonel Tom Green of New Mexico fame) attacked the city by both land and sea. Fierce fighting ensued, resulting in a spectacular Confederate win that reestablished their control of Galveston. A few days later, Union gunboats returned to regain the port and shell other fortifications along the coast, but the Confederates repelled the strike. Still, Magruder and the Texans knew that the federals would return, and they duly prepared for an all-out Union invasion of the state, though they did not know when or where the enemy troops would land.

In the middle of 1863, the war's current turned against the South following Union victories at Gettysburg (Pennsylvania), Vicksburg (Mississippi), and Chattanooga (Tennessee). For Texans, the task of defending the state's three frontiers remained. In the north and west, a state of near-anarchy persisted throughout the war years. Organized rings of bandits and cattle rustlers proliferated, with much of the resulting lawlessness and loss of property conveniently blamed on Indians. Indian raids—consistently exaggerated in official reports—continued sporadically, including one major attack by Comanches on settlers near Elm Creek in Young County in October 1864 in which seven whites were killed and several women and children were taken captive.

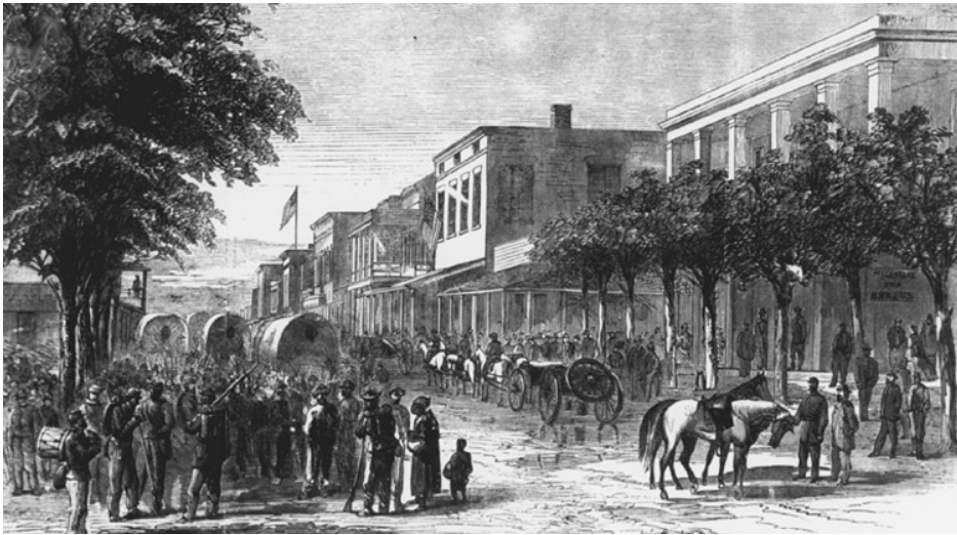
The Texan authorities rarely responded effectively to such incidents. In January 1865, a combined force of Rangers and Confederate soldiers attacked a camp of 1400 peaceful Kickapoos at Dove Creek, west of San Angelo. Armed with new Enfield rifles, the Indians killed some thirty-five soldiers and wounded another sixty, routing the attackers. Overall, however, Texas Indians emerged from the Civil War in a weakened condition. Severe droughts (in 1860, 1862, and 1864), disease, and Anglo retaliation for crimes real and imagined caused the Comanche population of the southern plains to decline by as much as 40 percent between 1860 and 1865. In August 1865, federal authorities in Kansas signed a peace treaty with the Plains tribes, relinquishing much of West Texas west of the 100th meridian to the Comanches. The US government soon reneged on the treaty (Texans never recognized it) and conflict on the frontier would continue into the 1870s.

On the southeastern coastline, the long-anticipated Union offensive against the state occurred in September of 1863, when a Union fleet of four gunboats and twenty-two troop transport vessels carrying approximately 4000 men attacked Sabine Pass. Though outnumbered, the Confederates led by Lieutenant Richard W. Dowling repulsed the attack. Recoiling, the Union troops turned their invasion plans to the region of the lower Rio Grande Valley. On November 2, 1863, Nathaniel P. Banks and some 7000 Union troops took Brownsville (Figures 5.7 and 5.8), interrupting the important Confederate supply line through Matamoros. Now the Union marched north to secure the Nueces region, but ultimately it decided it best hold Brownsville only and concentrate on plans for another northeastern invasion of the state.

Not until the next summer of 1864 did Rip Ford regain the lower Valley and restore the supply lines from Matamoros to Texas (and from there to the rest of the Confederacy). The expected counterattack upon South Texas came in May 1865; this time Ford rebuffed the enemy. But the Unionists proved to be members of the regular garrison at Brazos Island (a small island near the mouth of the Rio Grande), which Ford had failed to take in 1864.



**Figure 5.7** The Confederates evacuating Brownsville, Texas. Sketched by an English artist. Published in *Harper's Weekly*, February 13, 1864. Source: University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 72-328).



**Figure 5.8** Union soldiers on Elizabeth Street in Brownsville. Drawing from a photograph. Published in *Harper's Weekly*, December 16, 1865. Source: University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 72-330).

From a prisoner of war, Ford learned that the South had surrendered over a month earlier. As fate would have it, this was the last land battle of the Civil War.

### The Confederate front

No one can accurately state the total number of Texans who contributed to the war effort, either on the Texas or the Confederate front; historians generally accept the estimated figure of 68,500, though some argue that the total was closer to 90,000. Similarly, determining

the number of casualties remains elusive; a commonly accepted fact is that some 24,000 Texans perished during the four years of fighting. Many Texans distinguished themselves in combat as part of Texas units. Among those companies winning praise for valor were Terry's Texas Rangers, named for the unit's organizer, Benjamin Franklin Terry. The Rangers saw constant action in the Kentucky-Tennessee-Mississippi region and then, carrying out their reputation for swift and daring mounted attacks, assisted in efforts to delay Sherman's march through Georgia in 1864. Also earning kudos for bravery was Ross's Texas Brigade, named for its commander, Lawrence Sullivan "Sul" Ross. This cavalry brigade conducted hit-and-run strikes in the Alabama-Mississippi-Tennessee theater and participated in several major battles and numerous small engagements—in a three-month period in 1864, Ross's unit engaged the enemy almost daily. Another outfit that won wide acclaim for its audacity and bravery was Hood's Texas Brigade, named for John Bell Hood, who succeeded the brigade's original organizer, Louis T. Wigfall. This unit fought in the Army of Northern Virginia and participated in such significant engagements as the Second Battle of Manassas (Second Bull Run) and Antietam in the late summer of 1862, as well as in the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863. Numerous other Texas units, which fought on both sides of the Mississippi River, were singled out for praise by Confederate commanders.

Thirty-seven Texans went on to lead important Confederate brigades as high-ranking officers. Albert Sidney Johnston (Figure 5.9), who fell at the Battle of Shiloh, had been commissioned a general by the Confederate government; John Bell Hood, in 1862, earned a promotion to lieutenant general; and Samuel Bell Maxey, John A. Wharton, and Tom Green



**Figure 5.9** Albert Sidney Johnston. From a painting by E.F. Andrews. Exhibited at the Texas State Capitol. Source: The State Preservation Board.

led forces as major generals. Additionally, Texas furnished the Confederacy with thirty-two brigadier generals and about one hundred colonels.

Aside from the military aid Texas rendered to the Confederacy, the state also assisted the Southern cause economically. Until the very end of the war, Matamoros remained a center for Confederate trade, primarily through the port town of Bagdad. From the commencement of hostilities, the Confederacy had utilized Brazos Island as a way station for the export and import of goods, but following the arrival of the Union navy in early 1862, the suppliers removed across the Rio Grande into Mexico in order to conduct commerce under the guise of neutral trade. Bagdad, located about thirty-five miles from Matamoros, emerged as a boom port, as cargoes destined for Matamoros were first unloaded there. To Bagdad flowed cotton hauled from the plantations of Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and even states east of the Mississippi River, for export to British and French markets. From Bagdad left manufactured goods and war munitions, which were then distributed throughout the Confederacy.

Despite the close association that existed between the Confederate government of Texas and that in Richmond, relations between the two were not always amicable. From the beginning of the war, Texans, along with citizens of other western Confederate states, had felt neglected by the Confederate authorities. This had led the governors of Texas and Arkansas in 1862 to complain emphatically about the lack of protection they felt their states, as well as Missouri and Louisiana, were receiving. In July 1862, therefore, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America, authorized a meeting in Marshall, Texas. The results of this conference appeased the two governors attending, Texas governor Francis R. Lubbock and the governor of Missouri, for Confederate leaders in Richmond created the Trans-Mississippi Military Department and assigned Edmund Kirby Smith as its commander. A subsequent conference in August 1863, again held at Marshall and chaired by Lubbock, produced little relief for the western states; by this time the Confederacy had become increasingly concerned with the state of affairs east of the Mississippi.

### **Behind the lines**

Besides defending the state, Texas officials were also responsible for outfitting their own troops. State-run arsenals produced small arms, ammunition, and cannons, but shortages of all sorts of matériel continued throughout the conflict. A scarcity of labor forced women and children to toil in the munitions factories. Unable to collect taxes or place confidence in the paper money it issued, the state found it difficult to purchase weapons elsewhere. Troopers had to supply their own gear, and in the latter stages of the war, fighting men had so much trouble acquiring mounts, firearms, and other provisions that they called on families back home to furnish them basic requirements, including clothes. With proper medical care commonly insufficient, soldiers suffered ailments like colds and stomach disorders if not epidemics of infectious diseases such as measles. Food scarcities compelled soldiers to confiscate domesticated animals, among them pigs and chickens, from civilians.

The state also strained to assist distressed families of Confederate soldiers serving at the battle front. Without access to direct information, families agonized over the fate of their soldier recruits, especially following major battles. Families at home contended with problems male heads of households previously discharged: working the crops, making home repairs, fixing broken fences, and so on. In support of the military cause, the legislature in 1863 disbursed monies to counties in an effort to aid soldier families acquire cotton and

wool cards (the equipment that readied the cotton or wool for producing finished clothing). State finances by the fall of 1864 reached the point where the legislature could no longer meet its promise to assist families with menfolk absent due to war service. Still committed to helping them, however, it turned to a plan that allowed cloth and thread made by inmates at the state penitentiary to be issued to county officials who could then exchange these products for goods families needed for survival.

At the local level, charitable groups stepped up to help suffering families and their men and boys in combat. Women oftentimes led in this task, working together with municipal officers and other civic-minded leaders. With returns from a variety of fund-raising functions—such as dinners, entertainment programs, and musical performances—ladies societies aided families with members in the Confederate ranks but also helped found Soldiers' Aid Societies (organizations intended to deliver medical care to soldiers beset with injuries or illnesses). Fund-raisers also allowed women to establish Soldiers' Homes, shelters that offered food, housing, and medical care to troops returning from the front. But local efforts soon confronted the same reality as did the government in Austin. After 1864, communities lacked means to continue supporting the war effort. Charitable drives drew disappointing returns. Counties tried stretching dwindling resources but could only help families with the cotton and wool cards they needed to produce their own cloth at home.

Recruitment also plagued the military mobilization. The wartime governors, Francis R. Lubbock (1861–63) and Pendleton Murrah (1863–65), found filling army ranks a difficult and thankless responsibility. Disdain for military discipline and tradition, the necessity of having to care for family members, contempt for the rule that permitted planters and other members of the elite to exempt themselves from military service by finding (hiring) a substitute, and despair over the Confederacy's lack of progress in the war all hindered recruitment efforts. After the calamitous defeats suffered by the Confederacy in 1863, the rate of desertion increased. Decent men weary of battle and losing hope of victory departed for home upon learning that their families were hungry and unable to fend for themselves. Less honorable deserters made common cause with gangs of slackers and even Unionists on the run.

Additionally, Confederate Texans contended with dissent against the Southern Cause, especially in the Red River counties of North Texas, where several factors had fueled strong anti-secessionist sentiment in 1861: such factors included the relative absence there of slavery; regional dependence on the federal government, which purchased wheat (from Oklahoma) and corn from North Texas farmers; fears that the residents would suffer attacks by Indians and Union forces; and the influence of antisecessionists such as Collin McKinney, who propagandized against the fragmentation of the nation. In Cooke County, citizens who had voted against secession in February 1861 formed the Peace Party in the summer of 1862 to protest secession, resist taxation, defy the conscript law, and, according to rumors, prepare the way for a Union invasion into North Texas from Kansas. By the winter of 1863–64, other parts of north-central Texas seemed to contest the war effort openly; men in the regions between Dallas and the Red River engaged in such lawlessness that the Confederates feared losing the section. By this time, the detachment of West Texas was evident not only in the departure of civilians (who felt unprotected from Indians and white outlaws running amok), but in the brazen collusion of West Texas ranchers with the enemy. Cattlemen who had sided with the South at the outbreak of the war, now desperate to make a living, trailed their cattle west to New Mexico, where they sold stock to Union armies for a trusted currency.

Less blatant but no less serious was opposition posed from Unionist Democrats. One faction of the party, which had found the Texas Whigs attractive in the 1850s or had been Know-Nothings, had disapproved of secession but, valuing Texas more than the nation, had



reluctantly submitted to the people's referendum of February 1861 and fought for the Confederacy. A smaller element within the ranks of the Unionist Democrats, those of the Jackson-Houston persuasion or former Know-Nothings, revered the Union and the federal constitution and, placing nationhood above sectional concerns, had gone on to join Union military forces or become government officials in the North.

In addition, minority groups of diverse ethnicity expressed disapproval of the majority position in their state. Many blacks took the opportunity to run away from plantations or, if possible, flee to Union lines. Indeed, some fifty black Texans fought in the Union Army. German Americans (especially those concentrated in West Texas beyond San Antonio and Austin), although not vociferous in their opposition to slavery and secession, tended to harbor antislavery attitudes and sympathize with the Union. Actions in the German-populated Hill Country during the war, such as shielding Union sympathizers and draft dodgers, revealed German Texan displeasure with the South's cause. In communities along the Rio Grande, Texas Mexicans resisted the Southern campaign for several reasons. Ideologically, they opposed slavery but also detested resident Confederate sympathizers who with their Tejano allies protected political privilege. Moreover, Anglos who joined the South had historically considered native Mexicans as "foreigners." Locals, some of whom traced their presence on the border to the eighteenth century, asserted citizenship, and their claim to rights under the US Constitution influenced their decision to side with the nation. South Texas Unionist sympathizers led by Cecilio Valerio and guerrilleros such as Juan N. Cortina harassed Confederate troops throughout the war, seizing cotton and livestock for Union forces. Throughout the state, some 950 Texas Mexicans fought for the Stars and Stripes.

It should be emphasized, however, that most Texans steadfastly supported the South, and they did so for several reasons. They unswervingly believed in the institution of slavery and the Southern way of life upon which it rested. Texans further felt the immediate need to defend their families, their communities, and their material possessions. Self-dignity and Southern honor also prodded them to defend the Confederacy. Finally, to many, war presented the prospect for exhibiting manly valor.

The Texan devotion to the war effort periodically took dastardly turns in the state, manifesting itself in intolerance, harassment, and violence in the form of vigilante justice against suspected traitors. Ethnic Unionists confronted repression by angry Confederates. Slaves suspected of sedition or treason received swift physical punishment. German Texans became especially targeted for any outward sign of disloyalty or subversion, as German Texans had, as mentioned, expressed only qualified support for Confederate goals. Authorities kept an especially keen eye on West Texas Counties such as Gillespie, Kerr, Kendall, Medina, and Comal, some of which acted as a sanctuary for the Union Loyal League. Through this organization, German Unionists endeavored to destabilize the Texas Confederacy and reinstate Union authority, by military means if necessary. Expectedly, Austin officials considered the Union Loyal League a danger to Southern security; in July of 1862 they ordered a company of Confederate cavalry and Texas state troopers into the Hill Country to suppress League activities. Many Germans found the Confederate effort to establish law and order through arrest, detention, and violence so odious, however, that some sixty-one of them opted for flight into Mexico on August 1. Convinced that those fleeing the country were part of the seditious sentiment overrunning the German counties, Confederate troops gave pursuit, overtaking the Unionists on August 10 near modern-day Bracketville, on the West Nueces River. In what came to be known as the "Battle of Nueces"—a brief skirmish resulting in fatalities on both sides—the Confederates forced the Germans to

surrender. Subsequently, and on their own initiative, a handful of Confederates foully murdered some of the German survivors. For the remainder of the war, German Texans in the Hill Country continued to be exposed to acts of retribution from pro-Confederate forces. Family members resorted to hiding Union men in barns, cellars, pastures, or caves. Gillespie County, a haven for Confederate terrorists, became a particularly dangerous place for Unionist sympathizers. On more than one occasion, ruffians attacked German-American homes, abducted husbands in sight of their wives and children, and took them off for an extralegal hanging.

As to Mexican Americans, only the relative isolation of the border country protected them from attacks such as those Anglos had leveled against Germans, even though 2500 Tejanos served in the Confederates ranks, including officers like Santos Benavides. But Texans generally held Tejanos in contempt, referring to them at one point during the war as an assortment of abolitionists, outlaws, Mexicans, and fugitive slaves.

Ethnic background was not, however, a criterion for victimization by vengeful Rebels. In Gainesville (Cooke County), for instance, North Texas Confederates—responding to reports of a plot by members of the Peace Party to take over local ordnance depots and revolt at the same time that Unionists, forces invaded Texas from Kansas and Galveston—executed some forty-two Anglo American alleged conspirators (most of them innocent) in October 1862 and proclaimed martial law in the county. The imposition of lynch law followed, and more men in Cooke and neighboring counties fell victim to beatings, imprisonment, or hanging without a trial. Luckier ones made for the brush, successfully warding off Confederate detachments sent to bring them to “justice.”

### **At war's end**

Following the surrender of Confederate General Robert E. Lee at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, Texans looked to the future with a mixed sense of remorse, satisfaction, and uncertainty. Pride could be taken in the significant role Texans had played in the major battles of the Civil War and in the number of highly regarded officers the state had furnished the Confederacy. Gratifying as well was the fact that the war either furthered or launched the political careers of many Texas veterans. Texas had avoided the widespread destruction and demoralizing effects of military invasion and occupation, and in the coming decades Texans would often attempt to distance themselves from the painful memories of slavery, secession, and defeat, choosing instead to emphasize the state's frontier and western heritage. Nevertheless, the experiences of the antebellum and Civil War years would continue to give Texas a distinctively Southern identity for decades to come. The hard truths remained that Texas and the South had lost the war, that legal slavery was a thing of the past, and that before the state could once again enjoy its membership in the United States, it would have to tread the rugged road of Reconstruction.

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## The Era of Reconstruction, 1865–1876

What was to be the agenda for the country's future now that the Civil War had ended? Even the victorious Republican Party of the North held divergent views. One element within the party gave uppermost importance to granting citizenship to the newly freed slaves. These Radical Republicans, as they came to be called, were a distinct minority within the party in 1865, and they advocated extending full civil rights to ex-slaves, among them the franchise, education, and, possibly, ownership of confiscated Rebel land. Another, more moderate, faction within the Republican Party principally pursued economic development. During the course of the war, moderate Republicans succeeded in enacting a protective tariff, a plan of internal improvements (that is, improving transportation networks), a national banking system, and a homestead law that permitted the rapid settlement of the West. Backers of this agenda sought to keep southerners from undermining the vibrancy of an expanding national economy by their opposition to the new programs, their insistence on states' rights (the cornerstone of southern politics), and their demands for other concessions. Northern Democrats, not to be dismissed from determining the course of the nation, held still other views on the future of the postbellum United States. Nevertheless, nearly all Republicans believed that African Americans should, at the very least, have some measure of equality under the law.

In April 1865, the war moved from the battlefield to the political arena. Texans, as did other southerners, sought to reestablish the Democratic rule that held sway before the war. Most urgent, for them, was to find a way to keep a newly freed black population (estimated by scholars to have numbered about 250,000) in subordination. In the differing goals of Republicans and southern Democrats lay the seeds of division and confrontation that would mark the era of Reconstruction.

### Aftermath of the War

News of the Confederate surrender in April 1865 resulted in the disintegration of the army and government in Texas. Servicemen deserted in large numbers, and as the army dissolved, chaos ensued. Disbanding soldiers sacked arsenals and government buildings and confiscated

Confederate public property of every sort. Scoundrels capitalized on the general disorder to rob and recklessly kill innocent civilians. Unidentified persons pillaged the state treasury on the night of June 11. Simultaneously, government at the state and local levels staggered. Courts were disrupted and prominent Confederates, among them the governor, Pendleton Murrah, fled to Mexico to escape Union forces. This was the situation when the occupation army (US troops), commanded by General Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston on June 19, 1865. Granger declared all acts of the Texas government since 1861 illegal, the parole of members of the Confederate army, and all slaves free. The day of emancipation in Texas thenceforth was known as “Juneteenth,” a traditional holiday among black Texans ever since.

In comparison to other southern states, Texas emerged from the Civil War relatively unscathed. Seeing Texas as a haven from federal attacks, a number of slaveholders from every southern state “refugeed” their chattel in Texas to prevent federal troops from expropriating their bondpeople or to keep slaves from absconding to Yankee lines. No one knows the exact number of slaves relocated to Texas, but historians estimate it was close to 50,000; of these, some 31,000 remained in Texas as of the late 1860s, while the rest departed the state to enjoy freedom, look for loved ones, or go back home. The increasing labor pool had led to the opening of new cotton lands and, in some cases, greater production of the staple. Trade with Mexico during the war had also proved fortuitous. Because commerce in the international market demanded specie, gold currency was more common in Texas than it was in other parts of the Confederacy, and its presence served to mitigate the effect that the southern defeat had on a number of businesses in the state.

Furthermore, Texas had been spared the kind of wartime devastation the rest of the Confederacy suffered. Federal armies never successfully invaded the state, and Union troops did not level Texas towns or demolish roads and bridges. Civilian deaths resulting from combat in no way compared to casualties incurred in other states, such as Georgia. Community life, moreover, had not been disrupted as it had in other regions of the Confederacy. Despite the absence of so many male heads of household, society had functioned more or less routinely. Women “made do,” caring for their families by improvising in the kitchen, in clothing their loved ones, and in educating their children. Women also had assumed certain male roles and responsibilities and thereby maintained social stability. They had defended their homes from Indian raids and other threats, assumed the management of plantations where needed (in some cases, slave overseers performed the duties of an absent owner), and took over farm tasks such as plowing, planting, and tending livestock. A few women had contributed to the war effort by running supply wagons within the state: some even smuggled guns in from Mexico.

Nonetheless, Texans came out of the war needing to regroup. The accrued expenses had landed the state back in financial distress. Property values and the worth of farmsteads and ranches had depreciated. The war, furthermore, left a legacy of deep personal hatreds. Unionists and northern sympathizers, who had been harassed and denied liberties for four years, now sought vengeance. Ex-Confederates, on the other hand, despised and vented their hatred of anything symbolizing the North: Unionists, soldiers in blue, and ex-slaves who desired to exercise their new freedoms.

### **Provisional government and Presidential Reconstruction**

President Andrew Johnson (1865–69), who succeeded to the presidency on April 15, 1865, after Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, appointed Andrew Jackson Hamilton (Figure 6.1), a former US congressman from Texas and a Unionist who had fled to the North, as provisional



**Figure 6.1** Andrew Jackson Hamilton. Source: Texas Collection Library, CN 01000, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

governor of Texas on June 17, 1865. As part of his ongoing plan to implement what historians call Presidential Reconstruction, Johnson instructed Hamilton to call a convention and undertake the necessary steps to form a new civil government in the state. Johnson's terms of Reconstruction were mild: he was, after all, a Unionist Democrat from Tennessee whom fate had placed on the Republican ticket as Lincoln sought to gain Democratic votes in his bid for reelection in 1864. Now Johnson called on the seceded states to declare secession null and void, cancel the debt accumulated while fighting the war (repudiating the debt acknowledged the wrongfulness of the struggle), and approve the Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, which ended slavery, although he did not press further to guarantee the rights of African Americans. Most persons who took the oath of loyalty (to the United States), as required by President Johnson's amnesty proclamation issued on May 29, 1865, could participate in the restoration of home rule. This lenient policy permitted the majority of white male Texans to assume previous civil rights. Only high-ranking ex-Confederates and those owning property valued at more than \$20,000 were barred from voting or holding office.

As the new provisional governor, Hamilton faced a daunting task. He understood that any new state government for Texas would have to satisfy both President Johnson and the Republican Congress while also taking into account the political realities at home, where most whites were eager to maintain white supremacy and resume their former political power. Hamilton finally concluded that to be acceptable to Congress, the new state constitution must protect the life, liberty, and property of blacks and assure them equal protection under the law, including the right to testify in trials. He did not, however, advocate such

political rights as voting or officeholding for the freedmen. Still, he believed that the upcoming convention should formally recognize the end of slavery by ratifying the Thirteenth Amendment to the federal Constitution, and that the state government must ultimately be controlled by citizens loyal to the US government.

Presidential Reconstruction led to a confusing reshuffling of party labels and political loyalties. Hamilton's faction called itself simply the "Union Party," or "Unionists" (although they were frequently labeled "Radical Unionists" by their opponents). Treatment received at the hands of Confederate Texans had shaped Union Party politics. During the war, Texans loyal to the South had abused those sympathetic to the North by committing acts of violence on them, as well as by confiscating their possessions and, in general, violating the Unionists' constitutional rights. Now, in 1865, Unionists resolved to take control of the state's government. Upon doing so, they would see that the ex-Confederates paid for their offenses. Unionists further intended to recover personal belongings and properties lost during the war. Hamilton hoped that in time he could gain the support not just of avowed wartime Unionists but also of those who had opposed the secessionist Democrats before the war; in essence he wanted to reconstruct the moderate coalition that had supported Sam Houston in the late 1850s. These desires became apparent in the provisional appointments Hamilton made to state and local offices, many of whom had supported the Confederacy once the war started.

A conservative opposition to Hamilton's Unionists soon took shape. Wishing to avoid the "Democrat" label at a time when that party was so discredited, one conservative faction for a while took the somewhat misleading name "Conservative Unionists." Although some members of this circle had indeed opposed secession in 1861, most were not unionists once the war started. They were led by former state senator James W. Throckmorton of Collin County, an Ex-Whig who had fought valiantly against secession in 1861 but who later served as a Confederate officer on the western frontier. Throckmorton's conservative faction soon found allies in an even more conservative group of ex-secessionists who openly called themselves "Conservative Democrats." Among the leaders of this faction was Oran M. Roberts, who had presided over the 1861 secession convention and served as both a Confederate colonel and chief justice of the state supreme court during the war. Both of the conservative factions (distinguished mainly by their earlier stands on secession in 1860 and 1861), opposed granting any freedoms to blacks beyond emancipation, and they furthermore favored new legislation specifically restricting the rights of African Americans. The two factions would eventually coalesce into the new postwar version of Texas's Democratic Party.

Realizing the strength of the conservative opposition, Hamilton delayed as long as he could before yielding to pressure from President Johnson, who pressed for a rapid reinstatement of the former Confederate states. On November 17, 1865, Hamilton called for an election to be held on January 8, 1866, for the purpose of selecting delegates to a constitutional convention. All white Texans could participate in the contest, save those excluded by President Johnson's amnesty proclamation of the previous year, so when the convention assembled at Austin on February 7, 1866, both conservative factions were well represented. They showed their strength by electing Throckmorton as convention chairman.

Then the delegates turned to the business of considering the legal status of secession, the controversy over the state war debt, and slavery. Whereas Hamilton's Unionists argued that the US Constitution did not permit states the right to secede from the Union, and that freedmen deserved to enjoy the basic rights of citizenship, the conservatives defended the



state's right to leave the Union and strenuously opposed extending such rights to the ex-slaves. In the end, however, the convention reluctantly declared secession illegal and the debt repudiated. It also accepted slavery's demise, although Texas did not approve the Thirteenth Amendment until 1870. As on the first two questions, the delegates ceded to blacks only those freedoms federal policy forced them to concede. The new state constitution they drafted extended to the freedmen the right to purchase and sell property, sue and be sued, enter legally binding contracts, and testify in court cases involving other African Americans. But the document purposely deprived blacks of the franchise and access to public office, jury participation, and public schools—leaving to the legislature that would meet later in the year the responsibility of more precisely detailing the civil rights of black persons. Before adjourning, the convention called for a statewide election that summer. On June 25, 1866, the voters would approve the Constitution of 1866, which essentially consisted of an amended Constitution of 1845, and elect a new slate of state officials. Table 6.1 shows the five phases of reconstruction.

Despite differences on many issues, the two conservative factions united behind James W. Throckmorton, who had worked well with both groups in the convention. Governor Hamilton's supporters, meanwhile, reminded the voters that their rivals did not reflect the true demands established by President Johnson and the national Congress, that in fact the opposition was a throwback to the sentiments of the 1850s. The path to the state's readmission into the Union, they urged, lay in the philosophy of the Unionists. This party endorsed Johnson's Reconstruction policy, considered secession illegal, concurred with abolition, and consented to a semblance of equality for the freedmen. The Unionists' choice for governor, Elisha M. Pease, headed their campaign.

Throckmorton proved to be an ideal candidate to head the conservative opposition. He could attract the sort of moderate Democrats who had followed Sam Houston before the war, but he also appealed to former secessionists, who saw in him a leader who could assist them in their comeback. Understandably, Throckmorton's position on denying blacks the franchise appealed to the conservatives as an opportunity to restore the former power structure of the state. Indeed, in October 1865 they had denounced John H. Reagan, a former member of Jefferson Davis's cabinet, for a public letter he sent to Texans from imprisonment in Fort Warren (Massachusetts) advocating black suffrage, though limited to those with some schooling or who had managed to acquire property. (Reagan had seen the need for such a concession in order to expedite the state's readmission into the Union). Conservatives stressed the "radical" tendencies of the Pease ticket and took a stand against elevating blacks politically. A "radical" victory, they electioneered, would lead to a new racial order in the South, the political disarmament of ex-Confederates, and the denial of a place for the former Confederate states in the Union.

In the election, Texans opted for Throckmorton, giving him 49,314 votes to Pease's 12,694, according to official figures registered in Austin. Texans had decided to go with the candidate who called for the least amount of change from the prewar days. Whereas Pease promoted fundamental equality for blacks and refused to return to the prewar society, the majority of voting Texans believed, like Throckmorton, that states should have the right to determine internal political matters, among them the power to relegate black people to a marginal citizenship. By summer of 1866, then, conservative white Texans had put their prewar political differences aside—at least for a while—and had all united under the Democratic Party label.

**Table 6.1** Phases of Reconstruction.

|                      | <i>Provisional Government</i>                        | <i>Presidential Reconstruction</i>   | <i>Congressional Reconstruction</i>   | <i>Radical Reconstruction</i>   | <i>Redemption</i>  |
|----------------------|--|--|---|---|--|
|                      | (1865–1866)  | (1866–1867)  | (1867–1870)   | (1870–1874)   | (1874–1876)  |
| Constitution         | —  | 1866   | —   | 1869  | 1876   |
| Leader               | A. J. Hamilton                                       | J. W. Throckmorton   | Elisha Pease  | E. J. Davis   | Richard Coke   |
| Political supporters | Unionist (prewar and wartime) opponents of secession | Opponents of secession who supported the Confederacy; Secessionist Democrats | Wartime Unionists; Moderate and Radical Republicans; Union military officers; Ex-slaves | Moderate and Radical Republicans (including ex-slaves and so-called “Carpetbaggers” and “Scalawags”)  | Conservative White Democrats   |
| Ideology             | Basic rights for freedmen                            | No rights for freedmen   | Basic rights for freedmen   | Full equality for freedmen, strong governor, increased taxes, state-supported school system, bonds for railroads, state police/state militia, attractive homestead policy | White supremacy, weak governor, low taxes, locally controlled school system, land grants for railroads, anti-state police/state militia, weak homestead policy |

### **The ex-Confederates come to power, 1866–1867**

With Throckmorton as governor, the legislature that convened in August 1866 acted with dispatch to empower the conservative Democratic leaders of the state. For example, the legislators chose as one of Texas's US senators Oran M. Roberts, the same man who had presided over the secession convention in 1861. Moreover, the legislators were inclined to support the programs being advanced by the ex-Confederates. Lastly, the lawmakers worked to limit civil rights for blacks.

In the stand they took against black equality, the Democrats certainly reflected the sentiments of most Texans on the central issue of Reconstruction: the status of the freedmen, who, as mentioned, numbered about 250,000 as of 1865. In the wake of emancipation, some slaveholders procrastinated in releasing their chattels until the year's crops had been harvested. Other planters simply postponed informing their charges of emancipation, so that in some extreme cases African Americans remained in bondage three years after the Union victory. Some ex-slaves who took matters into their own hands and fled East Texas plantations immediately after the war were ambushed and killed as they attempted to cross the Sabine River or were hanged as whites came upon them.

In general, townspeople were not inclined to accept African Americans as free persons among them. Many municipalities viewed the former slaves as a menace, fearing they would become an economic and social burden. Typically, whites refused to tolerate the conduct of some freedmen. Many black Texans now shunned the old standards of social decorum that demanded they stand deferentially when addressing a white person or get well out of the way of white women when encountering them on city streets. Whites deemed blacks' refusal to continue such submissive practices as defiant, impudent, and insolent behavior.

White Texans insisted that blacks should remain submissive because they still firmly believed in their own racial superiority. The paranoia of whites concerning retribution by the former bondpeople, and especially over sexual congress between black men and white women, helped refuel old racial hatreds, though neither fear ever materialized as a major social phenomenon.

In order to regulate the lives of African Americans, the 1866 state legislature enacted a "black code," a body of laws resembling those adopted in other ex-Confederate states. The black code did not mention race specifically, but it clearly intended to dictate the ways in which the freedmen could earn a living. The black code, for example, included a contract labor law specifying that laborers wanting to work for more than thirty days would have to enter a "binding" agreement. A child apprenticeship law provided employers with the easy opportunity to indenture black children until they reached adulthood or married. Other segments of the black code stipulated that workers suspected of being truant from their jobs could be arrested and put to work on public projects without pay until they agreed to return to their "proper" employer. Further legislative acts clarified what the Constitution of 1866 had failed to enumerate: blacks were prohibited from interracial marriage, holding public office, serving on juries, voting, or pressing claims or bearing witness against white defendants in the courts (though blacks, as noted previously, could testify against other blacks). Through such measures, the conservatives sought to reestablish, as nearly as possible, the social conditions that had existed for African Americans in Texas before the Civil War, including serving as a cheap and controllable labor force.

As both races struggled to redefine their roles within an atmosphere of bitterness, frustration, and resentment, the incidence of white violence against blacks—murder, acts of terrorism, assault, and the rape of women—mounted. The very size of the state in part

explains the rampant atrocities. The US Army troops assigned to the state tended to be posted on the western frontier, far from the cities and towns of the interior where they might have safeguarded the freedmen. In addition, Texas was too big and northern government agents were too few to protect the freedmen everywhere whites and blacks commingled, whether it be the fields, the streets, or on the political circuit. Then, numerous situations provoked acts of violence by whites against blacks: political events (historians find a correlation between political setbacks for anti-Unionist Texans and an increase in violent incidents), disagreements over labor relations, violation of social codes by blacks, or a sense of defeatism within the white population. In other cases, nothing short of mindless hatred or vicious cruelty explained the murders of African Americans by whites. In Southeast Texas (in the towns of Columbus and Wharton) in 1867, sadistic thugs (safe from the condemnation of law officers) inflicted ghastly deaths on three freedmen: the killers disemboweled one of the victims, castrated and beheaded the second, and horribly mutilated the last.

White violence produced, according to one historian's estimate, the death of close to 1 percent of the black men in Texas between the ages of fifteen and forty-nine in the three years following the end of the Civil War. Black women were not spared barbarities, although likely the total number of murders perpetrated upon them did not approximate that of men's. But savage attacks against black women certainly occurred; violence served as a way of managing, dominating, and restraining them (and all blacks, for that matter, given their new independence). Whites carried out atrocities with impunity as they hardly considered it a grave crime to physically chastise black people. A number of reasons goaded assaults on women: perceived impudence toward whites, a need to correct some indiscretion, a desire to discipline indolent workers, or even capriciousness on the part of a hateful racist. Whites used whippings and brutal beatings as teaching methods, lashing female victims with implements such as clubs, canes, rods, or barn tools.

Outrages toward wives, mothers, and daughters included despicable sexual offenses. Rape became a mechanism for asserting racial authority. White men committed rape without fear of authorities, considering it as a racial privilege but also regarding black women as sexually loose or as degraded nonpersons. Indeed, society hardly considered the carnal abuse of a black woman as a criminal matter. Regularly, rapists escaped punishment as officials for the most part questioned the veracity of black women reporting cases of sexual violations. Even Freedmen Bureau agents, assigned to aid blacks, slighted such accounts or minimized their significance.

### **Northern institutions in a vanquished state, 1865–1867**

During Presidential Reconstruction, Texans also resisted the efforts of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, commonly known as the Freedmen's Bureau. Established by the US Congress in 1865 to help African Americans across the South make the transition from slavery to freedom, the Freedmen's Bureau dispatched bureau agents (those in charge of bureau offices in the various counties) to Texas in September 1865 to discharge its functions. No sooner did the agents arrive, however, than trouble began. White Texans detested the outsiders from the North, looking upon bureau men as "carpetbaggers" who wanted to render the South powerless, as intruders bent on interfering with race relations, and as opportunists working only for the money they derived from their offices. Moreover, the bureau suffered internally from its own inability to fill offices and build

administrative centers at the grassroots level—most of its appointees were recently retired Union soldiers. With only about seventy field agents and subordinates at its full staffing level, the Freedmen's Bureau lacked the personnel to carry out its mission of helping ex-slaves successfully enter society as free persons.

Many Texans saw the bureau as an unwanted institution thrust upon them by the Radical Republicans of the North, and the strong commitment of the bureau agents to perform their duties may have confirmed such opinions. General E. M. Gregory, the first head of the bureau in Texas, attempted to integrate the freedmen into the new order. Although he called upon freedmen to retain the jobs they currently held and enter into labor contracts, which were subject to review by the bureau, he simultaneously asserted that the freedmen had full legal rights and demonstrated a sympathetic attitude toward their aspirations. This hard Republican line prompted so much grumbling over Gregory's favoritism toward the ex-slaves (and conversely, his antagonism toward whites) that, in order to placate Texans, bureau officials transferred Gregory to Maryland.

Despite the overt hostility, the Freedmen's Bureau pressed ahead with its directives, among them to try to educate the former bondpeople. It soon found out, however, that it was very difficult to recruit teachers and secure school supplies. And even with a teacher in place, instruction was no easy task in an atmosphere in which the white majority opposed black education. Notwithstanding such drawbacks, the bureau began operating sixteen schools for freedmen in Texas in 1865. With the assistance of philanthropic organizations, as well as the Texas black community itself, the bureau made significant strides in the field of education during this period. Its achievements served as a foundation upon which a later Reconstruction administration would build.

On other fronts, the bureau took meaningful steps toward improving conditions for the freed persons. Bureau commissioners oversaw numerous cases involving abuses of African American labor rights (landowners habitually breached contract terms, for instance) and members of the African American community turned to the bureau courts to redress wrongs perpetrated against them, often by whites. In addition, the bureau attempted to provide direct relief to many of the former slaves, dispensing provisions and providing health care, among other things. But in this endeavor, as in the case of education, the bureau faced white resistance as well as inadequate funding from the federal government.

Disgruntled Texans also resisted the occupation army, federal troops charged with carrying out myriad duties. These tasks included protecting the western and southern frontiers from Indians or foreign threats, as well as the more unpopular one safeguarding the civil rights of both the former slaves and former Unionists. In addition, the US Army personnel found themselves performing many nonmilitary assignments, such as escorting herds of cattle on drives north to Kansas, censoring the press (most Texas newspapers were anti-North), performing inspections and enforcing quarantines at ports (to keep contagious diseases from entering the state through the coast) and enforcing other types of sanitation programs, as well as helping local authorities preserve the peace by tracking down law-breakers. For many Texans, the military presence touched so many aspects of their lives that it seemed to violate the form of government to which they were accustomed.

In retaliation, Texans openly condemned the men in blue. Brutality and violence were the byproducts of the people's dislike of US Army soldiers, who suffered numerous assaults in the years immediately after the war. To vent their frustration further, Texans turned to hit-and-run tactics, attacking supply trains and ambushing military details.

In some cases, however, the soldiers brought trouble upon themselves. Their public drunkenness offended many citizens' sensibilities, and some soldiers stole or callously

destroyed farm goods and livestock, their wanton destruction and violation of private property only exacerbating the delicate situation. Furthermore, some federal troops were openly contemptuous of the ex-Confederates. Texans, therefore, not only saw the military as an arm of the tyrannical North but also as an oppressive force whose presence they would have to endure until the secessionists regained control of the state's destiny. Amazingly, despite animosities on both sides, some individual friendships did develop between citizens and army personnel, and there are even records of marriages between soldiers and civilians.

## **Congressional Reconstruction**

Their loss to Throckmorton in the state election of 1866 and the subsequent actions of the Democrats solidified an affinity that had existed between Texas Unionists and the national Republican Party since the end of the war. Like the Unionists, the Republicans rejected conservative rule.

On the national level, too, Johnson's conservative Reconstruction had never gone over well with Republican congressmen from the North. To be sure, strong and varied opinions floated around in Congress regarding what direction Reconstruction should take, even within the Democratic and Republican parties themselves. Radical Republicans believed that only southerners who had remained loyal to the Union during the war should be allowed to vote or serve in government, that the former Confederate states should be treated like conquered provinces, and that all means should be taken to guarantee the freedpersons full equality with whites. More moderate Republicans, meanwhile, mostly concerned themselves with the mainstream Republican platform, including endorsing protective tariffs and making internal improvements, and they held differing views on the extent of political rights that freedmen should be granted. Nonetheless, the Republican Party overall stood aghast at Johnson's lenient policy toward the South, feeling that the long and costly war would have been fought in vain should the South be permitted to rejoin the Union with its prewar social structure basically intact.

But Johnson's refusal to cooperate with congressional wishes, especially with those of the Radicals, who articulated their policy most succinctly, unified the several Republican factions. Under Presidential Reconstruction, the governments of the southern states remained in the hands of ex-Confederate leaders and military men, voters used their powers to maintain the antebellum status quo, black codes placed restrictions on the former slaves, and violence continued to plague Union soldiers stationed in the South. Such developments enhanced the influence of the Radicals as time passed, and in the congressional election of the fall of 1866, Radicals and Moderates gained strength, as voters endorsed Radical Republican alternatives to Johnson's brand of Reconstruction.

Between March and July of 1867, the US Congress managed to dismantle Johnson's Reconstruction policies and redesign them, inaugurating in the defeated South the period that historians call Congressional Reconstruction. Now, a series of new Reconstruction Acts divided the ex-Confederacy into five military districts (each under a federal military commander whose authority exceeded that of state governments), suspended existing state governments, and demanded that the ex-Confederate states write new constitutions, with all races participating in the selection of delegates to the respective constitutional conventions, all of which had to draft new state constitutions that granted suffrage to black males and permitted them to hold public office. All prospective voters were subjected to the restrictions of the Reconstruction Acts, which barred from voting former Confederate

officeholders who had earlier sworn (and therefore broken their promises) to uphold the Constitution of the United States. Nevertheless, some 60,000 white Texans (about half of those who were eligible) still registered to vote, among them ex-Confederate soldiers, for the prohibitions of the Reconstruction Acts did not apply to those who had never taken an oath to support the US Constitution. Therefore, under Congressional Reconstruction, only between 7000 and 10,000 Texans were disfranchised for having held office before 1861 and then actively engaging in the rebellion.

The passage of the Reconstruction Acts and the overturning of Presidential Reconstruction led to the establishment, in Houston on July 4, 1867, of the Republican Party in Texas, as Texas Unionists now joined Congressional Republicans in the repudiation of the conservatives. Texas Republicans included those from moderate factions committed to Congressional Reconstruction policy (but not prepared to concede to blacks the right to vote or hold office) and to enacting projects that might improve underdeveloped parts of Texas. But although moderate Republicans agreed to grant basic freedoms for the ex-slaves, the radical wing within the Republican Party supported complete civil and political rights for African Americans. This camp backed further goals such as creating a system of schooling free of race discrimination and seeing that all Texans could acquire land regardless of race. Democratic action under Throckmorton in part had pushed the radical camp into this stand. With voting strength augmented by the enfranchisement of the freedmen, the Unionists believed they stood an excellent chance of regaining the power they had lost in 1866.

A major question asked of Congressional Reconstruction has been: Was the “radicalism” of its members the product of a sincere attempt to help the freedmen, or did it stem more from a cynical desire to boost the numbers within the Republican Party? Until a few decades ago, scholars argued that selfish, political motives accounted for their moves; that is, that the Radical Republicans recruited blacks into their ranks in order to neutralize the strength of hostile white southerners. But scholars now see Radical Republicans as having truly desired to bring about meaningful change in the South and give black Americans the chance to achieve equality under the law. According to this view, Republicans sincerely believed that blacks should be given the vote and legal rights so that the newly freed persons might be better able to help themselves function in society.

Texas Republicans got their chance to implement their platform when General Philip Sheridan, commander of the military district that included Texas, removed Governor James W. Throckmorton (Figure 6.2) from office, citing him as an impediment to Reconstruction on July 30, 1867, and replaced him with Elisha M. Pease (Figure 6.3) as interim governor. The commander of the subdistrict of Texas followed up by dismissing all the principal statewide elected officials and recruiting Republicans to fill the vacant offices. In the end, however, the military authorities were unable to find acceptable officials for the bulk of local posts, and only 500 of 2377 elected officials were ultimately replaced. Leaving so many unreconstructed rebels in place drastically limited the aims of Congressional Reconstruction and left the future of the state’s new Republican Party very much in question. Military authorities then announced an election for February 1868 to choose delegates to yet another constitutional convention scheduled for the coming summer.

Having taken over state government, the Republicans invited black political participation, and a number of black Texans readily accepted, becoming active co-agents in giving direction to Texas Reconstruction. In the campaign to mobilize the freedmen at the grass-roots level, many blacks achieved leadership roles, the most prominent among them being George T. Ruby of Galveston. As a teacher and traveling agent for the Freedmen’s Bureau,



**Figure 6.2** James W. Throckmorton, governor, 1866–67. Courtesy of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

Ruby had already organized local chapters of the Union (or Loyal) League in the areas he had visited. Throughout the South (and therefore in Texas) the Union League after 1867 was the vehicle utilized to integrate the newly enfranchised freedmen into the political process. The League also served African Americans in efforts of self-help and self-protection.

Freedmen hosted strategy meetings and used the Union League to assert their political goals. Among other things, black leaders now demanded (successfully) that voter registration boards include black members. About 48,000 freedmen registered to vote for the upcoming convention charged with framing a new state constitution.

In the face of violent threats, nearly 50,000 blacks registered to vote—about 89 percent of those who were eligible—and virtually all of them cast ballots in February 1868 for delegates to a new state constitutional convention. The black vote and the refusal of whites to participate (they had hoped to scuttle the convention by not going to the polls, for the Reconstruction Acts stipulated that at least one-half of the registered voters had to cast ballots in favor of the convocation before it could convene) resulted in the election of delegates sympathetic to Radical Reconstruction (among them nine African Americans). But the sentiments of the chosen delegates were by no means uniform: of the seventy-eight Republicans present, only about half of them could have been regarded as radicals; the rest would have to be categorized as moderates. Ironically, some white Republicans, jealous of black power and unwilling to share the fruits of postwar gains, now dominated the leadership of a party that consisted largely of black constituents. Overall, the state Republican





**Figure 6.3** Elisha M. Pease. Source: Texas Collection Library, CN 03883, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

Party of the era was a frail organization of blacks, native white Unionists, and a few northern immigrants.

At the convention, which met in Austin on June 1, 1868, delegates engaged in contentious debate. Disagreements arose between followers of Edmund J. Davis, a former district judge in Texas who became a brigadier general in the Union Army (like other Unionists, he had been the victim—as had his family in Corpus Christi—of Confederate mistreatment during the war), and those of former Governors Pease and Hamilton. The Davis faction supported *ab initio* (the belief that all official acts passed under secession to help the Confederacy were null and void), equality for the freedpersons, the state financing of public schools, the use of eastern railroad interests to build new lines in Texas, the disfranchisement of the ex-Confederates, and the division of the state into a number of smaller ones (as each of the different regions of the state desired a government sensitive to its particular needs). The moderate supporters of Pease and Hamilton rejected *ab initio*, the effort to partition the state, the movement to extend complete civil rights to African Americans, and the use of eastern railroad companies to further internal improvements. By late August, the money allotted for the session ran out, so the delegates disbanded until December with no document ready to put before the electorate.

While the Republicans continued to debate, the Democratic opposition launched a vigorous campaign of extralegal intimidation to undermine the power of black voters. Arsonists set fire to buildings in which blacks assembled, including offices of the Freedmen's Bureau

and Bureau-run schools. Many whites joined the Ku Klux Klan, which made its appearance in Texas at about this time. Vicious activity became the hallmark of the Klan's conspiracy against African Americans, and the black sections of towns suffered violence. On June 7, 1868, some fifteen Klansmen rode into the black quarter of Millican, in Brazos County, intent upon disrupting the local meeting of the Union League. The assembled blacks managed to mobilize, however, and returned fire, driving away the intruders. The next month witnessed a riot in which two of Millican's black leaders (among other persons) were killed. Fear infused Millican's black community, and the disquiet spread throughout black communities in other parts of the state.

Weakening the Republicans further was persistent intraparty conflict. During the four-month adjournment of the constitutional convention, the state party came to espouse two discernible positions, and Texans started to refer to the Davis faction as "Radicals" and the followers of Governors Pease and Hamilton as "Moderates." But when the two groups returned to Austin and reconvened for the second session of the constitutional convention on December 7, 1868, they reached a compromise. The *ab initio* issue had ceased to be a point of contention, as a decision was pending in the US Supreme Court. (In *Texas v. White*, March 1869, the high court ruled that a state's secession from the Union was unconstitutional.) In the cases of the other issues that had split the convention during the summer, the delegates concurred that the next state legislature should determine whether to partition the state, arrived at an amicable settlement regarding railroad building, and addressed the question of civil rights guarantees by barring from officeholding only those specifically restricted from doing so by the US Constitution.

The Constitution of 1869, which resulted from the convention when it adjourned in early February, departed from the Texas political tradition in a number of ways. It granted suffrage and general civil rights to black Texans, enthusiastically supported the opportunity of all Texans to receive a public education, sought to check local- and county-level interference with state laws by increasing the power of the governor (who could appoint people to executive and judicial posts), and attempted to keep the railroads from plundering the state's most valuable asset (its public lands), by prohibiting land grants to corporations in order to further internal improvements. Some historians see this document as one that augured a progressive social, political, and economic transformation.

### **The Freedmen's Bureau and the Union Army, 1867–1870**

From the time Congressional Reconstruction began in Texas until 1868, when the Freedmen's Bureau ceased operations in the state (except for its efforts in education, which continued until 1870), bureau agents faced formidable opposition in their efforts to carry out their work. The continued efforts of bureau agents between 1868 and 1869 to provide education for freedmen were impeded by hostile whites who abused the northern teachers who staffed many of the black schools. Still, the bureau made schooling a priority, and by 1870 the state managed some sixty-six schools, with an enrollment of more than 3000 black children; approximately 300 black students even engaged in "higher" learning. The rate of black illiteracy had been reduced in the process, and the groundwork for black education in the state had been established.

The southerners' view that bureau agents were opportunistic carpetbaggers is not substantiated by recent, balanced studies of the Texas bureau. True, some of the agents were inept and disinterested in their work, but many, such as William G. Kirkman, who was

stationed in Bowie County in 1867 (and who was murdered by Cullen Montgomery Baker the next year), and Charles E. Culver, who took command of a subdistrict in east-central Texas, defied such classification. These two northerners carried out exemplary service in rendering needed assistance to the respective black communities they served. They enforced the laws equally for blacks and whites, refereed labor and apprenticeship contracts, mediated disagreements between the races, and encouraged blacks to be self-sufficient and independent. Overall, bureau agents who served in Texas tended to be men of high principles who worked diligently to meet the goals of the bureau despite the considerable obstacles they faced. In short, the general lack of success in executing bureau mandates owed less to the determination of the agents and more to the opposition of white Texans.

The occupying troops, or bluecoats, meantime, continued to bear the stigma of outsiders who were propping up an unfriendly government. At this point Union Army soldiers began to perform even more duties, such as helping to register voters of all races, filling offices when local citizens could not take the loyalty oath, trying lawbreakers in military courts (because civilian tribunals at the grassroots level could not be trusted to rule impartially), protecting freedmen and Freedmen Bureau agents from the Ku Klux Klan, and enforcing martial law. Although Texans resented the power wielded by the occupation army, military rule in the state during Reconstruction cannot be rigidly depicted as capricious and despotic. Only about 4500 federal troops served in Texas between 1867 and 1870, 40 percent or less of whom saw duty in the more heavily populated areas where they might enrage Texans; the majority of them, stationed in remote forts on the western frontier, worked to guard the population from hostile Indians. Many of the army officers who served in Texas at the time were able and devoted men who discharged their duties impartially.

### The 1869 election

By the time of the state election in December 1869, the Republicans had formally split and consequently fielded two candidates. The Radical Republicans chose Edmund J. Davis, who supported the principle of *ab initio* and the Thirteenth and Fourteenth amendments to the US Constitution. Seeking to garner the support of disaffected Democrats, the Moderate Republicans ran A. J. Hamilton, even though he did not believe in much of their program. For a number of reasons, the Democrats did not nominate a candidate of their own.

During the campaign, Hamilton's Moderate Republicans pushed hard to gain the support of the old-guard conservative Democrats, believing that this strategy presented their best chance of defeating Davis. But several factors undermined Hamilton's campaign. For one thing, Democrats refused to endorse a man who during the war had fled to the North—while there Hamilton had cemented his relationship with national politicians—and who had criticized them while serving as provisional governor. More important, the Radical Republican opposition marshaled the black vote through the efforts of the Union League, in which Ruby's registration efforts had paid dividends. Approximately 37,375 blacks cast ballots in 1869, and with their support and the utmost participation of the Republican electorate, Davis edged out Hamilton: 39,838 to 39,005. Voters also approved the Constitution of 1869 by the wide margin of 72,366 to 4928. On January 8, 1870, General Joseph J. Reynolds, Texas military commander, who was in effect governor since Pease had resigned in September 1869, appointed Davis governor—before Davis's constitutional term officially began.

The results of the election then went to the US Congress. With few problems, the Congress produced a bill to restore Texas to the Union, which President Ulysses S. Grant signed on

March 30. General Reynolds thereupon transferred civil authority to the slate of Republican winners on April 16, 1870. This measure terminated Congressional Reconstruction in Texas.

Although the state now had a Republican-controlled legislature, its membership consisted of diverse elements. Although several Radicals had been victorious, Democrats and their allies won more than 40 percent of the seats in both houses. Moderate Republicans, furthermore, held enough seats to sway legislation in either chamber.

Additionally, two black senators and twelve black representatives sat in the Twelfth Legislature (1870–71); they constituted about 12 percent of the body's entire membership. Of these men, George T. Ruby (Figure 6.4) is the best known. Born, raised, and educated in the North, Ruby came to Texas in 1866 via Louisiana, where he did educational work among blacks. As a teacher for the Freedmen's Bureau in Galveston, Ruby cultivated close ties with the city's black community and established a solid political base, which he enhanced by becoming an agent for the bureau. As he traveled throughout the state in this capacity, he established chapters of the Union League. By 1868, he captured the presidency of the League and molded it into an efficient Republican political machine. His influence in Republican Party circles became evident when he performed the duties of vice president at the first state convention the Republicans held, in Houston in 1868. Between 1869 and 1873, Ruby served as state senator from Galveston and contributed significantly to the work of several influential committees.

The other black state senator was Matt Gaines (Figure 6.5), a self-educated former slave who became a lay preacher of the Baptist church after the Civil War. In the legislature, he



**Figure 6.4** George T. Ruby, Republican senator from Galveston and president of the Union League. Courtesy of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.



**Figure 6.5** Watercolor of Matt Gaines and G. T. Ruby in the Senate Chambers, Twelfth Legislature, 1870, by Milton Emanuel. Source: University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 75–730).

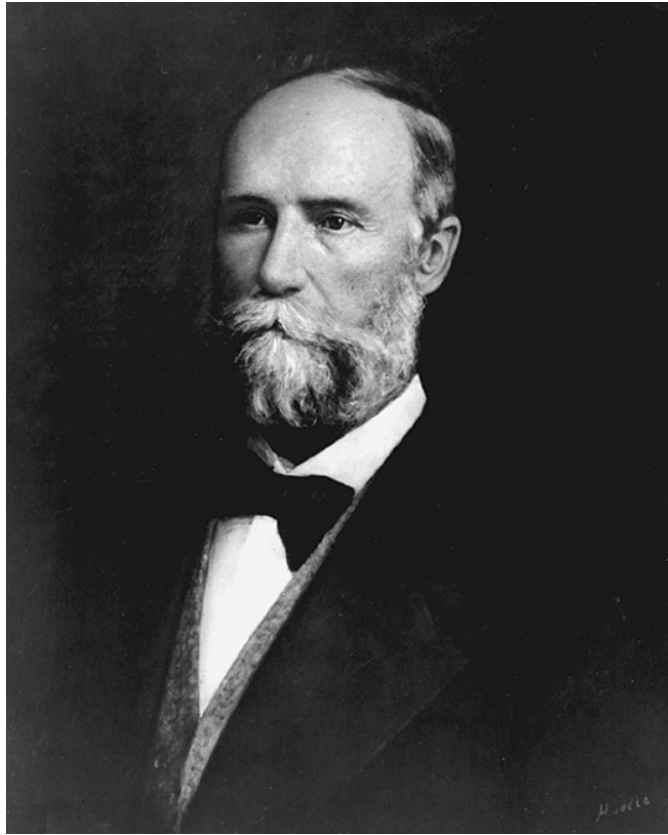
gained attention as an advocate for African American causes and as a persistent critic of those colleagues who remained lukewarm on issues pertinent to blacks. Although he alienated the opposition in the legislature, he won the grateful support of his African American constituents.

Although less strident than Ruby and Gaines, the twelve black representatives who sat in the Twelfth Legislature nonetheless served with competence. Richard Allen, a former slave who during Reconstruction earned a reputation as an accomplished bridge builder, held various public offices locally; he has been judged to have been a very capable representative. Another colleague, Benjamin F. Williams, a minister and land speculator, wielded such influence among his black associates in the house that he was nominated for speaker.

Overall, black legislators who served during the era of Reconstruction in Texas amassed political savvy and performed as well as did their black counterparts throughout the South. To win office, they had acquainted themselves with the new politics and functioned adequately within it. In carrying out their work, they displayed allegiance to the Republican Party and their black supporters, but they also responded ably to the diverse needs of the districts they represented.

## The Davis Administration and Radical Reconstruction

Governor Edmund J. Davis (Figure 6.6) initiated what scholars refer to as Radical Reconstruction. His top priorities included the reestablishment of law and order, the funding of a statewide school system for blacks and whites, the subsidization of internal improvements, and the protection of the frontier. In executing these provisions under the new state constitution, Davis was aided primarily by scalawags, and only minimally by the carpetbaggers of lore.



**Figure 6.6** Portrait of Edmund J. Davis. Exhibited in the Texas State Capitol Building. Source: The State Preservation Board.

The terms *scalawags* and *carpetbaggers* were born out of the animosity toward Reconstruction; both labels were invented by southerners and used pejoratively, the former to identify southern whites allied with the Republican Party, and the latter to refer to northerners who participated in Radical Reconstruction. Southerners despised both groups because of their alleged collusion with Radicals, but in Texas, carpetbaggers hardly influenced Reconstruction.

With scalawag help, therefore, the governor moved vigorously, and in his first two years in office he made successful strides toward accomplishing his legislative goals. Davis organized a state police (a law enforcement body empowered to assist local peacekeeping officials in contending with criminal elements). During its lifespan, the State Police chased after organized gangs, dealt with Ku Klux Klan activity, tracked down murderers, ruffians, and livestock rustlers, attempted to settle local disputes erupting out of the era's myriad political differences, set out to diffuse county feuds, while all the time trying to protect the freedmen from violence. A state militia, composed of enlistees between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, was created as a volunteer unit to help guard the frontier and the border with Mexico, but the group could also assist in handling internal problems or upheavals. Both these forces would be under the oversight of the governor. Further legislation established an attractive homestead program designed to settle the state and encourage farming; the plan offered several options, among them providing heads of households 160 acres of land so long as the family worked its grant for three years. The legislature also created a Bureau of Immigration to attract European settlers. In April 1871, Davis signed a bill financing a

public school system with such progressive features as a state superintendent and compulsory attendance. Higher taxes were imposed on property to finance these efforts, and the state issued bonds (redeemable at maturity) to railroad companies to subsidize railroad construction projects, a necessary move given the proscriptions under the Constitution of 1869 against awarding land grants (Texas, once again, had managed to retain its public domain) to interstate railroad interests.

Actually, these reforms harmonized with most people's conventional politics. Texans always had desired some kind of public school system. Since the 1850s, government had tried to bring about internal improvements, but a program for an updated infrastructure was now sought across the state, not only for the old plantation region. Radical Reconstruction, therefore, did not seek to overturn long-standing economic, political, and social mores. The redistribution of land was never attempted, labor did not receive protective legislation, and blacks, the backbone of the Republican Party, did not achieve full political equality. Davis did make a place for African Americans in his administration, but no black person held a high-level position such as a cabinet post. Even key openings in the Republican Party continued to elude black Texans.

Overall, the Davis administration succeeded in establishing a creditable record. Admittedly, the state government's expenses almost tripled between 1870 and the end of the Davis administration, but several unusual factors justified the increase. Population growths required expanded services, such as a public school system to accommodate rising school enrollment, including that of freed children. Paying for railroad building placed added strain on the budget. The expanded frontier broadened the need for defense. Crime increased during the period, and the militia and state police had to contend with all kinds of lawless activity and public disturbances, exigencies that required the need to hire more men.

Nevertheless, Davis's opponents, who included some Republicans and the Conservative Democrats, seized on the increased expenses and managed to mold public opinion into associating the Radical administration with corruption and extravagant spending. Scholarly research suggests that the greatest percentage of the state's revenue went to law enforcement, the common school system, and frontier defense, so that the Radicals were not in fact wasteful with the taxpayers' money. But Texans (among them members of the planter class, allies of the Democrats), opposed what they considered arbitrary taxation, and others condemned what they believed to be a central government's usurpation of local autonomy. Critics of the administration also attacked Governor Davis for cozying up to northern railroad companies, even though the governor vetoed some bond aid bills to save money for the state.

Clearly, Davis's critics were maneuvering to wrest power from him at the first opportunity. As Democrats campaigned in the special congressional election of October 1871, they stressed the issues of high taxes, corruption, fraud, and misgovernment. Their propaganda hit responsive chords. When the results were in, the Democrats had elected all four of their candidates to the US Congress.

The assault on Texas Republicanism spilled over into the general legislative election of November 1872, in which the Democrats won majorities in both chambers of the Thirteenth Legislature (due to convene in 1873). As a result, for the remainder of his term, Davis fought in vain to preserve the programs he had enacted. Democrats overthrew his public school system. They abolished the state police (or the "Governor's Hounds," as detractors labeled the force). Their changes to the homestead policy made public lands less affordable. Finally, a constitutional amendment in 1873 permitted the government to use land grants as an enticement to railroad building, because bond aid had become a financial burden on the state.

## **Black Texans During Reconstruction**

The former slaves, whose status was the central issue of Reconstruction, in reality found themselves only partially liberated. Generally, white Texans had retained their old racial attitudes, and during Reconstruction they found ways to deny the freedmen equal protection under the law. Social segregation, for one thing, arose immediately after the war, although most forms of legally mandated separation did not arise until the latter part of the century.

Devising methods of labor control, white farmers effected tenancy or sharecropping arrangements, the latter used more commonly. In return for land, seed, fertilizer, tools, food, farm animals, and other essentials, black sharecroppers delivered a good portion of their year's crops to the landowner. Freedmen at first liked the arrangement, as it actually permitted them a degree of independence and provided a release from gang labor and direct supervision by whites. And for the first time in their lives, black sharecroppers established their own work schedules, something that meant a great deal to former slaves.

But sharecropping (for blacks and whites) seldom led to prosperity, and most freedmen faced chronic indebtedness. By the mid-1870s, many rural blacks had become tenants, with their families destined to work together under a white landlord. Those who labored for salaries on the old plantations experienced other kinds of miseries, and urban blacks, vying with discrimination and competing with new laborers arriving from the countryside, had little choice but to take the most undesirable and lowest-paying jobs.

Thus, black Texans pursued every viable form of employment. Black women sought jobs in white households—washing clothes, cooking meals, cleaning house, and raising children. Some black men found work in East Texas's burgeoning lumber industry. Others wanting to contribute to the process of Radical Reconstruction joined the state police or militia in the early 1870s; a recent computer examination concluded that freedmen made up somewhere around one-third of the men who saw extended duty in the State Police. Despite the fact that labor practices of the day confined most blacks to performing menial tasks for substandard wages (as compared to the compensation offered whites who performed the same jobs), some black Texans managed to found successful businesses or enter professions (such as teaching), these persons forming an entrepreneurial elite during Reconstruction.

On the West Texas range, African Americans, some of whom had been herders in pre-Civil War plantations, made their mark as cowboys. Discrimination generally restricted black men riding the trail to the roles of cooks or wranglers. Underwritten conventions decreed that black crew members attempt the most risky work on the road, such as subduing unruly beeves or testing swollen waterways for danger. Despite such work handicaps, black cowboys could well earn respect among fellow drovers (Figure 6.7). Those adept at horse management were particularly valued. Matthew "Bones" Hooks wandered throughout West Texas and the Panhandle hiring out as bronco buster during the late nineteenth century.

In the forts of South and West Texas, African Americans served as US Army regulars with the infantry and cavalry, albeit in segregated regiments. Most renowned of these black troopers were the "buffalo soldiers" (a name given to black soldiers by Indians in Kansas: the Indians associated the troopers' curly hair with buffalo fur, but the term also implied an admiration for their courage and tenacity in battle). These particular units were responsible for scouting, charting, and recommending routes for linking the frontier to the settled areas of the state. On numerous occasions, the buffalo soldiers proved gallant in combat, in particular





**Figure 6.7** “Uncle” George Glenn, an honored life member of the Trail Drivers’ Association of Texas (the emblem is pinned on his shirt). In 1870 he drove back from Abilene, Kansas, alone with the body of his dead trail boss, John Folts, beside him. Source: *The San Antonio Light Collection*, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 359: L-0347-A).

Emanuel Stance, who won the Medal of Honor in 1870 for bravery against Apache foes near Fort McKavett. At the Battle of Rattlesnake Springs (north of Van Horn in far West Texas) on August 6, 1880, buffalo soldiers forced the Apache chief Victorio to abandon Texas for Mexico. When the last of the frontier troopers left in the mid-1880s, black regulars had been serving in Texas for nearly two decades and had made significant contributions to the peace, security, and settlement of West Texas. Among those who had served in the region from 1878 to 1882 was Lieutenant Henry O. Flipper, the first black man to graduate from the US Military Academy and the first black officer in the regular US Army.

Overall, economic conditions drove black Texans into dismal living standards. Although many African Americans expressed the desire to acquire their own land and build their own dwellings, most found shelter in one- or two-room shanties (with dirt floors), ordinarily in segregated districts lacking potable water. Illnesses such as smallpox and cholera ravaged black communities, food scarcities lingered, and indigents, paupers, orphans, and the infirm languished from lack of public assistance. Without access to proper medical attention, blacks faced high rates of mortality, especially infants.

Amidst such travail, blacks did their best to forge normal and decent lives for themselves and their families. They turned to the family as a means of coping. Viable African American

family structures had existed for some time, even under the cruelties of slavery, and blacks moved to legitimize these arrangements immediately following the war. From its appearance in Texas in March 1865, the Freedmen's Bureau had outlined a policy regarding family organization, including the stipulation that blacks having lived together outside of wedlock (during slavery) were now legitimate spouses. Many black couples, however, lived in an uncertain marital status until 1870, the year in which Texas formally legalized black marriages. In any case, recent studies derived from census data point to a degree of stability within the black family in Reconstruction Texas and to a resemblance to the white family in its patriarchal structure.

Aware of the importance of education, black communities built their own schools, at times with the help of the Freedmen's Bureau. Several black religious institutions also made efforts to provide fundamental education. Those fortunate enough to have acquired some education as free persons or as slaves before 1865 taught in early schools, passing on to children their own knowledge, and black soldiers who had acquired some reading and writing skills while in the military tutored illiterate adults.

Religion also aided blacks in resisting oppression. As freed people, black Texans established their own centers of worship—structuring the hierarchy and Christian message of their respective institutions to fit their own experience. As a focal point in the community, the independent black church became a place in which to hold religious services, social activities, educational instruction, political planning, and an office for such miscellaneous services as helping to place black workers in available jobs. From the church came reinforcement of the people's sense of morality and proper behavior. A large percentage of African Americans joined the Baptist Church.

The internal cohesiveness of the black community also was manifest in initiatives by blacks to transfer ideas of justice to their new status as freedpersons. Black Texans had learned something of Texas law during slavery and recognized that courts could be used for self-protection. While the Freedmen's Bureau functioned in Texas, blacks brought their grievances before bureau courts, seeking redress for numerous wrongs. Although civilian courts offered blacks little sympathy, once the Freedmen's Bureau left in 1868, African Americans did find sympathetic understanding from Republican district court judges appointed by Governor Davis between 1870 and 1873. Leaders at the local level, moreover, sought to assert their people's newly won rights. Besides Ruby, the activist from Galveston who was so instrumental in the development of the Union League, other black organizers for the League included Richard Allen and D. W. Bryant of Houston. Through the efforts of the Union League, blacks had been able to choose delegates to the Republican convention in 1868. After Davis became governor, African American participation increased in local and state politics.

### **A Perilous Place in Which to Live**

Patterns of violence manifest since antebellum days only worsened during Reconstruction and persisted through the 1890s. In efforts to explain this phenomenon, historians have cited several factors. Bitterness arising from the Civil War and Reconstruction has been advanced as a cause, as have been Indian warfare, new waves of banditry, regional conflicts stemming from the cattle industry, agrarian discontent, political difficulties, tensions related to modernization, race relations, and the final drive to close the frontier. According to the famous Texas historian Walter Prescott Webb, Texas in the 1870s could be a perilous

place in which to live. “Where all men are armed,” Webb quipped, “conflicts among them are inevitable and the violent death of some is certain.”

While town life was mostly peaceable, such was not the case in the countryside where vigilantes carried out specified objectives with violent force. From the Gulf Coast to the Hill Country, and from the Piney Woods to the West Texas frontier, the state withstood some fifty or sixty violent incidents involving vigilantes from 1865 to the end of the century, peaking in the 1870s. The professed intent of these movements was generally to establish order, but more often self-interest motivated participants, such as at Fort Griffin where ranchers, with the initial intent of clearing out stock thieves, next turned their violent drive against farmers, whom they saw as competitors on the range.

In addition to vigilantism, feuding erupted. Although some of these protracted conflicts were strictly family affairs, most of the major feuds in Texas have been identified as “community feuds,” that is, the larger community rallied behind the core group that had originated the conflict, forming a coalition of immediate and more-distant relatives, sympathetic acquaintances, and others linked by a common or vested interest in the outcome of the feud.

Other forms of violence included campaigns of murder and plunder led by lawbreakers intent on undermining Unionist influence after the Civil War. These bands of lawbreakers acted with the silent endorsement of Rebel elements (or Democratic Party) during the period from roughly 1865 to 1874 and targeted freedpersons, northern soldiers, Freedmen Bureau Agents, members of the State Police—in short, those who opposed the reemergence of antebellum ways and attitudes. Among the most notorious of these pro-Confederate rings was the one led by Creed Taylor and his relatives; almost with impunity they terrorized law-abiding citizens (and especially those sympathetic to northern rule in Texas) mostly on the southern and western edges of Central Texas, stole their cattle and horses, pillaged at will, hired gunslingers, and committed acts of cold-blooded murder with the assent of Conservative Democrats. When Deputy Sheriff of DeWitt County William E. Sutton and other law officers killed some Taylor family members in 1868, the desperadoes swore vengeance, ultimately assassinating Sutton in 1874. The Taylor gang’s reign of terror ultimately ended about the same time as did Reconstruction, when the Democrats, now firmly back in power in Texas, needed law and order to implement their agenda. Popularly, this conflict has been known as the “Sutton–Taylor Feud.”

Also responsible for the violence during the turbulent frontier era were several notorious gunmen. The most prominent and dangerous of which was John Wesley Hardin, a Texas native who killed more men than Billy the Kid, Jesse James, or Wild Bill Hickok. During the ten-year span after 1868, Hardin slew more than twenty men, and he is acknowledged to have killed more of them in close-range shooting than any other western criminal. As a hateful racist, he terrorized blacks, as an unrelenting supporter of the Confederate cause, he vented his antinorthern rage on the state police (that Governor Davis had organized), as a rancher, he had countless clashes with rustlers and competing cattlemen, and as a hired gun, he was particularly efficient. The legal system in 1878 sent Hardin to the Texas state prison for murdering a deputy sheriff. In 1895, only a year after his release from prison, another Texas gunman named John Selman shot and killed Hardin in El Paso.

Other killers of the period came close to matching Hardin in notoriety, and several of the other famous outlaws in western history built their reputations in Texas (and died in Texas shootouts), among them Ben Thompson, Jim Miller, John Larn, John Selman, Dallas Stoudenmire, King Fisher, Cullen Montgomery Baker, Jim Courtright, and John Hughes. Yet another gunman, Bill Longley, became known as “the nigger killer” for his arbitrary

murder of African Americans. But Longley amassed a record of killings that knew no color or ethnicity. By the time the law hanged him in 1878, his list of crimes included thirty-two murders.

## **The Indian Displacement**

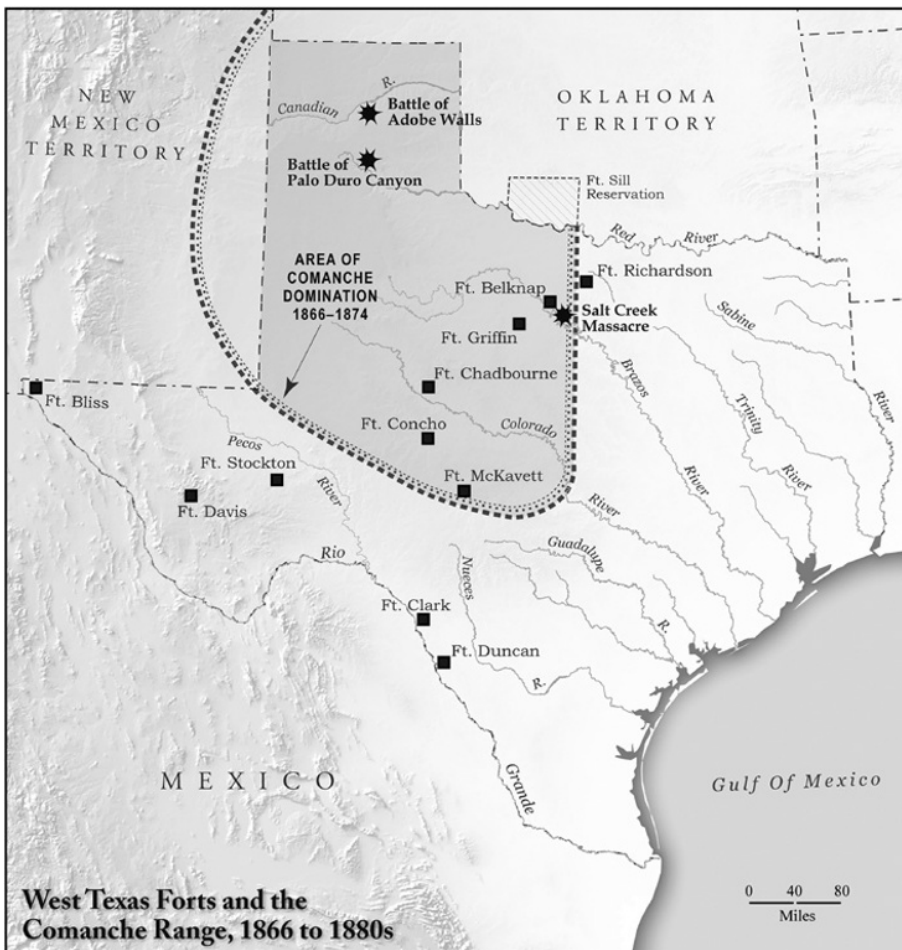
In the wake of the Civil War, the Comanches and their allies the Kiowas (the only tribe that had been able to negotiate any type of survival arrangement with the Comanches) continued to lord over the plains of West Texas for several reasons. For one, their society traditionally valued warfare as a means of gaining prestige and honor. For another, the Plains Indians had finely honed their military tactics—Comanches and Kiowas preferred (because of their dwindling forces) hit-and-run strikes, the raiders quickly inflicting damage on the enemy then fleeing with booty, scalps, and additional horses. Third, westering Texans stopped short of Comanche and Kiowa territory, realizing the deep enmity the Plains Indians held for white intruders, hate displayed in both tribes extended to new interlopers. Because they believed wounds inflicted on victims during or immediately after combat tormented the deceased for eternity, warriors of both tribes tortured prisoners or mutilated their corpses. Furthermore, Comanches and Kiowas often abducted white women and children, another horror that deterred families from venturing too far from settled regions. Finally explaining the Comanches' and Kiowas' hold on the plains was their nomadic lifestyle; the Indians maintained no stationary farms, storehouses, or munition stockpiles that an adversary might attack in order to diminish their ability to sustain quick raids.

The Civil War and the turmoil that followed gave the Comanches—who by then had gained control of the territory from southern Kansas, west to the Pecos River in New Mexico, south to Fredericksburg, populated by individuals of German descent, then north up the 98th meridian—the opportunity to sweep into the lands of northern and western Texas and devastate settlers' livestock and farmsteads. Between 1866 and 1868, the US War Department reestablished the antebellum line of defense in the West consisting of both prewar forts and new ones. Garrisons included Fort Richardson (near Jacksboro, the county seat of Jack County), Fort Belknap (in Young County), Fort Griffin (in Shackelford County), Fort Chadbourne (in today's Coke County), Fort Concho (at present-day San Angelo), Fort McKavett (Menard County), Fort Clark (opposite Brackettville), and Fort Duncan (above Eagle Pass). Farther west lay Fort Stockton (near the present-day town of the same name), Fort Davis (Figure 6.8, neighboring today's Fort Davis), and Fort Bliss (close to El Paso). Despite the soldiers' reconnaissance missions undertaken under a full moon (known to westerners as a "Comanche moon" because the Comanches themselves used the light of the full moon to carry out their fiercest raids), the Indians proved resourceful and cunning, easily avoiding the forts, which were spaced too far apart to cordon off the raiders effectively. Figure 6.9 maps the West Texas forts and the Comanche range during this period.

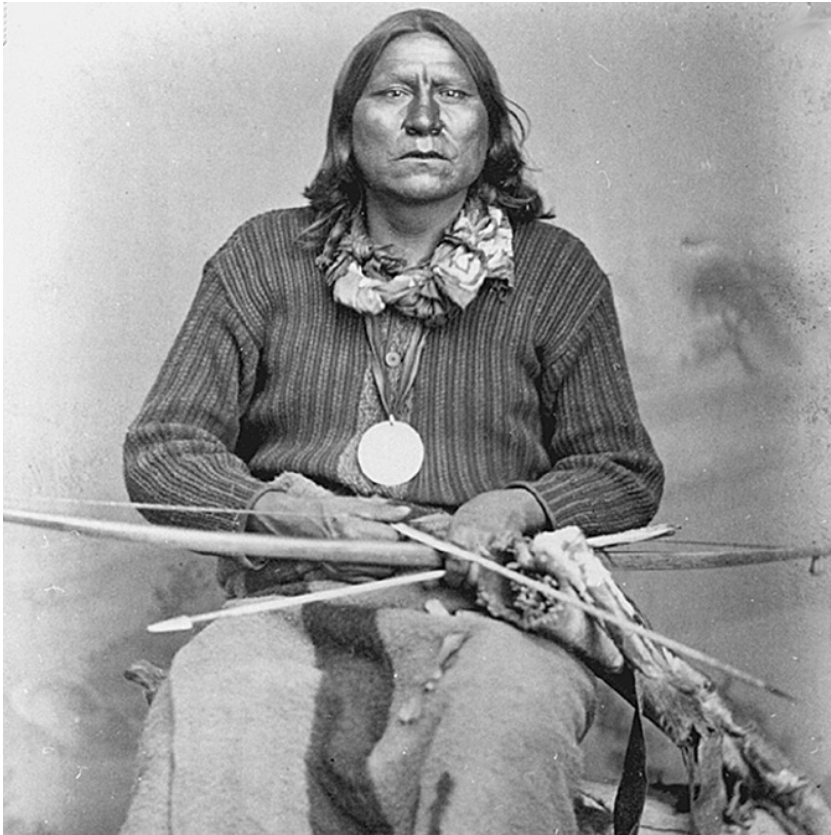
Offensive attacks against the Comanches and Kiowas did not begin in earnest until the early 1870s, for during the early administration of President Ulysses S. Grant, the US government followed a peace policy patterned after that used earlier by colonial Quakers in their effort to assimilate the Woodlands Indians into American culture. The peace policy soon began to unravel, however, with the Salt Creek Massacre, committed in May 1871 in Young County by the Kiowa chief Satanta (Figure 6.10) and between 100 and 150 of his followers from the Fort Sill Reservation in the Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). In the incident, Satanta and his Kiowas, who considered relinquishing control of their West Texas lands unthinkable, set upon a train of supply wagons between Forts Griffin and



**Figure 6.8** The 9th Cavalry at Fort Davis. Source: University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 68–1139).



**Figure 6.9** West Texas forts and the Comanche Range, 1866 to 1880s.



**Figure 6.10** Satanta, Kiowa Chief. Source: Frank Caldwell Collection, CN 04948, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

Richardson, killing and mutilating seven of the twelve drivers. When news of the attack reached the general of the army, William T. Sherman, then on an inspection tour of the region, he ordered the arrest of Satanta and the other Kiowa chiefs upon their return to the reservation. Authorities did indeed apprehend the wanted Kiowas and return them to Texas, where they were tried in civil court as murderers. A jury in Jacksboro found the Indians guilty and sentenced them to death by hanging. But Governor Davis, persuaded by certain Washington officials still committed to the peace policy, reduced the Indians' sentences to life imprisonment, and in 1873 Davis (on the Indians' promise to confine themselves to reservations) granted them parole. Once free again, Satanta resumed his old ways, and lawmen soon rearrested the chief and sent him to the Huntsville state penitentiary, where he died in 1878. (It is not clear whether the chief killed himself or was forcibly pushed out of a window.)

The new US Army military offensive following the Salt Creek Massacre was led by Colonel Ranald Slidell Mackenzie, assisted by Benjamin H. Grierson, commander of the all-black Tenth Cavalry, William R. Shafter, and John L. Bullis of the Twenty-fourth Infantry, also an African American unit. By the fall of 1871, Mackenzie was conducting search-and-destroy missions on the Lower Plains and Panhandle against Comanche-led bands—among them warriors under Quanah Parker (Figures 6.11 and 6.12), son of a (white) Comanche woman named Naduah; this was Cynthia Ann Parker, taken prisoner in 1836 from “Parker’s Fort” in Limestone County, recovered in 1860 by federal troops and Texas Rangers during a massacre of women, children, and old men breaking camp near the Pease River, and



**Figure 6.11** Quanah Parker—Comanche Chief. Source: Gibbs Memorial Library, Mexia, Texas.



**Figure 6.12** Quanah Parker as whites perceived him in highly stylized dress. Source: Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries (Rose 936).

reunited with her Anglo family. Other commanders pursued the offensive with similar conviction. The objective of the campaign was the forcible removal of the Indians to the reservations, a feat requiring a strategy that commanding General Phil Sheridan knew something about from his Civil War days. Dealing with an enemy that relied on guerrilla tactics, he turned to pursuit and destroying their resources. Soldiers consequently slaughtered the Indians' pony herds, razed entire Indian villages, and confiscated food, weapons, utensils, and blankets that the Indian people needed to survive. By 1873, the frequency of Comanche raids had decreased discernibly. Mackenzie was therefore assigned in April 1873 to Fort Clark to deal with Kickapoos, Apaches, and Mexican bandits then wreaking havoc along the Mexican border. The next month, Mackenzie, with the acquiescence of his superiors, led a 400-man cavalry unit across the Rio Grande near Eagle Pass. Some seventy-six miles into Mexico, Mackenzie's unit attacked and destroyed three Kickapoo and Apache villages, in the process wounding several of the warriors involved in the Texas raids.

The army launched a final military operation against the Indians in northwestern Texas following a Comanche, Kiowa, and Cheyenne attack on a buffalo hunters' camp at Adobe Walls, in modern-day Hutchinson County, in June 1874. Called the Red River War, since the actual engagements took place close to the tributaries of the Red River in the Panhandle, this campaign for Indian removal involved a multipronged assault from New Mexico, Kansas, Oklahoma, and West Texas. In September 1874, Mackenzie came upon a Comanche village at Palo Duro Canyon, and after dispersing the Indians following a brief skirmish, he ordered the destruction of the tribe's pony herd. Afoot, the Indians could not escape, and the soldiers had little difficulty subduing them. Finding it increasingly difficult to live off the land, remnants of the Plains Nations by mid-1875 turned for their survival to reservations in Indian Territory. Encouraging them to surrender was Quanah Parker. Feared in war, and respected in peace, the Comanche statesman soon bridged two worlds.

The near-extirpation and forcible removal of Texas Indians was not solely the result of defeat on the battlefield. The same way of life that had made the Plains peoples superior fighters also had a downside. Although Comanches and Kiowas had no permanent bases that an adversary could attack, they also lacked a system of supply depots and armories essential to conduct protracted warfare. Nor did the Indians build a support network of factories, farms, or an efficient infrastructure necessary to stem what seemed an inexorable tide of white pioneers moving west. Similarly, the weapons the Indians employed served them well in sneak attacks and brief battles, but not in prolonged conflict against well-armed, well-organized, and well-financed opponents. Even casual contact with whites had potentially disastrous results, for those traders selling the tribes rifles and other needed supplies might well spread devastating diseases into Indian camps, if not abet alcoholism. In addition, a growing reliance on consumer goods acquired from whites often had the effect of eroding age-old skills and traditions.

Contributing further to the deterioration of Indian power on the Plains was the thinning of the great buffalo herds by the 1870s and 1880s. Historians today point to such factors as new migrations into the Plains at midcentury by indigenous people that produced increased slaughtering, not solely because the nomads hunted buffalo for sustenance and essential by-products, but also because of trade value: buffalo products fetched finished goods from the white world, among them alcohol. In addition, domesticated range animals such as horses, cattle, and sheep imported by westering Anglos transmitted fatal diseases to the wild buffalo. The very presence of European livestock and new settlers living in the region upset its ecology, reducing once-abundant grass- and timberlands that had long nourished the buffalo and sheltered them during winter weather. Seasonal dry spells further reduced



the herds. Another contributing factor in the decimation of the great herds was the whites' intentional killing of buffalo. In their trek west, tourists and "sportsmen" shot the animals from trains as they grazed near the rail line, and railroad contractors laying track across the plains freely shot buffalo as a cheap source of food for their crews. Then, in the early 1870s, tanners on both sides of the Atlantic improved the technology that made trade in buffalo hides profitable. People found that buffalo leather made durable straps and belts for factory machines. Hide hunters using high-powered rifles and accompanied by skinners appeared in the Texas Panhandle around 1873, and the wholesale slaughter of the buffalo for commercial purposes began by 1875. Buffalo hunters loaded the pelts on wagons, leaving skinned carcasses behind to rot in the sun. By the early 1880s, fewer than two hundred buffalo were left on their old Texas feeding grounds, where untold thousands had once roamed.

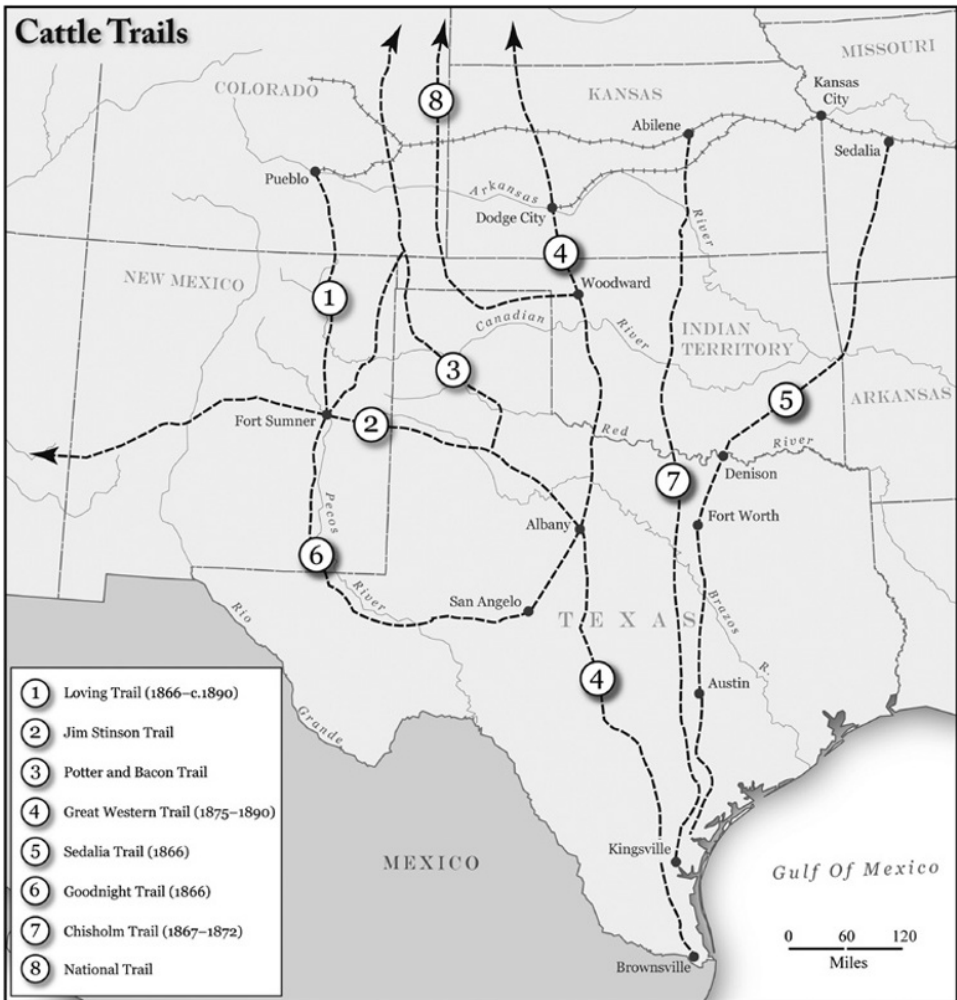
### **The Rise of the Cattle Kingdom**

Before the Civil War, longhorn cattle still roamed free in Texas, where they mixed with other varieties of cattle that had been brought into Texas from the United States, drifting randomly from South Texas and the ranches of the Cross Timbers in search of more grazing land as their numbers swelled. Eventually, the animals spread into the open ranges of West Texas, running wild from the South Texas country to the Panhandle Plains. Some five million of the beasts grazed throughout Texas in 1865, the majority of them "mavericks," which would belong to the first person to brand them.

The era of the Texas Cattle Kingdom commenced even as the Civil War drew to a close, and it lasted until about the mid-1880s. In the northern United States, people needed new animals to restore their war-depleted herds, this demand for beef pushing up the price of cattle in Texas. Beeves that sold for \$3 or \$4 a head in Texas might bring \$30 or \$40 in the upper Mississippi Valley. Within a year after the cessation of hostilities between North and South, therefore, the Texas cattle boom was in full swing.

Those taking advantage of the beef shortage were stockmen from the two cattle regions of prewar days—the Guadalupe, San Antonio, and Nueces River valleys and the ranches founded during the 1850s in the western Cross Timbers and the upper Hill Country. The earliest "long drive," undertaken in 1866, began in the northern Nueces Valley and passed through the Austin area, Fort Worth, and the North Texas town of Denison, through the southeastern part of the Indian Territory, and then on to the newly established railhead at Sedalia, Missouri. From there, meat dealers shipped the cattle north and east to reap handsome profits. On the trail to Sedalia, however, cattle drivers faced bandits and Indians who preyed on the herds. Also, Missourians made the Texas cowboys unwelcome—shooting cattle, trying to turn the herds back, and generally doing anything to keep the drives out of Missouri—charging that the cattle carried Texas Fever, a disease to which the Missouri stock had no resistance. With so much trouble attached to it, the Sedalia route was hardly a popular one with Texas cattlemen after 1866.

A preferable (rail) shipping point, therefore, became Abilene, Kansas: the town's location on the wide-open plains gave herds more room on the trail and allowed cowboys to circumvent the troublesome areas in Missouri. Developed in 1867 by an Illinois entrepreneur named Joseph G. McCoy, Abilene became a veritable cattle exchange for transporting steers to the stockyards in Chicago. Texans reached Abilene via the Chisholm Trail (Figure 6.13), named after the Scots-Cherokee trader Jesse Chisholm, who in 1867 used a route through the Indian Territory and Kansas that McCoy had already marked and posted. The Chisholm



**Figure 6.13** Cattle trails.

Trail went from the South Texas range, past the state capital, north through a corridor between Fort Worth and Weatherford, then through the Indian Territory to the town of Caldwell, in southern Kansas. From there, spokes of the trail led to several points, including north to Abilene. Some 35,000 cattle were driven from Texas to Abilene in 1867, and the number increased thereafter; the 1880 census recorded the number of beeves taken to the Abilene yards in the years between 1867 and 1871 at 1,460,000.

Equally successful long drives set out for other stockyards in the western plains. Ellsworth, Kansas, west of Abilene, became a more attractive destination during the early 1870s, as the line of farm settlements in Kansas forced cattlemen to veer west to go around them. After 1875, when the Indian tribes on West Texas lands had been relocated to reservations in Oklahoma, Texas cattlemen often chose to take the Great Western Trail, which ran north from San Antonio, to Kerrville and Mason, through Coleman and Fort Griffin, then across the Indian Territory to Dodge City, Kansas, located even farther west than Ellsworth.

Cattle, most of them born and raised on the ranches established in north-central Texas during the 1850s, were also driven during the late 1860s into Colorado Territory along the so-called Goodnight-Loving Trail. Who exactly blazed the trail remains open to dispute—one account claims a beef contractor named James Patterson founded it in 1865; in reality, Texans

had been moving cattle up this route during the later years of the Civil War, smuggling beeves to Union forces in New Mexico. In any event, the trail was named after cattlemen Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving, who in 1866, braved brushes with dangerous Indians to drive a herd from the western Cross Timbers along the Middle Concho and Pecos rivers to New Mexico, then north to Colorado.

Cattle driven north through the Goodnight-Loving Trail heralded, by only a few years, the large-scale westward movement of Texas cattle herds from the Cross Timbers and upper Hill Country into the Great Plains. By the early 1870s, Texas longhorns thrived in Colorado, Nebraska, Montana, and Wyoming, and in the Dakotas by the 1880s.

Responsible for trailing a cattle herd (approximately 2000 head in a drive) to their destination had been members of the general laboring class. Work on the trail called for expert range skills, which cowhands had acquired over years of herding livestock. A dozen or so of these seasoned herdsman pushed the cattle on the road north: Mexican *vaqueros*, generally from South Texas ranches, at times formed part of such trail outfits. As with black cowboys, Mexican crew members dealt with discrimination: convention prohibited them from positions reserved for the best Anglo riders. Ordinarily cattlemen paid them less than they did to Anglo cowhands, even as trail bosses recognized the *vaqueros* as exceptional in their trade.

Perils invariably attended the drive, as the drovers dealt with rain and hail storms, stampedes, injuries, Indian attacks, cattle rustlers, and a variety of other dangers. They faced a dull and monotonous journey, ending with small pay, gambling, drinking, and visits to ubiquitous brothels. Most cowboys working any given drive returned south to repeat the poorly paid task of trailing another herd north.

Following the suppression of the Comanches and Kiowas by the mid-1870s, Texas cattlemen thrust into West Texas past the 100th meridian via two discernible courses. Ranchers from the Guadalupe, San Antonio, and Nueces river valleys headed toward the Trans-Pecos region in the 1870s, founding new ranches along the Rio Grande in the Big Bend and Davis Mountain region. Now, Mexican *vaqueros* transported traditional Mexican herding practices into this area, mixing them with new ones adopted from Anglo American cowboys. Ranchers from the north-central counties who had led the advance of the cattle frontier into the Great Plains, meantime, also pushed into the Texas South Plains, the Texas Panhandle, and the Concho Valley during the 1870s.

In the South Plains and Panhandle cattlemen made free use of the grasslands on the open range, from which the Indians had been banished. These so-called “free rangers” by the 1870s included John Chisum, Charles Goodnight, C. C. Slaughter, George Littlefield, Abel H. (Shanghai) Pierce, and Oliver Loving. Customarily, these stockmen squatted on the open range, grazing their cattle over vast stretches of public lands and using the water resources thereof as they saw fit. These men often proved ruthless, asserting their “range rights” by resorting to arms to drive away intruders. They justified their actions by arguing that they had occupied the pastures first and had continued to use them. Once the government put the public lands on the market, the free rangers obtained legal title to as much of their domains as possible. In some cases, they leased the grazing rights to adjacent public lands, which they did not own but still controlled.

Cattlemen such as C. C. Slaughter and George Littlefield, and other stock owners like them across the state, generally descended from well-to-do backgrounds and could claim a degree of formal schooling. They viewed their estate as a business enterprise and regarded themselves as administrators (or as corporate managers); the daily tasks of range operations they left to a hired foreman. Many of the successful large-scale cattlemen married into families with established social connections in towns and readily integrated themselves into

urban activities, gaining membership in civic committees or winning election to various posts. Their wives hosted exclusive socials, either at the couple's ranch house or the one in town. Lore holds up these cattlemen as builders of the Texas frontier.

Several gigantic ranches emerged out of the need of speculators to legalize the claims they had assumed on the open range. In some cases, eastern and European investors eagerly subsidized a cattleman's purchase of open rangeland and cattle, or financed the amalgamation of smaller ranches into one huge ranchstead. Under this arrangement, ranchers provided the labor and shared the profits with their financial sponsors. By the late 1870s, "land and cattle companies" dominated more than half the rangeland and livestock in the South Plains and the Panhandle.

### "Redemption"

Following their legislative victory in 1872, the Democrats bided their time until the next general election, when they hoped to regain full control of the state government. When the gubernatorial race came around in December 1873, Davis again ran on the Republican ticket, while Richard Coke (Figure 6.14), an ex-Confederate, campaigned as a Conservative Democrat. During the campaign, Davis highlighted the programs he had initiated, whereas Coke and his followers talked of "redemption," of restoring strong states' rights, and of



**Figure 6.14** Richard Coke, Democratic governor of Texas, 1874. Courtesy of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

overthrowing the coalition of Republicans and freedmen. Even as Texas Democrats tried to keep blacks from the polls, the Republicans got out even more votes than they had in the earlier gubernatorial race of 1869. These efforts were, however, insufficient to fend off a Democratic victory. Coke took the election convincingly, outdistancing Davis in the vote count 100,415 to 52,141.

Davis readied to transfer his office to Coke, but on January 5, 1874, the Texas Supreme Court in the case of *ex parte Rodríguez* declared the election illegal because the polls had been open for only one day. (The 1869 Constitution stated that “all elections shall be held at the county seats until otherwise provided by law; and the polls shall be open for four days.”) The court’s decision had stemmed from an arrest involving a Mexican American named Joseph Rodríguez whom authorities in Harris County accused of voting twice (on two separate days) in the December election. Rodríguez’s lawyers maintained their client’s innocence, asserting that a law passed by the Thirteenth Legislature in March 1873 (designating only one day for elections) conflicted with the four-day provision in the state constitution—Rodríguez’s second vote was therefore immaterial, because it had been cast on a day when elections were not legally authorized. Democrats, in an exercise in hairsplitting, suggested that the semicolon made the second clause subordinate to the first, and that therefore the 1873 law mandating one-day elections was legal, and that Coke’s election should stand. The Republican court concluded that the semicolon in the sentence made the two clauses independent and, consequently, the legislature had not been empowered to alter the length of the voting period. Although the decision was probably legally correct, enraged Democrats thereafter derisively labeled the court the “Semicolon Court.”

Now Davis found himself in a bind. One option was to disregard the decision of the state’s supreme court and abide by the results of the election, but to do so would be to discount the judicial system’s role in governance. Instead, he wired President Ulysses S. Grant for direction. Coke and the Democrats, meanwhile, made it plain they would not abide by the court’s ruling, and they pursued plans to take over the government immediately. On January 13, 1874, they convened the Fourteenth Legislature, and two days later they swore in Coke as governor. When Grant’s reply arrived, informing Davis that he refused to get involved in the Texas controversy, Davis assumed the president was telling him to disregard the supreme court decision. The Radical governor thus formally resigned the executive seat on January 19, 1874. The Democrats’ resurrection and Coke’s victory spelled the end of Reconstruction in Texas.

The bearded and slightly balding Coke possessed a booming voice and often sported floppy felt hats and long-tailed coats. The new governor appealed to business interests, who recognized his moderate endorsement of railroad and industrial expansion, but also to a rural constituency. His perceived support for some agrarian goals won for him the undying loyalty of the Patrons of Husbandry, a farmers’ society better known as the Grange.

Coke and his Democratic supporters represented a group of politicians that has been described as southern Redeemers, for their goal was to “redeem” the South from Republican rule. According to their thinking, Republicans had destroyed southern prosperity and upset the region’s traditional racial relationships. They suggested that the agricultural depression of 1870, which grew into the industrial Panic of 1873, was the fruit of Republican misrule. The Redeemers’ solutions for the future included the endorsement of the “New South,” the concept that the South should emulate the North in some ways in order to industrialize. And the way to industrialize, according to New South advocates, was to hold down the expenses of government, lower taxes, and create an inexpensive labor supply. Such measures would attract northern investment and industry into the southern states.

## **The Constitution of 1876**

With the conservative Democrats back in power, a majority of the state's citizens wanted to erase all vestiges of Reconstruction, and they demanded the replacement of the Constitution of 1869. A new document, they figured, would reverse Republican successes on behalf of blacks and let the state return to the limited concept of government that had prevailed before the Civil War. Coke delayed calling a constitutional convention until 1875, citing lack of adequate financing. But after an 1874 legislative commission failed to revise the Constitution of 1869, Coke asked the legislature to submit a proposal to the citizens for the calling of a constitutional convention. In August 1875, voters approved the proposal, which called for a convention to meet in September, and selected three delegates from each of the thirty state senatorial districts to write the new constitution.

Of the ninety delegates who gathered in Austin, seventy-five professed allegiance to the Democratic Party. Five of the fifteen Republican delegates were black. None of the delegates had participated in the constitutional convention of 1869. Forty-one farmers (many of whom were members of the Grange) composed the delegation's largest single bloc, with twenty-nine lawyers constituting the second largest group.

Although, overall, the conventional delegation was not a particularly distinguished one, several of the delegates convened in Austin would go on to have distinguished political careers. John H. Reagan, who by 1875 had recovered from censure cast upon him following the uncovering of his Fort Warren letter, belonged to the Grange. Already elected in 1875 to the US House of Representatives, he would carve out a reputation for himself there and later in the US Senate as an expert on railroad regulation. Other well-known delegates included Lawrence Sullivan "Sul" Ross, a hot-tempered frontiersman and hero of the pre-Civil War Indian wars who would go on to become governor of the state and then president of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas. Also present at the convention were the distinguished Texas Ranger John S. "Rip" Ford and the future Populist leader Thomas L. Nugent.

The majority at the constitutional convention wished a general return to what might best be described as Jacksonian concepts of limited government and frugality. The delegates set the tone for the convention by authorizing salaries of \$5 per day for themselves, as opposed to the \$8 per day then received by legislators. In addition, the convention voted to keep no official record of its proceedings in order to save the costs of hiring a stenographer and printing the minutes. For a model constitution, the delegates relied on the Texas Constitution of 1845, which in turn had been heavily influenced by the earlier constitution of Louisiana and other similar documents written by Jacksonian Democrats. The concepts of frugality and antimonopoly particularly appealed to the farmers in the convention.

Although held together by past politics, those attending the convention did not vote in accord, especially on the significant issues confronting the state, namely economic development and social obligations. Diverse stands on such matters appeared throughout the proceedings, including fractioning within the Grange constituency. There were, for instance, delegates who believed government had a responsibility to promote private enterprise, something best accomplished by reducing taxes and limiting spending on social requirements such as education. A second group clashed with this reasoning, calling for a government commitment to both business activity and to ventures intended to realize an enlightened citizenry. A third element felt government should prioritize investments to fulfill social needs (among them schooling) and deemphasize attention to business growth. A last faction opposed any role for government in fostering business development or funding social services. These disparate elements would shift positions, form convenient coalitions,

and compromise on pressing issues to shape the final document. Consequently, the Constitution of 1876 included provisions that prohibited the state from chartering banks, empowered the state (if it should choose to do so) to regulate corporations and railroad companies, established a state debt ceiling of \$200,000, and put a strict limit on the maximum ad valorem tax rate.

One of the more heated controversies of the convention involved a proposed poll tax. Some Democratic delegates, particularly those from counties with sizeable African American populations, wished to require payment of the tax as a suffrage requirement, ostensibly to disfranchise black people (most of whom could not afford to pay a poll tax). But other delegates seemed equally committed to disfranchising white voting prospects. This latter element would include urban wage laborers who possessed no property and thus paid no taxes, but also uneducated members of society whom corrupt politicians might manipulate. Ultimately, a combination of delegates who came from counties in which the Republican Party posed no significant threat to Democratic control and others who wished not to see any responsible white Texans disfranchised defeated the proposal. The convention then went on to deny women, but not aliens, the right to vote. In short, the new constitution recognized only the Jacksonian concept of universal manhood suffrage.

The distrust of a powerful and expensive central government, one heightened by the depression of the 1870s and the skewed perception of Republican misrule, permeated the majority of the articles of the new constitution. The chief executive, or governor, received the traditional constitutional charge of responsibility for overseeing the execution of the laws but no real authority to do so; control of the executive branch rested with the electorate. The office of secretary of state was still a governor-appointed position, but voters would choose the other five members of the executive branch: lieutenant governor, comptroller, treasurer, commissioner of the land office, and attorney general. The governor could, of course, veto legislation, subject to the legislative powers of a two-thirds vote override, and was empowered to call special sessions of the legislature. The salary of the governor was lowered to \$4000 per year, and the term of office was cut from four to two years.

The general pattern of austerity in government and direct responsibility of public officials to the electorate was continued in other articles of the new constitution. The term of the thirty-one senators was reduced from six to four years, and the 150-member house of representatives would serve two-year terms. The framers chose biennial rather than annual legislative sessions, and they cut the pay of lawmakers to \$5 a day for the first sixty days of each session and \$2 a day thereafter. All judicial positions became elective rather than appointive, with district judges and those from lower courts serving for four years and appellate court justices serving for six. (The issue of partisan election of judges continues to be debated with regularity.) The Texas Supreme Court would accept appeals in civil cases, and the court of appeals would conduct criminal ones.

Most significant, the demands for economy in government and what was a backlash against Reconstruction produced judgments that shaped the future of education in Texas. Upset with the centralization and the expense of the public school system, many delegates to the constitutional convention argued that parents should bear sole responsibility for the education of their children. Family farmers, for their part, favored local educational control as a way to ease state finances and establish community schools with terms that corresponded to crop cycles. Whereas some delegates strenuously argued against any public support for education whatsoever, others understood the need for schools, as learned citizens would enhance the economic progress and modernization of the state. The new constitution, subsequently, authorized a \$1 tax on males between the ages of twenty-one and sixty

and reserved up to one-fourth of the state's annual revenue for public education. It made little provision for local taxes to fund community schools—cities and towns could levy school taxes only if two-thirds of taxpayers in the district approved. Although the new document eliminated the office of state superintendent and compulsory education, it mandated segregated schools. The Texas school system, already inadequate even by nineteenth-century standards, had received a weakening blow.

The convention did, however, endow a permanent school fund with revenue from lands previously set aside for the support of the public schools and added to this fund monies derived from the sale of one-half of the unreserved sections of the public domain. In a like measure, the convention took from The University of Texas the 3 million acres granted to it in 1858 and replaced it with 1 million acres of unclaimed land farther west. As luck would have it, this move placed some of the university's property over pools of oil, and this and later additions of acreage helped the permanent school fund accrue considerable monies.

The convention delegates adopted the new constitution in November 1875 by a vote of fifty-three to eleven. Few of the assembled seemed very enthusiastic about the document they had created, and the campaign over its ratification sparked little enthusiasm. Those who defended the document justified the public school provisions as necessitated by poverty and prior Republican extravagance. The Grange and most state Democratic leaders and newspapers did campaign for its ratification, however. Voters ultimately approved the new constitution by a better than two-to-one margin.

Despite the contemporary and later criticisms of the Constitution of 1876, it reflected fairly well the current political views of most white southerners. Shortly after their own "Redemption," Alabama (1875), Arkansas (1874), Georgia (1877), Louisiana (1879), North Carolina (1876), Tennessee (1870), and Virginia (1870) also adopted new constitutions. These documents differed in particulars, but all displayed a general distrust of activist government and a desire to limit its powers. Moreover, they all called for retrenchment in government services and expenses and placed ceilings on taxes (Unlike other Confederate states, however, Texas could count on its public lands as a source of revenue for economic development; by so doing it would avoid burdening citizens with heavy taxation.) In Texas, checks on the state government were written into the Constitution of 1876, so that most changes in government services and legislative powers could only be effected by an amendment reported out by two-thirds of the legislature and approved by the voters. Consequently, more than a century later, the state's citizens still serve as an awkward check on the legislative process by approving or disapproving amendments to the constitution that deal with matters that could best be handled by legislative action. Critics have maintained that the nineteenth-century constitution is one poorly suited to cope with the evolving industrial and urban society of present-day Texas. Texans seemed satisfied, however, with the awkward amending process and the archaic constitution. Two serious attempts to write a new and modern constitution, in 1919 and 1975, were vetoed by the electorate.

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## A Frontier Society in Transition, 1876–1886

Signs of a new modernity in Texas in the years following Reconstruction included a rise in the number of towns, a marked increase in the amount of railroad track laid, the growth of labor unions, and educational innovations. Yet several forces tied the state to its frontier roots. Most people still lived in rural areas. Towns remained basically small and agrarian, and the lack of good roads and modern forms of communication kept many people isolated. The population remained disproportionately male and young. This demographic reality helped fuel a frontier mentality. The persistence of a horse and gun culture, for example, led men to settle scores extralegally. Violence against lawbreakers and hated minorities (including Indians) continued much as it had in prewar days. With Reconstruction overturned, Texas politics settled into a pattern of heavy Democratic dominance, with low taxes, limited public services, and white supremacy as its hallmarks.

### The Texas Population

Texas grew dramatically after the Civil War. In 1860 the population of the state barely exceeded 600,000, but by 1890, more than two million persons called Texas home (Table 7.1). Most of those who relocated to Texas at this time were white southerners. Residents of states that had been devastated by the Civil War and post-1865 economic stagnation sought out another ex-Confederate state with cotton lands and similar racial attitudes in which to resettle. Texas had retained its public lands, and now it generously opened vast tracts of it to settlers willing to move. Thus (in descending order) Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Missouri, Louisiana, and Georgia sent the majority of the in-migrants to Texas. Only about 2 percent of the newcomers had arrived from New England.

During Reconstruction the state had encouraged immigration by establishing the Texas Bureau of Immigration (1871), but the Redemption government of 1876 abolished the agency. Nonetheless, other solicitations of immigrants continued. Private companies such as railroads, agricultural organizations such as the Grange, and local societies hired agents

**Table 7.1** Makeup of the Texas population.

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Urban</i> | <i>Rural (%)</i> | <i>Black (%)</i> |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1860        | 604,215      | 26,615       | 577,600 (96.4)   | 182,921 (30.0)   |
| 1870        | 818,579      | 59,521       | 764,058 (95.6)   | 253,475 (31.9)   |
| 1880        | 1,591,749    | 146,795      | 1,444,954 (93.7) | 393,384 (25.0)   |
| 1890        | 2,235,521    | 349,511      | 1,886,016 (90.5) | 488,171 (21.8)   |

and sent brochures to the Old South and Europe to recruit whites, whom they assumed would become independent farmers. One such agent, W. W. Lang, resigned as Worthy Master of the Grange in 1880 in order to accept the presidency of the Southwestern Immigration Company, and from 1881 to 1884 he remained in Europe trying to recruit immigrants to Texas. Though the success of Lang and other agents was limited, the state did add over 38,000 foreign-born settlers between 1880 and 1890.

The influx of new people did little to alter the previously formed cultural regions that had determined the course of prewar politics—North and north-central Texas mostly received settlers from the Upper South, and East and southeastern Texas those from the Lower South. From these areas, people eventually made their way into West and South Texas.

Numerous factors played a part in this growth. The pacification of the Indian peoples and their confinement on reservations outside the state removed a formidable obstacle for settlers pushing farther west. Cattlemen found new grazing areas in the rangelands of West Texas. Farmers followed the ranchers, bringing with them families and social institutions that gave the new settlements a degree of permanence. Railroad lines went hand in hand with the push southward and westward, helping to give birth to urban sites, which, in turn, furthered the stability of the developing culture.

### The Closing of the Open Range

The great post-Civil War trail drives had lasted only two decades. By the 1880s, railroad building had made it more cost effective to ship cattle to market than to drive them. Cattle lost weight on the trail, diminishing their price; the cost of provisioning trail hands kept rising; and Kansans—fearful of the Texas Fever that often arrived with northbound herds—began to enact laws that prevented Texas cattle from passing through their state. Furthermore, the long drives had upset the ecological balance of the land; the range could only support so many cattle, but ranchers continually overstocked it. Yearly, the pastures grew thinner and quantities of good grass dwindled. Then, after stockmen began importing barbed wire around 1874, fencing the range further reduced its grazing capacity. Finally, calamitous freezes and droughts in the mid-1880s dealt cattle ranchers from the Pecos River to the Panhandle a devastating blow from which some never recovered.

Its heyday passed, the cattle industry in Texas changed. Now ranchers divided the entire range with barbed-wire fences, carefully calculated how many cattle each pasture could sustain, supplemented their herds' dietary needs with special feeds, controlled the animals' breeding, and took a new interest in ranching methods then being introduced by stockmen's associations. Because Texas, alone of the western states, controlled its own public domain, investors with ample capital could amass mammoth landholdings. Charles Goodnight's JA Ranch by the late 1880s comprised 700,000 acres in Palo Duro Canyon, as well as enough fences, houses, corrals, and water tanks to maintain a ranch boasting 40,000

head of cattle. Thomas Sherman Bugbee enlarged his Shoe Bar Ranch in the Panhandle to 450,000 acres. In 1882, the Matador Land and Cattle Company of Dundee, Scotland, put up the capital to procure some 300,000 acres and a herd of 60,000 cattle in Motley County, and the enterprise grew into an immense empire. Across Dickens, Crosby, Garza, and Kent counties stood the Spur Ranch, a 439,000-acre spread owned by the Espuela Land and Cattle Company of London. The largest of the Texas ranches was the XIT, situated along the western boundary of the Panhandle, owned by a Chicago-based syndicate that received 3,050,000 acres from the state in payment for having built the new capitol in Austin in 1888.

Also changed was the cowboy's place on the range and in the popular imagination. Anglo and black cowboys sought work (often demeaning to them, considering their once trusted skills) wherever available. In South Texas, *vaqueros* became wage laborers, at times having to perform disgraceful field work. An era bygone, cowboys now acquired a new (and embellished) characterization. Instead of an overworked cowhand earning meager wages and toiling among disagreeable animals, the cowboy emerged as an independent figure, unencumbered by social restrictions, living on the open range amidst Indians, outlaws, and wild critters, and otherwise taming the badlands. Numerous mediums helped shape this romantic rendition. They included the dime novels (cheap tales of adventure sold at affordable prices and aimed at a youthful audience) of the late nineteenth century, western fiction penned by more professional writers in the early twentieth century, master artists who specialized in western scenes, and Hollywood films.

In its wake, the reign of the cattle kings left a settled region. Farmers had followed closely behind the ranchers, pushing forward the line of settlement. New railroads expanding west also lured many people, giving rise to towns planned by railroad promoters in blatant attempts to create new centers of commerce or get already established settlers to make financial contributions to their lines. Abilene (Texas), Sweetwater, Big Spring, Midland, and Odessa grew out of ventures negotiated by railroad executives and townsfolk wanting access to railroad service for their communities. On the northern frontier, similar agreements made directly or indirectly between railroad lines and groups of people produced such towns as Amarillo, in the Panhandle, and Lubbock, in the South Plains. El Paso, in extreme West Texas, increasingly attracted new arrivals from other parts of Texas and the United States following the completion in the early 1880s of four major railroad lines.

## Sheep and Goats

The first efforts to make sheep raising a viable concern in the State of Texas were undertaken by George Wilkins Kendall, a New Orleans journalist who in 1857 entered the sheepraising business in the Central Texas county that today bears his name. But the sheep-ranching industry—centered in the Rio Grande Plain, known by contemporaries as the Wild Horse Desert, and the section west of the 100th meridian—did not thrive until the decade after the Civil War. The Rio Grande Plain, an area of several counties encircled by the San Antonio River, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Rio Grande, supported more than 3.5 million Mexican-bred and Mexican-US cross-bred sheep and 323,000 goats by 1885, their products ready for market in Mexico, Europe, and the interior of Texas. Then, swiftly, the bottom fell out of the market. Overgrazing, prolonged droughts and hard freezes, and drops in the price of wool combined to weaken the sheep industry in South Texas.

Simultaneous with the expansion of the sheep and goat industry in the Rio Grande Plain, sheep ranchers and cattle ranchers moved into West Texas. In addition, by the late nineteenth



**Figure 7.1** Angora Goats on Pig Foot Ranch. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, the Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu>; credit Cattle Raisers Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.

century, the Edwards Plateau—the geographic area extending from west of the Colorado River and then southwest to the Pecos River—had surged ahead as a major producer of sheep (mutton) and wool; it also became known as an ideal region in which to raise Angora goats (Figure 7.1). Overall, there were more than 4.75 million sheep in Texas in 1886, ranking it second only to California.

After the boom years following the Civil War, the sheep and goat industry entered a period of reorganization and consolidation. In the twentieth century, it experienced alternating periods of decline and improvement, and investors succeeded in reaping considerable revenues from the sale of wool and quality mohair.

## **Violence and Lawlessness**

The violence and lawlessness that had characterized Reconstruction continued after the Democratic “Redemption” of the state. All racial and ethnic groups in Texas felt the effects of the rampant violence. Blacks living in East Texas communities experienced it in vicious forms. In some of the old plantation counties like Washington, Matagorda, Fort Bend, Brazoria, and Wharton white men in the 1880s used a variety of pretexts—among them the desire to dilute the strength of the black vote or drive black officeholders from power—to persecute blacks. Lynching or the threat of it by “white cappers” (white racist vigilantes) and loyalists to the defunct Ku Klux Klan was common practice.

Rape or other heinous crimes allegedly committed by blacks against whites also motivated wanton and savage cruelty. Although accurate figures on the lynching of blacks are lacking, the practice became more frequent in the 1880s, only to peak in the 1890s and continue well into the twentieth century. Equally gruesome forms of violence visited the Tejano community, especially in South and West Texas as more whites moved into the regions. In the charged atmosphere of the 1870s and 1880s, whites frequently lynched Mexicans on mere accusations of having murdered a white person. Suspicion of collusion with raiders from Mexico also proved reason enough to bring the wrath of whites down upon Tejanos. When Mexican bandits raided Corpus Christi in 1875, vigilante committees took to the countryside and brutally terrorized and murdered peaceable Mexican farmers and ranchers. Then, in 1891–92, when Texas-raised Catarino Garza used South Texas as his base for launching a revolution against Mexican President Porfirio Díaz, Texas Mexicans once more felt the sting of harassment, persecution, and violence.

Perceived threats to white supremacy also provoked whites to antagonize Tejanos. In numerous instances, Mexican Americans amassed to protest some misdeed or injustice perpetrated against their people. Such demonstrations, which in whites' eyes assumed the proportions of "riots" or "wars," invariably invited vindictive retaliation. In the El Paso Valley, for example, racial friction heightened in the 1870s over the nearby Guadalupe Salt Lakes, where border Mexicans had mined salt for generations to support themselves. When Anglo entrepreneurs arrived in the region in the 1860s, they sought to monopolize the trade. Animosity over the ownership of the lakes (situated some one hundred miles east of El Paso) peaked near San Elizario in the fall of 1877, when residents arrested Charles Howard, the principal Anglo claimant to the salt deposits, whom they released after he promised to permit Tejanos to continue to use the lakes. Hostility subsided following the initial skirmish, but disputes erupted anew in December, resulting in the deaths of Howard and four other Anglos and the surrender of a Ranger group that had been dispatched to the site. Then US Army troops, Ranger reinforcements, and volunteers from New Mexico descended on the valley and, through indiscriminate killings and atrocious acts committed against innocent people, put down what came to be called the Salt War, ending further free Mexican access to the salt beds. Similar episodes involving this type of white reprisal against Mexican Texans include the Alpine Riot of 1886, the Rio Grande City Riot of 1888, and two riots in Laredo, one in 1886 and the other in 1899.

Meanwhile, out on the western range, lawlessness presided. Clashes between cattlemen and sheepmen broke out frequently. Cowboys looked down on shepherders—especially on Mexican *pastores*, who performed much of the work. Cattlemen contended that as sheep crowded to graze, they trampled and ruined the range grass with their sharp hooves and also chewed the grass to the roots, thereby permanently damaging the range. Moreover, they claimed that the "woollybacks" emitted a certain odor that deterred cattle from feeding over the same grassland.

Cattle and sheep rustling intensified the lawlessness. Although it occurred throughout the state, rustling seemed most prevalent along the Mexican border. The so-called Cattle Wars, which followed the Civil War and lasted until the late 1870s, grew out of raids by Mexican nationals upon thousands of unbranded cattle that roamed the area between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande. Anglo Texan ranchers who moved into the region after midcentury claimed the free-roaming cattle and sheep as their own and incorporated them into their existing herds. Clashes between the Mexicans and the newcomers inevitably ensued. Lawlessness also existed in what contemporaries deemed "the bloody peninsula"—the lower part of Presidio County lying along the Rio Grande for a distance of sixty miles.



In both regions, Mexican nationals and a motley array of white ranchers, cattle rustlers, and cowboys repeatedly fought over the ownership of unbranded mavericks.

### The Return of the Texas Rangers

In 1874, the Democratic legislature resurrected the Texas Rangers to replace the state police force that they had eliminated the previous year (Figure 7.2). New laws established two units of Rangers: the Special Force under the command of Captain L. H. McNelly, and the Frontier Battalion led by Major John B. Jones. Routine assignments now given to the Rangers included collecting taxes, ensuring the safety of prisoners from vigilante mobs, maintaining the peace during sensational court cases, monitoring elections, acting as mediators in labor strikes, and enforcing quarantines against contagious diseases such as smallpox. Their more adventurous law enforcement tasks included protecting the frontier by fighting Comanches, Kiowas, and Apaches, suppressing cattle rustlers, tracking down outlaws, and arbitrating range wars. In the latter endeavors, they added to their reputation for bold courage in the face of danger.

Too often overzealous in enforcing the peace, however, the Rangers regularly overstepped the very laws they sought to enforce. Occasionally, they even violated international law by entering Mexico illegally. The Mexican tradition of *ley de fuga* (law of flight) became a standard practice, as Rangers killed many a prisoner who allegedly had attempted to escape. Society, however, tacitly consented to the Rangers' use of "all reasonable means" to make arrests. Texas law also allowed the Rangers to exercise "justifiable homicide" when attempting to thwart heinous crimes.



**Figure 7.2** Five captains and one major of the Texas Rangers. Among them (lower left to right) Capt. Sicken, Maj. John Armstrong, and Capt. Bill McDonald, ca. 1880. Source: Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, Waco, Texas (#P.80.342).

The Rangers frequently rode out to bring peace to the most notorious lawless regions. In 1877, three Ranger companies of the Frontier Battalion under Jones rode into Kimble County, a stronghold of cattle rustlers in West Texas, and initiated a general dragnet; they arrested thirty-seven bandits and cleared the area of desperadoes, many who were participants in the so-called Hoo Doo War that raged in Hill Country counties like Mason, Lampasas, San Saba, and Kimble. Equally bold in implanting justice was Captain McNelly. Despite his lean, 135-pound frame, McNelly stood up to the most feared bad men of Texas as commander of the Special Force of Rangers. He is credited with breaking up the organized cattle rustling across the Texas-Mexico border in the 1870s.

Despite their accomplishments, the Rangers have received kudos out of proportion to those bestowed upon other peace officers in Texas. Local agencies generally restored order without requesting aid from the Rangers. Uncounted numbers of sheriffs and deputy sheriffs in Texas distinguished themselves in the line of duty as they sought to bring law and order to their communities.

## **The Railroads and Economic Development**

Texas lacked wide, navigable rivers and had only 583 miles of railroad tracks in 1870. Except for coastal seaports and the town of Jefferson in northeastern Texas, reachable by steamboat via the Red River, most of the state remained landlocked. Inland farmers and merchants still relied on wagons and stagecoaches to move freight and supplies and for contact with the outside commercial world. The high freight rates and the slow service of ox wagons retarded the growth of commercial farming and related businesses. Most Texans knew that economic development of the state depended on the building of a railroad network.

The sizable financial subsidies that the Radical Reconstruction legislature had voted for railroads had proven unpopular with Democrats and Republicans alike. Most Texans, however, still wanted railroads to be built, and they recognized that government had a role to play in encouraging the railroad companies to do so. Now the legislature sought to promote railroad building by means that would not require higher taxes. The Land Grant Law of 1876 authorized the granting of sixteen sections of land to railroad companies for every mile of mainline track they completed. Under the provisions of this act and three special grants awarding certain companies twenty sections per mile of track, forty railroads received a combined total of 32,153,878 acres of land in return for building 2928 miles of track. Before the repeal of the Land Grant Law in 1883, the Texas and Pacific Railroad garnered more than 5 million acres of land, more than any other entity. Local communities also subsidized the construction of railroads by donating to railroad companies sites for depots and holding pens, giving them rights-of-way, paying bonuses to companies in return for choosing their town as a railroad stop, and granting them tax exemptions. Although prohibited by the state constitution from doing so, five counties and cities combined to appropriate almost \$1 million in public bonds for aid to railroads. Often, local civic organizations raised money through private subscriptions to entice railroads into their communities.

Railroad entrepreneurs promised almost instant prosperity to the communities that subsidized a route through their town, and local governments and citizens needed little urging to grant bonuses to railroads. A railroad siphoned off business from all areas not directly served by it, and local residents saw lower freight rates and expanding markets as a key to both economic and population growth. Indeed, the threat of a railroad to bypass a town might spell its economic doom.

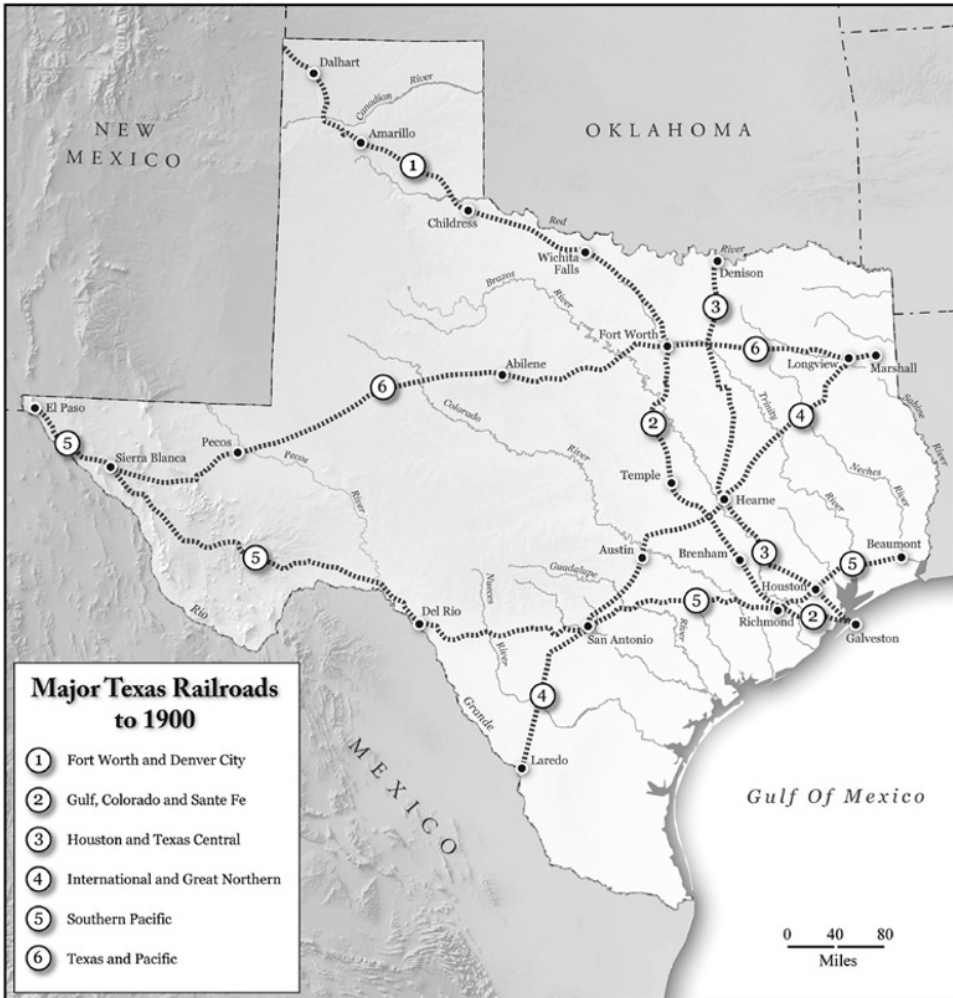
Historians continue to debate the wisdom and effect of the land grants to railroad companies. Certainly, private investments of eastern and foreign capitalists played an important role in the development of the railroad network in Texas, but this, coupled with the generous policy of public aid, allowed the expansion of railroads without the supervision of any state agency or a master plan for growth. Consequently, some areas of the state were overbuilt and others lacked any railroad facilities. Moreover, most transportation companies never prospered from the sale of the granted land. Many of them lacked sufficient capital, went into receivership, and ended up selling the land for a few cents an acre. And because railroad land had been awarded in alternate sections, the companies often had difficulty selling their lands to prospective buyers, many of whom preferred to buy contiguous tracts of public land. This forced some of the railroads to sell land at below the cost of surveying it. Indeed, through agents recruiting prospective settlers and massive advertising campaigns, railroad and land companies played a major role in the settlement of the West. Nevertheless, the Texas Pacific Land Trust, created in 1888 from the holdings of the Texas and Pacific Railroad, remained the state's largest landowner for a century.

Regardless of who financed their growth, the railroads quickly laid tracks throughout the state. In 1872, Texas ranked twenty-eighth among the states in total railroad mileage; by 1880, it had jumped to twelfth; by 1890, it ranked third. As predicted, population growth corresponded to the expansion of transportation services; in 1870, the population of Texas ranked nineteenth in the nation; in 1880, eleventh; in 1890, seventh. Figure 7.3 shows the major Texas railroads in 1900.

The Missouri, Kansas and Texas (Katy) Railroad reached Denison in 1872, and the next year, through the Houston and Texas Central, linked the Gulf Coast to North Texas (Figure 7.4). Now farmers received goods quickly from the Gulf Coast, and after the Texas and Pacific (T&P) Railroad entered the state (by 1875) they could ship their cotton through St. Louis and on to the East Coast. The Katy and the T&P spelled the end for Jefferson as a commercial center and strengthened the chances of a young and vibrant Houston to replace Galveston as the major Gulf port. The railroads moved west as the buffalo disappeared and whites displaced the Plains Indians. By 1881, Southern Pacific tracks linked El Paso to the rest of the state, and the Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe Railroad connected Galveston to Fort Worth, and eventually to the Panhandle. That same year the International and Great Northern linked Laredo with the rest of the state. This network of tracks united the Texas economy.

Railroad building spurred the development of other industries. In the heyday of railroad construction, companies bought vast amounts of lumber for ties, bridges, stations, temporary housing for workers, holding pens, cotton wharves, and freight platforms. The T&P alone in 1880 ordered 500,000 crossties. That year it also purchased 2000 tons of rails and spikes and employed 8000 laborers, who along with thousands of draft animals consumed tons of agricultural products. Cotton gins and agricultural industries followed the tracks, with many a Texas city owing its origin to once having been a railroad terminus.

But railroads proved a mixed blessing in Texas, as they did elsewhere in the nation. The developing commercial and trade network that followed industrial growth broke up old and familiar patterns of trade, which frequently had been community and family oriented. Now farmers and local businesspersons dealt with markets far removed from their region and with agents of trade and transportation who seemed both impersonal and impervious to local concerns. Even as the rail network neared completion, criticism of the railroad companies increased. Critics asserted that railroads discriminated between shippers, often charged more for short than for long hauls, granted free passes to political friends, gave rebates to



**Figure 7.3** Major Texas railroads to 1900.

preferred customers, signed pooling and monopolistic agreements, frequently gave poor or inadequate service, and used their considerable economic and political resources to prevent any legislation that would attempt to stop their abusive practices. Public funds had subsidized the railroads, and now that they had fallen short of the promised economic panacea, proponents of the New South and the railroads themselves became politically suspect.

The monopolistic policies of railroad management in the 1880s only fueled these suspicions. Collis P. Huntington of the Southern Pacific and Jay Gould of the T&P in 1882 organized a pool by signing an agreement to fix rates. Between their railroad holdings and lease arrangements with other lines, the two men controlled more than half the railroad mileage in Texas. Now they agreed publicly to joint use of the Sierra Blanca–El Paso line. Secret parts of the agreement, however, included possible joint purchase of competing lines, an understanding that the lines would not compete with each other, and a pooling of receipts. The secret provisions of the agreement would not become public until 1893, when the Railroad Commission acquired a copy of the agreement and released its contents.

A number of trunk lines or main rail routes organized the Texas Traffic Association in 1885, which announced as its purpose, the control of rates for traffic that originated in



**Figure 7.4** Kansas City Southern Passenger Depot, Port Arthur, Texas. Courtesy of OldFamilyPhotos.com.

Texas. Attorney General James Hogg won a court decree in 1888 dissolving the Association, which simply reorganized as the International Association, with its headquarters outside the state. For the next forty years, this monopoly or one of its successors would try to fix rail rates. This pooling device, along with a lengthy list of other abuses, explains shippers' charges of railroad corruption, which only increased in intensity as southern farmers became less prosperous. Particularly from 1882 onward, farmers demanded that the state create an agency to regulate railroads. Not until the rise of James Hogg to the office of attorney general in 1887, however, would that proposition receive an able political spokesman.

### **Public Land**

In 1876, Texas had a public domain of 61,258,461 acres. The land fell into two categories. First was the land assigned to the Permanent School Fund, which was endowed through the sale of "school land." As specified by the Constitution of 1876, this included half of all existing public lands, plus the alternate sections of the grants previously made to railroads, for a total of more than forty-two million acres. The remaining half of the unappropriated public domain could, at the legislature's discretion, be sold to retire the public debt or allocated to corporations (in practice, railroads) to encourage economic development. Governor Oran M. Roberts, concerned about the slow sale of land and citing the need to raise state revenue, encouraged the legislature to pass two laws in 1879 revising the method of dispensing public land. The price was set at \$1 an acre for school land, of which a purchaser could acquire up to four sections. The second act permitted the sale of all unappropriated public domain for fifty cents an acre, with no limit on quantity purchased.

The so-called Fifty Cent Law did less damage to prospective settlement of the frontier than its critics believed it would. During the law's tenure, the state sold less than two million

acres, and Land Commissioner W. C. Walsh blocked the sale of much of the land by interpreting the law to its narrowest possible definition. Indirectly, the Fifty Cent Law had a different influence on land settlement than expected: by depressing the cost of land, it forced some railroads and land-holding companies into receivership, allowing speculators to purchase tracts at deflated values.

Nevertheless, immediately after passage of the Fifty Cent Law, critics charged Roberts with selling off Texas's heritage to corporations and syndicates. Speculators heightened the controversy by claiming land, holding it for ninety days with no interest charges, and then, if they failed to find a buyer, simply turning the land back to the state with no penalties. Political dissatisfaction in 1883 led to a revision of the law. No more land was to be granted to railroads, and the public domain was reclassified according to agricultural, timber, or pastoral values: the former two sold for \$3 an acre and the latter for \$2 an acre. Now the legislature created the State Land Board to reclassify public land and ensure that settlers received priority over speculators. But the need for a general reorganization of public land laws led to the abolition of the State Land Board in 1887. From then on, the commissioner of the General Land Office administered the public land.

Some historians argue that Oran Roberts's unwillingness to try for a third term as governor stemmed from public discontent with his land policies. But his successor, "Ox Cart" John Ireland, who won his sobriquet as well as the gubernatorial nomination from his opposition to railroad land grants, had similar problems with the administration of the public domain. Indeed, the issue of the leasing of public lands generated quarrels between ranchers and the Land Board that led to, or at least intensified, the fence-cutting wars.

Technology had changed the western environment. The building of railroads into West Texas allowed the rapid transport of barbed wire into the area. Windmills, another technological innovation, made possible the utilization of shallow supplies of groundwater. Consequently, by 1883, cattlemen were fencing off their surface water sites in South and Central Texas and enclosing their pastures with barbed wire. In some cases, owners of large ranches also fenced off portions of the public domain, which they then leased or simply used as they saw fit. Settlers also used barbed wire to protect their crops and (any existing) water supplies. As a result, fence-cutting wars spread across the agricultural areas of Texas in 1883 and 1884, occurring in more than one-half of the organized counties in the state. The wars were waged by cattle ranchers against neighboring or competing cattlemen, between cattlemen and sheepmen, and by farmers who opposed the practices of both the cattlemen and the land-holding companies.

Law enforcement officers could do little to quell the violence and rampant destruction of property. Governor Ireland called a special session of the legislature to address the problem, and lawmakers responded with an 1884 law that made fence cutting a felony and required the building of a gate for every three miles of fence line. Furthermore, the law prohibited the enclosure of public land. Better law enforcement and public opinion that decried the lawlessness brought an end to the wars by 1890. But the fence-cutting strife had added to the perception that monopolies were closing off the public domain. In the Cross Timbers region, for example, poor farmers organized community networks of secret organizations that saw fencing as a threat to traditional republican values of land use and democracy. These fence-cutting, vigilante organizations may well have developed a class consciousness in their members that emerged later as third-party revolts.

The general policy of encouraging settlers to purchase land continued until the end of the century. By 1895, the price of land was reduced to \$1 an acre. Thus, from time to time, settlers could purchase tracts of from 40 to 640 acres (and in West Texas, four sections) with

interest rates of 3 to 10 percent. Until 1899, a married man could claim a 160-acre homestead, a single male one-half that amount. The homestead provision was designed for settlers who could prove three years' residence and some improvement of the land. The success of public land legislation was debatable. The actual number of settlers who claimed land in West Texas for themselves, rather than on behalf of large ranchers, was relatively small, for individual sales of land certainly exceeded the number of settlers in the area. Income from the sale of public lands did not solve Texas's debt problems. Speculators could purchase land from railroads and holders of Confederate veteran bonus certificates for fifteen cents or less an acre. The loss of land seemed a betrayal of the public school fund. And, finally, even if public land policies succeeded in encouraging settlement of the frontier and produced revenue for the government, the state failed to exercise careful management of its public domain.

As railroads opened public land for farming and other development, management of the land and the railroads' influence over it became political issues. East Texans, who held land in fee simple, would not ordinarily care what happened to West Texans or the western lands. But the fence-cutting wars and adverse publicity had made large ranching concerns, particularly those with foreign investors, seem to represent predatory, out-of-state monopolies. Although the geography of the area precluded the migration of small farmers to West Texas, the combination of large ranching enterprises and railroad land ownership there seemed to seal off the frontier as a potential safety valve. In short, so much land went to railroads and large ranches that the state's land policy seemed a hostage of the corporations and punitive to small farmers.

### **Lumber and Other Industries**

The rail network enabled the development of the lumber industry in Texas. The great yellow pine forests of East Texas grew on some twenty million acres of flat to gently rolling terrain that extended westward from the border of Louisiana. The mild climate of the area and ready availability of cheap labor made it ideal for a lumbering industry. Although small-scale lumbering had been carried out in the region since its early settlement, up to this point, the industry had relied on rivers to transport logs and rarely produced more finished lumber products than could be used locally. The 1870 census recorded slightly more than 100 million board feet of lumber cut in Texas, principally around Orange and Jefferson counties. Lumbermen floated the cut logs from the Piney Woods down the Neches and Sabine rivers to large commercial mills at Beaumont, Orange, or Houston. Boats then carried the finished lumber to coastal towns. Ox wagons took lumber into the Texas interior. In any case, the cost of such products for the average family was prohibitive. But railroad expansion changed the Piney Woods' economy. Pine trees, which farmers had always considered a nuisance, suddenly became a valuable commodity, as the arrival of cheap transportation coincided with the waning of eastern US pine sources.

The white pine forests in the nation's Upper Midwest had fallen to overcutting and a ruthless exploitation that left them depleted by the 1880s. Lumbermen now turned to the South for new sources of timber. Many consumers considered yellow pine inferior to its white counterpart, but the short supply of the latter and the increased use of southern timber soon eroded such prejudice. Indeed, the resulting timber bonanza pushed lumbering in Texas from a cottage industry into one that ranked first in the state's manufacturing economy. Lumber products led all other freight in tonnage transported by Texas railroads after

1875, and by 1890 more than 7000 Texans were employed in the lumber industry, producing products valued at \$14 million. Most of these products were used domestically until 1880, but thereafter entrepreneurs sent them to other states and overseas.

The burgeoning lumber industry lured eastern capital and experienced lumbermen into the state. Henry J. Lutchter and G. Bedell Moore came to Texas from Pennsylvania in 1877 and built sawmills near Orange. Their company continued as an economic force in the area well into the twentieth century. Other capitalists followed. Until 1883, entrepreneurs sometimes acquired their extensive timberlands at less than \$2 an acre. Land Commissioner Walsh and others forced the reclassification of pine forests from unproductive farm acreage to that of timbered acreage, but their assigned value still was only \$2 to \$5 per acre. The reclassification also did not solve the problem of cutting timber on school lands, a practice that continued throughout the nineteenth century.

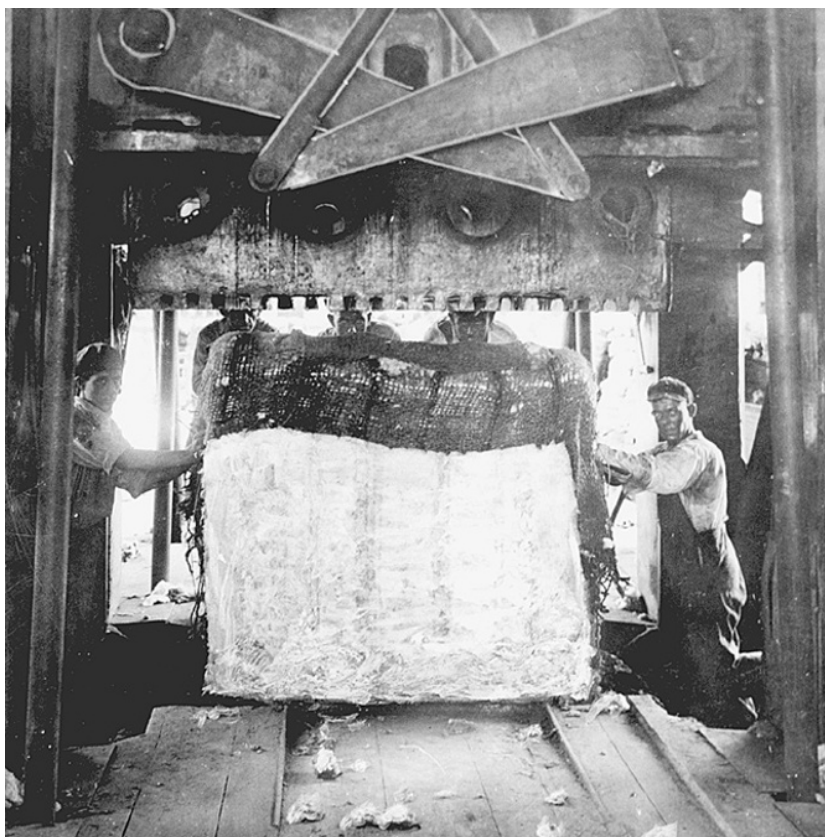
Other industries in the state in 1870 consisted of small shops or plants that served self-contained villages or surrounding agricultural areas. Smaller villages usually supported such enterprises as saw and grist mills, gun and saddlery shops, blacksmiths, dry goods and grocery stores, and sometimes cotton gins and presses. These industries resembled the modern craft shops and mostly drew on easily processed raw materials.

Larger communities might additionally support light industries such as foundries, which made plows, or have more than one flour mill that sold to regional markets. But even relatively major industries such as flour milling used a single process to convert a raw material into a finished product. Flour mills and sawmills fit into the frontier economy in that they could easily be packed up and moved in order to exploit new sources of raw materials or untapped markets. Railroads settled down these migratory industries, for transportation links allowed larger plants to erect permanent shipping sites, using the cheap transportation to integrate supply and marketing facilities. An integrated economy also applied economic pressures to local industries as larger, more efficient, urban establishments threatened to drive their small competitors—even far-flung ones—out of business.

Growth figures emphasize the changes in the Texas economy. In 1870, the average state manufacturing establishment had an investment of \$2200 and employed 3.5 workers; by 1890 the numbers were \$8887 and 7.5. Statistics further demonstrate the rapid growth of Texas manufacturing. In 1870, the total value of industrial products was \$11.5 million, less than one-fourth of the value of the state's agricultural products, and 2400 shops employed 8000 workers, or 1 percent of the state's population. Twenty years later the value of manufacturing rose to \$70.4 million, and 5268 establishments employed 39,475 workers, or 1.7 percent of the population. Finally, the value of manufacturing products that year equaled 63 percent that of farm products.

This rapid growth, however, hardly placed Texas in the front rank of industrial states. The national per capita value of manufactures was \$148.8 in 1890, as compared to Texas's \$31.5. One-third of the value of Texas manufacturing in 1870 was represented by flour and grist mills or local productive manufacturing units. The next-largest industries were lumbering, beef processing, carpentry, blacksmithing, and slaughtering. Lumber became the number-one industry by 1890, followed by flour milling, increasingly concentrated in large mills in urban areas. As in the case of grain-milling and animal processing, much of the state's manufacturing was directly related to agriculture. For example, cottonseed-products manufacturing ranked as the state's third-largest industry in 1890; the cottonseed mills now shipped their oil by rail in tank cars. Cotton ginning and compressing (Figure 7.5) also numbered in the top ten industries, as did saddle- and harness-making. The sort of heavy industrial manufacturing that was taking off in the northeastern states was still decades away in Texas.





**Figure 7.5** Cotton bale at Galveston before compression. Courtesy of Robert A. Calvert.

## Minerals

Industrialization in the late nineteenth century demanded coal and iron, of which Texas had little of high quality. Nevertheless, inferior grades of coal (with high slate and sulfur content) lay in the state, and as railroads in Texas increased in number, they often used local coal to stoke their engines. The first important ore discovery came in Stephens County in 1879. The next year, railroads purchased coal in Coalville in Palo Pinto County. A labor strike there in 1885 prompted railroads to concentrate their coal production at Thurber in Erath County, where the T&P coal company ran a company town. The value of coal production per year rose from \$1 million in 1870 to more than \$5 million in 1900, making coal the state's most valuable mineral.

Salt ranked second among minerals in the Texas economy at this time. Salt works or mines had dotted the Texas landscape and served local communities from the time of early settlement. When the Grand Saline plant opened in 1889 in northeast Van Zandt County, it tapped a solid vein of rock salt and soon dominated production in Texas.

Prospectors discovered some iron ores in East Texas, and entrepreneurs built foundries there. The Kelly Plow Company, near Jefferson, smelted iron to manufacture agricultural tools. The state prison at Rusk produced a limited amount of iron. In the late 1880s, an iron foundry briefly flourished at New Birmingham in Cherokee County, only to fail in the financial downturn of the 1890s. The great mineral discovery that would change Texas history—oil—was still several years away.

## **The Growth of South Texas**

In the aftermath of the war with Mexico, a small but meaningful influx of American and European civilians arrived in South Texas seeking to divest Mexicans of the land they held. Fraud played a part in the dispossession of Mexican grantees, but so did other factors such as Tejanos' inability to pay newly imposed taxes or ride out declines in the price of beef or prolonged droughts and reluctance on the part of independent ranchers to commercialize. Meanwhile, migration from other parts of Texas and Mexico into the region continued apace.

In the postbellum era, as wealthy markets in the northern United States spurred the demand for beef, ranching proved lucrative. Large enterprises, such as the Kenedy Ranch in Kenedy County and the famous King Ranch founded by Richard King, came to specialize in cattle raising, while other estates turned to raising sheep on the Rio Grande Plain. Close relationships developed between the successful ranchers and their employees. In return for work, ranchers provided their Mexican hands with essentials such as clothes, food, shelter, and ammunition. On especially large ranches such as King's, wherein resident employees came to be called the *Kineños*, a permanent workforce developed a close loyalty to the ranch.

In the 1880s and 1890s, however, a slow transition toward commercial farming began, and increasingly South Texas acreage was converted from ranchland to farmland; the process reached fruition in the early part of the twentieth century, one result of which was the deterioration of the former system of labor relations, as ranch hands became displaced wage workers. Meanwhile, new railroad connections to the region in the 1880s furthered its urban development. Corpus Christi, Laredo, and Brownsville all profited from the expanded lines.

### **Labor Unions**

Labor unions developed in response to the industrialization process. As large corporations grew and the anonymity of the workplace pushed aside traditional laborer–employer relationships, workers turned to collective bargaining. Early unions, then, represented more than the expression of traditional labor grievances. Workers joined unions to preserve some independence and control of their lives in the newly forming commercial-industrial world. Most immediate causes of work stoppages or strikes emanated from disputes with employers over wages and hours. On average, wage earners put in twelve-hour days, earning about \$12 a month for unskilled labor and upward of \$100 a month for skilled or craft work. The workweek comprised six days, seven in certain industries. And when economic downturns such as the depressions of 1873 and 1893 occurred, management tended to cut wages without a corresponding drop in workers' hours. Usually, employees either accepted employers' terms or left for other jobs. Such strikes as did occur often failed, leaving workers dispirited or unemployed.

Organized labor made little headway either in Texas or in the nation during this period because certain cultural assumptions limited the growth of unions. Most Americans considered a plant owner's ability to control wages and hours as an inherent right of property ownership. Strikes frequently fomented violence, and as such, they represented a threat to stability and order. Detractors of unions identified them with radicalism, which they classified as downright un-American: surely, they thought, the work of foreigners. In addition to

these negative views, union organizers in Texas encountered other obstacles. The state's frontier traditions had fostered a cult of individualism that distrusted interference with private property. Furthermore, most industries based in Texas relied on agricultural and extractive concerns, difficult to unionize because of their heavy use of unskilled labor. Finally, the state leadership exhibited an antiunion spirit fostered by the New South creed that sought to attract industry to the region by guaranteeing incoming businesses a stable and inexpensive labor force. Such a view allowed corporations to carry on union-busting tactics such as blacklisting, the hiring of strikebreakers (whom the striking workers called "scabs"), and relying on public officials to break strikes forcibly.

Although union activities in Texas dated back to the days of the republic, the first major labor organizations entered the state shortly after the Civil War. In 1866, Galveston longshoremen organized the Screwmen's Benevolent Association, a group of specialized workers who combined to request health benefits and financial aid for ill workers. The organization took a moderate stance, avoiding strikes and calling only one work stoppage—and that to protest the employment of black workers. Black longshoremen, under the tutelage of black businessman Norris Wright Cuney, formed their own union in 1882. By that time, the major Texas cities had typographical unions, some of which were probably affiliated locals of the International Typographical Union. The United Mine Workers entered the state in the 1890s, and it remained active in Erath County until the increased use of oil drove the coal mines there out of business in 1921. Local unions made little headway into the lumbering camps.

The Knights of Labor began nationally in 1866, and from 1878 to 1886, the organization enjoyed spectacular national growth. The *Dallas Morning News* reported in 1885 that the Knights claimed 30,000 Texas members. The union advocated boycotts and economic cooperatives rather than strikes, and it accepted women and African American members. Black people usually founded separate lodges of the Knights of Labor, but locals in some Texas cities accepted blacks into the main organization. David Black, an African American, served on the union's state executive board. The Knights were a true industrial union, admitting persons of all occupations except bankers, speculators, gamblers, lawyers, and liquor dealers. Therefore, some of its members were farmers and not necessarily committed to labor union goals. Most farmers, however, had no difficulty endorsing the union's call for such political reforms as a graduated income tax, the direct election of US senators, and other democratic measures.

Between 1881 and 1885, more than a hundred strikes took place in Texas, one of which involved 300 cowboys employed on big West Texas ranches. Despite their stated policies to avoid work stoppages, the Knights led most of these strikes. They won a dockworkers' strike against the Mallory line in Galveston, but they had a mixed success in the Capitol Boycott, which originally began when the state agreed that convict labor could be used to aid in quarrying stone for the new Texas State Capitol and in building a railroad from the quarry in Burnet to the construction site in Austin. The contractors, an out-of-state syndicate, also had turned to Aberdeen, Scotland, to recruit stone cutters. The Knights warned the immigrant workers not to come to Texas, but some did anyway. The union then agreed to furnish money for the prosecution of the contractors under the 1885 federal Alien Contract Labor Law, an act originally passed in response to union demands that immigrant workers be prevented from competing with domestic labor. Charges were filed against the Capitol Syndicate in federal court in Austin, and the contractors were fined. Republican President Benjamin Harrison, however, scaled down the amount levied against the syndicate on his last day in office, and immigrant workers continued quarrying stone for the capitol until the work was completed.

In the Great Southwest Strike (March–May 1886), the notorious railroad magnate Jay Gould seemed determined to break the Knights of Labor. Gould paid off federal and local public officials and employed spies in the union halls to look after his interests. After identifying a foreman in Marshall as a member of the Knights, the T&P company fired him. The union's district office, which had other grievances against Gould, responded with a strike that spread across the American Southwest. Violence occurred all along the line, particularly at switch junctures, where workers and strikebreakers clashed. After the battle of Buttermilk switch in Fort Worth between strike sympathizers and deputized railroad gunmen, Governor John Ireland sent in the militia and the Texas Rangers to maintain order and break the strike. Although Knights of Labor candidates swept the Fort Worth city elections a few days after the battle, court injunctions and criminal proceedings against hundreds of workers led many Texans to associate the Knights with wanton violence, and public opinion turned against the union. In May, the strike ended, with many of the Knights losing their jobs to nonunion workers.

The experience of the Knights in Texas in many ways paralleled that of the national labor movement: strikes occurred; public opinion at first supported the workers but, as the strikes lingered on and violence erupted and consumer services stopped, it eventually swung against the strikers; governmental powers (injunctions, national guard, or federal troops) were used to break strikes, and the union declined.

On May 4, 1886, at Haymarket Square in Chicago, police intervened to stop a protest meeting of anarchists and labor groups. During the melee, someone threw a bomb, killing seven policemen. Now, organized labor in general, and the Knights in particular, became labeled as radicals. Although no substantial connection was ever made between the Knights and anarchy, one member of the union, Albert R. Parsons, who had moved from Texas to Chicago, was unjustly accused of conspiracy to commit murder. He and three others were subsequently convicted and executed for having incited the Haymarket riot. Continued bad press and the failure of the Great Southwest Strike discredited the Knights, and by the early 1890s the union had only a few thousand members nationally.

## **Cities in the Late Nineteenth Century**

Table 7.1 reveals important characteristics of Texas's population growth during the post-Civil War era. As mentioned, the state started out and remained overwhelmingly agricultural. In 1860, 4 percent of the population lived in urban areas; this increased modestly to 10 percent by 1890. In 1890, Dallas and San Antonio stood in a virtual tie for the state's largest city, with Dallas at 38,067 and San Antonio at 37,673. Galveston, Houston, and Fort Worth rounded out the top five, with each of the three boasting fewer than 30,000 inhabitants.

San Antonio's antebellum role as a center of military installations and the point of departure for western expeditions continued into the last decades of the nineteenth century. The iron rail reached the city in 1877 and proved a catalyst to economic growth. By 1880, San Antonio had more than 20,000 inhabitants; a decade later the old Spanish municipality had almost doubled in size.

Houston, with a population slightly more than 9000 in 1870, began to surge ahead of other towns when, in 1869, the Buffalo Bayou Ship Channel Company initiated major dredging operations in Buffalo Bayou. With cotton still king in Texas, Houston in the 1870s became a major port for exporting the staple to manufacturing plants in the northeastern

United States and Great Britain. Its auspicious location facilitated its development as a focal point for the retail trade. The town's stores carried a variety of consumer goods and provisions as well as a range of stock ordered from as far off as New York or from nearby New Orleans. In addition to meeting local demand, merchants supplied goods to citizens living some ninety to one hundred miles to the northwest and west. By the 1890s, several rail lines replaced much of the shipping traffic through Buffalo Bayou, earning the city the motto, "Houston, Where Seventeen Railroads Meet the Sea."

Galveston, the largest town in Texas in 1870, with a population of 14,000, continued to grow. In the 1880s, it remained a major point of departure, as inland railroad networks expedited the conveyance of various raw products for export to overseas destinations and to factories in the eastern United States. During the decade, the town worked proactively to install telephone service (Galveston became the first town in Texas to acquire such an amenity) and electric lighting; to gain, following an aggressive public campaign, the site for University of Texas Medical School; and to achieve a building campaign that led to a flourishing business district and the construction of stylish homes. By 1890, Houston had nearly caught Galveston in terms of population, but it would take a tragic hurricane in 1900 to decide definitively the fate of Houston as the state's largest city.

The city of Dallas was transformed into a modern entrepôt in the early 1870s, when railroads came to town. With improved facilities for transporting goods to market, Dallas attracted the business of ranchers and farmers throughout North Texas. Farmers hauled their cotton to the city for shipment by railroads to out-of-state destinations. There followed the proliferation of cotton gins, textile factories, investment firms, banks, insurance companies, and related financial enterprises that made Dallas a modern entrepôt. Soon, Dallas evolved into a thriving hub of financial and cultural activity.

Before the Civil War, Fort Worth had survived as a minor trading station and stopping point on the way west, but the cattle trade of the 1860s and 1870s energized it. By 1870, some 300,000 head of cattle en route to Kansas passed through the outskirts of the fledgling community, and the arrival of the railroads there in 1876 and after enhanced Fort Worth's prospects for major-city status. By 1890, its population of 23,000 ranked it just behind Houston.

Texas cities lagged behind other US towns in urban and industrial development. Still crude towns in many respects, they lacked the fixtures of northeastern cities, such as tenement housing, distinct suburbs inhabited primarily by the wealthy, and systems of mass transportation (elevated trains, streetcars, and subways). Factories specializing in the mass production of clothing, shoes, and textiles likewise did not abound. Modern conveniences associated with urban living, such as electric lighting and telephone systems would not appear in most Texas cities until the end of the century.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Texas towns generally lacked the visible (European) ethnic enclaves like those found in northern cities. Of course, Texas drew immigrants from all over Europe, but its frontier orientation and the infancy of its cities restricted the growth of "Little Irelands" or "Little Polands." Immigrants coming into the larger Texas urban sites were subjected to Americanizing tendencies even as they sought to retain their native languages and customs. Germans, for instance, who constituted the largest European ethnic group in Texas cities, made their presence felt in Houston and San Antonio, operating German-language schools and newspapers even though they did not live in exclusively German neighborhoods. Other Europeans persisted in cooking favorite dishes and honoring traditional customs of their homelands, but the small concentration of any one group of immigrants (except Germans) forestalled the rise of (European) ethnic enclaves.

Also missing in Texas cities at this time were self-sustaining African American communities with their own business districts and professionals to serve them. As late as 1910, even Houston, with its geographical position and economy tied to the Old South, had no district clearly identifiable as a black one. Mainly black neighborhoods began to take shape during the late nineteenth century, but none of them were fully segregated until later in the twentieth century.

More fully segregated by ethnicity, however, were Mexican Americans, who lived in Hispanic neighborhoods called *barrios*. Predominately Anglo towns such as San Antonio and Corpus Christi had sections referred to as “*Chihuahuita*” or “*Laredito*.” Although they were largely poverty-stricken communities, barrios helped Mexicans perpetuate their own cultural traditions in ways that European immigrants could not, for the barrios were solidly Mexican, with new arrivals from nearby Mexico buttressing their numbers and linking them to the homeland. Small business districts existed in the barrios, though in many cases, the dire poverty of the enclaves prevented professionals from sustaining needed services, such as those of doctors and lawyers. In Hispanic South Texas towns such as Laredo and Brownsville, and in West Texas towns like El Paso, larger barrios displayed a semblance of self-sufficiency.

## Plain Living

In the post-Civil War era, Texans relied both on their adaptive capabilities and the surrounding physical environment to wrest a hard-earned livelihood from what was basically still a frontier society. People turned to the woodland, thicket, and brush for essential materials that could be used as fuel (for heating and cooking), or to make homes and household items such as kitchen utensils and furniture. They also looked to the environment for wild game such as turkeys, rabbits, quail, and deer, and fish from streams and rivers added variety to their table fare. Domesticated animals further enhanced diets. Chickens provided country folk with eggs; cows with milk, cheese, butter, soap, candles (from tallow), rawhide, and beef; hogs with ham, bacon, and lard; and sheep with wool and mutton. Garden plots yielded potatoes, peas, beans, and an assortment of other vegetables, while the fields plain-folk cultivated bore the cotton they needed to make clothing and useful items such as bedclothes and curtains.

Even in the settled regions of the state, isolation prevailed, and it was even more pronounced in West Texas, where modern means of transportation hardly existed (Figures 7.6 and 7.7). But wherever they resided, settlers did find ways to socialize and thereby mitigate the effects of the distance between communities. Popular occasions for interacting with neighbors or newcomers to an area included quilting bees and house-raisings. In the former, women gathered to sew patchwork quilts, for personal use or as a contribution to some worthy cause. Men, on the other hand, might volunteer their labor to build a house or a barn for a newlywed couple or a recently arrived family in the region.

Settlers also found relief from their general isolation in religious gatherings. In remote areas, people traveled by wagon or on horseback to the nearest service, whether that was held in a tent put up by an itinerant pastor or a community schoolhouse in which the teacher doubled as a minister. Town churches might have offered parishioners relatively comfortable seating, but the usual amenities elsewhere consisted of makeshift pews constructed from logs or rough lumber. Church picnics or dances also afforded Texans the opportunity to get acquainted with neighbors, court a prospective spouse, and, generally,



**Figure 7.6** Stagecoach at Concho Mail Station, Tom Green County, 1879. Courtesy Fort Concho National Historic Landmark, San Angelo, Texas.



**Figure 7.7** Mail station in Concho Country, West Texas, ca. 1870s. Courtesy Fort Concho National Historic Landmark, San Angelo, Texas.

take a sorely needed break. Overall, Texans apparently found the conservative Protestant sects most attractive. By the last three decades of the nineteenth century, the Baptists and Methodist churches exceeded others in the number of members and congregations.

## Agriculture

The expansion of railroads encouraged Americans to leave other southern states to settle what remained of Texas's frontier. This migration bypassed the fertile, well-watered lands of East Texas for the marginal farmlands of the Cross Timbers and farther west to the Panhandle, an area which never seemed to get enough rain.

This westward migration testified to the commercialization of agriculture. At first glance, an observer might have categorized the economic change as one of expanding the farming frontier. But it signified more: it was the triumph of commercial over subsistence agriculture and of cotton over all rival crops. Table 7.2 best illustrates the story of commercial farming in Texas in the final decades of the nineteenth century.

Now agricultural reformers urged Texas farmers to diversify. Theirs was a typical New South argument: diversification would lead to self-sufficient farms, which would allow landowners to be politically independent; scientific farming and crop rotation would

**Table 7.2** Dollar value of Texas crops.

|        | 1870 (\$)  | 1880 (\$)  | 1890 (\$)  | 1900 (\$)   |
|--------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Wheat  | 391,886    | 2,441,918  | 3,589,442  | 7,592,852   |
| Corn   | 10,153,941 | 11,509,808 | 34,940,748 | 39,259,415  |
| Oats   | 297,439    | 1,761,609  | 5,334,496  | 6,241,192   |
| Cotton | 21,212,994 | 39,458,916 | 63,263,400 | 107,510,010 |

preserve a family farm, avoid soil depletion, and prevent white sharecropping. The argument assumed that African Americans would not prove successful small farmers (thus the push for white immigration) and that nonspecialized farms would recapture the prosperity of the 1850s, a boom period in agricultural history. The New South reformers blamed the poor agricultural prices from 1870 to 1877 on Reconstruction, and they promised a return to prosperity once Democrats restored economic stability. The problem with this scenario, however, lay in the new technology. Better access to markets (through railroads) and improved agricultural implements and techniques soon led to overproduction, which naturally caused the world prices for staple crops to drop during the period. Nevertheless, many farmers wished to produce a commercially viable commodity, and growing cotton seemed their best bet. Cotton was less susceptible than were other crops to drought; it exhausted the soil the least; it brought the highest cash price; and it was the most adaptable to extensive agriculture. It fit the already existing farming habits of new settlers from the Upper and Lower South. Finally, it coincided nicely with the national drive for agricultural specialization.

Despite all the reasons that made it attractive to farmers, growing cotton brought prosperity to very few Texans; instead, the rate of tenant farming increased. Tenancy had existed on a limited scale in the South before the Civil War, as there always had been a capital shortage in farming. But the severe lack of financial resources after the Civil War necessitated bringing together an abundance of land with a cheap labor source, and the number of tenants exploded. Originally, cotton planters assumed that only African Americans would work the cotton fields, and sharecropping (one form of tenancy) effectively bound the freedpersons to the land. Ironically, many recently emancipated blacks opposed the wage system, seeing sharecropping as an alternative for advancement and a way to avoid the constant supervision of whites that they had endured under slavery.

Sharecropping, simply defined, was the exchange of labor for supplies or the use of land. In this arrangement, the rent for the land and the cost of the supplies (plus interest) would be paid for by the profits on the cotton crop. The crop lien, a mortgage on the growing crop, guaranteed the furnishing merchant, the person who furnished the supplies and foodstuffs for the farm family, a percentage of the crop grown plus the right to market the crop until all the costs of the supplies were repaid to him. One common sharecropping arrangement, "farming on halves," meant that half of the revenue the yearly crop produced went toward the rent, while the other half was pledged to pay off charges rung up with the local store owner or landlord, who might well be the same person. The difference between the bills owed to the furnishing merchant and the cotton sold was the sharecropper's profit, which, of course, might actually be a negative sum.

For this system to work well for the sharecropping family, the price of cotton had to rise. Instead it dropped, from 16.5 cents per pound in 1869 to a low of 5.7 cents per pound in 1898. Yet the rate of tenant farming went up, constituting 37.6 percent of Texas farming in 1880 and 41.9 percent in 1890. Under this system, independent farmers mortgaged their



land to furnishing merchants and lost their land once bills for supplies exceeded money paid for crops. Tenancy was also biracial; in the age of agrarian discontent, white folks and black folks were becoming impoverished together. Probably no crop could have broken the tenant–farming cycle. In order to improve their condition, farmers needed long-term credit, controlled markets, larger farms, low interest rates (it has been estimated that interest rates on some sharecrop liens may have been as high as 150 percent), and some way to control the prices of machinery and land.

## **Education and Other Public Services**

The reform of public education and other badly needed social services in Texas required a dynamic government, one capable of cooperating with the marketplace to raise revenue and fund public projects. But the philosophy of the state government from 1876 to the mid-1880s supported no such action. Citing the \$3,167,335 state debt in 1874, the New South advocates argued that only an economically conservative government could erase it, and that prosperity would come only after the state escaped from Republicanism and had attracted more corporations. Meanwhile, revenue realized from the sale of the public land was largely squandered, and the need for charitable and benevolent institutions, which cost money to found and operate, was ignored in the first several years following Reconstruction. The state, however, did establish the Terrell State Hospital for the mentally ill in 1883, and shortly thereafter the legislature authorized the State Orphans School (1887), The Texas Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School for Negroes (1887), and the San Antonio State Hospital (1889) for mental patients.

## **Prisons**

This minor gain in state services was not matched by one in the state prison system. Governor Oran Roberts believed that pardoning convicts and making prisons self-sufficient might solve the problems of overcrowded and inadequate correctional facilities. But self-sufficiency was difficult to achieve. The general population of the state had tripled between 1865 and 1880, and efforts to end lawlessness in West Texas contributed to a rapid growth in the potential number of prison inmates. No one came forward with a comprehensive plan on how to handle the increased number of prisoners. From 1871 to 1883, the state used a form of convict leasing whereby private individuals leased and operated the Huntsville penitentiary and could employ the convicts in whatever economic endeavor the lessee desired (Figure 7.8). State inspectors were to see to it that the prisoners were not abused, but there were always too few inspectors and too many convicts working on far-flung farms, railroads, and other enterprises for effective oversight. Meanwhile, the death rate of prisoners increased markedly, as did the number of escapes. The system was modified in 1883 to contract leasing, whereby the state controlled the prisons but hired out its shops and convicts to private entrepreneurs. This system, too, was inefficient, if self-supporting, and agricultural and union organizations opposed it because it drove down wages. Although some citizens and lawmakers complained of the brutality of the lease system, the main question was one of profits. There seemed to be no overall plan or guiding philosophy for the criminal justice system, except that it not impose a burden on the state's taxpayers.



**Figure 7.8** Prisoners, mostly black, at the stone dressing area of the quarry at Marble Falls, ca. 1880. The Texas State Capitol was built from this rock. Courtesy of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

## Education

Education fared slightly better. The Constitution of 1876 turned the matter of education over to local communities. These communities had no direct taxing powers, but they could draw on their share of the common school fund, composed of monies realized from the sale of assigned lands and a \$1 annual tax on adult males. The schools were segregated by law, which until 1890 specified that black schools must have equal access to the school fund. But there are records of too many complaints of poor training and supplies for African American students for there to have been equal distribution of funds to black schools. Although illiteracy figures for blacks did drop from 75 to 45 percent in the period, Texas ranked fifth among southern states in enrollment of black schoolchildren.

Reform groups attacked the inadequate schooling of all children and asked that the state take control of education. The matter boiled to the surface in 1879 when, citing public debt, Governor Roberts vetoed the school appropriations bill. Public indignation followed, forcing a constitutional amendment in 1883 that allowed the state to support public schools and authorized local school districts to levy taxes. The next year, the legislature passed the Law of 1884, which completely reorganized the public school system. The law mandated a partial return to a centralized education system with an elective state superintendent, county school districts under the supervision of county judges, teacher certification, and regular record keeping. It further provided that local districts could tax themselves to support the common schools. However, some fifty-odd school districts were exempt from this law. These “independent” districts already had successfully functioning schools, frequently maintained by a local civic organization. Under the new law, the period of required school attendance for Texans was raised from ages eight to fourteen to ages eight to sixteen.

The success of the Law of 1884 was debatable. The rural character of the state and its rapid increase in population created a scattered settlement pattern, and small farming areas had trouble establishing educational leadership or a viable tax base. City schools, with a permanent population base behind them, offered a much better education than did rural ones. In 1900, urban school districts spent an average of \$8.35 per child, whereas rural school districts appropriated less than \$3.34 per child. The school year for urban children consisted of 162 days, compared to 98 days in rural districts, and city teachers earned almost twice as much as their country counterparts. Nevertheless, the Law of 1884 laid a basis for the school system that had been dismantled in 1876. The legislature, urged on by citizens and such reformers as Barnas Sears (the first general agent of the Peabody Fund, a northern philanthropic agency) and O. N. Hollingsworth (secretary of the State Board of Education) would continue to grapple with educational problems.

Higher education in Texas enjoyed better success. The first public college, the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, opened its doors in 1876 as a result of the Morrill Act of 1862, by which each state received funds from the sale of federal public lands in order to establish a college for practical training in agricultural and mechanical arts. Authorized by the legislature on April 17, 1871, and located near Bryan, the college was originally designated as a branch of the not-yet-born University of Texas. The Morrill Act required that the all-male school provide military training. Farmers complained early on that the school taught too many liberal arts courses and too much military drill. Led by A. J. Rose, worthy master of the state Grange and chair of the board of directors of the college, the proponents of A and M College eventually won the support of rural Texans. The Texas Agricultural Experiment Station began in 1888. It aided Texas agribusiness and helped validate scientific agriculture for farmers. Lawrence Sullivan Ross, the former governor of the state, took over the college presidency in 1891. His political acumen earned higher appropriations for the college and increased its credibility.

The University of Texas (UT) was chartered in 1839, when the republic passed an act that set aside 231,400 acres of land for two universities, but the Civil War, Reconstruction, and controversies over public lands delayed the opening of the university. In 1880, the State Teachers' Association sent a report to Governor Roberts with a plan of organization for the university. The legislature responded the next year and provided for the establishment of the school. Voters picked Austin as the site of the main campus and Galveston for the medical school. The former commenced classes in 1883 and the latter in 1891, when it replaced Texas Medical College. Ashbel Smith, a pioneer in Texas education, served as the first president of the UT board, and O. M. Roberts, the former governor, as professor of law and the first head of the law department. The university was to be financed by general revenues as well as the Permanent School Fund, which derived from the sale or lease of fifty of the leagues granted in 1839, 1 million acres granted by the Constitution of 1876, and a second million in 1883. The legislature appropriated no maintenance funds for the school until 1889. By the end of the century the university had both academic and law departments.

By law, Texas A&M could not admit black students. The legislature provided for a Negro agricultural college in 1876, but a lack of demand for an agricultural education for blacks prompted it to become a college for training teachers. Named the Prairie View Normal Institute, it opened in 1879 under the control of the Agricultural and Mechanical College's board of directors. Ten years later, industrial arts had been added to Prairie View's curriculum.

Sam Houston State Normal School, restricted to white students, began operation in 1879 in Huntsville, Texas. When the Peabody Board offered the state \$6000 in matching funds

to establish a model teacher-training college, Huntsville donated the site. Sam Houston State served as the institutional guide to the other normal schools, which were governed until 1949 by a single board of regents appointed by the governor.

## **Politics**

A number of factors explain the conservative control of Texas from 1875 to 1891 and the supremacy of the Democratic Party. Past allegiance to the Confederacy blended with the New South's creed of celebrating the past to create an almost religious devotion to "The Lost Cause." The period featured the rise of fraternal organizations based on Confederate symbols, and these organizations and their local communities sponsored ex-Confederate picnics, holidays, and funerals—all designed to honor the Confederate dead and their cause. To choose a Republican or a third-party candidate over the official Democratic nominee in an election meant for white voters a repudiation of the party of their fathers. So strong was this sentiment among white Texans that the cultural heritage of the "Redeemer" Democratic Party would linger long after the post-Reconstruction period had ended and the nineteenth century yielded to the twentieth.

Furthermore, party machinery and election laws worked for the benefit of Democratic conservatives. Democratic nominees for state and national offices were chosen by state nominating conventions composed of local party members. Political power brokers sought compromise candidates who would appeal to these delegates, usually local elites, and thus Texas's nominees were frequently even more conservative than the constituencies at large. The party leadership would then use party unity as a rallying cry to defeat any Republican or third-party candidates who challenged the Democratic nominees in the general elections for state or federal offices. Local elites usually controlled regional politics and captured local offices. They could meet as an unofficial group and nominate a slate of delegates to county party conventions, which, in turn, sent the delegates to state nominating conventions.

Sometimes, either through lack of party organization or because an independent or third-party challenger actually bothered to run, these Democratic machines lost a contested election to an outsider. The elites, however, usually kept a tight rein on the election process by occupying the offices that certified voter eligibility and vote-count totals. The state had no voter registration law until 1891—which originally applied only to cities of 10,000 or more people—and no secret ballot until the twentieth century. This skewed setup encouraged local Democratic bosses to use fraudulent methods to fix elections for themselves and their subordinates.

Finally, the agrarian wing of the Democratic Party, which called for extensive reforms such as railroad regulation and expanded state services, also favored keeping taxes low. Consequently, Texas farmers were divided over how much reform legislation was needed and whether to achieve their goals within or outside of the Democratic Party.

### **Conservative Democratic dominance**

Governor Richard Coke was unanimously renominated by the Democratic state convention in 1876. He won support from rural progressives, who saw him as the man who had defeated Reconstruction, as well as from entrepreneurs, for his promise to entice more railroads and corporations into the state. Citing, as usual, the need for party unity, the convention

renominated Lieutenant Governor Richard B. Hubbard, who lacked the personal appeal and popularity of Coke. The general election to choose state officers was a landslide for the Democrats. When the newly elected legislature convened in Austin, it turned first to selecting a US senator to replace the Republican incumbent, Morgan C. Hamilton, who had completed his term. Coke announced his candidacy and, upon his selection, resigned the governorship in 1877 to serve as one of Texas's US senators (until 1895). The other US senator, Samuel Bell Maxey, who openly bragged of his support for secession, held office until 1887. Then Congressman John H. Reagan, who had fought for years for a law to establish a federal Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), saw legislation enacted that year to do so, and he announced that he was ready to move to the Senate. In a close campaign, Reagan garnered enough support in the legislature to unseat Maxey. Reagan served in the upper house until 1891, when he resigned to serve as the head of the newly created Texas Railroad Commission.

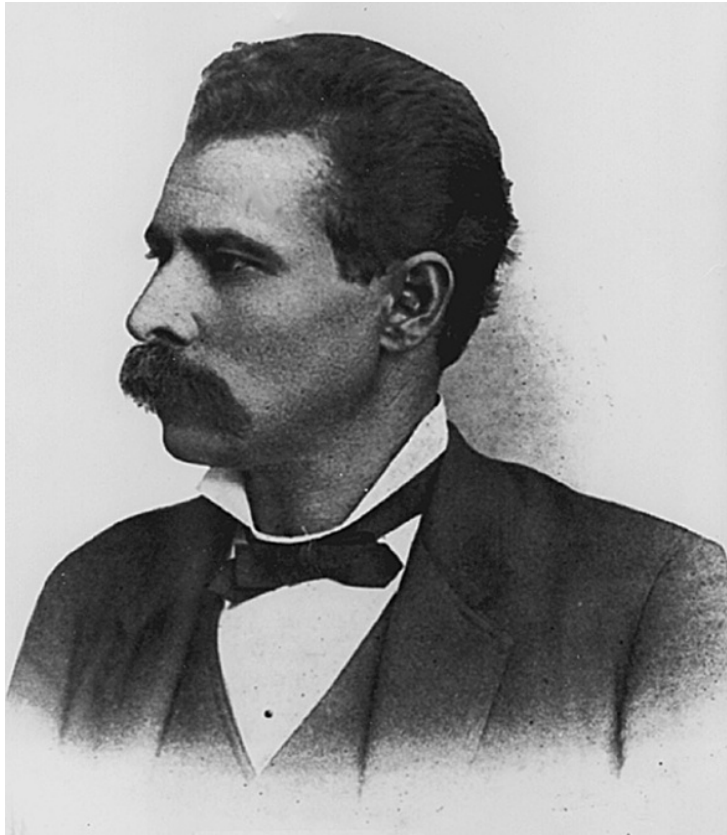
Although Lieutenant Governor Hubbard had ascended to the governorship after Coke's departure, he soon faced criticism for his failure to pay off the state debt, and several challengers came forward to contest him at the 1878 nominating convention. Now the delegates turned to a compromise candidate, nominating for the gubernatorial spot Oran M. Roberts, chief justice of the state supreme court. Roberts, representing the conservative wing of the Democratic Party, handily won the general election. He served two terms as governor but refused to try for a third. Nevertheless, the conservative Democrats continued to control state politics through the successive administrations of Governors John Ireland (1883–87) and Lawrence Sullivan Ross (1887–91). These conservative chief executives brought no substantial reform to the state's economic system.

Possibly the major accomplishment of this time occurred during the Ireland administration, when the Texas State Capitol in Austin was completed. The legislature appropriated 3,050,000 acres of land in 1879 to finance the building of a new capitol. The state then awarded the construction contract to an English company, which hoped to profit from its work through the sale of its appropriated lands. In May 1888, the beautiful new building opened officially. Modeled on the capitol in Washington, DC, the structure is classical in design and shaped like a Greek cross. Meanwhile, the English syndicate, unable to find buyers for the vast public lands it had acquired, eventually used the grant to establish the famous XIT Ranch.

For the poor and the dispossessed, the conservative Democratic governors failed even to raise any issues of significance. In order to find anyone who would fight for meaningful political changes for the underclass, one needs to turn to the period's opposition parties—the Republicans and the Greenbackers.

### **The challengers**

The Republican Party had reached its zenith of power, if not size, during Reconstruction. Black voters composed the majority of the party's constituency. No suffrage restrictions came out of Redemption, and approximately 50,000 blacks voted in 1886. After the death of E. J. Davis, Norris Wright Cuney (Figure 7.9), an African American from Galveston, claimed the leadership of the party because of his influence over black voters. Cuney, an able leader, served as sergeant-at-arms in the Twelfth Legislature (1870–71) and as collector of customs for the Port of Galveston from 1889 to 1893. Political patronage and shrewd leadership protected his position in the party. Some white Republicans resented black Texans' domination



**Figure 7.9** Norris Wright Cuney (R). Source: CN01074A, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, the University of Texas at Austin.

of the party and organized so-called lily-white factions, which hoped to seize the patronage plums that the national Republican Party dispensed. The lily-whites, therefore, favored no fusion with any other party. Nonetheless, the strength of the state Republican Party lay in the Black Belt of East Texas and Gulf Coast. From Redemption to 1898, voters from those regions elected approximately sixteen state legislators and numerous local officials. Whites modified the election code in 1879 to forbid the use of colored paper ballots, thereby eliminating the Republican Party's easy identification of a "straight ticket" by illiterate voters, blacks and whites. Also, by the mid-1880s, various counties organized white men's associations, which often used intimidation and election fraud to preclude the election of African Americans to local offices.

The Greenback Party was the first third-party challenge to the Democrats' political hegemony. The new party was organized in response to federal monetary policies that were causing a drastic contraction (or deflation) of the nation's money supply. The roots of the problem lay in the Civil War. During the war, the US government had taken the radical step of taking the nation off the gold standard. To meet wartime needs for money, the government had issued paper money, nicknamed "greenbacks," which were not backed by gold in the US treasury. The greenbacks had caused some inflation, but they had also allowed for a rapid expansion of the economy. When the war was over, Wall Street bankers, who had financed much of the war effort, wanted to be repaid not in greenbacks but in gold, which was more valuable. Indeed, they owned millions of dollars in greenbacks, which they hoped

to be able to redeem at face value in gold. In 1875, Congress responded to their demands by passing the Specie Resumption Act, which would return the nation to the gold standard by 1879. When the United States did return to the gold standard, the amount of money in circulation declined precipitously, which caused interest rates to skyrocket. Farmers were particularly hard hit by these developments. High interest rates were only part of the problem; ongoing deflation of the currency also causes dollars to become more valuable over time. Because most farmers had to borrow money at the beginning of the year in order to finance the coming year's operations, the end of every year found them having to repay their loans in dollars more valuable than the ones they had borrowed. In essence, on top of the already high interest rates, there was an additional hidden interest rate caused by deflation. The Greenback Party's goal was to reverse the policies that were leading farmers to the brink of financial disaster.

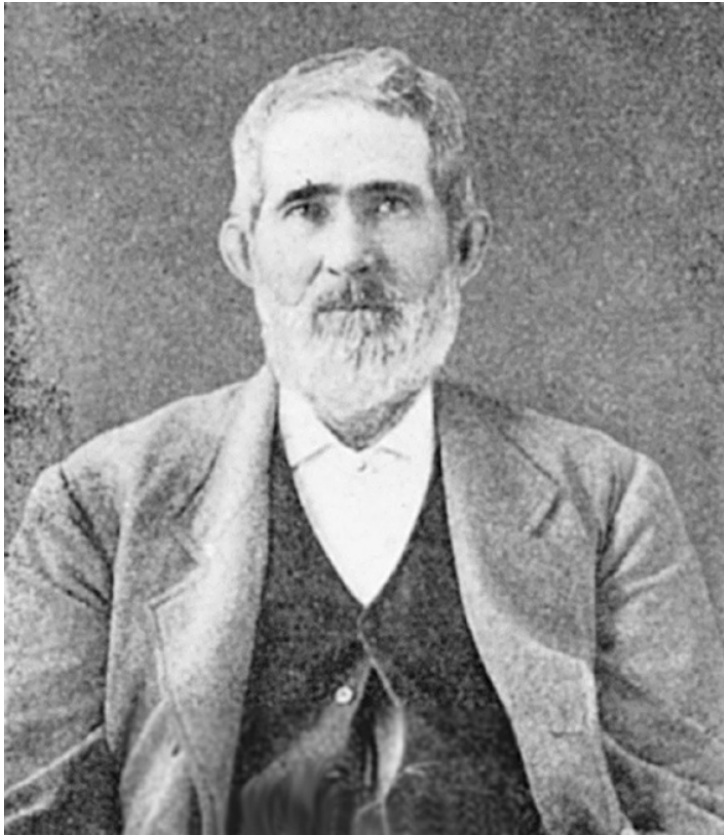
The Greenbackers recruited from the more-radical farmers in Texas and courted fusion with the Republican Party. The Greenbackers specifically proposed that the federal government issue greenbacks until at least \$55 per capita were in circulation, arguing that this inflation of the currency (then estimated at \$35 per head) would drive the price of agricultural commodities up by about one-third. Nationally, the Greenbackers also advocated an income tax, an Australian or secret ballot, direct election of US senators, and, in Texas, railroad regulation, a better school system, elimination of convict leasing, a reduction in the salaries of government officials, and the wholesale elimination of useless offices in state government.

The Greenback Party held its first convention in 1878 in Waco, with the delegates nominating William H. Hamman for governor. Roberts easily defeated both Hamman and the Republican nominee, A. B. Norton. Greenbackers did, however, win ten seats in the legislature and elected George W. "Wash" Jones (Figure 7.10) of Bastrop to Congress. Hamman received the Greenbacker nomination again in 1880. E. J. Davis, who had supported fusion with the Greenbackers in 1878, agreed to head a separate Republican ticket in 1880. The Democrats simply renominated Roberts, who won again by a wide margin.

Greenbackers, now a distant third in voter support, retained some strength in East Texas, the Cross Timbers, and other poor, white, farming counties; Republicans, meanwhile, continued to run well in the Black Belt. Increasingly, an alliance of the Greenbackers and the Republican forces made political sense, and the two parties fused in support of "Wash" Jones's race for governor in 1882. Jones, an excellent campaigner known for his oratorical skills, put some excitement and personal charisma into an otherwise drab political period. Having always been a political maverick—a Unionist who served in the Confederate army, a Democratic lieutenant governor from 1866 to 1867, and now an independent—Jones ran on an appeal to economic and racial out-groups. Although he lost the general election to Ireland, it was the closest such contest of the decade. Nevertheless, the Greenback Party strength peaked that year, and attempts to continue the fusion between the Greenbackers and the Republicans failed. Although Jones again ran for governor in 1884, this time he lost by a wider margin to Ireland.

Shortly thereafter, the Greenback Party faded away, and the next Democratic governor, Lawrence Sullivan "Sul" Ross, faced little political opposition. His success rested partially on his record as an Indian fighter and Civil War general, and the lack of any coherent third-party challenge.

By this time, the most divisive issue was prohibition. A united front of prohibitionists asked by 1884 that the legislature replace the local option law with one that outlawed the sale of alcoholic beverages throughout the state. The United Friends of Temperance and its



**Figure 7.10** George W. “Wash” Jones (Grnbk). Source: CN07326, The Dolph Briscoe Center For American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

juvenile affiliate, the Bands of Hope, joined the powerful and recently arrived (in Texas) Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) to mount a persuasive and powerful political campaign to force the Democratic Party to comply with their wishes. The prohibitionists could count on the support of J. B. Cranfill, the important Baptist editor and minister, S. A. Hayden of the *Texas Baptist Herald*, Senators John B. Reagan and Sam Bell Maxey, and many members of the Grange and the newly organized Farmers’ Alliance.

In 1886, the prohibitionists decided that they could not rely on the Democratic Party to overcome the anti-prohibition stance of such leaders as Ross, James S. Hogg, and Congressman Roger Q. Mills. Therefore, the ardent prohibitionist E. L. Dohoney called for a convention in Dallas to organize a third party. Dohoney, an ex-Greenbacker who would later help organize the Populist Party, garnered the gubernatorial nomination. Now the Democratic Party closed ranks, and Dohoney received only 20,000 votes for governor. The next year, prohibitionists and their supporters forced the legislature to submit a prohibition amendment to the voters of Texas. The anti-prohibitionists continued with a platform of governmental restraint in private affairs. In the end, the amendment failed to pass by more than 90,000 votes, but the issue of prohibition would resurface in the twentieth century.

The voices of reform swirled about Texas in the mid-1880s, but no clear-cut consensus emerged on how reform organizations should identify and carry out their priorities. The short-lived Union Labor Party ran former governor Marion Martin for governor in 1888, but Sul Ross easily beat back the challenge. Greenbackers, prohibitionists, Knights of Labor,



Grangers, progressive Democrats, black Texans, and the Farmers' Alliance all wanted a more responsive state government. Their demands meant that Ross would be the last of the New South conservatives to control Texas politics. Yet the issues of reform still awaited some vehicle to articulate them. In a short while the increasingly discontented farmers' organizations would serve as that instrument, pushing the Democratic Party into accepting moderate reforms and mobilizing what looked like would be a viable third party, one that demanded more-radical solutions to the problems facing the state.

### **The Legacy of the Frontier**

The last quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed a tremendous transformation after which Texas no longer constituted a frontier region. Since prehistoric times, people of diverse cultures had seen Texas as a land of promise. The struggle for territorial supremacy took on international overtones as Spaniards, then Mexicans, and then Americans intruded into the province and waged the fight to displace the land's indigenous groups. By the 1880s, Anglo Texans had established their hegemony over the state, having removed all other claimants to the region through warfare, usurpation, or simply by absorbing them into the new social mainstream.

Demographic factors, combined with innovations in weaponry, transportation, and agriculture, had by the end of the nineteenth century effected a dramatic shift in the older frontier society. The new technology pushed people into unsettled lands, assisted them in exploiting land and natural resources, and then facilitated the transportation of crops and products to market. The forces of modernity were so potent that neither inhospitable terrain nor the stiff resistance of its Native inhabitants could forestall the frontier's consolidation into the new sovereignty.

Nevertheless, the legacy of the nineteenth-century adventurers remained. The self-confidence and individualism that emerged during the era of the Republic of Texas persisted into the post-Civil War period. Entering the wilderness and deriving a livelihood from it, building cities and large ranching estates, and suppressing the Indians had instilled Texans with a sense of power and a belief that courage and hard work could overcome great odds. The saga also made a lasting imprint on American culture, as Texans are regularly depicted (sometimes stereotypically) as products of the nineteenth century. A wealth of literature, as well as a long list of films, depicts Texas as a frontier setting. In folklore, ballad, and story the legends of Davy Crockett, Sam Houston, the Texas Rangers, and outlaws such as John Wesley Hardin still fascinate.

Yet the legacy of the frontier is not entirely positive. With self-confidence came an arrogant attitude that often expressed itself at the expense of others, namely racial minorities. As already discussed, African Americans, Mexicans, and Indians were many times the targets of white Texans' hatred. Furthermore, Texans sometimes revealed their worst characteristics in the westward push. Development of the state was accomplished through courage, resourcefulness, and commitment, but their concomitants included violence, greed, and wastefulness. Intruders into the frontier often recklessly exploited the natural resources of the region. This resulted in the decimation of the great buffalo herds, the overgrazing of the range, the stripping of timberlands without regard for the future, and the pollution of rivers, streams, and the Gulf.

As Texas entered the final decade of the nineteenth century, the power of tradition would increasingly clash with the forces of change. The 1890s would witness an acceleration of economic and social changes, and the state's political realm would experience its greatest upheaval since the days of Radical Reconstruction.

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## Texas in the Age of Agrarian Discontent, 1886–1900

The late nineteenth century marked a critical period in the history of Texas. The development of a mature railroad network tying the major regions of the state together set in motion far-reaching changes. Although the state remained overwhelmingly rural and agricultural, the economy was beginning to diversify, cities were experiencing growth, and the last vestiges of the frontier were fast disappearing. Although the displacement of the Indians and the closing of the open range had opened the western half of the state to European American settlement and made cattle a major industry, cotton remained king and even expanded its dominions. The 1890s witnessed massive immigration into eastern Texas from the older parts of the South. Subsistence agriculture became a relic of the past, as commercial agriculture followed the railroads. New industries grafted themselves onto commercial agriculture, changing Texas from a preindustrial, rural state into one with modern transportation facilities that linked producers of raw materials to regional, national, and international markets (over which Texans had little control). Despite these rapid changes, all was not well with the Texas economy. As the long agricultural downturn of the 1870s and 1880s bottomed out in outright depression in the early 1890s, Texans sought answers to the hard times that never seemed to end.

A majority of Texans still considered themselves Democrats, but the rise of the commercial economy and the deepening depression threatened party unity. Landless farmers did not hold the same economic and political goals as did those who owned their farms. Nor did cattle ranchers always have the same interests as cotton farmers. Merchants, bankers, lumbermen, and railroad entrepreneurs all might have considered themselves Democrats and yet have disagreed over different aspects of railroad regulation or monetary policy. All business interests, however, opposed those agrarians who wished to raise taxes on businesses, and many white Texans feared any expansion of federal power that might result in expanded rights for African Americans. In short, rapid social and economic change, coupled with hard times, tore apart the consensus politics that had defeated the Republicans and “redeemed” Texas in 1874, opening the way for new battles as the nineteenth century came to a close. The Democrats would meet their greatest political challenge since

Reconstruction, and the fallout from that challenge would shape the political and social landscape of Texas for decades to come.

## **Economic Change**

Much of the economic change that Texas experienced was directly or indirectly related to the startling growth in the state's population. In just ten years, the population grew from 2.2 million to more than 3 million. Much of this growth came from new arrivals from the Deep South states, as Texas seemed to offer greater opportunities than did the other former states of the Confederacy. Along with the state's major cities of Houston, Galveston, Dallas–Fort Worth, and San Antonio, the favorite destinations for these new Texans were northeast Texas and the Blackland Prairies of north-central Texas. For example, the population of Hunt County in northeast Texas grew by 48 percent from 1890 to 1900, and Ellis County, south of Dallas, grew by 58 percent.

### **King Cotton**

Most of these newcomers were poor farmers, and most of them pursued the only vocation they knew, cotton farming. In the decade of the 1890s the acreage of Texas land planted in cotton doubled, from 3.9 million acres to 7 million acres. The burgeoning population kept the price of farmland high, even as crop prices collapsed. From an already-low price of nine cents a pound in 1890, cotton prices slipped to seven cents in 1893 and as low as five cents when the depression bottomed out in 1894. Those who could not afford to buy land, or who could not hold onto what land they had, were forced to become tenants or sharecroppers, renting small farms and paying their rent in cash or, more commonly, with a portion of the crop at harvest time. Thus the trends of increasing farm tenancy and the corresponding poverty that it produced—trends already evident in the 1870s and 1880s—became even more pronounced in the 1890s. In 1890, 42 percent of Texas farmers worked rented farms (Figure 8.1); by 1900 the figure had grown to 50 percent. Even those who remained in the ranks of the landowners felt the squeeze of hard times. In 1890 only about 8000 farms in the state were mortgaged; by 1900 the number had grown to 38,000.

### **Manufacturing and urban growth**

Despite the economic crisis of the 1890s, the pace of manufacturing accelerated. The number of manufacturing establishments in the state increased from 5268 in 1890 to 12,289 at the end of the decade, with capital investment growing from \$47 million to \$90 million. The cities that dominated industrial development pointed to later urban growth. A 1905 US Census on Manufacturing listed Dallas as the leading industrial center in Texas, with flour and grist milling and printing and publishing as its major industries. Houston ranked second, with railcar construction and cottonseed as its principal sources of income. Those two cities were followed by San Antonio, which led the state in the distilling of malt liquors. Next came Fort Worth, which built a meat-packing plant that failed to survive the depression of 1893. Cowtown's development as a major packing center lay in the future. By 1905, Fort Worth's major industry was flour and grist milling. Galveston led Texas in industrial development in 1870 but had fallen to fifth place by 1900. The turn of the century still witnessed Galveston handling 4 million bales of cotton a year, more than 90 percent of



**Figure 8.1** Jesse Boyd plowing Charlie Swenson's farm in the late 1890s or early 1900s. Courtesy of Mrs. Sadi Hoel. Source: University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 71-443).

which went into the export trade. Waco, Sherman, and Beaumont completed the 1900 listing. The former two served as agricultural marketing centers, and the latter was already enjoying the advantages of economic gains produced by the Spindletop oil strike of 1901.

The concentration of agricultural wealth in shipping centers bothered farmers. As they saw themselves becoming poorer during the period, they saw the growth of cities as being at their expense. When agricultural reformers condemned middle men, saying "neither do they reap nor do they sow, but grow rich off the toil of others," they were referring to the railroad corporations, large land companies, processing industries, and commission and furnishing merchants, as well as crossroads merchants, persons who profited from the transporting, grinding, compressing, ginning, and selling of the agricultural crops that farmers worked so hard—and borrowed so much money—to produce.

### **Growth of the lumber industry**

The large-scale commercial lumber industry, which had commenced in the years following the Civil War, expanded greatly in the last decade of the century. By the 1890s Texas had moved into the top ten lumber-producing states. Production peaked in 1907, when a record 2 billion plus board feet were logged. The rapid cutting and the lack of care for the forest destroyed much of the vast East Texas timberlands, but no drive for conservation of resources occurred until later.

Foremost among the turn-of-the-century timber barons was John Henry Kirby, who organized in 1901 what became the first multimillion-dollar firm in Texas, the Kirby Lumber Company. Kirby, who grew up in poverty on an East Texas farm, briefly attended

college, read law with a local state senator, and gained entrance to the bar in 1885. With the aid of eastern capital and consultants, he made a fortune buying and selling timberlands. He eventually joined with Nathan D. Silsbee, namesake of the Texas town, and other easterners to acquire more than 250,000 acres of pine forests. In short order, a symbiotic relationship developed between railroads and lumber companies, one that encouraged lumbermen to build trunk lines to their bases of operation as well as to invest in railroad companies that transported their products to market. For example, Kirby built the Gulf, Beaumont, and Kansas City railroad to open untapped lumber sources before selling the line to the Santa Fe Railroad, with which he established a long and friendly relationship. It also worked the other way around, as railroads also acquired timberlands. For example, by 1910, the Southern Pacific owned 117,000 acres of Texas forest.

Until 1883, Kirby and other entrepreneurs were at times able to acquire parts of their extensive timberlands at less than \$2 an acre. Land Commissioner Walsh and others forced the reclassification of pine forests from unproductive farm acreage to that of timbered acreage, but even then the assigned value of timberland ranged only from \$2 to \$5 per acre. Nor did the reclassification solve the problem of cutting timber on school lands, a practice that continued throughout the nineteenth century. In 1905, the state finally established competitive bidding for the right to exploit school lands but, by this time, only 31,978 acres of public land were still available, so the new system had little impact on the timber industry. Indeed, the industry had already undergone a concentration into the hands of a small number of corporations. Individuals still owned half of the lumbering plants in 1910, but one-third of the corporations employed three-quarters of the total workforce and produced 75 percent of both the value and the value added by manufacture of lumber products.

As a group, the larger lumber barons ruled over their domains as though they were fiefdoms. They built company towns—complete with churches, schools, housing, and stores—in which their employees and their families lived. Up to 75 percent of those who worked in lumbering were unskilled laborers who earned a meager \$1.50 to \$2 a day until 1917. The lumber companies frequently paid their workers with merchandise checks spendable only at company stores, which charged higher prices than did other local establishments. In short, those workers who lived in company houses and relied on the goodwill of the company in times of illness or economic hardship had little power to negotiate better living and working conditions with their employers.

Most of those who labored in lumbering came from the local areas surrounding the mills. Of the 6400 wage earners in the lumber industry in 1910, only 336 were foreign born. About one-third of them were African Americans, who usually held the lowest-paying jobs with no chance of advancement. Women seldom worked for wages in the lumbering industry, and, unlike in several other industries at the time, child labor in the mills was rare. The 1890 census recorded only thirty-one boys between the ages of ten and fifteen working as skilled or unskilled mill operatives. Census figures did not report the number of women and children who did contract labor for lumber companies, such as marking trees and clearing brush, or those engaged in piece work; they might have fallen under the general census classification of unpaid family workers. In all cases, the average workday lasted a little over twelve hours.

### **The labor movement**

Unions recruited few workers in the Piney Woods, but even without the leadership of organized labor, a few work stoppages did occur there. Workers at the Elyan sawmill struck in 1886 for a lowering of the workweek from sixty-six to sixty hours with no decrease in pay,

and four years later strikers shut down the mills in Orange. African American workers at Harrisburg threatened to burn down the town over what was probably a labor grievance, but a militia from nearby Houston quelled the potential violence.

The timber magnates, like the railroad barons before them, vigorously opposed any labor organization. They used blacklists, antiunion contracts, paid informers, private police agencies, and other instruments to prevent the logging and sawmill workers from joining unions. Texas lumber manufacturers, moreover, organized themselves into trade associations (the largest being the Southern Pine Association) that exchanged information and colluded to set prices and wages. The Southern Pine Association also served as an effective lobbying force, making its wishes known to state legislators and circulating lists of suspected labor organizers or unruly workers to association members. In short, the lumber owners successfully avoided antitrust actions, maintained company towns, issued merchandise warrants, and prevented union organization for more than four decades, right up to the New Deal in the 1930s.

Going back as far as the pre-Civil War period, there had been individual skilled craft unions in Texas, serving workers such as printers, carpenters, and sailors. As the state's railroad network was built in the 1870s and 1880s, these craft locals (or "brotherhoods," as they were called in the railroad industry) had become common among subgroups of railroad workers: engineers, firemen, brakemen, and conductors. Many members of craft locals also joined the Knights of Labor in the 1880s, but the failure of the 1886 Great Southwest Strike and the inability to displace the dominant conservative Democrats triggered a steady decline in Knights membership through the decade of the 1890s. As the Knights lost members, the skilled craft locals—designed to engage in collective bargaining with employers in the same line of business—reemerged. Some union members wanted to avoid politics, but that proved difficult. Starting in 1889, various craft locals, several remaining Knights assemblies, and some militant chapters of the Farmers' Alliance organized the Texas State Federation of Labor, which later renamed itself the Texas State Labor Union. It launched the eight-hour (maximum workday) movement for urban artisans, and in many localities in the 1890s the union scored a partial victory by securing a nine-hour workday for laborers, just short of achieving their goal of an eight-hour day. Most of the state's labor groups, however, also took the risky action of plunging into third-party politics beginning in 1891. When their political insurgency failed in 1896, the Texas State Labor Union collapsed. Still, a few craft locals survived, and in 1900, representatives from seven Texas cities organized a new Texas State Federation of Labor, the forerunner of the Texas AFL-CIO, soon claiming 8475 members. Overall, it is safe to say that the decade of the 1890s was a period of turmoil and only limited gains for labor, as workers turned to political solutions to their troubles rather than strikes and collective bargaining. In a rural state suspicious of labor organizations, the dawn of the new century did not bode well for unions.

## **Ethnic Groups in the Late Nineteenth Century**

### **African Americans**

Black Texans, still concentrated in East Texas, continued to experience the same kinds of travails dating back to the years of slavery and Reconstruction. Violence, Jim Crow segregation, discrimination, and political suppression all remained facts of daily life for black Texans toward the end of the nineteenth century. Despite these conditions, African Americans courageously pressed ahead in efforts to build racial solidarity and carry out



their daily activities as meaningfully as possible. Several social and cultural institutions played important roles in sustaining a viable black community, which was almost powerless to extract essential services from the white establishment. Benevolent associations and mutual aid societies, for example, offered charitable and other humanitarian aid, such as insurance and death benefits, to members during times of crises. In addition, between 1870 and 1900, some sixty black-oriented and black-edited newspapers were published in the state. Most of these papers suffered from a shortage of paying advertisers and low subscription rates, due to a largely illiterate public, but they did serve the function of disseminating news and information of particular interest to black Texans.

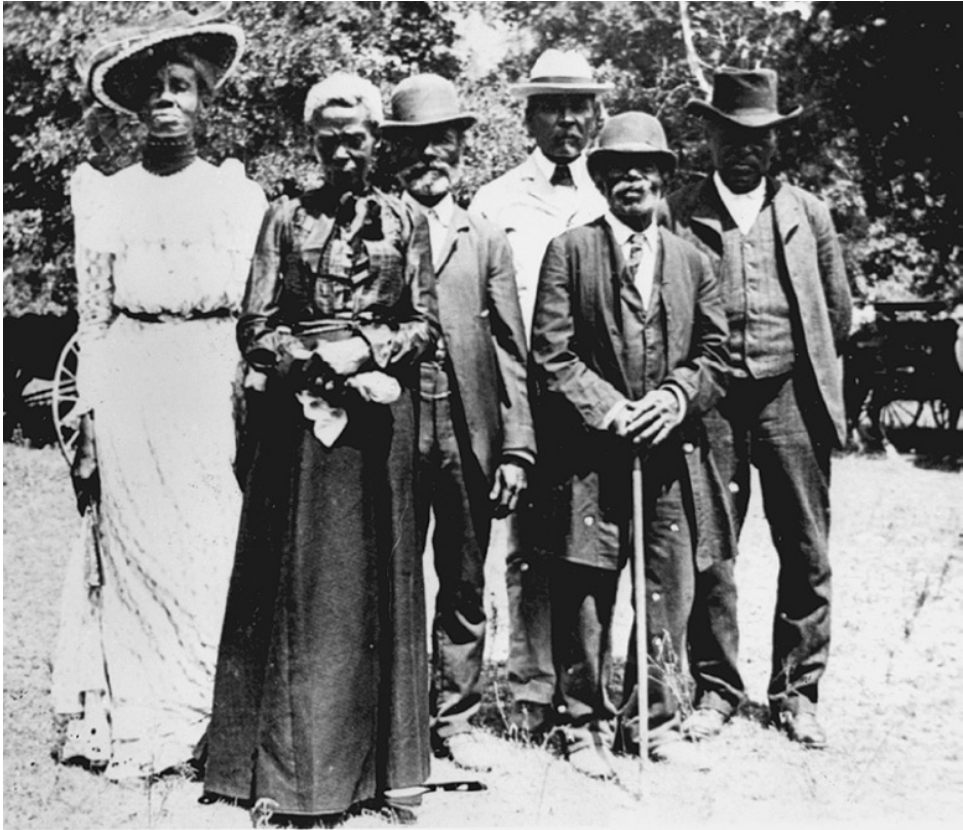
The most influential social force within the African American community was the church. Aside from being a place where blacks could worship free from the surveillance of whites, the church also evolved into an institution in which blacks could develop leadership qualities and learn the techniques of independent planning and the execution of group agendas. Some of the most accomplished black Texans received such leadership training in the church, and ministers played prominent roles in education and politics. The Methodists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians were well represented among black Texans, but the Baptists seemed to have been the most successful in winning loyal parishioners. Perhaps the theology and the autonomy of the Baptist Church made it especially appealing to African Americans. In any case, by 1890, black Baptists claimed a membership of more than 111,000.

Forms of entertainment also served as an invigorating force in the black community, in many cases maintaining old traditions as well as offering a well-needed respite from the daily grind. Days for leisure were numerous, but the most meaningful celebration remained “Juneteenth,” the anniversary of June 19, 1865, the day on which General Gordon Granger declared the slaves in Texas freed (Figure 8.2). On Texas’s Emancipation Day, therefore, every black community sponsored a big to-do. The festivities typically included a parade, inspiring speeches, barbecues and picnics, and music and dancing.

Despite rising levels of literacy, the growth of a black middle class, and the proliferation of social, cultural, and educational institutions, African Americans continued to face discrimination and hostility from the white majority. Indeed, the visible progress of the black community may have played a part in the growing incidence of white-on-black violence, as whites felt threatened by black success and assertiveness. Whatever the cause, the terrifying practice of lynching became increasingly frequent in the late nineteenth century. One study estimates that in Texas between 1870 and 1900, extralegal justice was responsible for the murder of about 500 black people—only Georgia and Mississippi exceeded Texas in this grisly record. So fiendish was some of the racially motivated sadism—in two cases in particular during the 1890s, victims were tortured and burned alive before hundreds of onlookers—that the legislature in 1897 passed an antilynching law, which, unfortunately, proved ineffective. Sadly, lynching remained a real threat to black Texans well into the twentieth century.

### **Mexican Americans**

Unlike African Americans, many members of other ethnic groups in the state were born outside the United States. Foreign-born Texans in 1890 numbered 152,956, or not quite 7 percent of the total population. The 1890 census lists only 710 Chinese and 3 Japanese and 704 “civilized” Indians. The great majority of immigrants were Mexican or European.



**Figure 8.2** Freed slaves celebrate Juneteenth. Source: Photo no. PIXA #05476, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

In 1890 the Mexican American population stood at approximately 105,000 (49 percent of which was foreign born), and it increased ten years later to as many as 164,000 (43 percent of which was foreign born). Primarily, Tejanos were clustered in three parts of the state, though preeminently in South Texas, in which Mexican Americans overwhelmingly outnumbered Anglo Americans. More balanced ethnically was West Texas, wherein the number of Tejanos roughly equaled the number of the Anglo Americans, though Anglos dominated the urban centers while Mexicans remained in the majority in the border counties such as El Paso, Presidio, and Val Verde. In complete contrast was Central Texas, where Anglos and European immigrants outnumbered Tejanos by more than two to one in 1900.

As a community, Tejanos fashioned a bicultural world that adopted beliefs and practices from the American culture of white society while managing to retain familiar and traditional aspects of Mexican culture. The maintenance of the Mexican past was manifest in the language they spoke, the secular and religious holidays they observed, the foods they consumed, the curative herbs they turned to when ill, and the familial structures they honored. As a way of helping themselves, they organized mutual societies such as the *Sociedad Benito Juárez*. To keep abreast of local matters and current events in Mexico, they read Spanish-language newspapers, of which there were several in Texas in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

That Tejanos did indeed familiarize themselves with the Anglo world about them was apparent by their ability to function within mainstream institutions when permitted to do

so. Ranchos in South Texas owned by Tejanos were by this time few, but some, such as Don Macedonio Vela's *Laguna Seca*, Hipólito García's *Randado*, and Dionisio Guerra's *Los Ojuelos*, still operated successfully. The same applied to small business ventures in urban areas. Politics also drew Tejanos into the mainstream culture. In those areas in which Tejanos predominated, such as Laredo, Brownsville, and the El Paso Valley, fervent political involvement secured the election of Tejano mayors and other local government officials. The election of Tejanos to the state legislature remained infrequent in the post-Civil War years, although G. N. García of El Paso, Santos Benavides of Laredo, and T. A. Rodríguez of Pleasanton did serve in the capitol.

### Europeans and other ethnics

European immigrants, except for those who settled in Galveston and Houston, resided in a fragmented "German Belt" of settlements clustered in three areas of Central Texas. Between 30,000 and 35,000 Germans lived in Texas in 1860, about 60 to 70 percent of whom were of foreign birth. In the post-Civil War era, Germans who made their way to Texas primarily landed in the eastern end of the "German Belt," where they purchased land from railroad companies, former plantation owners, and restless folks itching to move farther west. A stream of new immigrants coupled with natural reproduction strengthened existing German communities throughout the region or created new ones. By 1887, the number of Germans had increased dramatically, to 130,000. Their numbers represented more than half of all European immigrants in the state.

Diverse groups composed the rest of the European element. Slavic migrations to Texas began in the 1850s and continued into the postbellum era. Czech migration fanned out from the primary settlement at Fayetteville, in Fayette County. Serbin, in Lee County, was the home base for the Wends; from there they dispersed throughout the remainder of the county, but also into the South Texas town of Corpus Christi and the north-central settlement of Vernon in Wilbarger County. In Karnes County, Silesian Poles in 1854 established Panna Maria, said to be the mother of Polish settlements in Texas, and these Poles went on to found sister communities along the San Antonio River. After the Civil War, Galician Poles arrived to complement the Silesian colonies. The new Polish immigrants founded settlements in the valleys along the Brazos River. Bremond (Robertson County), for example, became the headquarters for extensive Polish immigration in the 1870s.

Other immigrant groups made Texas their home in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Italian immigrants gathered in Montague County or in mining towns such as Thurber, in Erath County, or in the cotton lands of central Texas. The Dutch headed for southeastern Texas, establishing Nederland in Jefferson County. Greeks gravitated toward coastal towns in which they could make a living as fishermen. They also founded enclaves in several Texas cities. Of the small contingent of Asian immigrants, the Chinese were the most visible. They arrived in Texas during the 1870s, namely in El Paso and Robertson counties, to meet demands for railroad hands, but they left practically no imprint since most of them were adolescent and adult males who did not intermarry. In Robertson County in Central Texas, the Chinese did wed local black women, begetting the "black Chinese" found in modern-day Calvert.

Groups such as the Italians, the Bohemians, and the Irish faced difficulties finding social acceptance in the regions wherein they settled. Many native Texans refused to recognize them as racial equals, not because they were not "white" of skin color, but because Anglo

society associated them with degeneracy, laziness, infirmity, criminality, and political backwardness. Acculturation helped pave the way to “whiteness,” and by the later decades of the nineteenth century these new immigrants had negotiated their way into mainstream society. Such acceptance, however, often required the adoption of negative attitudes toward people of color, and even displaying these hatreds in overt acts of racism. Immigrant groups such as the Chinese, of course, never even reached consideration as white by the mainstream.

The contributions that each of these ethnic groups (see Figure 8.3) made to Texas created a pluralistic society that encompassed a diversity of languages, folkways, and behaviors. Distinctive features of each subculture, such as favorite foods, dances, and music, blended into Texas culture. Despite their cultural differences, the immigrants gave their civic involvement, military service, labor, and allegiance to the common good of the state. They may have chosen to retain elements of their distinctive ways of life, but residence in Texas also involved them in a process of cultural synthesis that simultaneously made them Americans.

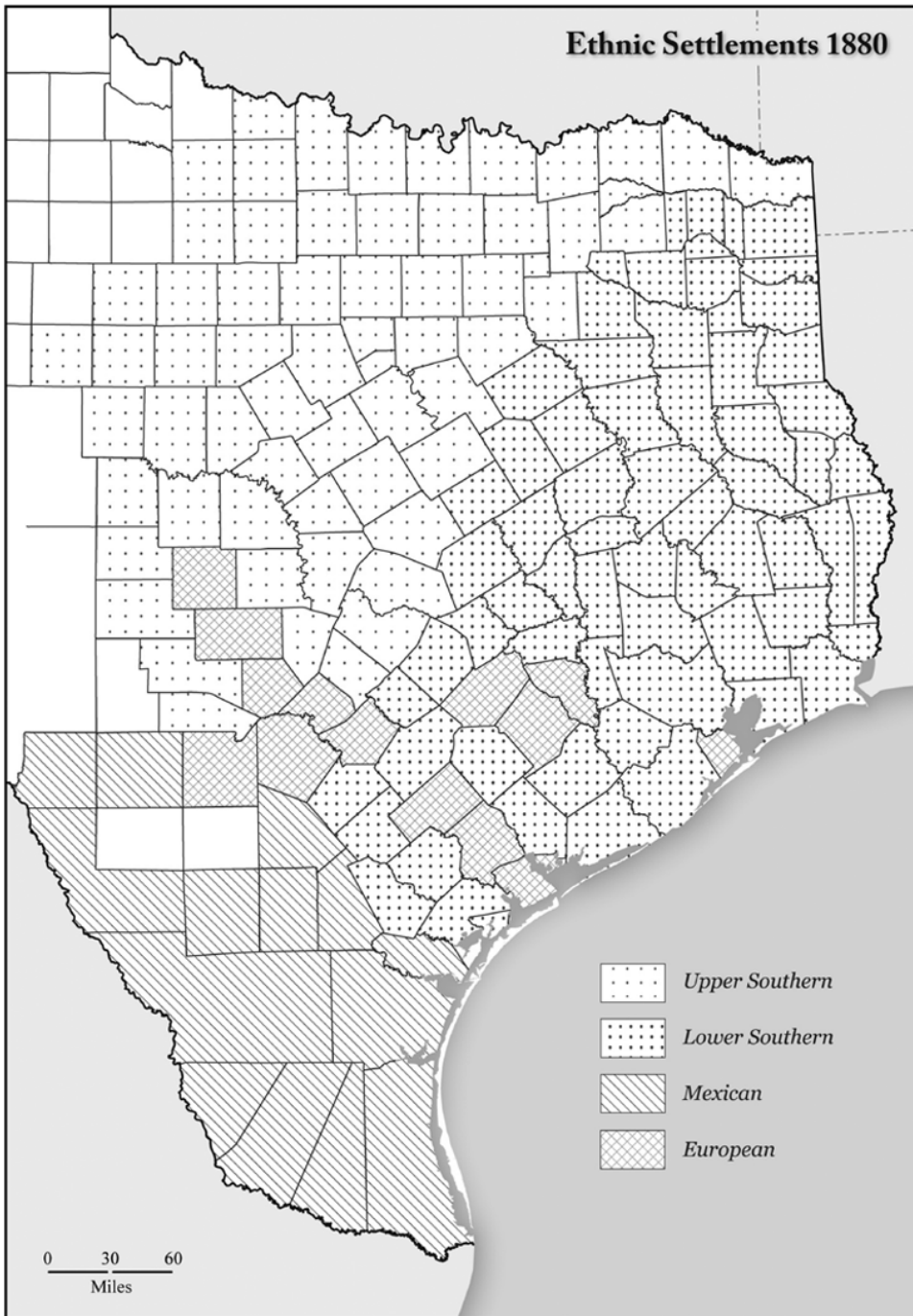
### **Women in Late-Nineteenth-Century Texas**

The legal status of women in post-Civil War Texas had changed little since antebellum times. The law still deprived married women of the right to purchase property in their own names or dispose of it without the consent of their husbands. And no woman could bring suit, sit on a jury, vote, or hold public office. In addition to these legal constraints, social norms continued to place women at a disadvantage. A double standard of morality persisted: men permitted themselves certain freedoms that they denied to women.

Society also restricted women in the range of employment, and most women agreed that their responsibility to their children and husbands came first. Married women were not expected to work for pay outside the home, and single women did so only until they married and became homemakers. Census data bear out the latter point. The federal schedules for 1870 listed only some 5 percent of women aged ten or more engaged in gainful employment. Almost one-half of those employed did agricultural tasks, expectedly so given the state’s agrarian economy and the fact that women worked beside men on farms, though nearly 25 percent of said rural laborers were adolescents, girls aged ten to fifteen years.

By 1900, though, there was evidence of change. Women now constituted 14 percent of those employed, nearly three times as many as in 1870. Many still worked on farms (42 percent), suggesting that hard times in the agricultural sector had not relieved women from the burdens of farm labor. But by the turn of the century, 7 percent of working women labored in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits (mostly as stenographers and telephone and telegraph operators), 6 percent as teachers, and 4 percent in trade and transportation.

In rural areas women often performed tasks considered to be “men’s work,” but their roles as wives and mothers (and commitments to the welfare of the family) prescribed set duties. Household chores included fetching all the water that the family used in the home. Furthermore, women often had to combine their domestic obligations with work outdoors that included tilling fields and maintaining the household garden, the products of which they often canned and stored for the family’s later consumption. Women also assisted in milking cows, slaughtering farm animals, dressing wild game, and in salting or smoking fresh meat. Additional burdens included clothing the family, a responsibility that entailed making the clothes from scratch and then keeping them clean and in good repair.



**Figure 8.3** Ethnic settlements 1880. Source: Terry G. Jordan et al., *Texas: A Geography*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984.

Aside from agricultural work, women took up domestic service most frequently. From 1870 to the end of the century, about 40 percent of employed women worked as household servants. Many women had to support themselves or supplement the family income by working for pay as laundresses, seamstresses, waitresses, or cooks. Other women took in washing and ironing or put up boarders.

Although men largely monopolized positions of authority, there were always a few women engaged in such traditional male occupations as ministers, lawyers, physicians, and bankers. The 1900 census listed one hundred female doctors and seventeen lawyers. But it was in the teaching profession, however, where Texas women made the most gains in the late nineteenth century. In 1870, men generally dominated the teaching positions: only 21 percent of those listed as teachers were women. But by 1900, 58 percent of the state's 14,686 teachers were women.

The example set by these professional women helped temper negative attitudes toward women who worked for wages. Indeed, women's careers as educators influenced society to lift some of its more restrictive rules and traditions, which in turn gave rise to new opportunities for meaningful achievement. Perhaps the role of a number of women as ranch owners also helped lessen such constraints. Due to the death or even just the absence of husbands, some women found themselves the bosses of a ranch. Few women, however, worked the range; instead ranch women typically hired foremen to oversee the cowhands while they attended to the business aspects of ranch management.

The efforts of Texas women to acquire jobs dominated by men show the human will to improve the self and perhaps an equal desire to contribute to the improvement of the social order. There are numerous examples in late-nineteenth-century Texas history of organizational activity by women in behalf of social reform. Women's pledge to prohibition, for example, led to the founding of the state's earliest chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in Paris, Texas, in 1882. The larger towns in North Texas soon organized their own affiliates, and one year later the organization had spread statewide. As a political organization, the WCTU afforded women the opportunity to campaign for political issues besides prohibition, among them restrictions on child labor, improved educational opportunities for children and women, and woman suffrage. (One of its national leaders, Francis Willard is shown in Figure 8.4.) The woman suffrage movement crested during the World War I years, but in its early phase, it spawned two associations, both of them short lived: the Texas Equal Rights Association in 1893 and the Texas Woman Suffrage Association in 1903. In 1901 the WCTU succeeded in getting the state legislature to found the institution that eventually became Texas Woman's University.

During the 1890s, a women's club movement also came to life in the larger cities of the northern and eastern sections of the state. Initially focusing on literary studies, women's clubs—membership generally derived from the middle class—turned increasingly to public activism, speaking to issues that male society regarded as within the women's sphere. In the 1890s, white women's clubs endeavored to enrich the cultural life of their communities and improve social conditions, enhance education, promote child welfare, beautify municipalities, and modernize sanitation. In 1897, several community groups involved in such civic work founded the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs (TFWC) in Waco. By the early years of the twentieth century, thousands of white women belonged to the TFWC and were engaged in promoting numerous social and political reforms.

By the latter half of the 1890s, women had also taken an interest in the idea of preschool education. By the early twentieth century, women had founded kindergartens in several of the state's larger urban communities. The drive to organize kindergartens in part gave impetus to the formation of mothers' clubs, which in turn produced the organization of the Texas Congress of Mothers (later the Parent-Teacher Associations, or PTAs).



**Figure 8.4** Suffragist Frances E. Willard. Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division (LC-USZ61-790).

### **Agrarian Organizations**

In 1867, Oliver H. Kelley, an employee of the US Department of Agriculture, founded the Patrons of Husbandry, commonly called the Grange. He conceived of the Patrons as a secret fraternal society that would offer social and educational benefits to its membership, composed mostly of family farmers. The Patrons of Husbandry had a loose national governing board, but each state Grange formulated most of the policies for its local lodges. As with many such organizations in the period, state officials had little control over the actions of the subordinate Granges. The local lodges, acting under broad national and state guidelines, selected their own membership and defined their own priorities. Consequently, the agricultural depression of the 1870s spurred state and local Granges into changing the major goals of the parent organization from social and educational ones to the establishment of economic cooperatives for farmers. The state lecturers, persons paid by the governing board to organize subordinate and local Granges, soon discovered that potential members asked first about the financial benefits that members of the order could expect to enjoy and second about the social trappings of the organization. Because the lecturers received pay based on the number of new members they recruited, they soon spoke of economic cooperation to the near exclusion of any other topic. The Grange had been more or less moribund until the downturn in farm prices, but its new focus on monetary benefits to its members spurred 800,000 men and women to join the national fraternity. Even though

the national Grange rules specified that the fraternity was apolitical, it encouraged its newly enlarged membership to take political action. Indeed, the subordinate Granges in the Midwestern states spun off viable third parties that advocated reform and successfully combined with small shippers to establish state railroad regulatory commissions.

Because of the lack of a centralized, national control, state Grange leaders quarreled among themselves over the exact direction that state Patrons should take. William Lang, the conservative worthy master of the Texas State Grange, wanted the organization to remain distinct from third parties, work within the traditional political system, and do nothing to antagonize merchants or railroads. Progressive farmers within the organization listened to Lang's political appeals but rejected his economic ones. They insisted that the creation of economic cooperatives that featured pay-as-you-go rules would enable members to rise above poverty and become prosperous, middle-class farmers. After Lang left the organization, the progressive wing of the Grange seized the initiative and did indeed create cooperative ventures. Led by Archibald J. Rose, the Grange founded the Texas Cooperative Association in 1878. The Association's sales aggregated \$560,282 in 1883, handling 16,045 bales of cotton for 150 Grange stores. Because the cooperatives' stores could not operate without credit, the Association extended credit to them and bought on credit from wholesalers. When the fierce drought years from 1885 to 1886 came along, farmers could not pay their stores, which in turn could not pay the Association, and the whole thing collapsed. The Association limped along until the 1890s, but it did not affect the lives of many farmers after 1887. Although individual Patrons may have joined such third-party movements as the Greenback Party, the subordinate lodges never mobilized their collective membership into vehicles of political protest, as had occurred elsewhere. Instead, A. J. Rose and his Grange following exercised a moderately progressive agrarian influence within the Democratic Party. And even after Grange membership declined, the organization's political philosophy proved helpful in mobilizing support for James Hogg.

By the mid-1880s, a new organization, the Texas Farmers' Alliance, was replacing the Patrons of Husbandry as the mouthpiece for agrarianism. From its beginnings, this organization differed radically from the older Grange. The latter had come to the South from a national organization, which had garnered its leaders from a higher economic class of farmers. The Alliance, on the other hand, was a grassroots organization that first formed in the marginal farmlands of the Cross Timbers and drew its membership from voluntary associations that varied from vigilante groups to such social institutions as schools, churches, Masonic lodges, old Grangers, and newly organized local farmers' clubs. Although it also emphasized the social and economic advancement of farmers, the Alliance never denied an interest in influencing politics. Yet this forced an internal division within its ranks, with movement toward a third-party nomination driving the more conservative members out of the organization.

The Farmers' Alliance had originated as a local organization in Lampasas, Texas, in 1877. This lodge had disbanded in 1878 when some of the Lampasas Alliacemen threw their support to the Greenback Party. At this point, William T. Baggett, a schoolteacher and member of the Grange as well as the Lampasas Alliance, moved to Parker County, taking with him the constitution of his defunct alliance, and immediately organized a school for farm children and a suballiance. Converts recruited converts, and in 1881 and 1882, local lecturers, compensated out of organizational fees, recruited more members throughout the Cross Timbers region. In 1884, this so-called Texas Farmers' Alliance funded a traveling lecturer, S. O. Dawes, to move across Texas restoring flagging Alliances and organizing new ones. Dawes's rhetoric was more political than that of Grange organizers, as he attacked monopolies and unresponsive politicians.



By 1886, the Texas Farmers' Alliance claimed a membership of 100,000, and other organizations began to flirt with it. The president of the Alliance and two of its newspapers supported prohibition, suggesting to the *Dallas Morning News* that the Alliance and the "Drys" might unite into a viable third-party platform. Moreover, some local lodges had cooperated with the Knights of Labor during the Great Southwest strike, implying a possible farmer-laborer party. Now, local third parties, such as the Commonwealth party in Jack County, ran candidates against the establishment Democratic Party. The Alliance members constituted the majority votes of the local groups. That year, too, black farmers in Houston organized the Colored Alliance and elected Robert M. Humphrey, a white minister, as its superintendent. The Colored Alliance posed no social threat to whites; it professed to want economic independence for its members, not social equality. Any melding of dissatisfied poor whites and blacks into a third party threatened Democratic hegemony; thus, the Populist Party would later make overtures to the Colored Alliance membership.

By this time, the Democratic Party fully realized the political dangers afoot. Its concern was heightened by the 1886 drought. That summer a bill to aid stricken Texas farmers passed Congress only to be vetoed by President Grover Cleveland, a Democrat. The president deemed such aid an unwarranted central government action. Some Texas farmers, mostly members of the Alliance, now argued that the time had come to challenge the federal and state political structures. Dawes, anxious to avoid the collapse of the Texas Farmers' Alliance, as had occurred in Lampasas, proposed the "Dawes Formula": the Alliance as an organization would only foster farmer education and cooperation, but individual Alliancemen were free to combine with their neighbors for political action.

The Dawes Formula set the stage for the 1886 state Alliance convention at Cleburne, where the majority endorsed a platform that began each statement with "We demand!" These "Cleburne Demands" included recognition of labor unions, regulation of railroads, a revision of the banking system, inflation, an interstate commerce commission, prison reform, and legislation that would outlaw speculation in agricultural futures and land. Conservative Alliancemen, who saw these demands as a challenge to the Democratic Party, left the convention and split into an educational organization calling itself the Grand State Alliance.

In 1887, therefore, the new Farmers' Alliance president, Charles W. Macune, a moderate, presided over a divided organization. A self-read lawyer and physician, Macune announced that he had contacted the Louisiana Farmers' Union and that a merger with that union and the Arkansas Wheel would herald the beginnings of a national organization, the Farmers' Alliance and Cooperative Union of America, commonly called the Southern Alliance. Macune maintained that the new Southern Alliance would pressure Congress to bring relief to southern farmers, and he proposed that Texas farmers create an Alliance Exchange that would revolutionize marketing by having all members sign joint notes—essentially IOUs—to borrow money from banks, then purchase goods and supplies from a half-million-dollar corporation located in Dallas. The Exchange was to replace the middlemen in the chain of trade and extend credit, consequently addressing, unlike the Grange, the problems of tenant farmers. Macune accepted the post of manager of the Exchange, and it opened for business in September 1887.

But banks refused to accept joint notes, and within a year Macune's plan for large-scale economic cooperation had failed, convincing him that only the federal government could solve the problems of poor farmers and their need for credit. At an 1889 national Alliance convention, he outlined a proposal he called the Subtreasury Plan, which called for Congress to build a nationwide network of warehouses in which farmers could deposit their crops at

harvest time and then receive low-interest government loans. The government would store the crops and release them onto world markets only when prices were sufficiently high. The loans would essentially be made in greenbacks, which would expand the money supply nationally, inducing inflation and further easing the credit crunch.

The problem, of course, with the Subtreasury Plan was that it called for an even larger role for government than the Alliance had previously envisioned with its other demands. The Democratic Party promptly repudiated the idea, and many Alliancemen turned directly to third-party politics, where some of them had meant to be all along. As farmers' hard times turned to outright depression in the 1890s, these men organized the Populist Party, a national third-party movement that, as will be seen, became the most serious political challenge to Democratic control of Texas between Reconstruction and the rise of the modern Republican Party.

### **Texas Politics, 1886–1900**

The bellicosity of the Cleburne Demands and the growing third-party inclination of Texas farmers finally encouraged Democrats to respond politically to the agrarians' needs; that response, however, was a moderate one. Nationally, Texas Democrats took the lead in reform. Congressman Roger Q. Mills fought for lower tariffs to reduce the price of imported products and force domestic manufacturers to lower their prices in order to compete. Then, as mentioned, Senator John H. Reagan coauthored the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887, the first federal regulation of railroads. The Texas Democrats moved away from President Cleveland and endorsed the free coinage of silver, a measure to mint silver coins and thereby inflate the currency. Beginning in 1886, the progressive wing of the state Democratic Party advocated legislation to encourage farmers to settle western lands, correct railroad and corporate abuses, and change the banking system into something resembling the later Federal Reserve System. Clearly, reform elements demanded that the Democratic Party favor an active rather than a passive state government. Leading these demands for reform into action was James S. Hogg (Figure 8.5).

Hogg won his first statewide office in 1886. As early as 1889, the young attorney general was rumored as a potential gubernatorial candidate. His tenure as attorney general Populist ticket. Both the Populists and the Democrats appealed to black voters through promises such as (Populism's) economic improvement or (Hogg's) antilynching bill, but the Democrats used violence and vote fraud to counteract the appeal of Populism to black voters. Nonetheless, in the election of 1892 Populists won eight seats in the state house of representatives, one in the state senate, as well as numerous local offices. In the governor's race, Nugent (108,483) lost to Hogg (190,486) and ran behind Clark (133,395).

As attorney general, Hogg wielded the powers of his new office vigorously. He fought to protect the public domain and set it aside for public institutions and school funds. As the state's lawyer, he instituted suits against railroads, large corporations, and ranchers who leased public land. He forced the return of 1.5 million acres to the public domain and compelled land companies to sell their land to settlers within a certain time limit. He won fame and notoriety by demanding that out-of-state insurance companies comply with Texas law, and he drove "wildcat" insurance companies from the state. Commissioner of Agriculture, Insurance, and Statistics L. L. Foster estimated that Hogg's stance saved Texas citizens \$250,000 a year. Hogg's battles against monopolies and unscrupulous companies earned him widespread support from farmers and legitimate businessmen.



**Figure 8.5** James S. Hogg family portrait, ca. 1890. Source: James Stephen Hogg Papers, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

The majority of agriculturalists' enthusiasm for Hogg, however, emanated from his attacks on what farmers saw as monopolies—railroads and trusts. Farmers believed that the railroads, cotton processors, and manufacturers of farming supplies transferred the rightful profits of their labor from them to middlemen. Now farmers demanded that state agencies intervene on their behalf. The young attorney general complied by assisting in the writing of antitrust legislation (the second such law in the nation) that outlawed corporate combinations in restraint of trade, either by fixing prices or limiting production (farm cooperatives and labor unions were exempted from such prosecution). He actuated the constitutional definition of railroads as public carriers, breaking up the Texas Traffic Association and compelling the powerful Jay Gould to resume operating the East Line Railroad, then in receivership. He also coerced railroads to establish or restore their headquarters within the state and keep depots and tracks in good repair. Finally, judging even the recently expanded powers of the state inadequate to protect the public interest, Hogg ran for governor in 1890 on a platform of “Hogg and a Commission,” a promise to establish a railroad regulatory agency.

The constitutional legality of such an agency, however, remained in question. Article X of the Constitution of 1876 had defined railroads as “public” carriers, thus suggesting that the state had the power to regulate them, and state laws allowing the regulation of railroads could be traced back as far as 1853. Nevertheless, in 1889 the legislature decided that a constitutional amendment should be submitted to the voters. Hogg campaigned for passage of

the amendment, and in 1890 easily won the Democratic Party convention's nomination for governor, then proceeded to trounce the Republican, Webster Flanagan, in the general election. After voters ratified the constitutional amendment by more than 100,000 votes, Hogg moved quickly to create the Railroad Commission. The legislature established the Railroad Commission in 1891 and empowered it to set rates and fares and, as Hogg advocated, made its members appointive rather than elective. Hogg personally selected the three railroad commissioners, including John H. Reagan, without consulting the Farmers' Alliance. His actions outraged the Alliance, which now campaigned for an elected Commission, and spurred the left wing of the organization to move toward third-party action. By a subsequent constitutional amendment, therefore, offices of the Railroad Commission became elective in 1894. Seven railroads sued in 1892 to prevent the Commission from enforcing its rate-making powers. The trial immobilized the Commission until the US Supreme Court upheld its constitutionality in 1894 in *Reagan v. Farmers Loan and Trust Co.*

As governor, Hogg championed five major pieces of legislation. In addition to the Railroad Commission, the "Hogg laws" included the railroad stock and bond laws, authorizing the Commission to regulate how much stock a railroad could issue; a law forcing land corporations to sell off any formerly public land they held within fifteen years of acquiring it; the Alien Land Law, forbidding land grants to foreign corporations; and an act that restricted the amount of bond issues undertaken by county and municipal authorities, a measure to hold down indebtedness. But Hogg's influence extended past these economic reforms. He promoted prison reform, advocated longer school terms, supported the University of Texas and the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, and, unfortunately, forced the railroads to segregate their facilities. He could have become a US senator in 1896. Instead he left office in debt and resolved to go into business to guarantee financial security for his family. Through wise land and petroleum investments and his work as a corporate lawyer, Hogg accomplished that goal, too.

## Populism

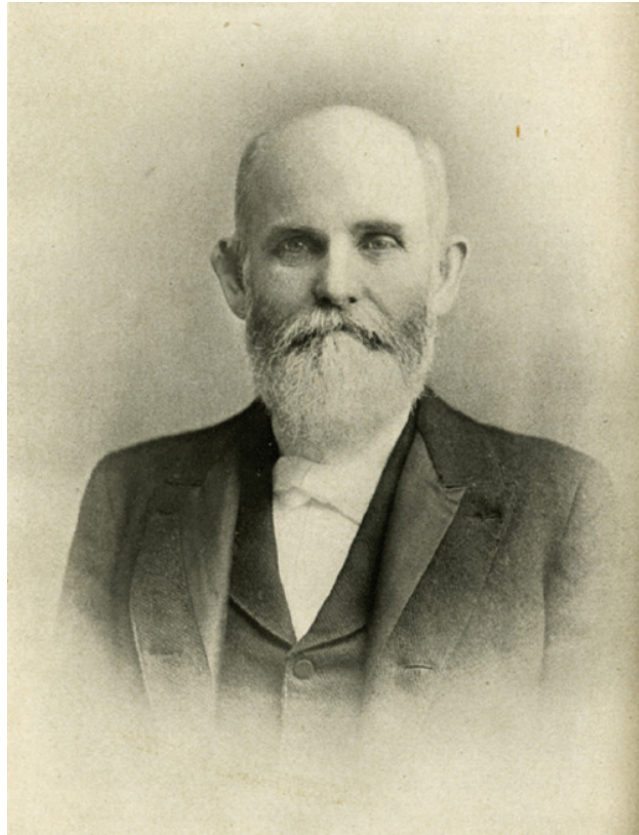
Political factions challenged Hogg during his successful tenure in office. His reputation as a reformer and his general popularity with rural populations subdued any potential political threat from the Alliance. Within that organization, however, militant radicals wanted more than regulatory reform; they thought that the economic system needed surgery, not palliatives, and they advocated government ownership of railroads, abolition of the national banking system, and establishment of the subtreasury system. The Subtreasury Plan, as mentioned, would have allowed farmers to store staple crops in government warehouses and receive loans against the market value of the crops in the form of government notes that could circulate as currency. As such, the subtreasury was an attack on national banks and an endorsement of earlier Greenbacker ideology. In addition, the Alliance's militant radicals campaigned for a wide variety of reforms that would make the political and economic system more open, democratic, and fair. Among these were an income tax, an eight-hour workday, the direct election of US senators, the free coinage of silver, the secret ballot, referendum, and recall. Texas Populists took no stand on woman suffrage and prohibition, fearing the divisiveness of the issues.

But the issues did not tell the whole story. The Democratic Party could and did endorse some of the planks in the Populist platform. It could not or would not accept the Subtreasury Plan; in 1891 it specifically rejected it. After Hogg turned down an elective Railroad

Commission and denied the Alliance a seat on an appointive one, future Populists used that issue against the governor. Although Hogg then compromised on an elective Commission, he could not compromise on the Subtreasury, for the idea signified the intent of the dispossessed to use the government to correct economic injustices. In this sense, Populism was more than a political platform; it represented a crusade of rural Americans and a class awareness that appealed to the have-nots, persons who felt that the American economic system had failed them and that the dominant Democratic and Republican parties offered no means of redress. Populism, then, was a complex mix of old and new ideas. Populists believed that they were being true to the democratic ideals of Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson, both of whom had championed the “common man” and denounced monopolistic banks and corporations. In this sense, their movement was conservative and in keeping with American traditions of republicanism. At the same time, though, the Populists believed that the rise of large-scale industrial capitalism since the Civil War had enabled the monopoly power of banks and corporations to grow so great that in order to fight back, the common man had to turn to the only powerful institution that the people could control: the federal government. Hence their demands that the government create credit, inflate the currency, curb the abuses of banks and railroads, and make the political system more responsive. Their ends were the same as those of the old Jeffersonians or Jacksonians—protecting the freedom of the common people—but the means—using the power of government—were radical, if not revolutionary. Through its experiments with economic cooperatives, its lectures, newspapers, and meetings, the Farmers’ Alliance had been the institution most responsible for preparing farmers to make this radical break with political tradition. The Subtreasury Plan became the most powerful symbol of the new party and of its political radicalism. Those who agreed with it voted Populist. Those who did not remained Democrats.

The Populist crusade relied on stump speakers and party newspapers to turn its goals into a secular religion. Many of its leaders used the Bible as the touchstone of their speeches and recruited in camp-meeting style, changing the words of familiar hymns to sing their political cause. Although they were capable of speaking the language of the country folk in order to identify themselves as being of the people, the Populists were also surprisingly modern in their views, championing science, reason, and what they called “business methods” to make government more responsive to public needs. Their policy proposals concerning the need for a flexible paper currency not tied to the gold standard anticipated the later Federal Reserve System, and their calls for electoral reforms, including the secret ballot, would later become the law of the land. At the state level they championed such reforms as ending the brutal convict lease system and reforming the corrupt fee-based system of compensation for county officeholders. Consequently, despite its agrarian roots, Populism also attracted its fair share of the state’s intellectuals and “free-thinkers,” many of whom held unorthodox social, religious, and political views. Many Populists were prominent advocates of woman suffrage at a time when few Texans supported it, and the party welcomed female speakers at its gatherings and opened the pages of its newspapers to women editorialists.

Populists leaders were a surprisingly diverse lot. Some, like H. S. P. “Stump” Ashby, a former Methodist minister, and James H. “Cyclone” Davis, a spellbinding orator, reinforced Democratic stereotypes of Populists as rural eccentrics. But many others, such as Thomas L. Nugent (Figure 8.6), a scholarly ex-judge from Fort Worth, or Jerome Kearby, a sophisticated and renowned trial lawyer from Dallas, defied the image of Populists as long-winded “hicks” or “hayseeds.”



**Figure 8.6** Populist political leader Thomas Lewis Nugent. Source: The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

For Texas Populism to succeed it had to gain the support of black voters, concentrated in the eastern third of the state. At its first state convention in 1891, the People's Party took the step of electing two African Americans to its state executive committee, on which blacks would serve throughout the 1890s. Although white Populists did not profess a belief in racial equality, they appealed to blacks on the basis of shared economic interests, arguing that the Populist economic program would benefit poor blacks and whites alike. As time went by, the party stepped up its efforts to woo black voters, proposing such policies as equal per-capita funding for black and white public schools and placing black schools under the control of black trustees. John B. Rayner, a black Texan and an ex-Republican from Calvert, soon emerged as the foremost African American Populist, serving on the state executive committee and traveling far and wide across the state organizing black Populist clubs and making speeches, often to integrated audiences. The Populist platform promised both equal protection under the law and a guaranteed right of suffrage, regardless of race, color, or creed.

The campaigns of the 1890s grew increasingly strident as conservative Democrats, Hogg reformers, and Populists warred for control of the state. George Clark, a former Confederate officer from Alabama who had served both as attorney general and secretary of state for Texas, led the conservatives. He was closely identified with the railroads and big business interests. At the famous "streetcar barn convention," Clark led a group of anti-Hogg Democrats, the so-called Gold Democrats, out of the party and declared his candidacy for

governor in 1892. In an attempt to keep blacks from leaving the Republicans in order to join the third party, black leader Norris Wright Cuney endorsed Clark rather than the Populist candidate. Hogg reclaimed the Democratic nomination, and Nugent led the Populist ticket. Both the Populists and the Democrats appealed to black voters through promises such as (Populism's) economic improvement or (Hogg's) antilynching bill, but the Democrats used violence and voter fraud to counteract the appeal of Populism to black voters. Nonetheless, in the election of 1892 Populists won eight seats in the state house of representatives, one in the state senate, as well as numerous local offices. In the governor's race, Nugent (108,483) lost to Hogg (190,486) and ran behind Clark (133,395).

By this time the Alliance had recruited 200,000 members, many of them potential Populist voters. To counteract the appeal of the third party, Governor Hogg now sought to fulfill his political promises and reconcile the division within the Democratic Party. An uneasy truce between the party's warring factions was fashioned in 1894. Edward M. House, an adroit party organizer who never held public office but had effectively managed Hogg's campaigns, now threw his support behind Charles A. Culberson, the state's attorney general. Culberson agreed with Hogg on state politics but was neither as inclined toward free silver nor as anti-President Cleveland as was Hogg, who preferred to see John H. Reagan as the party's next gubernatorial nominee. House shrewdly led Culberson to the nomination. The Populists renominated Nugent. Although Culberson won the gubernatorial election by nearly 60,000 votes, the Populists elected to state office twenty-two house members and two senators in 1894. In addition, the Republican and Prohibitionist candidates collected enough votes to make the new governor a plurality victor.

Two years later, with Republican support, the Populist gubernatorial candidate, Jerome Kearby, came the closest to unseating the Democrats, losing to Culberson by less than 60,000 votes. The campaign of 1896 on the state level was a particularly bitter one. Democrats charged Populists with racial betrayal, attempting to restore black Reconstruction, anarchism, and communism. Local Democratic Party supporters intimidated voters, stuffed ballot boxes, and threatened and actually shot Populist organizers. On the national level, the Democratic Party's move toward free silver and low tariffs encouraged some national Populist Party leaders to "fuse" (or form a coalition) with the Democrats and endorse William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic nominee for the presidency. Most Texas Populists, who came from the tradition of organizing the Alliance along the frontier and supported the subtreasury, were "midroaders" and not "fusionists." These men wanted to nominate national candidates specifically for the Populist Party, but they lost out in the 1896 national Populist convention to the fusionists, who gave the Populist Party's presidential nomination to the Democrat Bryan. Bryan's subsequent loss to Republican William McKinley left the Populists with no national leader, because their chosen candidate, Bryan, headed the Democrats, and with no national platform, because Bryan did not endorse the Subtreasury Plan.

Populists attempted to regroup after the 1896 election, but a measure of prosperity returned to the nation briefly after that year, relieving some degree of agrarian discontent. Furthermore, the contentious campaign left both local and national Populist leaders disorganized and with no real political vehicle with which to begin another crusade. The pro-Bryan Democrats endorsed many of the old demands of Grangers, Greenbackers, and Alliancemen—although not the Subtreasury Plan or government ownership of the railroads. After a period of political alienation, some of the Populists returned to the state Democratic Party and, along with reform Democrats, forged a "progressive" coalition that fought the political battles of the early twentieth century. Other former Populists dropped out of politics permanently or joined the socialist movement.

The residue of the political contests of the 1890s shaped Texas politics for the next fifty years. The Populists had enjoyed some success in local campaigns. As a result of these bitter, often fraud-ridden contests, white men's associations were organized in counties with large black populations. These associations attempted to remove the black voter from politics. Following this example, all-white primaries developed throughout the state. These devices allowed local county Democratic executive committees to force prospective voters in the Democratic Party primaries and conventions to swear "I am a white Democratic voter. . . ." Obviously, those who could not swear such an oath were thereby disfranchised. By 1903, it was accepted that the county executive committee could define who could and who could not qualify to vote in their county in the statewide primary, which was mandated by the Terrell Election laws (1903, 1905). In most counties in Texas, African Americans could still vote in the general election—which was meaningless in a one-party state—but not in the Democratic Party primaries, which effectively chose state officeholders. In 1902, Texas voters approved of a poll tax that disfranchised many poor whites and blacks and further limited the possible third-party challenges to Democratic hegemony. Texans did not resort, as did most southern states, to literacy tests, grandfather clauses, and property requirements to prevent a recurrence of Populist-like challenges to the Democratic Party. Probably the heterogeneity of the state's population by this time made such a course politically unworkable. But the legislature did continue to pass "Jim Crow" laws after it mandated segregated railroad facilities. By the turn of the twentieth century, Texas, like many southern states, had erected an elaborate legal code that racially segregated public and private facilities.

### **Texas at Century's End**

The political battles of the late nineteenth century eroded much of the New South's concept of a passive state. During Culberson's four-year tenure as governor, he blended Hogg's reform tendencies with conservatism. Governor Culberson vetoed more legislation than did any other previous governor, including new reform measures, citing government economies as the reason for his vetoes. On the other hand, he enforced the 1889 antitrust act against Waters-Pierce Oil Company, a Standard Oil Company subsidiary based outside the state and one that would return illegally in 1900 and play a leading role in a famous political controversy. He also sponsored tax relief for victims of the 1893 depression, supported an increase in the powers of the Railroad Commission, and signed laws regulating labor relations and public lands.

Edward M. House, who later won national fame as an adviser to President Woodrow Wilson, gained considerable control of the state Democratic Party. Texas may not have yet seen his equal as a political manager. House shared his power with Joseph Weldon Bailey, a congressman from 1891 to 1901 and then a US senator from 1901 to 1913. More conservative than Hogg, House and Bailey represented moderate business views, as did Culberson, who in 1899 went on to the US Senate, where he served until 1923. The next two governors of Texas, Joseph D. Sayers (1899–1903) and S. W. T. Lanham (1903–1907), might also be described as moderate Democrats. However, as the last two ex-Confederates to serve as the chief executive of the state, they shared many of the conservative outlooks of the governors of the 1880s and thus, like Culberson, were reluctant to embrace Hogg-style progressivism.

The decline of agricultural influence on politics followed national trends. Progressivism, as it was emerging at the turn of the century, addressed urban as well as rural problems.



Overall, Texans went along with the general course of other agricultural states and accepted the commercialization of agriculture and its growing interdependence with national markets. Texas farmers moved toward specialization, but most of them never overcame their economic dependency to rise out of poverty. Railroads had spread across the state, unifying it, closing the frontier, and encouraging the growth of cities. The new political battles over how to deal with an increasingly urban environment would be fought within the Democratic Party. By endorsing segregation and one-party politics, Texas remained at the end of the nineteenth century as it had begun it, more southern than western in its political and social outlook.

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## Texas in the Progressive Era, 1900–1929

As the twentieth century dawned, Texas in many respects seemed mired in the past. Agriculture still dominated the economy, with cotton the mainstay of most Texas farms. Tenant farming remained commonplace throughout East Texas, as it had since the late nineteenth century. The majority of all Texans still lived in rural areas. In 1900, less than 20 percent of Texans resided in cities of more than 10,000 people. The census recorded 3.9 million persons living in Texas in 1910; that number increased to 4.7 million in 1920, and to 5.8 million in 1930. Sixty percent of this population was still classified as rural.

Race relations also turned on old customs and patterns. Indeed, the old traditions of white supremacy found new expression in legislation that reinforced patterns of public and residential segregation and that restricted minority groups from voting. Well into the twentieth century, Texans still fell back on time-tested tactics such as coercion and violence to sustain a racial order rooted in the nineteenth century.

Despite the state's many conservative impulses, the Texas economy advanced in significant ways. In the early twentieth century farming spread to South Texas and sections of West Texas on a grand scale; in these places, cotton farmers relied on migrant workers to do the grubbing of land and the picking of cotton. Farmers who could afford it acquired new farm implements and applied new techniques to working their fields. They embraced science and found ways to deal with destructive insects such as the boll weevil. Texas crops increasingly found national and international markets. Ranching (of sheep, dairy cows, and cattle for breeding) complemented farm living.

The most important new economic change, however, was the discovery of oil in vast quantities. Starting with Spindletop in 1901, oil gave birth to boomtowns, made cities oil-business centers, and created an oil-refining industry along the Gulf Coast. As it spread throughout the state, the oil industry brought hope to hundreds of farm and ranch hands who could now find better-paying jobs in the nearby oil fields. New railroads and highways were built, and banking became more widely accepted by the public.

Socially and culturally, Texans began breaking with their southern roots, increasingly identifying themselves more as Americans—even if foremost as Texans—and less as Southerners.

New political issues of national importance, such as prohibition, woman suffrage, and the income tax attracted Texans more than did the past exploits of the Confederates. World War I, moreover, exposed veterans to new ways of life, causing Texans to think nationally, even internationally, instead of regionally. As Texans reconsidered old mindsets, some even conceded women's right to vote, limit family size, or have professional careers.

The early twentieth century also witnessed political change. The progressive wing of the Democratic Party adopted the notion that government should address social ills, make business more responsive to public needs, and curb political corruption. Increasingly, many Texans came to prefer an activist government as opposed to old-style, laissez-faire politics. Progressivism would lack the radical edge of Populism, but it would help Texas begin the transition to modernity.

## Oil

Texans had long known that oil lay underground. Periodically, in one section of the state or another, people drilled for water and instead hit oil, which had relatively limited commercial uses. Nineteenth-century Texans never dreamed that oil and the state would become permanently intertwined in myth and economics. But in 1901, wildcatters discovered oil at Spindletop, near Beaumont, ushering in a boom that would ultimately see oil surpass both cattle and cotton to become the linchpin of Texas prosperity.

The first commercial oil well in Texas was struck in 1894 at Corsicana, where a company drilling a water well hit oil at 1035 feet. Subsequently, real estate developers persuaded James M. Guffey and John H. Galey of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (associates of millionaire Andrew W. Mellon) to come to Corsicana to join them in a search for more oil. Two years later, this team drilled a twenty-two-barrel-a-day well, and by 1900 their Corsicana field was producing 836,000 barrels a year. Soon this oil glutted the local market. Producers stored petroleum in open tanks and spilled a good amount of it, allowing the substance to become a hazard to the environment and public safety. Meanwhile, in 1897, the town's leaders asked J. S. Cullinan of Pennsylvania to come to Corsicana in order to exploit the resource better. In doing so, Cullinan founded the first successful commercial refinery in Texas. The J. S. Cullinan Company later merged with two other firms to form the Magnolia Petroleum Company (now known as Mobil, which merged with Exxon in 1999). As it expanded, the refinery needed new markets for its petroleum products, and Cullinan convinced the Cotton Belt Railroad in 1898 to run an experimental locomotive on steam created by an oil burner. Soon thereafter, most railroads began the switch from coal- to oil-burning locomotives.

Despite these beginnings, it was a discovery in Jefferson County that heralded oil's true potential. Patillo Higgins of Beaumont believed that the salt dome three miles south of town known as Spindletop would be a good site to drill for petroleum. Captain Anthony F. Lucas, a mining engineer, deduced from his work in Louisiana that Higgins was probably correct and decided to join him, even though most experts of the day disputed their theory and indeed believed that little or no oil existed west of the Mississippi River. In the face of such skepticism, Higgins and Lucas had a difficult time raising money for their drilling project. Finally, the Mellon men, Guffey and Galey, joined the Spindletop venture in Beaumont. These wildcatters then hired the Hammill brothers (Curt, Allen, and James) of Corsicana, users of a revolutionary rotary drilling process. The blending of technological expertise and Mellon money tapped the Spindletop pool on January 10, 1901.

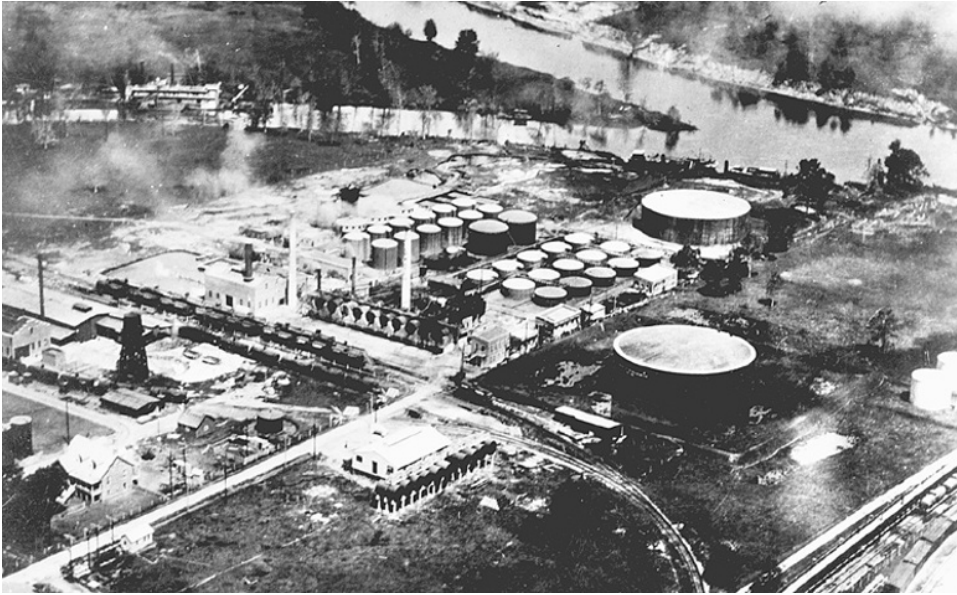
For nine days before it was capped, Spindletop spewed between 70,000 and 100,000 barrels daily, dwarfing previous strikes. Even as torrents of the uncapped “black gold” fell to the ground, speculators rushed to Beaumont. In 1901, the State of Texas chartered 491 oil companies. Houston Oil Company, in which John H. Kirby was the major stockholder, was capitalized at \$30 million and quickly replaced the Kirby Lumber Company as the largest corporation in Texas. All told, that year oil companies issued \$239,639,999 of capital stock, or six times that of all corporations, excluding railroads, in the previous decade.

A few other oil companies organized in the early days of Spindletop became giants. The J. M. Guffey Petroleum Company, owned by the Mellon interests, bought out Anthony F. Lucas’s share of the original Spindletop oilfield in 1901 and later became Gulf Oil. J. S. Cullinan left Corsicana and joined investors James S. Hogg, Hogg’s partner Jim Swayne, and barbed-wire entrepreneur J. W. “Bet a Million” Gates to create the Texas Company (later known as Texaco) in 1902. Other companies that can trace their roots to Spindletop include the Humble Oil and Refining Company (later Exxon), the Magnolia Petroleum Company, as mentioned, and the Sun Oil Company. Figure 9.1 shows the Texan oil fields between 1894 and 1918 together with their dates of discovery.

Perhaps more important than the discovery of oil itself were the numerous oil-related spin-off industries it generated, for these spin-offs created a framework from which the industrial base of Texas would grow. Within a year of Spindletop, Gulf constructed a



**Figure 9.1** Oil fields of Texas and date of discovery 1894–1918.



**Figure 9.2** Texas City oil refineries, 1911. Source: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

refinery at Port Arthur. The Texas Company did the same in 1905 (Figure 9.2). Both companies built pipelines connecting their refineries to the huge Glenn Pool field in Oklahoma, so that Oklahoma oil could now be processed in Texas. The Texas Company also built a refinery at Port Neches to make asphalt, another petroleum product. Tank cars were soon being fabricated to move oil by rail to great ocean-going tankers, which sailed out of new port facilities in recently dredged harbors. Machine shops turned to the making of oilfield equipment. Oil and gas law, petroleum engineering, and petroleum geology developed into important professions. Real estate firms especially designed for oil leasing spread throughout the state. Increasingly, Texans drove gasoline-powered automobiles over roads paved with asphalt. By the 1910s, natural gas, which was produced along with oil in most of the fields, was being transported to the major cities via pipeline. The construction of a carbon black plant in Stephens County in 1923 signaled the birth of the petrochemical industry in Texas.

In 1896, Texas had produced approximately 1000 barrels of oil; in 1902, it produced 21 million barrels. Soon wildcatters were scurrying through the state looking for new fields. One obvious place to look was under other salt domes, searches that yielded major fields at Sour Lake (1902), Batson (1903), Humble (1905), Goose Creek (1908), and Barbers Hill (1918). North Texas fields included Electra (1904); Mexia (1912, 1921); Burkburnett (1913); Ranger, Desdemona (1918) (Figure 9.3), and Breckenridge (1920); and Big Lake (1923). From North Texas, oil exploration spread into Central Texas, turning up fields at Powell (1923) and Luling (1922). Rotary drills and improved bits made deeper drilling possible and expanded the industry in 1926 to West Texas, where the Yates, Hendricks, and Borger fields started production. Back in the already drilled salt-dome areas, the loss of underground gas pressure had slowed the flow of oil to a trickle, but output was revived by new scientific methods of secondary recovery, the new, deeper drilling capabilities reactivating old wells and reaching new ones. The oil industry moved down the Texas coast, and by 1928 the Greta field, near Refugio, was a major producer. As the decade closed in 1929, the Texas



**Figure 9.3** Desdemona, Texas, ca. 1920. Source: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

oil industry produced 293 million barrels of oil annually, employed 13,726 persons in its refining, and had a value of \$429.5 million. Oil and the industries it spun off added an entirely new tax base for the state.

The oil frontier created boomtowns and wild times, as in one oil hamlet after another sharpsters, oil-lease hustlers, drillers, and day laborers rubbed elbows with bootleggers, pimps, gamblers, and prostitutes. Oil fever swelled the population of Breckenridge in 1918 alone from 800 to about 30,000. People rented cots by the hour or slept on floors; city services ceased; chains hung between trees served as jails. At times the Texas Rangers had to be sent to the boomtowns to tame lawlessness and expel troublemakers.

Texans were ill-prepared to deal with the physical and environmental problems posed by oil booms. Entrepreneurs drilled as close to existing rigs as was physically possible, each trying to extract a maximum share of the limited pools. In Breckenridge, some 200 derricks rose within the town limits, and several thousand more derricks sprouted up in the immediate area. In such places, fire and health hazards abounded. In the aftermath of the boom at Corsicana, where the municipal water supply had been ruined by oil seeping into the water table, the legislature required that casing be used in oil sands and that abandoned wells be plugged. But apart from this first step, matters of conservation and safety were left in the hands of the oil industry, whose voluntary standards were too often ignored. Only after World War I would the Railroad Commission be empowered to enforce more stringent regulations.

### **Urban Growth and Workers**

As the new century progressed, each decade saw a higher percentage of Texans living in metropolitan areas: 17.1 percent in 1900; 41 percent by 1930. Texas's five largest cities—Houston (292,352), Dallas (260,475), San Antonio (231,542), Fort Worth (163,447), and El Paso (102,421)—enjoyed a spectacular population surge of between 40 and 111 percent in



the 1920s. By this time, each city had taken on specific characteristics. Fort Worth had become known as “Cowtown,” a place dependent on its busy rail and stockyards. Dallas, which had acquired one of the twelve national branches of the Federal Reserve System in 1913, became a financial and business center. San Antonio, its prosperity built on manufacturing and military bases, prided itself on its Spanish heritage and began to emerge as a well-known tourist destination. Houston became the epicenter of the developing oil business, and in 1914, the fifty-five-mile-long, thirty-foot-deep Houston Ship Channel opened and began to attract industries along its banks, turning the Bayou City into one of the nation’s major ports. El Paso served as the commercial hub of the Trans-Pecos region and a smelting and mining center. The Beaumont–Port Arthur area grew with the oil and petrochemical industries, as did a number of West Texas towns. Increased barge traffic encouraged the growth of Corpus Christi and other Gulf ports.

Meanwhile, Galveston was enjoying its status as the third-largest city in Texas, a major port, and a cotton compressing center when, on September 8, 1900, the greatest natural disaster ever to strike North America hit the “Island City.” That night a massive Gulf hurricane slammed into Galveston, killing approximately 6000 people and leveling most of the city. Houston was already replacing Galveston as the economic giant of the Texas Gulf Coast, but the storm hastened the latter’s demise. By 1930, a rebuilt but economically diminished Galveston had begun to advertise itself as a vacation spot of scenic boardwalks and beaches (Figure 9.4).

In the wake of the disaster, in 1901 the city leadership of Galveston adopted a new form of municipal government, the so-called commission plan (also known as the Galveston Plan or the Texas Idea). Under this setup, commissioners replaced the elected representatives from specific geographic wards, who in turn had selected the mayor. This scheme, designed to bring efficiency to the rebuilding of the devastated city, put individual commissioners in charge of specific municipal departments. When assembled, the commission



**Figure 9.4** Boulevard and bath houses, Galveston, Texas. Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries. UH Digital Library.

acted as a policy-making and legislative body. Houston adopted this form of government, which came to be known as the Galveston Plan, in 1905; Dallas, Fort Worth, and El Paso did so in 1907, and by 1920, seventy other Texas communities had followed suit. The plan underwent some modifications in 1913, when Amarillo adopted a council-manager form of city government. Under this arrangement, the council hired a city manager to oversee the administration of city services. Critics charged that the commission form of government, which abolished ward representation through at-large voting, diluted the strength of minorities and secured the political control of cities by their respective elites. Progressives, however, did not disapprove of elites' control of local government, and the Galveston Plan served as a model for city reform that spread across the nation.

After the turn of the century, Texas cities began to develop modern amenities. Most urban areas quickly developed telephone exchanges. In 1913, Texas Power and Light connected Waco, Fort Worth, and Dallas with high-tension electric lines. Oil producers supplied natural gas to urban areas. The growth of streetcars, interurban lines, and individual automobile ownership moved families from downtown to the newly forming suburbs. The League of Texas Municipalities, organized in 1913, advocated "city beautiful" movements that led to urban landscaping projects and the creation of public parks. By the 1920s, the state's major cities all had zoos, public swimming pools, ballparks, and fairgrounds.

The expansion and linking of urban areas attracted more workers into the cities. The length of the average workweek dropped, and by 1929, forty-eight hours was becoming the norm, although some industries such as slaughtering and cotton processing demanded longer hours. The average Texas worker earned \$540 per year in 1909. Over time wages grew, but the increase in the cost of living, which doubled between 1913 and 1920, offset any real increase in wages. In 1929, the average wage worker earned about \$1129, roughly 80 percent of the national average. Skilled workers received about 25 percent more, whereas salaried employees in corporations earned roughly double that amount. At the low end of the scale, those working in slaughtering and the cotton industries made about 30 percent less than the state average. Nevertheless, the rapidly growing number of industrial jobs continued to make urban areas more attractive than the countryside.

The expansion of job opportunities also affected women. The shortage of male workers during World War I lent respectability to female employment, and women's successes in the workplace encouraged male employers to continue to hire them. Slightly more than 400,000 Texas women worked outside the home in 1930, an increase of about 25 percent over 1920. A higher percentage of urban women than rural women were employed, a fact reflected by the decrease of female agricultural workers by nearly one-half, as more women moved to cities and the demand for agricultural labor in general dropped.

The growth of large cities and new technologies offered Texas women increased employment in such occupations as telephone operators, clerical workers, and salespeople. As professionals, women accounted for 80 percent of the teachers, 90 percent of the nurses, and 90 percent of the librarians, but fewer than 2 percent of the lawyers and physicians. The increasing number of white married women in the workforce contributed to the concept of the "New Woman": the independent young lady who made her own decisions, free from male restrictions and advice.

The growth of an urban economy also aided in the decrease of child labor, as fewer children were now hired as farmhands. The percentage of employed children aged ten to fifteen dropped from 20 percent in 1900 to 7 percent in 1930. Ninety percent of these children worked in agriculture, usually on the family farm. Although Texans steadfastly refused to ratify a proposed amendment to the US Constitution regulating child labor, state regulatory

laws effectively decreased the number of children in the labor pool, as did a 1915 law mandating compulsory school attendance.

## **Labor Unions**

Labor unions never enjoyed a strong base in Texas. In the early twentieth century, the Texas State Federation of Labor was the strongest union, with 512 local chapters at the union's peak of strength in 1918. By 1931, the organization had fallen to 135 locals. Oil workers in Texas and Louisiana, who had organized in 1905, called a strike during World War I that failed completely, temporarily ending unionism in the oil fields. This oil-workers' affiliate of the AFL did, however, remain strong along the Gulf Coast. The Brotherhood of Timber Workers (an independent union) in 1911 and 1912 recruited among lumber men in East Texas who worked amid horrid conditions in the logging camps and sawmills. But the union did not survive for long, unable to fend off counterattacks from the powerful lumber companies. Although numerous other unions actively recruited members, a vigorous, unified voice for Texas industrial workers never materialized, and union membership in the state, as in the nation, dropped during the 1920s.

Open hostility from business interests and the general public underlay the decline in union membership. The nation's first "Red Scare" after World War I led public opinion to link union activity with socialism and the Russian Revolution of 1917, and the state's political leaders seemed to endorse the antiunion spirit. When dockworkers in Galveston joined a national strike in 1920 for higher wages and the exclusive employment of union workers, Governor William P. Hobby declared the strike illegal, imposed martial law, and dispatched the National Guard (later replaced by Texas Rangers) to force the longshoremen back to work. Meanwhile, a special session of the legislature passed an Open Port Law that officially prohibited any activities that might interfere with the free passage of trade within the state. In 1922, Governor Pat Neff used the law to crack down on a railroad strike. The courts eventually ruled the Open Port Law unconstitutional, but union officials cited it as an express example of Texas public officials' opposition to unions.

## **Agriculture and Rural Life**

Agriculture remained the mainstay of the Texas economy well into the 1920s. In 1927, for example, the value of Texas agriculture was three times that of oil and of manufacturing. And in Texas agriculture, cotton remained the "king," as the state produced one-third of the nation's cotton throughout the 1920s, leading all other states.

The early twentieth century saw commercial agriculture move into the Panhandle and High Plains, suitable ground for both cotton and wheat. Cotton also moved into the Rio Grande Valley, where, beginning around 1920, it was joined by citrus as a major cash crop. By the end of that decade, citrus production would almost equal cotton in South Texas. The passage of the federal Bankruptcy Act of 1898 gave businesses protection from creditors for the first time, and favorable banking and insurance legislation at the state level created a more favorable environment for farmers who increasingly treated agriculture as a business. Although Central and East Texas still grew the most cotton, in 1894 the boll weevil arrived in South Texas from Mexico and proceeded to spread throughout the state. By 1922, the destructive insect had reached its westernmost limits, for the Panhandle climate was

**Table 9.1** Ranking of Texas crops by acreage, 1909–1929.

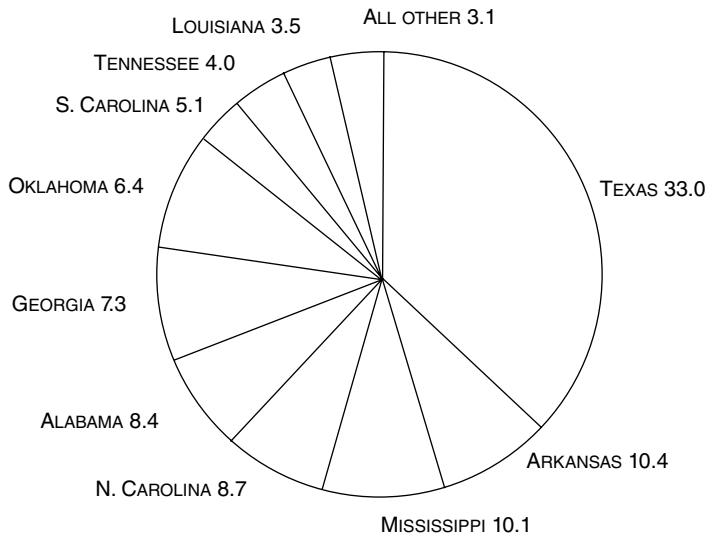
|               | 1909      | 1919       | 1929       |
|---------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Cotton        | 9,930,000 | 11,523,000 | 16,813,000 |
| Corn          | 5,131,000 | 4,748,000  | 4,075,000  |
| Grain Sorghum | 572,000   | 1,484,000  | 1,701,000  |
| Wheat         | 325,000   | 2,414,000  | 2,969,000  |
| Oats          | 459,000   | 1,864,000  | 1,148,000  |
| Rice          | 207,000   | 964,000    | 106,000    |

inhospitable to the weevil. This development, coupled with the cultivation of early-maturing strains of cotton which developed before the weevils had a chance to overtake the fields, encouraged cotton's westward expansion. Nevertheless, in some years boll weevils cost Texans one-third of their crop. Grain sorghums, used as stock feed, proved more drought-resistant than did corn, and they, too, spread to the High Plains. Corn, however, remained the principal cultivated food source for animals in north-central and East Texas. Table 9.1 gives the ranking of crops, by acreage, in Texas between 1909 and 1929.

As in the previous few decades, agriculture, though vast, brought prosperity to few Texans. In particular, cotton failed many farmers. In 1900, the price of cotton stood at 9.78 cents per pound; in 1919, boosted by the demands of World War I, the price rose to 20.9 cents; however, with the agricultural depression of 1921, the price of cotton fell to 11.60 cents; and by 1929 it had retreated all the way back to 10.9 cents per pound. Since the cost of living doubled between 1913 and 1920, the farm family was still earning about the same amount from farming cotton as it had at the beginning of the century. As farmers saw their mortgaged land foreclosed, the rate of increase in farm tenancy increased. In 1910, 51.7 percent of Texas farmers were tenants; by 1930 the rate had grown to 61 percent.

Although the availability of cheap labor generally discouraged mechanization, Texas farm values, including the value added by mechanization, rose. In 1910, the average Texas farm had \$85 invested in machinery; by 1930, the average was \$367. The inflation of 1913 to 1919 must be taken into account, but the spread of agriculture to the High Plains and Rio Grande Valley largely drove the increase in the value of farms and machinery. Those vast areas invited the establishment of large, mechanized farms. A more accurate gauge of mechanization, therefore, might be the number of tractors in the state, which between 1925 and 1929 increased by more than 20,000. Figure 9.5 charts the percentage of cotton grown in each state in 1922.

East and Central Texas cotton farmers worked in much the same fashion that they always had: they plowed with mules, hoed one-half to one acre a day, and picked cotton by hand. Their lives still tightly conformed to the agricultural seasons of planting, weeding, and harvesting. In a typical day, father and sons started their chores before daylight, first feeding the mules or horses, then having breakfast with other family members, and afterwards going to the fields (accompanied by the women folk) to begin a long day of planting, plowing, clearing, or picking, depending on the time of the harvest cycle. As in the past, farm families wrestled with hard times and the caprices of nature in a desperate pursuit of comfort and survival. In rural homes, people made do with kerosene lamps for lighting and fetched water from the most readily available source, perhaps the local well, a cistern, or the nearby stream. Country folks suffered bitter cold in the winter and suffocating heat in the summer, as farming simply did not produce enough income to make home improvements capable of



**Figure 9.5** Percentage of cotton grown in each state, crop of 1933.



**Figure 9.6** A group of dogs on a car at the Fords Lake Lumber Co. An African American man sitting on a wooden cart attached to a horse is next to the car. Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries. UH Digital Library.

staving off the elements. Mosquitoes, flies, and bedbugs added to daily misery, as did rats and roaches that seemed to scurry about homes at will.

Tenants and their families remained the poorest of the farmers. As in the nineteenth century, the landowner dictated the terms of the arrangement. Often, landlords determined what amount of land the tenant should set aside for different crops; ordinarily, more than half the acreage was to be planted in cotton, which still paid better than other crops. But

terms might also depend on one's bargaining powers. Share tenants, who furnished some portion of animals, tools, implements, seed, and their own food, and then bargained what percentage of crops they paid to the landlord, were also termed "third and fourth" renters (one-third of the cotton and one-fourth of the corn going to the landlord). "Halfers" or "croppers," those who furnished nothing but their labor, divided their crops equally with the landlord. In addition, all tenants borrowed against their expected income. In 1914, one-half of tenant farmers annually borrowed 100 percent of their gross income. Much of this borrowing was not to invest in a productive process but simply to purchase food, clothing, and essential supplies. Interest rates varied but were invariably astronomical, sometimes as much as 50 percent. The result was that croppers worked smaller farms (37 acres for blacks, 78 for whites) than owners (71 acres for blacks, 364 for whites), with tenants only slightly better-off than croppers. Property values followed a similar trajectory. Lucky tenants were allowed to raise chickens or hogs, keep a milk cow, or grow a vegetable garden, but many landlords forbade such practices, and hunger still plagued many.

### **Farm laborers**

The 1929 census reported that 347,996 Texans worked in the fields for some period of the year. About 43 percent of these laborers toiled on their home farms; the rest worked for wages. Although the overall number of these wage-earners dropped throughout the 1920s, the decade saw a major increase in the number of male and female Hispanic farm laborers, who were listed as nonwhites in the 1930 census.

The hours worked by day laborers depended on the chores at hand. In South Texas, cotton picking began in July and ended in December. It was essential that the mature bolls be gathered quickly, before rain or wind damaged the exposed cotton. Therefore, cotton pickers worked long hours, five and one-half days a week. They were paid by the hundredweight. When crops were big and labor in short supply, pickers might make from \$3.50 to \$4 per hundredweight, but at other times wages fell to less than \$1. Additional wage scales were set by the acre for hoeing and chopping cotton, \$1.50 to \$1.75 per day being the norm, and roughly the same amount was earned for topping corn. The average Texas agricultural wage earner worked between nine and eleven hours a day for 165 days and earned a yearly wage of \$485.35. At times, black and Hispanic women hired out on a family contract, whereby the arranger, frequently the eldest male, received the pay for the total family production. Migrant workers sometimes contracted with employers through a labor negotiator, who took a percentage of their pay. Consequently, their individual wages may have been less than those workers who arranged independently with farmers. Women seemed to have earned equal pay, but most farm labor income was piecework, which meant that laborers were paid for the total amount of crops picked or the total number of acres or rows hoed. Therefore, many women were not physically capable of matching men's wages.

### **Farm women and families**

Farm life for women in the Blackland Prairie region of Central Texas likely exemplified the kinds of conditions women faced elsewhere in the state. There, women rose before the rest of the family to prepare breakfast, joined everyone else for work until noontime, returned home to fix lunch, resumed field duties until dusk, and then in the evenings, while other



**Figure 9.7** This photograph of fig-shipping employees in the early twentieth century is testimony to the large number of women agricultural workers during this period. Source: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, Houston, Texas.

family members might rest, took up household chores such as washing, sewing, and cleaning (Figure 9.7). As agricultural laborers, they participated in every stage of the yearly harvest cycle, including plowing, planting, hoeing, cultivating, and picking the crop. Yet women generally saw little of the proceeds from the season's harvest, as the male heads of household usually managed the finances. The falling cotton prices of the first three decades of the twentieth century furthermore must have been psychologically debilitating to farm women, especially as they saw village and urban women acquire more luxuries and achieve a higher standard of living. Moreover, tenant and cropper women likely had it worse; many croppers moved every two or three years, so they seldom enjoyed the traditional stability of rural-community life.

Advances in technology in the twentieth century did not do much to lessen the burdens of farm women. A study of women in Central and East Texas in 1930 found that 57 percent of white women still cooked on wood stoves, 80 percent used oil lamps, and 63 percent washed clothes in tubs of boiling water then rubbed them clean on washboards. Black women fared worse; 99 percent of them used oil lamps and wood stoves. Simple amenities were rare for all farm families. Fewer than 5 percent of Texas farms had electricity, fewer than 8 percent had indoor plumbing, and fewer than 15 percent had water piped into the kitchen.

### **Agricultural improvement efforts**

Although some Texans preferred rural to urban living, most farmers genuinely resented the circumstances that prevented them from obtaining economic security. Before World War I, the Renters' Union of North America founded some two hundred locals in Texas. This socialist organization attempted to establish rules for tenancy and improve methods of marketing crops. The Farmers' Union, organized in Emory, Texas, grew to have 140,000 members. A Colored Farmers' Union formed in emulation of its white counterpart. The Union's goals closely mirrored earlier alliance goals. It was best known for its plow-up campaign of 1908 (creating a planned shortage by destroying one-third of its cotton) and its approximately 1300 cotton warehouses and marketing cooperatives. The Texas Farmers Congress and Farmers' Institutes at the Agricultural and Mechanical College stressed

improvement through rural education, the use of scientific farming techniques, and cooperative marketing. The more conservative Farm Bureau, which became the dominant rural organization, also supported self-help ventures. All such organizations sought ways to expand credit availability to agriculturists, none of which succeeded for the average farmer. Instead, the condition of Texas farmers only worsened as the Great Depression approached.

### **Leisure**

Though poor farmers could spare little time for entertainment, leisure nonetheless entered into rural life. Much of it was of a make-do variety, as people possessed few resources to finance activities such as eating out, attending paid sports events, or even bearing the expense of dating. Thus, adult leisure pursuits involved visiting neighbors (mainly on weekends) or participating in church-sponsored events. Weddings always called for some type of celebration, and parents managed to observe this phase of their children's life with some type of entertainment. Women competed in baking or cooking contests while men enjoyed hunting or fishing. Young people found fun in common adolescent socializing, or, in the case of boys, playing baseball or other kinds of sports. Children made up their own games, showing off their dexterity by running, jumping, or climbing trees. Girls spent time with (homemade) dolls or invented household play work while boys played with tops, marbles, or their own handmade toys.

New technology did, however, improve the social lives of some rural families, lessening their isolation and loneliness. The personal automobile, for one, brought the village closer to the farm. In 1929, about three-fifths of farm families reported owning an automobile, although poor roads limited access to the village in bad weather; 391,000 of the 450,000 miles of Texas roads in 1929 were unpaved. Other new technologies were not as prevalent as the automobile. In 1925, radios were found in only 2.5 percent of rural homes, and by 1929, only 32 percent of rural homes had a telephone.

### **Ethnic Texans**

#### **African Americans**

Historians have described the early twentieth century as the low point of race relations in the United States. Ironically, Populism, which tried to create a biracial political coalition, helped to encourage segregation in the South. Attempting to prevent any future coalition of blacks and poor white farmers, establishment Democratic politicians sought to drive a wedge between poor blacks and poor whites by accusing blacks of being genetically inferior to whites and claiming that such "innate" flaws made blacks a threat to society. This movement to make African Americans into permanent outsiders largely succeeded. In rural areas of Texas, most blacks did not vote, the casualties of all-white primaries.

In 1923, the legislature acted to formalize black exclusion in the Democratic primary, but Lawrence A. Nixon, a Wiley College graduate and physician, challenged the law: in *Nixon v. Herndon* (1927) the US Supreme Court ruled that all-white primaries violated the Fourteenth Amendment. The next year, however, the state defined political parties as "private organizations"—and therefore not subject to federal voting requirements—effectively skirting the federal law. In short, until 1944 most black Texans simply did not vote.



*Segregation and violence*

Excluded from political participation, black Texans watched as white officials segregated public facilities. The state legislature in 1910 and 1911 required separate waiting rooms at railroad stations and employee compartments on trains, the latter to prevent black porters from resting in unoccupied Pullman berths (in which a white passenger might next lie). Soon, virtually all public facilities had separate water fountains and restrooms. In 1916, the Dallas city council passed ordinances requiring residential segregation. The US Supreme Court ruled against these types of laws, but the state legislature authorized cities to pass creative zoning regulations that effectively segregated neighborhoods. Consequently, urban ghettos where poor black residents were inevitably made to concentrate developed in all Texas cities. Needless to say, health and recreational facilities and governmental services such as road paving and repair, lighting, sewage, and police protection were inadequate in black neighborhoods and hardly equal to the level of city services provided to white neighborhoods. By 1930, it was impossible for black citizens to stay at major hotels, eat in better restaurants, or attend most cultural or sporting events unless the venue provided segregated, usually inferior, seating sections.

White individuals employed vigilante-style violence to keep blacks “in their place,” and even law enforcement agencies helped uphold the separate and unequal society. Texas lynch mobs murdered more than 300 African Americans between the 1880s and 1930. In 1916 at Waco, approximately 10,000 whites turned out in a holiday-like atmosphere to watch a mob mutilate and burn a black man named Jesse Washington (Figure 9.8). In this violent atmosphere, race riots erupted periodically. In 1908 at Beaumont, whites burned down two black



**Figure 9.8** The burning and mutilation of the body of Jesse Washington following his lynching. Source: The Texas Collection, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

amusement parks. In 1919, clashes between whites and blacks in Longview culminated with the burning of the black section of town. Similar experiences occurred at various times in Sherman, Port Arthur, Houston, and other cities. White prejudice included animosity toward black troops in the US Army. The Brownsville community, for example, objected to the stationing of the all-black Twenty-fifth Infantry at Fort Brown. In anger, whites and Hispanics of the city charged that the troops had raided their town in 1906 in protest of discriminatory practices. Later evidence demonstrated the unfairness of the charges, but by that time President Theodore Roosevelt had dishonorably discharged 167 of the troops. In Houston, black soldiers' resentment of segregation flamed into a clash with white citizens in 1917. The riot, during which sixteen whites died, ended with the execution of nineteen of the black soldiers for murder and life imprisonment of fifty-three more.

Their political power diluted, blacks in Texas, as in the rest of the nation, chose either accommodation or resistance to the segregation they faced daily. In 1912, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) founded a chapter in Houston. There in the Bayou City, a black middle class comprised of businesspeople and professionals prospered and a variety of black organizations could effectively mobilize the black citizenry. By 1930 the NAACP had organized thirty more chapters in the state. White hostility toward the NAACP surfaced in the 1919 beating in Austin of John R. Shillady, the organization's white executive secretary. Throughout the 1920s, indeed, the NAACP faced accusations that it held Bolshevik ties; simultaneously, it confronted hostility from local communities and reactionary forces resentful of African American assertiveness.



**Figure 9.9** Tillie Brackenridge in San Antonio, ca. 1900. Courtesy Mrs. Charles C. Bush. Source: University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 85-75).

*Rural blacks*

The African American population in Texas increased from 670,722 in 1900 to 854,964 in 1930, during which period the majority of blacks remained in rural areas, where they worked as tenants and farm laborers and dealt with stifling conditions. Women experienced a double dose of drudgery, having to work alongside men for ten hours a day during the harvest season, then having to tend to household chores, including making meals, doing washing and ironing, and caring for sick family members, all the while lacking the benefit of running water, indoor facilities, or modern kitchen appliances.

As cotton prices fell, tenants' chances of acquiring their own farms fell further out of reach. Some turned to the Farmers' Improvement Society (FIS), first organized by Robert Lloyd Smith in the 1890s. The society endorsed the philosophy of the nationally famous Booker T. Washington, calling for racial accommodation and black self-help. The FIS founded a bank in Waco, operated a vocational school in Ladonia, and sponsored a Women's Auxiliary and a Truck Grower's Union. Other organizations established farmers' institutes and local cooperative associations. Finally, Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College held annual Farmers' Congresses to aid black Texans. These organizations all spoke of accommodation and self-help to counteract poverty and segregation.

*Urban blacks*

A number of black Texans sought to escape rural poverty by moving to urban areas outside the state. Some joined the wave of black Southerners moving to northern cities, which historians refer to as the Great Migration. Still others went only as far as Louisiana or Oklahoma. In most cases, however, blacks who left Texas farms relocated to Texas cities. The percentage of the black population in the state's urban areas grew from 19 percent in 1900 to 32 percent in 1930. Settling in segregated neighborhoods, most blacks joined the workforce by taking unskilled jobs, as craft unions generally excluded them from membership. Segregated unions existed for select trades such as longshoremen, porters, and switchmen, but these organizations had almost no influence in the Texas State Federation of Labor. Because the dockworkers maintained unions to secure equal pay with whites, the best semiskilled vocations for blacks were those of longshoreman and stevedore.

In 1900, 57,000 black males in Texas worked in nonagricultural jobs. Nearly 60 percent of them toiled as domestic servants and unskilled laborers. During the next thirty years, the number of African American males employed in urban areas doubled, but 64 percent of them still worked as laborers or servants. The expanding economy of the 1920s did open new employment opportunities for black men as porters and chauffeurs and in building trades and oil refining. The public sector, however, hired few African Americans, except as janitors and manual laborers. Three times as many black women as white women worked outside the home, most of these as domestic servants.

The segregated communities also fostered the emergence of a small black bourgeoisie. Ministers and teachers composed the largest occupational group of black professionals in 1930, whose number also included 205 physicians, 99 dentists, 20 lawyers, and 198 undertakers. A handful of these professionals were women, as a few black women did manage to acquire the advanced education necessary to practice medicine—as doctors, dentists, and pharmacists. More common were nurses (some trained at Prairie View A and M), along with social workers, teachers, journalists, beauticians, salespeople, and secretaries, most of whom worked in black-owned businesses. Texas had only four black-owned banks in 1928, and the shortage of investment capital limited the expansion of black businesses. Most

black-owned stores in Texas were mom-and-pop ventures that shared their customers with white retail outlets.

In the larger cities, by the 1920s black-owned and -operated nightclubs and dance halls also came to play important sociopolitical roles. Although the emerging art forms of blues and jazz rarely openly challenged white supremacy, their unique, improvisational musical forms and edgy lyrics often barely masked intuitive messages of protest. The clubs, then, took their place alongside more “respectable” institutions of the urban black community in helping African Americans push back against the indignities and injustices of Jim Crow.

### *Social, religious, and fraternal organizations*

Social activities for African Americans revolved around segregated institutions, especially the church. In 1916, 396,157 blacks belonged to a church, a majority of them Baptists. As with the general population, the number of church members actually attending services regularly dropped during the 1920s, but churches also served as public forums—for education, social interchange, and the development of African American leadership skills. In addition, all-black chapters of lodges such as the Knights of Pythias (which had 35,000 members in 1921) and the Masons (which had 30,000) served the black community as schools, recreation sites, churches, and civic centers. The fraternities also sometimes offered insurance and banking services to their members. William M. McDonald used his connections with black Masons to convince other fraternal groups in 1912 to help him establish the Fraternal Bank and Trust Company in Fort Worth. In 1930, he sold his controlling interest in the bank to the Masons. His influence in the African American communities of Texas made him perhaps the most important black political leader of the 1920s. Women’s efforts to improve conditions within segregated communities also saw expression in the establishment of lodges of their own; among those to thrive were the Female Masons, the Order of the Eastern Star, and the Grand Court, Order of the Calanthe. In addition, a vigorous black women’s club movement paralleled that of white women, drawing membership from the wives of ministers, lawyers, businesspersons, and other professional types. Several of these groups belonged to the Texas Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs, organized in 1905.

By 1930, black Texans had responded to a racist, segregated society by organizing separate institutions that furnished intellectual and social stimulation apart from white society. These organizations, especially strong in those urban areas with an increasing black population, gave African Americans a greater degree of autonomy, opportunity, and community than they otherwise would have had, and they schooled the generation of young African Americans who would challenge, and ultimately dismantle, the system of Jim Crow.

### *Education*

The segregated school system of the day also trained black leaders. The Colored Teachers State Association urged professionalization for black teachers, and the Interscholastic League of Negro Schools promoted athletic events and academic contests. Administrators tended to support conservative positions and maintenance of the status quo, for school funds relied on the support and good will of whites, and, with some exceptions, they endorsed technical and vocational training at the expense of the liberal arts.

Despite many obstacles, the black school systems did improve. By 1930 illiteracy in the black population had fallen statewide to 13.4 percent. Comparisons of black to white schools revealed, however, the unfairness of the Jim Crow system. Black students attended school an average of 106 days a year, as compared to 131 days for white students. Black

teachers earned on average about \$92 per month, as compared to \$121 for white teachers. Three-quarters of the black schools were one-teacher, one-room facilities. One study estimated that statewide during the 1920s, per capita spending to educate white children exceeded that spent to educate black children by three times.

The inability of black teachers to attend graduate programs in the white state colleges created problems of competency and professionalism in black education. The emphasis at Prairie View A and M remained on technical, agricultural, and teacher education; the college offered no graduate courses until the late 1930s, and then only in agriculture and home economics.

## **Tejanos**

An estimated 695,000 Texans of Mexican descent resided in the state as of 1930. Much of the increase was due to heavy emigration from Mexico: people pulled to Texas by a demand for cheap labor and pushed from their homeland by the poverty and terror of the revolution that broke out in 1910. So intense was the migration into rural hamlets and barrios that the newcomers overwhelmed the native Texas Mexican population. In some cases, Tejano communities even came to look toward Mexico for cultural assurance. Not until the 1930s would a “Mexican American Generation” surface to reorient the Tejano community toward the United States.

### *Discrimination*

Most white Texans continued to look upon Tejanos, whether native or foreign born, and regardless of social class, disparagingly as “Mexicans” or “greasers.” Racist attitudes that marked Mexicans as inferior and ill suited for assimilation into the mainstream of American society were reinforced in the 1920s and 1930s by racist theories that deemed Mexicans inherently “dirty.” Mexican Americans, therefore, remained deprived of the full rights of US citizenship. In politics, for example, they faced new hurdles to voting following a series of practices implemented between 1900 and 1920. The 1902 poll-tax requirement and the rule used at the county level by the white men’s primary associations, barring voters who could not swear to be “a white person and a Democrat,” eliminated many Texas Mexican voters. Then, in 1918, a new law prohibited interpreters from translating for voters and election judges from assisting anyone who could not prove that he had been a US citizen for twenty-one years.

Furthermore, Mexican Americans in Texas encountered segregation at every turn. Developers in South Texas laid out new towns with sections specifically intended as “Mexican quarters.” When permitted an education, Mexicans attended the “Mexican school,” and administrators seldom encouraged them to enter the all-white high schools. Many of those Tejanos who sought to achieve higher education left the state to do so. Meanwhile, back home in Texas, barber shops, restaurants, and other public places unabashedly displayed signs that read “No Mexicans or Dogs Allowed.” In short, white society persistently displayed repugnance at “mixing with Mexicans.”

### *Working conditions and organized labor*

As of 1900, 76 percent of Tejanos lived in rural areas. They made their living primarily as agricultural hands: in West Texas, *Mexicanos* worked in the sheep ranches as *tasinques*

(sheepshearers); in South Texas they turned to farm work in *el desenraiz* (grubbing) and *la pizca* (cotton picking). In the 1920s, a pattern of migratory labor began that would persist for a half-century thereafter. From the lower Rio Grande Valley, Mexicans pursued the harvest of "King Cotton." Family unit after family unit joined the army of migrant pickers in late summer as it passed through the Corpus Christi area, thence up to Central Texas, over to West Texas, and then to North Texas. The so-called Big Swing ended in the Panhandle near the start of winter, at which point the migrant workers finally returned to their South Texas homes. For those Tejanos employed in the new citrus groves of South Texas in the 1920s, conditions often resembled the peonage systems found in prior centuries in Latin America and Europe.

Town dwellers coped as best they could in areas often characterized by urban blight and squalor. Barrios in El Paso, San Antonio, and the towns of South Texas swelled with recent arrivals fleeing the Mexican Revolution. In these urban settings, workers turned to public works and mercantile establishments for their livelihoods, though many through necessity joined the migrant cotton stream, returning to their homes at the end of the Big Swing to await the start of next year's cycle. Mexican settlements popped up in cities such as Houston, where Mexicans provided the labor for the construction of railroads and the ship channel. Mexican neighborhoods also sprouted in cities such as Lubbock, where those weary of the Big Swing opted to establish new and permanent roots.

Although the cotton pickers and other Mexican American *obreros* (laborers) often remained at the mercy of the worst exploitative potentials of the capitalist system, the historical record shows that Mexicans in Texas founded or joined workers' organizations for self-improvement and change. Texas Mexican socialist unions composed of agricultural laborers were, for example, active within the cotton-belt circumscribed by B exar, Travis, and Victoria counties as early as the 1910s.

Industrial unions also surfaced. Among the most prominent such labor organization was Federal Labor Union No. 11,953 of Laredo, which in 1906 gained a wage hike after striking against the Mexican Railway. Other work stoppages marked the first decades of the century. In 1901, 200 Mexican American construction workers struck the El Paso Electric Street Car Company for a salary raise and fringe benefits, as did smelter workers in that city later (1907), both unsuccessfully. When the murder of a Mexican American labor organizer triggered a challenge to the Texas and Pacific Coal Company in Thurber in 1903, 1600 members of the United Mine Workers, some of whom were Mexican, won both a pay increase and shorter working hours. Onion clippers struck for higher wages in Asherton in 1912. Mexican American clerks in El Paso founded the International Clerks' Protective Association in 1913 and achieved their demand for earlier closing hours. Approximately 300 laundry workers walked off the job in El Paso in 1919 for union recognition, but strikebreakers from Mexico ended that endeavor.

### *Self-help organizations*

Avenues for self-help took various forms. Though sometimes disfranchised, Tejanos nevertheless found the means of gaining from the extant political structure. In South Texas, where political bosses such as Jim Wells and Manuel Guerra (in Starr County) maintained power through their control of the Hispanic vote and access to patronage, Mexican residents received numerous social services. These offerings included social-welfare benefits, relief during times of drought, help with legal problems, assistance in marrying, baptizing, or burying a family member, encouragement in improving the lot of talented individuals in

the community, and even protection from the persecution of racist members of white society. Sometimes this standard of living gained the notice of jealous whites. Indeed, many progressive reforms spearheaded by white Texans intended not only to eliminate political machines but also to limit the ability of Tejanos to exploit political contests for their own social advantages.

By the early twentieth century, almost every town in the state had separate Tejano organizations that extended aid to members and their families and otherwise helped Tejanos survive the difficult living conditions they faced daily. An effort to unite these several societies was made on September 14, 1911, at Laredo. Known as *El Primer Congreso Mexicanista* (the First Mexican Congress), this assemblage considered such statewide issues as unity, cultural nationalism, exploitation in the workplace, educational exclusion, the rights of Tejanos, extralegal justice directed at Tejanos, and discrimination. Little, however, resulted from the meeting of the Congreso, for the individual *mutualistas* (mutual self-help societies) preferred their own independence and local control to merging with others under an umbrella group.

Indeed, the 1910s and 1920s imbued many within Mexican communities with the fervor of mutualism, among them women. In many cases, Tejanos established auxiliaries to male mutual-aid associations. In the same spirit of altruism, other women joined the ranks of the *Cruz Azul*, a charitable agency that had tended to the poor and the sick in barrios. A few women, mainly of the middle class, became social workers in settlement homes of the larger cities, where they helped impart useful information to new members of Hispanic communities regarding health, cooking, family relations, and job skills. Still other Tejanos sought to instruct the poor by teaching in *escuelitas*, small schools set up informally by parents or communities. By the 1930s, the commitment to mutualism appeared, however, to lose its zeal, perhaps because of the effects of the Great Depression, the upheaval of communities during governmental repatriation efforts, and the rise of new civil rights organizations.

Mutualism, of course, was not politically driven, as would be the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC, founded in 1929) and its forerunner, *La Orden Hijos de América* (The Order of the Sons of America, or OSA, organized in San Antonio in 1921), both of which addressed the political issues brought to public light by the Primer Congreso Mexicanista. The new organizations owed their creation to the presence of a small but growing Tejano middle class that had (since before World War I) advocated a progressive platform to improve the living conditions of Texas Mexicans. Progressive Tejanos felt that Texas Mexicans could advance themselves by attending school, effectively integrating themselves into the growing South Texas economy, placing trust in the US government and its guarantee of equal protection of rights, and their accommodation to the mainstream American society (albeit while retaining their own ethnicity). OSA restricted admission to native-born or duly naturalized citizens of the United States. Members stressed their American citizenship and actively distinguished themselves from noncitizens from Mexico, whether recently arrived or not. By the 1920s, this element had initiated the modern Mexican American civil rights movement in Texas, calling for (among other things) better schooling, an end to segregation, and the right to serve on juries.

When the OSA dissolved in the late 1920s, LULAC assumed its mantle. Derived from the ranks of the growing progressive corps of native-born or US-raised lawyers, doctors, merchants, and World War I veterans, those who founded LULAC and its first members represented the emerging “Mexican American Generation” (as opposed to the “Immigrant Generation” of the earlier era). The guiding philosophy of these so-called LULACers placed great faith in the willingness of US society to modify its racist tendencies and absorb their

race if, only Mexican Americans would readily learn and adopt the English language and other Anglo ways. Once Tejanos altered their “Mexicanness,” the argument held, they could come together as respected citizens and mount effective protests in demand of their full civil rights as Americans—especially the right to vote. Attacked from its inception by some Mexican Americans as elitist and overly accommodationist, LULAC nonetheless would prove to have remarkable lasting power.

### **Other ethnic groups**

Foreign immigration to Texas continued throughout the early twentieth century. The National Origins Act of 1924 curtailed immigration of peoples from Southern and Eastern Europe, a fact reflected in the 1930 US Census. Nevertheless, the 1920 census reported 360,519 foreign-born Texans, double the number in 1900. These sizeable ethnic communities supported fifty-seven foreign-language newspapers in 1909, including Czech-, Polish-, and Swedish-language periodicals.

After Mexicans, Germans constituted the largest white ethnic group in Texas. In most cases, newly arrived immigrants from Germany tended to settle in previously established German “colonies” in Austin, Fayette, Lee, and Washington counties. From these places, Germans pushed westward and northward to establish “folk islands” scattered throughout McLennan, Bosque, and Coryell counties and up into the Cross Timbers and due west to the Hill Country. Cotton farming drew the Germans, who in their folk islands tended to retain the indigenous religions, cuisine, and architecture of their homeland. Their institutions and newspapers used their native language and reaffirmed their heritage. The large cities also attracted some German settlers. In 1920, 3400 Texans of German descent lived in San Antonio, with smaller numbers residing in other cities. Living in urban areas lessened the distinctiveness of European settlers, as they, unlike persons of several other immigrant groups, were not restricted to living in certain wards or barred from certain establishments on account of their skin color. Nevertheless, San Antonio, as well as the Hill Country, retained a visible German culture well past World War II.

Other European peoples arrived in Texas as well. Approximately 25,000 Czechs joined the Germans in their folk islands. The same economic forces that drew Germans to these areas attracted Czechs, both of whom shared a common Eastern European heritage. An estimated 17,000 Polish immigrants settled in a belt extending northwest from Houston, tending to concentrate in the agricultural communities around Marlin and Bremond in Robertson County. By 1890, the state had seventeen Polish Roman Catholic parishes, whose members organized National Polish lodges. Meanwhile, approximately 8000 Italians, mostly from Sicily, came to Texas. Some settled in the Galveston–Houston and Dallas–Fort Worth areas. Some 3000 Italians migrated to Brazos County, settling along the fertile but often dangerous floodplain of the Brazos River, an area not farmed by older settlers who feared the periodic flood damage. Bosque County became the home of some 1356 Norwegians in 1900, and smaller numbers of Dutch, Greek, Swedish, Belgian, Danish, French, Hungarian, Russian, Swiss, British, Chinese, and Japanese immigrants also arrived in the early years of the century (Figure 9.10). With the rise of commercial agriculture in the Rio Grande Valley, South Texas became home to a surprising number Russians, Canadians, Greeks, Syrians, Spaniards, and European Jews, attracted by the growing availability of commercial credit that allowed them to purchase farms and businesses.





**Figure 9.10** Confirmation class of 1905 at Temple B'nai Israel, Galveston, Texas. Source: Archives of Temple B'nai, Galveston, Texas. University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 73-1096).

In general, ethnic whites got along well with their Anglo-Texan neighbors. The one exception seems to have been during the period of World War I, when the superpatriotism that swept the nation sometimes focused on those with foreign-sounding surnames, especially Germans. Indeed, the German Hill Country was seemingly under siege during the war, as neighbor harassed neighbor over actions that some deemed unpatriotic, such as a failure to join the Red Cross or a refusal to endorse the draft.

## Texas Politics in the New Century

### Progressivism

Historians have always struggled to define progressivism. Political historians have tended to focus on a rising middle class of urban professionals, allied with agrarian and social reformers, responding to rapid social and economic change and working to create a cohesive community for economic development. Social historians, on the other hand, stress the agency of ordinary folks, emphasizing the ways in which elements of the lower class survived in the modern world but railed at the injustices of a country dominated by the corporation, the landlord, and the political incumbent driven by self-interest.

Another problem troubling historians is the time span of the Progressive Era. Traditional treatments place a starting date around 1901 (roughly corresponding to Theodore Roosevelt's accession to the presidency) and declare its end by 1917 (when the nation's energy was redirected to fighting World War I). More recently, some scholars have proposed a "long progressive movement," pushing the starting date back as early as the 1870s, when workers first began organizing to resist the dehumanizing effects of large-scale

industrialization, and detecting certain strains of progressivism lingering into the late 1920s. Some even extend it to include the New Deal. Most historians, however, tend to agree that as a reformist group, progressives worked to effect good government, end corrupt politics, improve rural life, curtail the influence of large corporations, purify social institutions through laws such as the prohibition of alcohol, and otherwise improve society through prison, educational, social welfare, and suffrage reforms. The progressives stressed that social goals were obtainable through efficient bureaucracy and public education. In short, they believed that through reform they might create an orderly and moral climate, as well as foster industrial and agricultural prosperity.

Texas progressivism fits this mold. Although it owed some of its impulses to earlier reform efforts (especially Populism), progressivism in the Lone Star State coincided with a transition that unfolded during the early years of the twentieth century. In that era, with the Populist threat gone, reformers within the Democratic Party began to call for more vigorous government action (in the form of new laws and regulations) to deal with mounting corporate influence, increased domination of politics by conservative elites, and the demands of a changing economy. Texas progressivism differed from previous reform movements. Unlike Radical Reconstruction, it was an indigenous movement; unlike Populism, it operated within the Democratic Party. It also occurred within a shrinking electorate, as African American and lower-class political participation waned. Southern and Texas progressivism aimed for a democratic society for whites only. And all progressives perceived recent immigrants and the uneducated as threats to middle-class, democratic perceptions. Consequently, they saw no clash between social control and social reform. Moreover, Texas progressives remained bound to older agrarian solutions of agricultural efficiency and technical training, and blind to the problems of tenant farmers and minority groups. Within these self-imposed limitations, Texas progressivism succeeded.

Texas progressivism carried an inherent anti-eastern bias, which dated back to the Hogg administration and the creation of the Railroad Commission. Texas reformers saw Commission regulations as one way to relieve local businesses from competition with and reliance on northern financial interests. Therefore, one aim of the expansion of the power of the Railroad Commission and state banking and insurance laws was to ensure some protection in the marketplace for local businesspeople. Although Texas progressives did succeed in passing needed regulatory legislation, their attempts to make Texans independent of northern money interests mostly failed.

### **Governors Sayers and Lanham**

The twentieth century did not begin auspiciously for reformers. Governors Joseph Sayers (1899–1903) and S. W. T. Lanham (1903–07), both of whom were Confederate veterans, were conservative by nature and had no desire to upset the favorable business climate, which they credited for fostering the developing oil and surging lumber industries.

Nevertheless, during the first years of the twentieth century, the state legislature enacted some progressive measures. Some of the proposals for reform sprang from the old agrarian coalition of former Governor Hogg, who returned to active political campaigning in 1900, introducing a reform package calling for three new amendments to the state constitution to counter railroad abuses. Although Hogg's effort initially failed, it signaled an attempt to woo former Populists and old Alliancemen, now active in the Farmers' Union, back into a political coalition. A number of other organizations, including commercial clubs of

businesspersons, antiliquor forces, women's clubs, and the State Federation of Labor, joined the appeal for progressive legislation. Much of their efforts centered on election reform, which, ironically, some ex-Populists endorsed as the only method to ensure certain reform goals.

The adoption of the poll tax in 1902 had marked the start of election reform. The poll tax served as a system of voter registration, which made fraud on election day more difficult to perpetrate. The 1905 Terrell Election Law (which superseded a similar but weaker law passed in 1903) furthered the cause of election reform. The law, proposed by senior statesman Alexander W. Terrell, attempted to eliminate election fraud and bring some uniformity into the process of selecting candidates by establishing a modern system of primary elections. Prior to the reform, county nominating conventions were not always called with adequate notice, or were convened at inappropriate times, thus limiting rank-and-file participation. Local political bosses sometimes scheduled conventions to give advantages to certain candidates. In order to prevent such shenanigans, the law guaranteed official secret ballots and prescribed deadlines for the payment of poll taxes. But the centerpiece of the new law was the requirement that all political parties that had polled more than 100,000 votes in the last general election (normally, only the Democrats) would hold primary elections on the fourth Saturday in July. Late July traditionally was a time of agricultural inactivity, and conducting the primary at that time maximized farmers' opportunity to participate in politics. The law further mandated that county and precinct nominees be selected by primary voting returns rather than by convention.

Although the poll tax and the Terrell law did much to clean up elections, the reforms came at the expense of democracy. The poll tax disfranchised large numbers of African Americans who could not afford to pay it. Although the measure may have been undemocratic, progressives still considered the poll tax a reform, for in the 1890s black votes had often been manipulated by corrupt politicians. Historians have estimated that only between 15,000 and 40,000 of the 160,000 black males over the age of twenty-one in Texas managed to retain the right to vote in the 1920s. The poll tax also eliminated from the electorate many of the poorest whites—a group that had been all too eager to embrace the radical notions of Populism in the 1890s. Progressives were confident that eliminating such “unsavory” elements from politics would go far to clean up the system.

Progressives secured other limited gains during the Sayers and Lanham administrations. Labor unions were exempted from antitrust legislation, fulfilling a major demand of organized labor. Other prolabor measures included limiting the number of consecutive hours railroad trainmen could work to sixteen; increasing safety standards for railroad employees; the outlawing of blacklists, company scrip, and mandatory trading at company stores; and passage of the first law regulating child labor. In practice, some employers ignored this legislation.

Tax reform, long demanded by agrarian interests, also began in this period. In 1905, the legislature raised taxes on intangible assets of corporations and taxed the gross receipts of railroads and insurance corporations. Franchise tax laws, which taxed a company's capital investment, also passed that year, although an attempt to levy additional corporate taxes failed. Backed by the strong progressive leadership of Dallas attorney Thomas B. Love, the legislature created a commission of insurance and banking; it also initiated a constitutional amendment in 1903 (ratified in 1904) that allowed the chartering of state banks, which had been prohibited by the Constitution of 1876. These laws were designed both to prevent banking abuses and generate local capital investment. The new commission, led by Love, authorized more than 500 banks over the next five years. Other bills that Love and like-minded progressives favored during the governorships of Sayers and Lanham, such as

restricting usurious interest rates, creating pure food and drug laws, regulating private banks, raising liquor-license fees, and protecting household furnishings from seizure for debts, all failed.

### **Baileyism and antitrust**

Antitrust suits constituted a major element of progressivism. Progressives believed that restoring competition in the marketplace would attract new industry to Texas and create a favorable business climate for local investors. Texas had a long history of antitrust sentiment, and in 1889 and 1903 the legislature enacted laws restricting trusts. Before World War I, state attorneys prosecuted more than one hundred companies for violating state antitrust laws. Most famous of these antitrust suits was the Waters-Pierce case, which centered on the relationship of US Congressman and later Senator Joseph Weldon Bailey and Henry Clay Pierce, the president of the Waters-Pierce oil company, which was seeking to gain a foothold in the Texas oilfields. In 1897, Attorney General M. M. Crane brought suit against the Waters-Pierce company because it was controlled by the monopolistic Standard Oil trust of New Jersey. When Waters-Pierce was indeed found to be in violation of state antitrust law, it was made to forfeit its state charter, at which point Pierce appealed to Bailey for aid. The congressman recommended that the company be reorganized and urged Governor Sayers and other state officials to admit it back into the state. Crane followed Bailey's advice, and the reorganized company, now supposedly devoid of Standard Oil affiliations, once more conducted business within Texas. In 1905 an investigation by the State of Missouri revealed that in contradiction of a 1900 affidavit by company officials, Standard Oil still owned 3000 shares of Waters-Pierce stock.

Some citizens had always maintained that Bailey's actions had represented a conflict of interest; the Missouri suit seemingly affirmed their charges. Into the public eye came affidavits that tied Bailey to Pierce; the latter employed Bailey as a legal counsel and had loaned him \$5000. Later, critics charged Bailey, who by this time was a US senator, with being compromised by accepting legal fees from both the Standard Oil Company and the Kirby lumber interests. In 1906 Attorney General Robert V. Davidson successfully prosecuted Waters-Pierce: the company was ousted from the state and ultimately paid a \$1.8 million fine. Meanwhile, the controversial Bailey ran unopposed for the US Senate, claiming that his relationship with Standard Oil was a client-lawyer business arrangement and that charges of misconduct against him emanated from political foes. The voters apparently believed him, for the legislature returned him to the Senate in 1907, and legislative investigations subsequently exonerated him. Nevertheless, Bailey found himself increasingly out of step with progressive Texans. Opposed to prohibition, woman suffrage, and Woodrow Wilson, who received the support of the Texas delegation in his bid for the presidency in 1912, Bailey retired to private life in January 1913. At the urging of supporters, he ran against Pat Neff in the 1920 Democratic primary for governor but was soundly defeated, ending the long period in which "Baileyism" stood as a synonym for political corruption in Texas.

### **The Campbell and Colquitt administrations**

The gubernatorial contest of 1906 featured a campaign in which all the candidates endorsed progressive reform measures. Democrat Thomas M. Campbell, a lawyer from Palestine, received the endorsement of ex-Governor Hogg. Campbell went on to defeat three other

candidates in the first primary conducted under the new Terrell Election Law and win the governorship (1907–11).

The new governor was a genial, pleasant man who believed in prohibition but considered one's use of alcohol a moral choice, and therefore outside the realm of politics. Nevertheless, Campbell and the Thirtieth Legislature formed the most reform-minded government in Texas history. During the Campbell administration, the legislature passed the Hogg antirailroad amendments, which prevented insolvent corporations from operating in Texas, prohibited the wholesale granting of railroad passes, and denied the use of corporate funds for political purposes. Other measures Campbell oversaw included an antinepotism law and strengthened antitrust legislation. The governor responded to demands for tax reform in 1907 with a law aimed at taxing the intangible assets of corporations. This so-called full-remittance law doubled the value of assets on state tax rolls. In 1909 the law was amended, creating a tax board composed of the governor, treasurer, and comptroller to supervise ad valorem taxation. Although Campbell failed to convince the legislature to pass a state income tax, he did secure an inheritance tax and higher franchise levies on liquor dealers.

One of the Campbell administration's premiere accomplishments was the Robertson Insurance Law of 1907, which required insurance companies to invest at least 75 percent of the premiums paid by Texans back into Texas real estate and securities. Out-of-state insurance companies protested, and twenty-one of them withdrew from the state. The law had mixed benefits. Certainly, insurance companies previously had invested only a minimum of their funds in state securities, and under the new law this certainly changed. By 1914 the amount of capital invested in Texas by insurance companies had increased by more than \$24 million. On the downside, the law encouraged the development of some "wildcat" companies—that is, local insurance firms that were financially shaky—which created problems for consumers as well as state government. For its part, the insurance lobby continued to fight for modification or repeal of the Robertson law until it was finally overturned in 1963.

Less controversial was the passage in 1909 of the Bank Deposit Guaranty Act, which created a state insurance program to protect deposits in the newly authorized state banking system. The plan worked well until the 1920s, when the failure of some banks in the economic downturn of that era put stress on the system, as did some mismanagement. The state deposit insurance program was repealed in 1927. Not until the organization of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in 1933 was there similar national legislation.

The Campbell administration supported other legislation that typified southern progressivism: it encouraged an expansion of the Galveston Plan of city government; it responded to agrarian demands by creating a department of agriculture; and it appeased urban residents by establishing a state library and a historical commission. The prison and public school systems saw reform as well. In 1907, the legislature strengthened the state's antitrust measures. That year, too, it passed laws extending the eight-hour day to telegraph operators and creating a bureau of labor statistics. Campbell enjoyed fewer successes in his second administration, as prohibition dominated much of the state's political energies after 1908 and crowded out other issues.

In the gubernatorial election of 1910, Oscar Branch Colquitt, a longtime Democratic legislator, railroad commissioner, and former Hogg supporter, ran successfully to succeed Campbell. Because Colquitt opposed prohibition (and took a pro-Germany stance prior to World War I), many progressives distrusted him, and many historians have viewed him as a conservative. But Colquitt's years in office cataloged some progressive achievements. The legislature passed laws regulating child labor, factory safety standards, and the hours of

women workers. The first state workmen's compensation legislation was passed, and major penal reforms were enacted. The state built a hospital for tubercular patients and a training school for delinquent children, and allowed counties to create poor farms for the indigent. Two pressing problems, however, occupied the governor's attention: the Rio Grande border and the state's finances.

The border problems developed from the 1910 Mexican Revolution, in which insurgent forces ousted the dictator Porfirio Díaz. As the fighting increased in northern Mexico, the border became the scene of revolutionary activity. The insurrectionists bought arms and equipment from US merchants, recruited freely among Tejanos, launched raids on ranches and farms to secure provisions, sabotaged railroad lines, and in other ways used the Texas side of the border to conduct the Revolution. Presidents William Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson sent troops to the border, but they did so reluctantly, for both chief executives wished to improve US relations with Mexico. Colquitt, however, responded more boldly to repeated incursions onto Texas soil by ordering Texas Rangers to the Rio Grande. In April 1914, following the US occupation of Vera Cruz, Mexico, Colquitt sent Texas National Guard troops to Brownsville to deter feared attacks by Mexican troops. The governor condemned Wilson's policies toward Mexico as weak and urged the president to intervene more directly in the Mexican Revolution. Wilson's refusal to follow the governor's advice further divided Colquitt and Texas progressives who supported Wilson.

Colquitt's other principal irritant was the state budget. New state institutions and progressive reform programs, coupled with the state's traditionally low taxes, left Texas with a deficit of \$1 million. Although Colquitt had pledged to oversee an economical government, new revenue was needed. This problem would play a central role in Texas politics as state leaders struggled to deal with the emergence of a modern economy.

### **General progressive reforms**

Some reform movements could not be identified with a single governor or legislature. These institutional reforms, most of which came to fruition in the years after World War I, enjoyed broad public support. All of them, however, typified the progressive spirit.

#### *Educational reforms*

Progressives considered educational reforms necessary both for the sake of their children and attracting new industry to the South. About 73 percent of school-age children attended some public school in 1920, with a corresponding drop in illiteracy to 8.3 percent of the population, the lowest in the South. In turn, state expenditure per student, taxation for support of education, and teacher salaries rose. Nonetheless, in 1920 an independent survey ranked Texas thirty-ninth nationally in the quality of education offered.

One general progressive reform was a move to regularize education, so that all school districts might use the same books, offer similar courses, have the same requirements for students and teachers, and resemble one another administratively. Generally, two types of school districts existed: common, which were largely rural; and independent, which usually served incorporated towns. Common schools were administered by trustees, who convened voluntarily to hire teachers and operate and maintain a school, usually a single building (and sometimes a single room) housing all the grades. Independent school districts (ISDs) resembled present-day school systems. Critics maintained that common-school

students received an inferior education. One proposed solution was school consolidation. A 1914 law allowed a majority of voters to consolidate two or more schools. By 1925, school trustees could mandate consolidation under certain conditions, and rural students received free busing to their schoolhouses. By 1929, more than 1500 school consolidations had been accomplished.

Reformers also wanted to issue free textbooks of uniform quality. A 1907 law mandated five-year adoptions for all textbooks, which provided a measure of uniformity across school districts. By 1911, districts could if they wished provide free books, but since few did, a 1918 constitutional amendment mandated that the state issue books.

Meanwhile, progressives and professional educators fought for compulsory attendance legislation. In 1905, such a bill failed. By 1914, Texas was one of only five states that had no compulsory school attendance law. The next year, the legislature passed a law requiring that all children between the ages of eight and fourteen attend school for at least a sixty-day term. The school year was to be expanded over the next two years until it comprised at least one hundred days. By 1929, Texas school terms averaged 156 days yearly, the highest in the South and only six days below the national average.

Progressives also wanted to professionalize education by making school administration more efficient and raising tax revenue to provide local schools with sufficient funds to provide a minimum education. The Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA), Colored Teachers State Association (CTSA), and women's clubs spearheaded these as well as other educational reforms. Annie Webb Blanton, the first woman president of the TSTA (1916) and the first woman to hold statewide office—that of superintendent of public instruction (1918–22)—organized the “Better Schools Campaign,” which in 1920 helped secure the passage of a constitutional amendment permitting districts to raise school taxes above the original constitutional restrictions.

The upgrading of teacher qualifications caused reformers great difficulties. As late as 1920, 48 percent of common-school teachers in Texas had not graduated from high school. Only 16 percent had graduated from a normal school, and 5 percent from a college or a university. In the case of ISDs, teacher qualifications were considerably better, with 92 percent of teachers holding at least a high school certificate, and with more than 50 percent of them having graduated from a normal school, college, or university. One obvious need was to expand normal-school training for teachers. In addition to the two normal schools established in 1899 (North Texas and Southwest Texas), the legislature authorized three more normals in 1917 (Sul Ross, East Texas, and Stephen F. Austin). Along with the previously established Sam Houston State Normal Institute at Huntsville, in 1923 the legislature designated all of the above as teachers' colleges, giving educators a number of places in which to specialize in teacher training.

As hoped, the greater availability of higher education and the drive for the professionalization of teaching upgraded the quality of the public schools. By 1929, the number of public school teachers who had graduated from either normal school or college reached 39 percent for common and 73 percent for ISDs, with 64 percent of all teachers having had four or more years of experience. Nevertheless, the state still confronted overwhelming problems in upgrading teaching staffs. For one thing, teachers were grossly underpaid. In 1920, the average annual salary for a Texas teacher was \$615, about 55 percent of that of the average Texas wage earner. Black teachers earned less than did white ones, and rural teachers earned less than did their urban counterparts. Annie Webb Blanton asked to no avail that the State Industrial Commission set a minimum wage for teachers. Some teachers tried to join or found unions but met traditional Texas hostility toward such organizations. By 1929, Texas teachers' salaries averaged \$924 per year, as compared to the national mark of \$1420.

At this time Texas schools began to broaden their interaction with students to include previously avoided duties. Administrators authorized regular, supervised recess periods on the playgrounds. The development of the University Interscholastic League (UIL) by the University of Texas regularized athletic competitions and instilled a concern for public affairs through declamation and debating contests. Schools also undertook some health care responsibilities for students, and school nurses regularly visited many of the school districts. The public health movement sent experts, usually through university extension work, to schoolhouses to lecture on disease prevention and aid administrators in maintaining proper sanitation facilities, health and safety standards, and fire control.

Colleges also underwent changes. In 1901, the College for Industrial Arts for Women (now Texas Woman's University) was authorized. The legislature added Texas College of Mines (now the University of Texas at El Paso) in 1913 and Texas Technological College (now Texas Tech University) in 1923. Private college education expanded with the creation of Rice Institute (1912) and Southern Methodist (1915), which joined existing church-affiliated schools, Trinity (1869), Southwestern (1873), Baylor (1887), Hardin-Simmons (1891), and Texas Christian (1902). The Baptist state convention expanded its system of higher educational institutions in 1897 with the creation of Mary Hardin Baylor College as a senior school and Howard Payne College, Rusk College, and Decatur College as two-year schools. Other denominations authorized a number of two-year church colleges. Meanwhile, the legislature and cities endorsed the nationwide junior college movement. The state founded junior colleges at Stephenville and Arlington, and cities created seventeen others. The junior, or community, colleges were especially significant because they had admissions policies that accepted students of all ages and achievement levels.

Colleges undertook new roles. Professional education was expanded with the creation of colleges of business, education, engineering, and pharmacy. Various academic disciplines now offered graduate training. Schools of medicine and law were upgraded and new ones were established. By 1930, Texans enjoyed a wide range of options for higher learning at relatively low cost. The expansion and availability of colleges saw student enrollment leap, from 2148 in 1900 to 23,134 in 1929.

Progressives accepted as axiomatic the Jeffersonian proposition that mass education produced a more responsible citizenry. Consequently, university administrators created outreach programs to instruct those who could not enroll on a campus. Agricultural reform, with its long tradition in Texas, fitted nicely within the progressive concept of rebuilding the southern farms through technical expertise offered outside the classroom. The Agricultural and Mechanical College at College Station responded by planting demonstration farms, establishing the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, and conducting farmer institutes throughout the state. Beginning in the 1890s, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) stepped up its programs to improve agriculture. In 1898, it established a grass experiment station outside of Abilene, managed by the former Populist leader Henry Lewis Bentley, to conduct research in rangeland restoration. In 1903, impressed with Seaman A. Knapp's work on control of the boll weevil in Louisiana, the citizens of Terrell, Texas, asked the department to send Knapp to assist them in their efforts. Knapp arrived in Terrell in 1903 and established the state's first demonstration farm. The farm succeeded, and soon the combined efforts of the USDA, Texas A&M, and local farmers led to the spread of such farms throughout the state. Knapp was also instrumental in creating a program that dispatched a series of "lecture trains" to help educate farmers, and in 1906 Knapp initiated the county agent plan, whereby every county would have access to a trained extension agent to assist farmers and to act as a liaison between farmers and the state. Boys' cotton and corn



growing clubs and girls' corn and poultry clubs were soon added. These organizations were the forerunners of the modern 4-H Clubs. In 1907 the state established the Texas Department of Agriculture, and over the next three years the state doubled its budget. By 1912, Texas A&M was cooperating with the USDA in a variety of programs to teach farmers scientific agriculture and crop diversification. The federal funding of agricultural extension work (Smith-Lever Act, 1914) and agricultural vocational training in public schools (Smith-Hughes Act, 1917) strengthened the college's endeavors.

Progressives strongly supported such efforts. The collaborative efforts of the USDA, the state, and the A&M College led to the introduction of new crops, better pest control, improved seeds, and other such applied agricultural science. The benefits, however, were not shared by all. Tenant farmers, for example, whose numbers grew dramatically in the early 1900s, were largely omitted from the extension programs. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 officially included black farmers in the new extension services, creating a Negro Division of African American agents who reported to white officials. The initial success of the Negro Division, however, exacerbated tensions between the races and resulted in pressure by whites to limit the benefits to blacks. With the general weakening of federal support for civil rights that accompanied the Woodrow Wilson administration, the Negro Division ended up promoting systematic discrimination and bolstering white supremacy. Like many other progressive reforms, then, the era's agricultural reforms often failed to benefit those who needed them most.

### *Institutional reforms*

Progressives argued that efficiency in management, scientific investigations, and the recommendations of trained experts could make such institutions as prisons operate better and more humanely. In Texas, county, city, and state governments all used convicts as a source of labor. The state owned several prison farms, a central plant at Huntsville, and a prison near Rusk that manufactured iron. Progressives and the citizenry wanted these prisons to support themselves, but they also desired more humane treatment of prisoners and the standardization of prison administration and the granting of pardons.

A series of 1908–09 newspaper articles exposed the abuses in state facilities and lessee camps. Political corruption seemed to dominate the administration and conduct of the penal institutions. Prisoners were overworked, underfed, poorly clothed, and sometimes shot or whipped to death for minor offenses. The lack of sex-segregated facilities and the failure to separate convicts by age and the nature of their crime led to the sexual abuse of women and juvenile offenders. Basic health and sanitation precautions were ignored.

Governor Campbell called a special legislative session to address the issue. Lawmakers phased out the contract-lease system, established a ten-cent-per-day pay scale for convict labor, eliminated the wearing of striped uniforms for prisoners considered not dangerous, mandated segregation and classification of prisoners, and authorized the improvement of prison sanitation and medical services. Although whipping continued, its use was restricted.

Nevertheless, the prison system continued to generate controversy. Colquitt publicized the deplorable prison conditions in his 1910 gubernatorial campaign, but one problem persisted: elected officials and most citizens still held that the prisons should be self-supporting. The leasing of convicts earned the institutions surplus revenues but also resulted in intolerable treatment. Leasing ended in 1912, after which convicts were made to work on state-run farms, a shift intended to make the prison system self-sufficient. In boom agricultural years it was; more often it operated at a loss. The prison system remained a

political hot potato until a 1925 constitutional amendment provided for the reorganization of the management of the entire penal structure. In 1927, the legislature created a nine-member Texas Prison Board, which functioned well enough to remove prisons from the forefront of political controversy. In short, by the end of the 1920s the prison system was far more efficient and humane than it had been when the century began.

Progressives also concerned themselves with other wards of the state. Juvenile offenders began to receive better care when the State Juvenile Training School at Gatesville was transferred to the management of the State Board of Control in 1919, enabling it to emphasize reform and education of the young inmates. The Gainesville State School for Girls was established in 1917. The Gatesville school housed both black and white boys, whereas Gainesville was for white girls only.

The Constitution of 1876 considered care for the poor the responsibility of local government and private charities. However, the 1911 legislature authorized commissioners' courts to issue bonds for the maintenance of county poor houses. Counties and cities could establish hospitals for indigent patients, and the state expanded its services for the mentally ill, the blind, the deaf, orphans, and those suffering from tuberculosis. By 1930, the state had succeeded in making room for most of the white mentally ill in one of four mental hospitals (at Austin, San Antonio, Terrell, and Wichita Falls) and for some mentally ill African Americans at Rusk. A psychopathic hospital was authorized at Galveston, and facilities for the mentally ill and epileptics were separated.

In 1919, supported by a study that revealed deplorable conditions in asylums, the legislature created a State Board of Control with authority over all eleemosynary institutions, which included the State Tuberculosis Sanatorium (near San Angelo), the Texas School for the Blind (Austin), the School for the Deaf (Austin), the Waco State Home for Dependent and Neglected Children, the State Orphan's Home (Corsicana), and, for African Americans, the Texas Blind, Deaf and Orphan School (Austin). Reformers did not, however, gain nearly all that they wanted regarding the care of the unfortunate. Both private and public investigating committees throughout the period criticized the condition of the public facilities and deplored their overcrowding. As late as 1929, some of the mentally ill were still confined in jails. Yet the public usually pleaded poverty as a reason not to expand the welfare institutions of the state.

### *Forest conservation and good roads*

The years 1900 to 1910 were banner ones for the Texas lumber industry, but the average cut of more than 2 billion board feet a year alarmed conservationists, who warned that Texas's forests would soon be decimated. W. Goodrich Jones, a Temple bank executive, crusaded for regulation of the lumber industry and a program of reforestation (Figure 9.11). In 1908, he attended President Theodore Roosevelt's White House Conference of Governors on Conservation. This experience prompted Jones to organize the Texas Forestry Association, which was committed to a statewide forest conservation plan to prevent lumber barons from completely depleting an area's timber resources and then simply moving on. Jones believed in the conservation of resources for use later, and he worked with lumber tycoons to establish a policy of selective cutting and reforestation that would guarantee profits as well as future forests.

The new association lobbied for the establishment of a department of forestry and the employment of a state forester. The legislature complied in 1915 and created the Texas Department of Forestry (later renamed the Texas Forest Service), administered as a division



**Figure 9.11** Driver for the Temple Lumber Company, 1927. Source: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, Houston, Texas.

of Texas A&M. Critics charged it with being too closely linked to timber barons and not committed enough to conservation, but when Eric O. Siecke took over the agency in 1918, he did much to stifle political controversy and professionalize the service. Under his tutelage, the agency established state forests, taught scientific reforestation and selective cutting methods, and developed nurseries for seedlings to replace harvested trees. When World War I more than doubled the price of lumber, Texas companies flourished. The Forest Service never significantly regulated timber harvesting; in Texas no law existed (then or now) mandating that a seedling be replanted for each mature tree cut. The Great War hastened the exploitation of Texas timber resources, and the 1920s witnessed the waning of the bonanza period of the lumber industry. By 1932, the production of Texas lumber was lower than that of any year since 1880. Still, the legislature ignored the appeal of conservationists, and the great old-growth pine forests of East Texas were essentially destroyed.

The limited successes of the Forest Service had occurred because businessmen found a modest degree of government activism to be in their interest. The same held true for highways. The Constitution of 1876 deemed the counties responsible for road maintenance, but in the early twentieth century the spread of the automobile rendered a decentralized system unfeasible. The Texas Good Roads Association organized in 1911 with the intent to educate citizens and the legislature on the need for a central authority to plan and maintain a state highway system. In 1916, Congress enacted legislation offering matching funds for all states that joined a national highway network; the law required each state to have a central highway planning agency to qualify. The promise of federal funds overrode the objections of those opposed to centralization, and the legislature quickly moved to establish the Texas

Highway Department, to be directed by a three-member commission appointed by the governor. The commission hired a state engineer to consult and advise on plans submitted by the counties for highway construction. But the program floundered from its beginnings, as the system was still quite decentralized and counties refused to cooperate or coordinate with each other. Then, World War I-related activities worsened the roads, while increasing the amount of automobile traffic. Finally in 1924 the state awarded the Highway Department sole responsibility for maintaining and building intrastate highways.

Rumors of mismanagement dogged the Highway Department during Miriam Ferguson's administration and briefly led the US government to cut off federal aid, but her successor, Dan Moody, reorganized the highway department, selecting capable commissioners who hired qualified engineers. Moody appointed a 1928 Citizen's Advisory Commission to formulate a plan for future highway development. Although finances would continue to be a problem, the progressive goal of a professional and efficient highway agency had materialized. In time, an integrated highway system tied together markets and thus validated the arguments of businesspeople and farmers that economic growth depended on a reliable and modern transportation network.

### **Reform interrupted: The Ferguson administration**

In 1914, a political unknown named James E. Ferguson came to the forefront of Texas politics. His personality and policies slowed reform and remained a political issue for more than thirty years. A self-educated lawyer and a banker from Temple, "Farmer Jim" won two terms as governor, was impeached, and then dominated the gubernatorial administrations of his wife (1925–27, 1933–35) (Figure 9.12). His race for the governor's office in 1918 and the US Senate in 1922 and Miriam A. "Ma" Ferguson's gubernatorial campaigns in 1926, 1930, and 1940 kept the issue of "Fergusonism" before the Texas electorate. Critics identified the Fergusons with demagoguery and corruption. Supporters lauded them as friends of the oppressed and tenant farmers. Ferguson announced his campaign in 1914 by declaring that Texans were tired of the prohibition issue. He, therefore, would ignore it and concentrate on more important topics. He campaigned in the poorer agricultural districts, promising to limit the amount of rent that landlords could charge tenant farmers. He defeated Thomas H. Ball from Houston, a prohibitionist, in the Democratic primary and won the November general election.

Ferguson's first term (1915–17) garnered a measure of success. His bill capping farm rents passed. Evidently, the state attorney general chose not to enforce it rigorously, and the US Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional in 1921. The governor and the legislature worked harmoniously. He vetoed only five bills, and successful legislation under Ferguson included educational reforms, increased funding for higher education, and the creation of the State Department of Forestry. Although rumors surfaced concerning malfeasance in government, Ferguson won reelection. His new term witnessed higher appropriations for education, expansion of the college network, a revision of labor laws, and a state highway commission.

Like Colquitt before him, Ferguson had to contend with border problems. Troubles escalated following a series of raids in the lower Rio Grande Valley connected with the *Plan de San Diego* (PSD). This radical manifesto, discovered in January 1915 and supposedly written in the Duval County seat of San Diego (though historians have yet to pin down with certainty its authors or the place where it was written), sought to ignite an uprising of Texas



**Figure 9.12** James E. Ferguson and Miriam A. Ferguson, c. 1925. Source: *San Antonio Light Collection*, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 359: L-0002-C).

Mexicans, sympathizers in Mexico, and other aggrieved minority groups in Texas for the establishment of an independent republic composed of those territories that Mexico had lost to the United States in the Mexican War. In July, Ferguson ordered all available Texas Ranger companies to the troubled region. The next year, he sent out the Texas National Guard following counter-raids into Texas, even as US Army General John J. Pershing marched into Mexico to capture Pancho Villa, the Mexican rebel leader who had attacked Columbus, New Mexico, on March 9, 1916 (Figure 9.13). Border troubles subsided in late 1916, when both nations agreed to let a joint commission settle their differences. Sporadic violence, however, continued throughout 1917 and 1918.

Everyone in South Texas was affected by the border troubles, especially Tejanos whom whites suspected of complicity with the PSD insurrectionists. Texas Rangers, local policemen, and volunteer groups indiscriminately killed and brutalized many Tejanos on various pretexts. A US Senate investigating committee documented the terror, and a legislative investigation prompted by a bill introduced in January 1919 by Brownsville representative J. T. Canales also aired Texas Rangers' atrocities. Specifically, Canales sought to reduce the number of Texas Ranger companies and implement policies designed to forge a more community-sensitive Ranger cadre. Ultimately, the Tejano legislator could not muster the needed support for his bill so that the Rangers continued past the PSD episode and World War I, retaining the faithful support of the public and the state government.



**Figure 9.13** Some soldiers from the Punitive Expedition, 1916. Source: United States War Department, General Staff; copy from collections of University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS362: 68-1354).

Charges of corruption in the governor's office continued in Ferguson's second term, when they intertwined with his deteriorating relations with the alumni of the University of Texas. As early as 1915, the governor quarreled with W. J. Battle, acting president of the university, over university finances. Ferguson wanted more control over specific items in the school's budget. His detractors said that he wished in reality to designate faculty appointments in order to purge the staff of those who opposed him politically. This attack on the University of Texas was complicated by A&M College's demand for a share of the Permanent University Fund and the structure of the governing boards of both schools. When the University of Texas board of regents selected Robert E. Vinson as president of the university without consulting the governor, Ferguson renewed his attack on the school. He charged that some faculty members mismanaged state funds and that the university offered an elite and costly education. When U.T. regents refused to fire Vinson and selected faculty members, Ferguson vetoed the university's entire two-year appropriation. Now the regents and the alumni association called for Ferguson's impeachment (Figure 9.14).

The Texas Equal Suffrage Association joined the University of Texas supporters in the request. Minnie Fisher Cunningham, president of the association, went to Austin to support the removal of Ferguson because he opposed woman suffrage. Moreover, Ferguson's stance against prohibition united prohibitionists with University of Texas alumni and suffragists. The discovery of a \$156,500 loan to Ferguson from brewing interests (with no provision for repayment) sent many wavering progressives into the impeachment camp. Because women's reform, progressivism, and prohibition overlapped intellectually and politically, their proponents' opposition to the governor should have come as no surprise.

On July 23, 1917, the speaker of the house issued a call for a special legislative session. When it convened, the legislature drew up a list of twenty-one charges against the governor, of which the senate affirmed ten. Seven of the ten charges involved Ferguson's handling of finances, including the disputed loan and a charge that the governor illegally deposited public funds in the Temple Bank, of which he was a stockholder. On September 2, Ferguson resigned to avoid impeachment. The court of impeachment acted anyway, removing the governor and banning him from holding future state offices.



**Figure 9.14** Anti-Ferguson rally at the University of Texas, May 28, 1917. Source: Prints and Photographs Collection, CN 01027, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

Undaunted, Ferguson challenged Lieutenant Governor William P. Hobby (Figure 9.15) in the 1918 gubernatorial campaign. Ferguson and his supporters maintained that his resignation had predated the ban from future officeholding and thus did not rule out his eligibility for state office. He attempted to rally voters by continuing his attack on the University of Texas, in particular charging that faculty members were indolent elitists who undertook meaningless and impractical research projects. Hobby defeated Ferguson handily, but “Fergusonism” still did not disappear, as “Pa” Ferguson would soon run for the US Senate, maintaining now that the impeachment limited his eligibility for state, not national, office. Furthermore, “Ma” Ferguson’s later political activities kept “Fergusonism” alive, or at least the concept that support or opposition to “Farmer Jim” determined (more than issues of self-interest) how voters would cast their ballot. Meanwhile, progressives rejoiced over the victory of Will Hobby, who advocated both woman suffrage and prohibition.

### Woodrow Wilson, Will Hobby, and World War I, 1917–1919

The United States entered World War I six months before Will Hobby took office as governor. His election represented a victory for President Woodrow Wilson’s policies as well as a rebuff of Ferguson. Texans undertook a major role in Wilson’s 1912 nomination and campaign. Thomas B. Love organized the Woodrow Wilson State Democratic League in 1911 and joined with Edward M. House, Albert Sidney Burleson, and Thomas Watt Gregory in delivering the forty-man Texas delegation, and hence the nomination, to the New Jersey governor in the 1912 Democratic National Convention. Once in the White House, Wilson



**Figure 9.15** William Pettus Hobby at the Galveston Convention in 1930 (campaigning for Ross S. Sterling for governor). Source: Ross Shaw Sterling papers, “First Campaign in Photographs,” album 353, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

repaid the political debt: Burleson served as postmaster general from 1913 to 1921; Gregory was US attorney general from 1914 to 1919; House became a special adviser to President Wilson for most of his two terms in office; and Love served as assistant treasury secretary. David Houston, who had been president of both A&M College and the University of Texas, was appointed secretary of agriculture. Sam Rayburn began a distinguished career in the House of Representatives in 1913 and earned a reputation as a Wilson supporter, as did Morris Sheppard in the Senate. Rayburn fought for national antitrust legislation, and Sheppard introduced the law that became the Eighteenth Amendment (prohibition).

Texas progressives considered Wilson a beacon to guide their reform efforts, and when the United States entered World War I they transferred their energies into support of the president’s and the nation’s war aims. The demands on Texans were great: 197,789 Texas men either volunteered or were drafted into the armed forces. In addition, 449 Texas women served in the military as nurses (the army did not allow the enlistment of women), and others joined the Red Cross, among them Dr. May Agness Hopkins of Dallas who under the Allied command treated thousands of wounded soldiers in France.

About 25 percent of the Texans who served in the armed services were African American. Some sixty-eight of these served as officers (captain and below), ordinarily under the authority of white commanders. Black soldiers experienced little improvement over civilian life; they trained in segregated camps and the army largely appointed them to nonmilitary



tasks, such as performing manual labor, stocking depots, and managing supplies. Some 12,000 African American soldiers did receive assignments overseas, a few saw combat, and some earned medals for valor in face of enemy fire.

Nevertheless, tensions between whites and blacks accelerated. A white mob in Huntsville lynched a black man accused of evading the draft and subsequently murdered six members of his family. A riot caused by discrimination in Houston involving the all-black Third Battalion of the Twenty-fourth US Infantry ended with a court-martial that severely punished the soldiers.

Less stress developed between Anglo Texans and Mexican Americans when mobilization got underway. For the first time, it seemed, the federal and state governments acknowledged the presence of Tejanos, for the personnel shortage compelled the nation to muster all its resources in the struggle to defeat the Central Powers. Tejano men and women responded by sponsoring fundraising drives, staging propaganda programs on behalf of the Allies, joining local chapters of the Red Cross, and registering for military duty. It has been estimated that about 5000 Tejanos served in the US military; some saw combat on the western front. David Cantú Barkley, a Tejano from San Antonio, earned the Medal of Honor for valor on November 9, 1918, two days before the signing of the armistice.

Most of the Texas trainees joined other soldiers in numerous training camps (called “cantonments” at that time). The four largest were for ground troops: Bowie, in Fort Worth; Logan, in Houston; MacArthur, in Waco; and Travis, in San Antonio. Kelly Field, in San Antonio, offered aviation training. The University of Texas housed a school of military aeronautics for basic flight instruction. Several other flying fields for training aviators dotted the state, making Texas the national leader in flight training. The US Army Air Force recognized this fact in 1928 with the construction of Randolph Field, “The West Point of the Air,” in San Antonio. Other army bases operated in Texas, including an officers’ training camp at Leon Springs. Concerned with the moral conditions in the civilian areas surrounding the camps, the legislature passed laws prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages within ten miles of the camps and an antvice act designed to halt the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

The war induced many important changes in the state. Inflation soared but incomes failed to match it, while the cost of government more than doubled as the new progressive reforms became functional. As men went off to war, work opportunities for women increased, with many women beginning to work outside the home for the first time in their lives. Not only did women now staff jobs formerly reserved for men, but they undertook significant roles in voluntary agencies and war work. Women’s clubs encouraged the propaganda campaign, and women rolled bandages, conserved food and fuel, entertained troops, and engaged in Red Cross activities. Their efforts contributed to both the culmination of the woman suffrage movement and the concept of the “New Woman,” or the young, progressive woman who saw other options in life besides marriage and motherhood. Demographic shifts also resulted from World War I as rural workers headed for the city to take war-related jobs. By around 1920, roughly one out of every three Texans resided in urban sites, twice as many as had lived in towns twenty years earlier.

## **Women in Action**

### **Woman suffrage**

The woman suffrage movement had always been intertwined with progressivism. In Texas, women unsuccessfully petitioned the 1868 and 1875 constitutional conventions for the right to vote and founded the Texas Equal Rights Association in 1893. Divisions developed

within the National Woman Suffrage Association over whether it should be a limited reform organization for the vote only or a broader movement for women's rights. The split affected the Texas wing of the organization, which lost its momentum. In any case, the suffrage movement at the dawn of the twentieth century still faced a wall of resistance. Opponents to women suffragists advanced numerous arguments: they alleged female inferiority, affirmed women's traditional place in the home, noted women's disqualification from military service and jury duty, and raised the specter that allowing women to vote would enfranchise black women.

Then, in 1903, the Texas Woman Suffrage Association (TWSA) emerged to seize the mantle of reform. It asked the state legislature in 1915 and 1917 for approval of a constitutional amendment granting woman suffrage. The political controversy the proposed amendment generated, stirred by the impeachment of Ferguson, sustained the stern opposition of many men and failed to gain passage. Nevertheless, Minnie Fisher Cunningham, Annie Webb Blanton, Jessie Daniel Ames, and other women continued to lobby effectively for the cause. The TWSA's successor, the Texas Equal Suffrage Association (TESA) led by Cunningham, used World War I propaganda to mobilize public opinion in behalf of suffrage. The strategy appeared necessary, as the earlier argument in behalf of the suffrage—that fairness should allow women to share with males the right to vote—had not been effective. Beginning in 1917, suffragists emphasized their contribution to the war effort (by assisting the Red Cross, planting gardens to alleviate food shortages, raising funds to complement the war budget, and organizing patriotic functions). But they clearly intended only for white women to exercise the franchise—minority women, they asserted, lacked patriotism as evidenced by their indifference to work on behalf of the Allied cause. Furthermore, immigrant women (such as Germans and Mexicans) did not merit the vote for they could not lay claim to being truly American.

Then, in a special session in 1918, the state legislature passed an act extending the franchise to women in primary elections. Blanton won the race for state superintendent of education that year, and several other women were elected to local offices. The next year, Governor Hobby requested that the legislature put before the electorate constitutional amendments enfranchising women and denying the vote to the foreign born. Legislators complied, but the voters defeated both measures in an election in which all men in the state, including aliens, could and all women could not cast ballots. Later that same year, however, the legislature ratified the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which authorized woman suffrage. Texas was the first southern state and the ninth in the nation to do so.

### **Women's organizations**

Although the war accelerated the drive for woman suffrage nationally and locally, the hard work of many women had fueled it. The women's club movement, regularized with the formation of the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs in 1897, popularized and campaigned for progressive reforms. The federation sponsored many of the state's public libraries and spearheaded drives to construct public parks, bring about school reform, improve working conditions for women and end child labor, approve the building of The Texas Woman's College, found and modernize state charitable institutions, and initiate city beautification movements, including the closing of districts where prostitution flourished. Clubwomen worked hard to establish licensing standards for nurses and improve health care facilities. Private Texas organizations of women, such as the National Council of Jewish Women and several Protestant women's groups, endorsed the national movement for settlement houses,

the Young Women's Christian Association organization, and other goals of social reform. Women's organizations also worked for specific legislation to aid women in other ways besides removing suffrage restrictions. They met with a measure of success in this endeavor when, in 1913, the legislature passed an act that defined both separate and community property of husband and wife. Nonetheless, state laws remained restrictive, and married women had limited control of their own property and could not enter into financial contracts or serve on juries until the 1950s. Women expanded their role to occupations formerly seem as male preserves (Figure 9.16).

In African American communities following the establishment of a Texas black club-women federation in 1905, black women engaged in work paralleling that of their white counterparts. Middle-class African American clubwomen worked to bring cultural enlightenment to segregated black communities and to overturn the white image of black women as immoral and poor keepers of their homes. Black clubwomen further assisted the poor by raising funds for the purchase of playground equipment and school supplies, and through their involvement in settlement work (where possible).

The obvious need for politically aware and active women led a coalition of (white) women's groups in 1922 to organize the Women's Joint Legislative Council. Over the next year, the Texas League of Women Voters (organized from the Texas Woman Equal Suffrage Association and headed by Ames), the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs, the Texas Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Texas Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs combined forces in this new venture. The "Petticoat Lobby," as condescending legislators dubbed it, proved remarkably effective, especially between 1923 and 1925. It advocated middle-class,



**Figure 9.16** Katherine Stinson being sworn in as an airmail pilot by Postmaster George D. Armistead in front of a Wright model "B" airplane, San Antonio, Texas, May 14, 1915. Source: *San Antonio Light Express News*; copy from the collections of University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 85-27).

moderate reforms regarding working people, prisons, public health and child welfare, public education, a birth registration program, and the enforcement of prohibition laws.

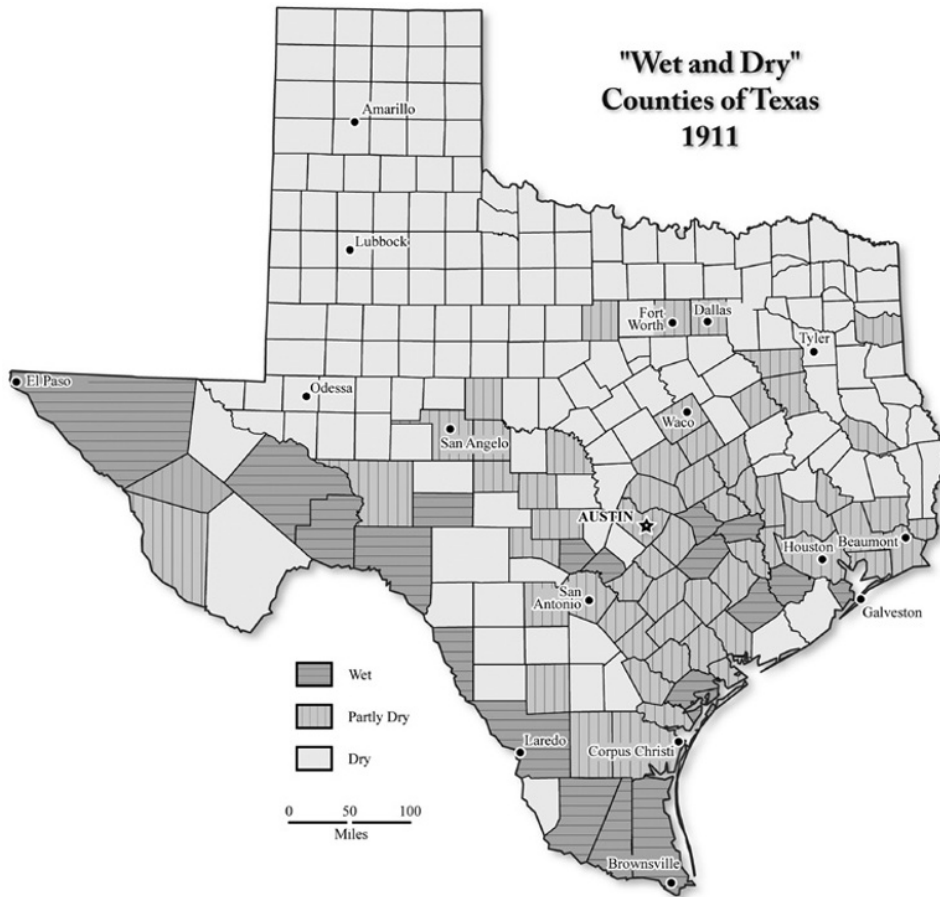
## Prohibition in Texas

The prohibition movement both gained sustenance from and nourished the women's movement. In a period during which women were considered keepers of morality and culture, prohibition provided them an entrée into political participation, a crusade for reform in which they did not have to step out of their male-ordained societal role, the "women's sphere." Moreover, prohibition linked many types of progressive reformers together. Progressives saw alcohol as a corrupter of democratic society and its sale as a moral evil. In a state nearly bereft of urban reform targets and, except in South Texas, of political bossism, progressives made statewide prohibition their number-one political goal. The presence in the antiprohibition movement of ethnic minorities, Germans and Mexicans in particular, buttressed the identification of "dry" forces as upholders of Anglo-Saxon democracy. Prohibition thus fit nicely into the progressives' goal of social control.

After 1887, prohibitionists retreated from a strategy of a statewide referendum and concentrated on local-option laws. The Texas Local Option Association organized a campaign in 1903 to dry up North Texas. It furnished speakers and organizers to encourage and abet local-option elections. The powerful Anti-Saloon League entered Texas in 1907 and combined its propaganda and numerical strength with the local-option organization. These separate forces worked within evangelical churches, enlisting preachers, women's groups, progressive politicians, and social reformers into the cause. Dry strength thus centered in North Texas, where a combination of rural voters, the religious press, and Protestant homogeneity contributed to victory after victory for the dries in local-option elections. Figure 9.17 shows the "wet" and "dry" counties in Texas in 1911.

The "wets" met the dry challenge by organizing their own lobbying groups, of which the Texas Brewers' Association, formed in 1901, was the most important; led by the Anheuser-Busch interests, it raised a war chest of \$2 million over the next decade. Then, in 1907, liquor makers organized the Retail Liquor Dealers' Association. But Attorney General F. Looney demonstrated in 1915 that the brewers association had violated Texas antitrust laws and had illegally contributed to the campaigns of wet candidates and, in some cases, paid poll taxes for poor people who agreed to vote "wet"; consequently, the breweries were fined \$281,000 and costs. These revelations, plus impeachment proceedings against Governor Jim Ferguson in which, as mentioned, investigators had accused him of receiving an unsecured loan from the brewers' organization, further wed the drive for prohibition with antitrust movements and besmirched pro-liquor interests.

By 1908, the issue of prohibition dominated Texas politics. Dries, urged on by the *Baptist Standard* and other religious publications, decided to ask for statewide rather than local-option prohibition legislation, forcing each Democratic primary candidate to declare either for or against prohibition. The issue split the voters almost in half. Dries won narrow victories in the 1908 and 1910 primaries to force the legislature to submit to voters a constitutional amendment outlawing the sale of alcohol. The legislature refused in 1909 by two votes to do so, but it relented in 1911, when by a close vote of 231,096 to 237,393, wets defeated a prohibition amendment to the Texas Constitution. Because the wet vote came largely from cities and ethnic and racial minorities, the *Baptist Standard* best expressed the dries' attitude when it declared that prohibition was clearly "an issue of Anglo-Saxon culture" versus the presumably inferior civilization of minorities in urban areas.



**Figure 9.17** “Wet and dry” counties of Texas 1911. Source: Adapted from Lewis L. Gould, *Progressives and Prohibitionists: Texas Democrats in the Wilson Era*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973, p. 33. Reproduced by permission of Dr. Lewis L. Gould.

The identification of ethnic groups with alcohol paid large dividends to the prohibitionists in Texas and elsewhere during World War I. To not drink alcohol became “patriotic”: people did not work well with hangovers; alcohol was needed in the war effort; and saloons corrupted US servicemen. Furthermore, the 1918 law that forbade the sale of liquor within ten miles of military bases practically dried up the state anyway. On February 28, 1918, the Texas legislature approved a national prohibition amendment. The passage of a statewide prohibition law followed shortly, and in January 1920, the Eighteenth Amendment to the US Constitution outlawed the sale of alcoholic beverages.

### Texas after World War I

The same surge of patriotism that identified liquor as un-American during World War I also encouraged a demand for cultural conformity. In an effort to unite a heterogeneous population into a public consensus for the war effort, propaganda committees extolled patriotic goals and middle-class American values. A public suspicion arose of those ideas or

people who might not endorse the majority view. The state and federal governments responded to demands that all join the war effort with legislation designed to enforce patriotism. Texas, for example, made public criticism of the American flag, the war effort, the US government, and soldiers' uniforms a crime punishable by imprisonment. The legislature mandated that public schools teach patriotism, fly the American flag, and, except for foreign-language classes, conduct all studies in English.

Election laws were changed to prevent the foreign born from voting. Sometimes super-patriotism became hysterical and repressive: violent acts such as floggings were used to instill patriotism in those suspected of holding dissenting opinions. In some cases, simply having a foreign-sounding name convinced mobs that one was a potential enemy sympathizer.

Germans became the targets of much of this suspicion and intolerance and bore the brunt of the antiforeign frenzy. As of 1910, some 48,000 foreign-born Germans resided in Texas, with another 220,000 being of German-descent. In 1920, about 31,000 Texans claimed German birth. Because German was the first language of so many, some twenty-four German language newspapers circulated throughout the state at the beginning of World War I. In this emotionally charged atmosphere, ordinary citizens took it upon themselves to submit reports to county councils of defense if they suspected their German-speaking neighbors of being pro-Kaiser. Sometimes the superpatriotism/German bashing bordered on pure silliness: sauerkraut became known as "liberty cabbage" and frankfurters "liberty pups." Self-styled "Americanizers" hoped for the Americanization of the German population by denouncing German-language newspapers and discouraging the use of the German language in public discourse, parochial schools, and church services. Government officials reacted suspiciously to the German-Texan presence and also assumed an anti-German posture. House Bill 15 (1918), for instance, prohibited the display of the German flag. A legislative committee recommended pulling from circulation in the state library all books and periodicals that portrayed Germany or German culture in a favorable light. Governor Hobby in 1919 vetoed the state appropriation of money for the German Department of the University of Texas.

In response to this hysteria, the Texas-German community attempted to assure the state of its commitment to the nation. German-language readers, at the encouragement of German-language newspapers, now displayed their loyalty to the United States more vigorously. Heavily German populated towns sponsored loyalty parades and held bond drives. Texans of German descent also joined the armed forces as demonstrations of allegiance to the United States. Some German Texans even joined in the anti-German movement to disabuse Texans of any doubts held about their own patriotism.

The antiforeign hysteria melded into an antiradical crusade after the 1917 Communist revolution in Russia. Now, the state citizenry even decried labor strikes and demands for civil rights as un-American and Bolshevik-inspired acts. The federal government reinforced such attitudes with the passage of the May 1918 Sedition Act. Consequently, governmental suppression of the American Socialist Party leadership and harassment of the editors of the Socialist newspaper, *The Rebel*, destroyed that party in Texas. Minority groups suffered too, as white citizens now greeted calls for civil rights with violence. Race riots occurred in Port Arthur and Longview in 1919; it took the state militia to restore order in the latter. This fear of radicalism explains passage of a 1923 law that mandated that all teachers in public schools be US citizens and that the study of the constitutions of Texas and the United States be included in the curriculum.

### **The return of progressive administration: Hobby (1919–1921) and Neff (1921–1925)**

The 1923 legislation was an example of what happened to progressivism in the 1920s. Progressivism did not disappear after World War I; rather, the drive for patriotism during the war encouraged progressives to stress some goals at the expense of others. Consequently, two strains of progressivism dominated the politics of the 1920s. Because progressives saw no contradiction between reform and social control, they looked to public schools and other state institutions to Americanize foreigners, inculcate middle-class values, and protect morality through prohibition. Thus, one faction of progressives actually had no trouble endorsing attempts by a reborn Ku Klux Klan and antievolution crusaders to exercise social control by legislating morality. The other emergent faction embraced “business progressivism,” which endeavored to utilize the ideas of efficiency and public service to foster order and prosperity. Business progressives fought for administrative reorganization, good roads, and improved schools and health care; they seemingly ignored the demands of labor unions, tenant farmers, and proponents of civil rights. The social-justice movement, never strong in the South, and the antitrust movement gave way to the two different but not mutually exclusive progressive factions.

The ascension of William P. Hobby, a business progressive, to the governor’s office in 1917, upon Ferguson’s resignation, and Hobby’s subsequent election in 1919 dramatized for progressives the triumphs of Wilson, World War I, and prohibition. Hobby served at a time when the economic downturn of 1920–21 pulled up and into a boom period that continued through the administration of Hobby’s successor, Pat M. Neff. Bountiful crops disguised the economic weakness of Texas farmers by helping to offset falling prices for agricultural commodities. In addition, expanding industries and developing cities absorbed returning veterans and offered new job opportunities for Texas men and women.

Hobby and other business progressives advocated measures to strengthen this growing urban economic network, but their appeals largely fell flat before a reluctant legislature and an unconcerned electorate. In his last term in office, Hobby proposed bills that would have aided education, reorganized the state government, authorized judicial reform, and established a civil-service commission. His only success lay in education.

Pat Neff entered the gubernatorial primary race in 1919 as a prohibitionist who supported Wilson. A devout Christian, a former speaker of the state house of representatives, and prosecuting attorney of McLennan County, Neff espoused progressive goals. In a runoff with Joe Bailey, who opposed reform and denounced Wilson, Neff rode progressive support to victory.

As governor, Neff, as had Hobby, dealt with an unresponsive legislature, which turned down a reorganization of state administrative offices and a proposed constitutional convention. Neff did, however, convince the legislature to consolidate the Pure Food and Drug Department with the Health Department. The legislature also approved the organization of cooperative marketing associations to help farmers sell their commodities as well as the creation of water reclamation and irrigation districts. In addition, Governor Neff worked hard for prison reform, disbanded the board of pardons, and halted the easy granting of paroles, which had been highly visible occurrences under “Farmer Jim” Ferguson’s administration. Neff used martial law to quell violence in a railroad strike at Denison and in the turmoil created by the oil discovery near Mexia. His pro-management action in the Federated Shop Craft Union strike led organized labor to oppose his reelection in 1922, but he still won handily. Neff’s longest lasting successes came from his fight for good roads and the initiation of a state park network.

Many of his failures emanated from his attempt to enforce prohibition laws. Decrying what he called the worst “crime wave” in Texas history, he asked the legislature to increase the Ranger force, repeal the suspended-sentence law that allowed bootleggers to avoid prison sentences, and allow the removal of local officials who did not vigorously enforce prohibition. His criticism of legislators for failing to act created a rift between his office and the house of representatives. Nonetheless, Neff used his authority to try to enforce prohibition, dispatching Rangers to areas of suspected bootlegging activity, and publicizing the need to eradicate drinking. His successes were slight: an amendment to the Texas prohibition law that made possession of more than a quart of liquor or any material for manufacturing it *prima facie* evidence of bootlegging. Although prohibitionists approved of Neff’s actions, prohibition itself remained politically controversial throughout the 1920s. The issue even made Neff reluctant to condemn the Ku Klux Klan, because the Klan opposed bootlegging.

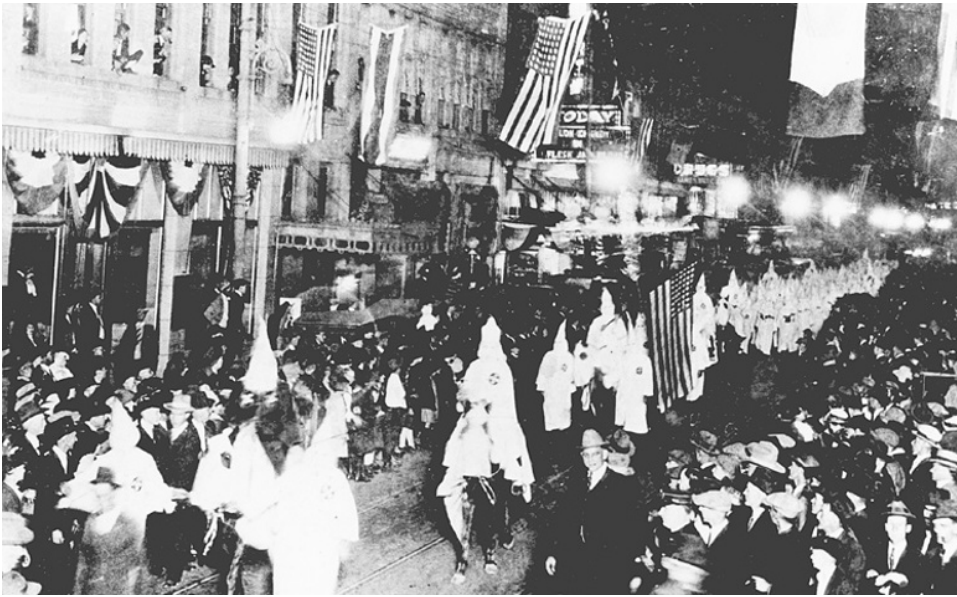
### **The Ku Klux Klan, fundamentalism, and the evolution debate**

The general failure of prohibition enforcement convinced many Texans that American morals were in decline. Some blamed rapid urbanization: migration to the city disrupted rural neighborhoods and broke up extended families. Urban growth also created tensions between rural and urban Americans, as rural folk perceived urban areas as hotbeds of disloyal foreigners, religious modernism, illegal speakeasies, organized crime, morally suspicious “New Women,” and corrupting modern music. These tensions were further abetted by the post-World War I Red Scare and reinforced by the progressive drive for social control.

The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s borrowed the name and some of the trappings of the Reconstruction Era organization, but otherwise it was quite different from the original KKK. Founded in 1915 near Atlanta, Georgia, by William Joseph Simmons, an ex-Methodist minister familiar with all types of fraternal orders, the new Klan was to be a secret social organization to advocate patriotism. Simmons teamed up in 1920 with Edward Young Clarke, who paid field organizers (kleagles) to organize KKK chapters (klaverns) throughout the nation. The organizer received \$4 of each \$10 initiation fee paid by a prospective inductee, who had to be white, Protestant, and native born. The Klan professed as its goals the preservation of patriotism, the purity of women, white supremacy, and law and order. It opposed radicals, Catholics, Jews, blacks, Mexicans, the wearing by women of short skirts, sexual immorality, the consumption of “demon rum,” and continued foreign immigration. By 1922, the organization had 700,000 members and by 1925, possibly as many as five million. The new Klan was strong throughout the South and Midwest, especially in Indiana, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas. Its alleged commitment to the preservation of the social order and its militant fundamentalism seemingly appealed to those in the Bible Belt. The Klan recruited in urban areas of the South, where citizens with rural backgrounds endorsed its professed goals. The organization’s ability to enlist members of the new urban middle class explained Neff’s unwillingness to condemn the order and the attitude of other progressives, such as Thomas Love, who described Klan members as good but misguided men.

The Klan came to Texas in 1920 (Figure 9.18). Playing upon white fears engendered by the race riot of 1917, the kleagles made contacts with the better-known citizens of Houston. From contacts with prominent city leaders, the Klan earned enough respectability to recruit extensively in the white middle class. It soon spread across the state, except, naturally, in





**Figure 9.18** Ku Klux Klan parading, Beaumont, Texas, November 10, 1922. Source: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, Houston, Texas.

those areas with a large Catholic population, such as San Antonio and South Texas. Its core strength lay in the Dallas–Fort Worth area, East Texas, and Central Texas. The motivation behind the Klan in Texas included racism and nativism, as well as the imposition of moral conformity. Black boldness growing out of World War I experiences and the establishment of NAACP chapters in eastern Texas provoked a response to the perceived insolence of African Americans. To prevent “moral decay” from spreading throughout the state, the Klan was willing to use extralegal methods. Texas newspapers reported eighty incidents of flogging in 1921. Klan victims included doctors accused of performing abortions; businessmen charged with corrupting young women; oilfield workers whose rowdy behavior had disturbed the townspeople of Mexia; husbands who abandoned their wives; divorcees who set immoral examples; as well as pimps, prostitutes, gamblers, thieves, and bootleggers. The Klan argued that it existed to enforce law in a time of lawlessness. Governor Neff and other members of the Texas elite gave tacit support to the clandestine organization. Conservative women had no quarrel with it, and many Protestant churches endorsed its anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic proclivities. Business leaders feared Klan-sponsored boycotts and were wary of earning its wrath. Even some individuals in law enforcement agencies turned a blind eye to Klan flogging and tar-and-feathering expeditions. The Klan reportedly dominated the Austin, Waco, and Dallas police forces and the Tarrant County Sheriff’s Department. Undoubtedly, the Klan coopted potential opposition by recruiting judges, law enforcement officers, government officials, and newspapermen into the organization.

Some opposition to Klan intimidation and violence did appear. Women unwilling to submit to conventional roles reproached the Klan’s stand on traditionalism. The *Dallas Morning News*, appalled at the increase in lynching, published editorials in 1921 assailing extralegal use of force, as did the *Houston Chronicle* and the *El Paso Times*. Such well-known Texans as Joseph S. Cullinan of Houston and Maury Maverick of San Antonio denounced the “invisible empire.” Some private organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Bar Association requested that Governor Neff condemn Klan violence. He did not. A

few local judges and law enforcement officers encouraged grand juries to indict Klansmen for brutal assaults and violent crimes. Others attempted to prevent Klan parades—in which members marched with masks on—or published the names of those who belonged to the organization.

The Klan struck back. It boycotted opposition newspapers; it endorsed political candidates who favored its goals; and its supporters won local offices in 1922 throughout North and East Texas. Klan sympathizers defeated candidates who opposed the secret society in Beaumont, Fort Worth, Dallas, and Houston. That year the Klan endorsed Earle B. Mayfield for the US Senate, and he defeated James E. Ferguson in the primary and won the general election. Mayfield's victory, however, represented the zenith of Klan popularity in Texas.

By 1923, the Klan's increased use of violence had begun to alienate upper- and middle-class white voters. Even if, as Klan officials maintained, there had been no actual Klan participation in floggings and lynchings, the emotionalism of its rallies and its moral fervor certainly helped inspire the hateful acts. Mayfield's election to the Senate convinced many moderates that reasonable people must rally against the Klan. In 1924 Neff, in a surprise announcement, finally went on record as opposing the organization. The voters that year nominated Miriam A. Ferguson for governor rather than the Klan candidate, Felix D. Robertson of Dallas. Membership in the Klan dropped shortly thereafter, and the organization disappeared toward the end of the decade, but its residue of demands for moral conformity lived on.

Indeed, both private and public agencies worked to establish moral conformity. Their support for uniform behavior codes dovetailed with the early Klan goals of a society that turned back urban sins. Texas teacher organizations passed resolutions demanding that textbooks explain the evils of liquor. Local organizations censored paintings, books, and movies they deemed radical or immoral. At various times, clubwomen and ministers attacked indecent dress, excessive drinking, bathing-beauty contests, carnivals, jazz clubs, and dancing. Blue laws closed theaters on Sunday. City councils introduced or actually enacted codes that limited flirting, prohibited women from smoking in public, forbade the playing of jazz after midnight, and restricted the brevity of bathing attire. A legislator introduced a bill to ban women's shoes with heels higher than one inch. Clearly, society was changing in the Roaring Twenties, and many Texans knew not how to cope with the new environment.

An upsurge in religious fundamentalism accompanied these calls for conformity. The urbanization of America placed considerable pressure on churches. Automobiles and roads bypassed rural churches, taking parishioners to urban ones. Radios created ministries with national congregations. Protestant churches, which once focused family entertainment around Wednesday prayer meetings, choir practices, and Sunday schools, now competed with urban activities for their members' time and attention. Not surprisingly, Protestant churches and ministers were the vanguard in the fight to preserve rural values in a time of rapid social change.

Protestant churches directed the religious faith of most Texas churchgoers. Although Catholics (22.6 percent of the state's churchgoers) outnumbered any single Protestant sect, Southern Baptists (19.9 percent), Methodists (17.8 percent), and Baptist Church National Conventionists (16.3 percent) dominated the religious landscape. Of the 1,784,620 church members in Texas in 1916, most attended congregations of fewer than 100 members. These small Protestant churches shared certain characteristics, such as the belief that each person could achieve salvation without direct intervention of a priesthood or an educated ministry. This relatively democratic idea contributed both to religious anarchy and conformity. Even though each member could read and interpret the Bible for him or herself, the scriptures

needed a literal rather than an exegetical translation to have a direct bearing on each individual's life. The general assumption of the white population that the Klan attacked vice partly explains why rural Protestants reacted so slowly to speak out against the violence of the "invisible empire."

The struggle by fundamentalists to reclaim rural values from urban Texas took place within theological and public frameworks. Organizations such as the Texas Sunday School Association and the Bible-in-the-Public-Schools Association pressured school boards to include some form of religious instruction, such as Bible readings, during the school day. About 50 percent of the schools complied. The demand for religious orthodoxy soon went to the state legislature, where education bills that mandated morning devotional services, required teachers to take a religious oath, and limited parochial school education all failed. The diversity of the state's population forced legislators from South Texas, the Gulf Coast, and the Hill Country to oppose the bills.

Another effort concentrated on banning the teaching of the theory of human evolution. A 1923 bill to bar the teaching of Darwin's theory in any state-supported educational institution passed the house but died in the senate. The next year, legislators voted down another version of the bill, which would have fired teachers who taught evolution and punished members of the state textbook commission who approved books containing the theory. Until 1929, similar laws under various guises went to the legislative floor. The state textbook commission did censor textbooks that seemingly treated human evolution as scientific fact, but Texas, unlike five other southern states, passed no antievolution law. The heterogeneity of Texas's population and the strong opposition of legislators from the German Hill Country and the Rio Grande Valley defeated the antievolution legislation.

### **The waning of progressivism, 1925–1931**

Miriam A. Ferguson ran for governor in 1924 against the Klan candidate, Felix D. Robertson of Dallas. Part of her campaign focused on opposition to the Klan, but much of her appeal came from the general understanding that she was running as a surrogate for her deposed husband. In the second Democratic primary, progressives divided their vote. Some, like Love, campaigned for Robertson on the grounds that the Klan voted dry. Others stayed with Ferguson in reaction to Klan excesses. Mrs. Ferguson defeated Robertson by nearly 100,000 votes in the second primary in a record turnout. Love said Mrs. Ferguson won because progressives hated the Klan violence more than they hated Fergusonism. He led a group of Democratic bolters who fused with the Republican Party in an effort to defeat Mrs. Ferguson in the general election. Those who supported fusion chose as their candidate George C. Butte, Dean of the University of Texas Law School. Ferguson defeated Butte and his "good government" campaign by 100,000 votes. Her victory in both races rested on rural voting strength. Unlike in "Pa" Ferguson's losing senate race against Mayfield, "Ma" ran competitively in the urban Klan strongholds.

Mrs. Ferguson by no means ran as a reformer, and her gubernatorial administration (1925–27) boasted of no reforms. It was, as expected, dominated by her husband, who approved appointees and attended all important meetings. The political controversies of the day centered on the Fergusons' liberal policy of pardoning prisoners and the administration of highways by the State Highway Commission composed of Ferguson appointees. One historian best summed up the Fergusons' tenure: "In the murky world of statute books, there may well have been no illegality, but the Fergusons were guilty of a flagrant abuse of

the ethical standards of public office.” Their chief political antagonist was Dan Moody, the state attorney general. His opposition to the State Highway Commission’s method of granting construction contracts to other than the lowest bidders led to the resignation of two Ferguson appointees and the cancellation of several road contracts. Reformers and other enemies of Fergusonism rallied behind the young attorney general, who defeated Mrs. Ferguson in the 1926 gubernatorial race.

In office, Moody, who served as governor from 1927 to 1931, quickly became a spokesman for business progressivism. He urged the legislature to bring efficiency to government by passing a civil-service law. He advocated tax reform, a reorganization of part of the state judiciary, and expanded appointive powers for the governor’s office. Although the legislature responded negatively to all of these proposals, Moody was able to establish the state auditor’s office, which evolved into a modern-day fiscal controller of state agencies. Then Moody and his progressive supporters commissioned a report on Texas prisons, based on a study of other states’ penal facilities. The report effected a compromise between the governor, who wished to expand the powers of the Texas Prison Board, and the legislature. Moody’s successes were few, yet national journals cited him along with some other southern governors as examples of progressive leaders.

Although Moody easily won reelection in 1928, the unity of progressive Democrats was shattered that year when Governor Alfred E. Smith of New York, a Catholic and an antiprohibitionist, secured the Democratic nomination for the presidency. Texas Democrats split over support for Smith’s candidacy, with some (like Governor Moody) supporting Smith and others (including ex-governors Culberson and Colquitt) backing the candidacy of Republican Herbert Hoover. In November, Texas voted Republican for the first time since Reconstruction. Smith’s brashness, urban background, Catholicism, and antiprohibition stand had combined with the relative prosperity of the 1920s to defeat rural loyalties to the Democratic Party. The winners of state offices, however, were, as usual, Democrats, with Tom Connally defeating Earle B. Mayfield for the US Senate seat.

Moody’s first term in office had corresponded to a time of prosperity for the nation and the state. His second term witnessed the stock market collapse of 1929 and the onset of the Great Depression. Now business progressivism, which had solidified with the industrial growth of the 1920s, collapsed with the shattered economy. The rhetoric of business progressivism identified it closely with chambers of commerce and rotary clubs that emphasized efficiency and economic development over the calls for social justice and reform, and efficiency and high profits in business would hardly play well during the Great Depression. Nevertheless, a legacy of Texas progressivism remains to this day in the popular acceptance of the public-service functions of government.

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## Texas and the Great Depression, 1929–1941

The prosperity of the 1920s camouflaged serious weaknesses in the US economy. Agriculturists suffered from low crop prices, a fact that had been only partly mitigated by expanding production. Big business held down wages and increased its profits at the expense of workers and the producers of raw materials. Wealth was unequally distributed: 2 percent of the population controlled 28 percent of the national wealth. This concentration of wealth depressed consumer purchasing power and limited savings, thus weakening most citizens' ability to weather an economic downturn. By the mid-1920s, the railroad, textile, and coal industries were in trouble, and housing starts and automobile purchases had begun to decline. International trade dropped as the US policy of protective tariffs limited the growth of an already weak European economy. Consequently, European nations defaulted on their international debts and withdrew investments from the United States.

Heavy speculation in the stock market in the late 1920s created an illusion of prosperity that disguised both industrial weaknesses and a shaky financial network. More than 7000 banks closed their doors in that decade, and although only about 2 percent of all Americans owned stock, the market's monumental crash on October 23, 1929, exposed the nation's economic weaknesses and threw its citizenry into a panic. By 1932, at least one of every four American workers was unemployed, median family income had dropped by 50 percent, a hundred thousand businesses had failed, corporate profits had plummeted from \$10 billion to \$1 billion, and the gross national product was cut in half. The industrial machine had ground to a halt.

President Herbert Hoover and the Republican Party did not cause the Great Depression, but Hoover's unduly optimistic pronouncements promising a rapid return to prosperity, and the fact that he was in office when the depression began linked him and his party to the downturn in the minds of most Americans. Actually, the president used the powers of the federal government to attack the depression more extensively than had any other chief executive in like situations. He foresaw as a solution to the depression a cooperative state that would weld together business owners who promised to keep wages and production levels from falling, workers who pledged not to strike, and local governments and charities that would dispense temporary relief to the needy. The federal government, meanwhile,



would offer loans to agriculture and businesses to enable them to continue producing needed goods and employing laborers. Federal officials, including the president, would create an air of optimism that would prevent panic and restore confidence in the economy. As the depression worsened, however, many Americans realized that optimism, private charities, and local and state governments could not cope with the impact of the mass unemployment. But in the face of growing public demands for direct relief aid, Hoover held firm to his views, thus appearing heartless and uncaring. Having no choice but to supplement their diets by hunting, rural Americans took to calling rabbits and ground hogs “Hoover hams,” and hobo camps that gave temporary shelter to the millions of unemployed became known as “Hooverilles.” Even if the blame was not entirely fair, in the final analysis Hoover’s policies failed.

By March 1933, the American banking system had collapsed. Texans had returned to the Democratic Party the previous November (1932) to vote for President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who proclaimed a “New Deal” for the dispossessed. His decisive action in confronting the bank crisis of 1933 restored a measure of public confidence in the economy. Under FDR’s leadership, the federal government accepted responsibility for direct relief for the unemployed and passed measures to stimulate and reform the economy. The economic recovery of the nation moved unsteadily forward until mid-1935. Prosperity and growth seemed assured from 1935 until 1937, when an economic downturn in the fall deepened into a recession that continued throughout most of 1938. Not until the defense buildup of World War II did industrial recovery succeed. As late as 1940, 311,000 Texans were either unemployed or working for a federal relief agency.

An assessment of the New Deal created intellectual challenges for contemporaries as well as for historians ever since. The New Deal did not work fundamental changes in the capitalist economy or in state politics, nor did it end the depression. It did, however, apply the vast resources of the federal government to attacking the immediate problems of poverty and despair. Some historians find it difficult to see how Roosevelt could have acted much differently given the complexities of the economic problems and his and the majority of the New Dealers’ commitment to mainstream American values. The president’s agenda included neither long-range economic planning nor an abandonment of capitalism. Instead, he advocated a political pragmatism to solve immediate ills and achieve an eventual return to a balanced budget. His charisma and methods captured the hearts of most Texans, if not of the majority of the state’s leaders. And, certainly, the citizens of the nation and the state were better off after his administrations than they had been before them.

### **Texans Confront the Depression**

The immediate impact of the stock-market crash did not affect most Texans. Few had money invested in securities, most lived in rural areas, and, except to tenant farmers, prosperity through agricultural expansion still seemed plausible. Some state leaders even argued that a market collapse would encourage the money formerly siphoned off by stock speculation to return to capital investment in agriculture and manufacturing. The long-standing agrarian hostility toward speculators even encouraged a thinly concealed smugness that the eastern establishment was now receiving its just deserts. The state press and leadership followed the national pattern in 1929 and 1930 of encouraging confidence in the economy and pointing out that the present economic downturn represented the historical boom-and-bust cycle. Once the excess waste and inflation were rendered from the economy, they

asserted, prosperity would return; meanwhile, private and civic charities should provide for those unfortunate enough to be unemployed. Cities asked community groups to dispense charity through such organizations as the Community Chest, the Red Cross, churches, and the Salvation Army. But these organizations, designed to offer temporary aid to the destitute in good times, could not expand their resources to confront the mass unemployment of the early 1930s. By late 1931, private organizations announced that they were inadequate to the task.

Cities assumed some responsibilities to augment private charities. They used public works to expand job opportunities. Usually, these projects were designed to offer unskilled work to the (presumably) temporarily unemployed, and they included cleanup campaigns and such long-range improvements as widening streets, laying sewer and water lines, and constructing or renovating public parks and buildings. Dallas established the "Committee of 1000," composed of civic leaders who directed "buy-now" and "hire-the-unemployed" campaigns. Other cities combined this volunteerism, as did Dallas, with offers of free garden spaces, soup kitchens, and the use of public buildings to house transients. Cities in West Texas sponsored rabbit hunts and distributed the animals to the poor. A few civic groups encouraged back-to-the-farm movements or self-sufficiency as an alternative to urban unemployment.

Some local governments took stronger measures. Blacks and Mexican Americans were denied relief in Houston on the grounds that aid to minorities prevented the allotment of resources to deserving whites. Midland and other cities stationed law enforcement officials at train depots to prevent transients from staying in the community. All cities instituted austerity programs, some of which involved discharging employees. Most cities eliminated some urban services and froze employee salaries. Beaumont and Houston cut off either part or all of their streetlights. Dallas reduced its city personnel, eliminated playground supervisors, instituted a hiring freeze, and curtailed library services. Most Texas civic leaders warned as early as 1932 that they could not continue their relief efforts. As the depression worsened, school districts cut teacher salaries and reduced appropriations for public education.

### **State Politics, 1929–1933**

The early reactions of the cities to the Great Depression revealed much about Texans' and Americans' attitudes toward employment. Many believed that government aid sapped people's willingness to work and weakened the self-help and frontier spirit of the nation. Others believed that once jobs grew scarce, white men should come first. The demographic composition of the population most affected by the depression reflected this attitude. The unskilled and the inexperienced, women, the young, and minorities were the first to be fired and the last to be hired. The rate of unemployment among blacks was double that of whites, and Mexican Americans outnumbered all others in percentage of unemployed.

Unemployment had a ripple effect on the economy. Entrepreneurs eliminated proposed or not-yet-completed construction projects. Employers fired workers, who then became nonconsumers. By mid-1932, estimates placed the number of out-of-work Texans at 350,000 to 400,000, with 25 percent of these persons having no resources. Dwindling tax revenues, falling property values, and a preponderance of rural conservatives in the state legislature further limited funds for public relief or donations to private charities. As the economic collapse continued, the middle class began to identify with those first beset by poverty, and a consensus for some sort of direct aid to unemployed citizens emerged.

As the depression affected more Texans and revealed the inadequacies of local resources to cope with an economic disaster, the public sought a leader who would take action. Eleven gubernatorial candidates announced in 1930, including “Ma” Ferguson, Earle Mayfield, and Tom Love. Early in the campaign, Mrs. Ferguson and Ross S. Sterling (Figure 10.1) emerged as front runners. Governor Moody chose not to run for reelection and left office without really contending with the depression. Sterling, president of Humble Oil and Refining (later Exxon) until 1925, had served as Moody’s chairman of the State Highway Commission and advertised himself as a business progressive who wanted a bond issue for highway improvements and economies in government. Sterling’s personal fortune would decline during the depression, but after his retirement from public office in 1933 he returned to Houston and accrued wealth in real estate and oil investments. His image as a rich man—with a reputed net worth in excess of \$50 million in 1930—did not damage his original appeal to Texans. Although “Ma” led by more than 70,000 votes in the first Democratic primary, Sterling defeated her in the runoff by 90,000 votes. In the general election, Sterling easily defeated the Republican nominee. As the depression continued, however, the stigma of excessive wealth undoubtedly weakened his leadership role.

The Sterling administration (1931–33) was awash with controversy. The Texas press dubbed the 1931 legislature a “do-nothing” session. A bill to create a state income tax failed, as did a redistricting bill and one that sought to equalize taxes. But even as state revenue fell,



**Figure 10.1** Ross S. Sterling making his first speech in the 1930 campaign for Texas Governor, Huntsville, Texas. Source: Ross Shaw Sterling papers, 1930–1939, CN 01553, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

the cost of government remained the same. Despite four special sessions, Sterling's term ended with a deficit and without a state relief act. His liberal use of the veto typified the divisions between the governor's office and the legislature. The legislature's unwillingness to provide sources of revenue caused the governor to veto \$3 million in appropriations, including monies for summer schools. But the two controversies that marked his administration were in the basic Texas industries of oil and agriculture.

### **The East Texas oil boom**

In October 1930, Columbus Marion "Dad" Joiner drilled an oil well near Kilgore. The wildcatter hit oil where the collective wisdom of geologists maintained that none existed, and thus where the major oil companies had not leased extensively. Even after the first couple of East Texas wells came in, the major oil companies ("majors") remained skeptical. The independent oil companies ("independents") did not; they rushed in, and by the time the majors realized the extent of the boom, independents controlled 80 percent of the field. The great East Texas field exceeded the expectations of even the most optimistic oilman. It comprised 140,000 acres in five counties, contained about one-third of the nation's then-known oil reserves, and in 1933, its peak year of production, spewed out 205 million barrels of oil, more than the total production of the rest of the state.

The East Texas oil boom had several economic effects. It helped the poorest part of the state, in which small farmers and sharecroppers composed the majority of the population. As a result of the boom, land leased for as much as \$30,000 an acre as new wells were drilled at a rate of one an hour in October 1931. Kilgore became the great boomtown of all oil strikes. Prostitutes, gamblers, and swindlers mixed with oil-field workers, entrepreneurs, truck drivers, and investors to create an aura of quick wealth and a disregard for law and order. Most of the local residents welcomed the boom, which offered some relief to the chronically depressed area. The immense output of the field drove the price of oil down from slightly more than a dollar a barrel in 1930 to eight cents a barrel in 1931. The majors asserted that the market for oil could not keep up with the supply. They and conservationists pointed out that rapid drilling and pumping would deplete underground pressure and ruin the field. Some of the independents agreed with the majors, but others with limited capital pumped furiously, sold quickly at whatever the price, maintained their cash flow, and gambled on hitting other wells. Because oil moves underground, as long as one well pumped nonstop, independents felt that all others needed to do so. Also, majors could afford to hold oil reserves until the price of oil went up; their stance, which appeared so sensible, could potentially drive many independents from the only field that they themselves had developed.

The state legislature had earlier authorized the Texas Railroad Commission to prorate oil—that is, establish maximum amounts of oil that wells would be allowed to pump. Progressives had expanded the Commission's powers in 1917 and 1919 to limit production of oil for conservation and environmental purposes, and in both the Yates and Borger fields the Commission had limited pumping or drilling until immediate problems of transportation or waste had been solved. In East Texas, though, the issue was that the supply of oil exceeded demand, and overproduction rather than conservation was the reason for proration. It was not clear, however, that the Railroad Commission could legally prorate oil for the reason of marketing. In April 1931, the Commission issued its first proration order for East Texas. Some operators promptly procured injunctions to prevent proration; others simply ignored the order.

Majors controlled the refineries in the state. They refused to buy East Texas crude, pointing out that the market had dropped below the 1929 level and that they did not need the oil. Therefore, independents built refineries of their own. Some were substantial operations, but many were “teakettle” refineries, designed to produce a low-grade gasoline that could be sold by independent stations for seven to eight cents a gallon. Fleets of tank trucks carried this East Texas gas and sometimes other petroleum products from one of the eventual ninety-five refineries to independent gas stations. Because these independent trucking firms handled oil pumped above what the Texas Railroad Commission permitted, their cargo was known as “Hot Oil.”

Realistically, the Railroad Commission could not enforce its proration orders. The independent oilmen held a series of meetings but could not agree to curtail production voluntarily. Ultimately, a group of East Texans appealed to the governor for aid. Governor Sterling issued an executive order on August 17, 1931, instructing East Texas producers to cease operation, and dispatched National Guard units, commanded by General Jacob F. Wolters, into the East Texas field to enforce the decision. Wolters was an attorney for the Texas Company; Sterling, of course, was identified as a friend of Humble Oil and Standard Oil. Understandably, public opinion in East Texas cataloged the governor’s actions as an attempt by the majors to freeze out independents. The East Texas field opened again in September and the allowable amount prorated to each well soon dropped to a hundred barrels a day.

Meanwhile, the traffic in Hot Oil increased. Illegal pipelines ran to teakettle refineries that sent East Texas gas to independent stations. The market turned to chaos as National Guardsmen met local hostility and found it difficult to identify the producers of Hot Oil. Because of the secrecy involved, no one knew how much oil was produced, if correct royalties were paid on it, or whether various middlemen were skimming off profits by pumping extra oil and selling it on the side. Sporadic acts of violence occurred in what already had become a boomtown atmosphere in East Texas. The state supreme court in February 1932 ruled that Sterling’s declaration of martial law was unconstitutional; still, he left the troops in East Texas until December.

February saw the Commission further lower the allowable oil production rate to seventy-five barrels a day per well. In October, the federal court struck down the Commission’s order, on the grounds that it discriminated against wells with high production capabilities. Sterling immediately called a special session of the legislature, which passed a law that specifically authorized the Commission to prorate to meet market demands. In January 1933, enforcement of proration limits went back to the Commission. At first, the efforts of the Commission failed. Its investigators were poorly trained, frequently took bribes, and were both too few and too timid to face hostile public opinion and shut down Hot Oil operations. Ernest O. Thompson, whom Sterling appointed chairman of the Railroad Commission in 1932, asked for and received a force of Texas Rangers to stop the flow of Hot Oil from the East Texas field. By the end of 1933, a semblance of order had been restored to the area.

Subsequent events also helped bring order to the East Texas field. In 1933, President Roosevelt placed oil under the production codes of the National Recovery Administration (NRA), and the majors started producing inexpensive gas in order to compete with the East Texas refineries. The majors’ stepped-up output drove some of the undercapitalized independents out of the market. The next year, the state enacted legislation to require all refiners to disclose totals of petroleum processed and account for the sources of supply. When the US Supreme Court struck down the NRA, Congress responded with the Connally Act (named for Texas Senator Tom Connally) which made it illegal to transport Hot Oil across state lines. By 1935, the combination of federal and state laws enforced the powers of the Texas Railroad Commission to prorate oil.

Before the decade closed, the majors owned 80 percent of the East Texas field. Only the strongest independents survived. Using the vast supplies of East Texas oil, these entrepreneurs went on to amass huge fortunes that led to the stereotyped image of the Texas oilman. The need for East Texas oil outlets caused independents to transfer their offices to Dallas, making it, rather than Tulsa, Oklahoma, the capital of southwestern petroleum money. The boom conditions helped the state survive the depression. Ultimately, the greatest impact of the East Texas field may well have been in forcing the state to limit oil production in order to force up the price of petroleum. The Railroad Commission continued to prorate oil production for the next two decades. For Sterling, however, the crisis in East Texas earned him considerable hostility from the voters of the region.

### **The agricultural depression**

The agricultural depression also mired the Sterling administration in controversy. When farmers planted their cotton crop in 1931, the market price of cotton averaged 9 to 10 cents a pound; by harvest time, it had fallen to 5.3 cents a pound, where it remained for the next year. Corn and cattle prices fell to less than one-half of their 1929 levels. Prices for other goods did not drop at the same rate as did those for agricultural commodities. Nor did interest rates fall, because those who loaned money now had less of it to loan. By 1932, the actual purchasing power of cotton was only 58 percent of what it had been in the years before World War I. In simple terms, a farmer needed at least three times the amount of production in 1931 that he had needed in 1928 to pay off the same amount of loan. Small and marginal farmers in North and East Texas suffered the greatest hardship.

Earlier pleas of agricultural reformers to farmers that they voluntarily limit production and diversify crops had failed. Consequently, both the state and federal governments now moved to control the marketing of cotton. In June 1929, Congress passed the Agricultural Marketing Act. It created the Federal Farm Board, which extended loans to agricultural cooperatives to aid them in holding cotton and other crops off the depressed market. As agricultural prices continued to fall and defaults on the loans it had extended seemed probable, in June 1930, the Federal Farm Board organized the Cotton Stabilization Corporation, which took direct control over the cooperatives' cotton and held it off the market. The Federal Farm Board had too little capital, however, and there were too few cooperatives to stabilize crop prices. The Texas Marketing Association numbered only 754 cooperatives, with about 47,000 members. The 1931 cotton crop of 17 million bales was the second largest in history, which only added to the existing surplus of 4.5 million bales held over from 1930 production. Now the Farm Board ceased its efforts to prop up the market and returned to volunteerism, urging farmers to diversify crops and plow up one-third of the cotton already in the field.

Meanwhile, Texas attempted remedies of its own. Governor Moody proposed that businesspersons buy a bale of cotton in 1930 and hold it until prices increased, but too much cotton made such an appeal ineffective. Then, when farmers asked for a special legislative session to pass a cotton-reduction law, Moody refused to call one, maintaining that legislative action would be futile without a similar response from other cotton-producing states.

Sterling inherited the farm depression upon assuming the governorship. Responding to a joint resolution of the legislature, he called a conference of governors to meet in the summer of 1931 to consider cotton acreage control. Five states sent representatives, who agreed that if Texas restricted production their state would too. But cotton-reduction plans raised national

and state opposition from industries that relied on the cotton trade. Shippers, merchants, ginners, and manufacturers, for example, and their employees argued that acreage restrictions would cause a decline in their income. Southern governors reacted negatively to the proposal, except for Huey P. Long of Louisiana, who offered his own “drop a crop” plan. The Louisiana governor proposed that farmers plant no cotton in 1932. His state passed a law to that effect, which it intended to activate as soon as other states enacted similar legislation.

Long’s action placed political pressures on Sterling. For the “drop a crop” plan to succeed, Texas would have to curtail its considerable cotton production. Yet the Texas Cotton Association, an organization of shippers and buyers, and most of the big city dailies across the South opposed Long’s idea. Pressure from farmers mounted, and Sterling called a special legislative session in September of 1931. The legislature turned down Long’s blueprint but passed a measure that limited cotton acreage in 1932 to 30 percent of that cultivated in 1931. A fine for each acre of cotton planted in excess of the allotment was to be levied on offending farmers. Most ignored the law. And only three other southern states passed similar acts. When Long saw that other states would not follow his lead, he repealed the “no cotton” law by executive order. A few days later, in February 1932, the Texas law limiting cotton acreage was ruled unconstitutional. Sterling, who opposed the Long plan, had not been enthusiastic about the Texas legislation.

### **The Return of “Fergusonism,” 1933–1935**

The cotton-restriction failure and the troop assignments to the oil field damaged Sterling’s reelection campaign. “Ma” Ferguson again challenged him for the Democratic nomination and led all candidates in the first primary. Charges of vote fraud soon emanated from the Sterling camp. In 132 counties, 40,000 more votes were cast than poll taxes paid. Many of these votes came from East Texas, where the Fergusons had strength and Sterling was roundly disliked. Much of the Texas establishment, the other defeated candidates in the first primary, and most of the state press endorsed Sterling in the runoff. In a bitterly fought campaign, Sterling increased his primary votes by more than 175,000 but lost by a slim margin of 3798 ballots. Once again, vote totals exceeded poll-tax receipts. Sterling tried unsuccessfully to get a fourth special session of the legislature to investigate vote fraud. He then filed a suit contesting Mrs. Ferguson’s nomination. The Texas Supreme Court ruled that her name should go on the general election ballot, and come November, she defeated Republican Orville Bullington, a Wichita Falls lawyer and businessman.

Sterling always believed that illegal voting in East Texas cost him a return to the governor’s chair. He said later that if he had sent the Texas Rangers into those East Texas counties to prevent voter fraud, he would have won. Certainly, Mrs. Ferguson carried those counties in which many poor farmers could not afford to pay their poll taxes, and migrant oil workers made accurate voter rolls difficult to keep. The legislature, on the other hand, would have had problems in ascertaining a truly accurate vote count, since a discrepancy between poll taxes paid and ballots cast surfaced in more than 100 counties. Probably, a more accurate estimation of Ferguson’s victory lay in the continued support of her husband by poor folks and the political despair generated by the widening depression. Sterling, like Hoover, received blame for a depression not of his making and seemingly not caring about the less fortunate.

The second Ferguson administration (1933–35) corresponded to President Franklin Roosevelt’s first two years in office. The governor and “Pa” needed to address the financial

catastrophe of a \$14 million state debt and a failed welfare system, but New Deal legislation that preempted state economic decisions complicated any local actions. A wary legislature that remembered previous Ferguson administrations' reluctance to pass tax bills also hampered strong executive leadership. Governor Ferguson proposed sales, corporate, and income taxes, but the only tax the legislature enacted was a small two-cent levy on each barrel of oil. Partially for revenue purposes, the legislature legalized racetrack gambling and prize fighting. Much of the state attempts to balance the budget centered on economizing in government, but the most far-reaching proposal to save money by consolidating state agencies failed. The Graves-Woodruff Reorganization bill, the result of recommendations from a committee appointed by Sterling, would have revamped some state government agencies and higher education. The governor supported the early New Deal legislation, including federal control of the price of oil, and she endorsed a called state election that carried a constitutional amendment authorizing \$20 million in relief funds for the unemployed. By executive order, the governor created the Texas Relief Commission to distribute funds from the New Deal's Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC). The legislature renamed its agency the Texas Rehabilitation and Relief Commission and authorized it to administer "bread bonds" as well as federal funds available to Texas from the RFC and other New Deal agencies. When the Twenty-first Amendment (1933) to the US Constitution ended prohibition, the state authorized a referendum to approve the sale of 3.2 percent (alcohol) beer.

"Ma's" second administration generated less political controversy than did either of the other two tenures of Fergusonism; nevertheless, charges of corruption soon surfaced. Critics complained of a return to her previous policy of the generous pardoning of convicts. Some observers saw her actions as an example of the administration's disdain for law and order that included the dismissal of forty-four Rangers and their replacement by men of dubious character. The governor also issued "Special Ranger" commissions to 2344 men, thus making the force a venue for political patronage. Finally, political chicanery touched relief agencies as Jim Ferguson oversaw the Texas Rehabilitation and Relief Commission. He and the governor's appointee, Lawrence Westbrook, the head of the Texas Relief Commission, were accused of using relief monies and patronage to build a party machine. A senate investigation forced Westbrook's resignation in 1934. That year, the governor announced that she would honor the two-term tradition and not seek reelection.

### **The New Deal and Taxes**

By the time of the 1934 gubernatorial campaign, President Roosevelt and the Democrats controlled Congress. The return of the Democrats to power brought many Texans into national prominence. John Nance Garner, the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, had been mentioned frequently, along with Al Smith and Roosevelt, as a possible front runner for the 1932 Democratic presidential nomination. The Uvalde native's decision to step aside and support Roosevelt won Garner the vice-presidential spot and gave him a lot of political capital to spend with the president. During the president's first term, the vice-president offered him advice on a wide range of matters. Thereafter Garner and FDR gradually split over the New Deal's swing to the left and the president's decision to run for an unprecedented third term. Nonetheless, the crusty West Texan remained a life-long Democrat, if not a supporter of Roosevelt. Possibly, Jesse H. Jones of Houston, who entered government service as a Hoover appointee to the RFC, exercised more power than did even the vice president. Roosevelt was impressed by the well-known Houston banker,



making Jones chairman of the RFC (1933–39) and expanding his responsibilities with assignments to the Export-Import Bank (1936–43), the Federal Loan Agency (1939–45), and as secretary of commerce (1940–45). Jones was always more conservative than were most of his New Deal colleagues, and his disapproval of Roosevelt's policies led in 1945 to his break with the Democratic party. During the early New Deal years, though, Washington newspapers hailed Jesse Jones as the most powerful man in the capital.

Some referred to Garner, Jones, and the Texas congressional delegation as a dynasty. Indeed, the congressional seniority system promoted Texans to committee assignments of great importance. Nine Texans held chairmanships of permanent committees, including four that were instrumental in passing New Deal legislation: James P. Buchanan, Appropriations; Marvin Jones, Agriculture; Hatton Sumners, Judiciary; and Sam Rayburn, Interstate and Foreign Commerce. Rayburn went on to become majority leader and Speaker of the House for most of the time from 1940 to 1961. His ability to manipulate legislation and work out political compromises won him respect on both sides of the aisle. He endorsed, introduced, and supported most of the New Deal legislation but was usually regarded as a moderate in the Democratic Party. Elsewhere in the House, Maury Maverick received national acclaim as a New Deal supporter. After his defeat in the congressional race of 1938, he became mayor of his native city, San Antonio, and then served as an able administrator of wartime mobilization agencies. Wright Patman, the Texarkana congressman, won acclaim as a progressive, particularly concerning bank legislation. Patman, Lyndon Johnson (who went to Congress in 1937) (Figure 10.2), and Rayburn were the most consistent supporters of FDR throughout his administration.



**Figure 10.2** Franklin D. Roosevelt, Lyndon B. Johnson, Governor James V. Allred, and Mayor of Galveston Adrian Levy during FDR's visit to Galveston, May 1937. Source: University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 74-1140).

Not all Texas congressmen, however, were ardent New Dealers. Martin Dies of Orange, who later headed the House Un-American Activities Committee, was equally well known as a vigorous opponent of the New Deal. In the Senate, Morris Sheppard, of prohibition fame, usually supported the president, but his 1941 replacement, W. Lee O'Daniel, usually did not. Senator Tom Connally, a political moderate and life-long Democrat, aided New Deal legislation in Roosevelt's first term but became personally estranged from the president in 1937. Nevertheless, Connally remained influential in the Senate, and he played a powerful role in the defense buildup to World War II that ended up greatly aiding the state's recovery and economic growth. Probably the majority of Texans endorsed the New Deal with more fervor than did the state's congressional representatives, and their early support of Democratic measures cleared the way for much of the New Deal's legislation.

### Reviving the banking industry

Roosevelt took office promising relief, recovery, and reform. His first acts as president were aimed at restoring confidence and getting people back to work. He immediately used emergency powers granted in World War I to close the nation's banks for a "bank holiday," a hiatus that stopped runs on banks. When the banks reopened, they fell under new government regulations. Under Jesse Jones (Figure 10.3), the RFC functioned much differently than it had in the Hoover administration. Rather than loaning money to banks and increasing their indebtedness, the RFC bought up their preferred stock, thereby enlarging their capital bases. Jones consequently propped up the more stable and prosperous banks. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) guaranteed deposits up to \$5000 and periodically audited the insured banks. By 1935, the Federal Reserve System controlled interest rates, thereby limiting competition from new (and possibly shaky) banks that might offer more attractive deals to prospective customers. Moreover, government regulations that separated investment and commercial banking mandated careful periodic auditing of banks by various state and federal agencies. These measures restored public confidence in



**Figure 10.3** Jesse A. Jones, A. J. McKenzie, and Col. W. B. Tuttle at Chamber of Commerce dinner. Source: *The San Antonio Light Collection*, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 76-31).

banking. Jones and his regulatory measures also reduced competition and guaranteed the primacy of national banks. In Texas, banking deposits doubled between 1925 and 1940, and the number of banks decreased from 1490 (834 state and 656 national ones) to 839 (393 state and 446 national ones). The depression destroyed some of the banks, but the New Deal and Jones, himself a banker, followed a policy that encouraged financial stability through larger, more prosperous institutions. Roosevelt thought that he had saved the financial community, and he expressed surprise that many bankers, including some from Texas, opposed his reelection in 1936.

### **Recovery and relief measures**

To begin recovery and relief, Congress enacted the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). It operated through two separate agencies. Title I established price codes through the National Recovery Administration (NRA), allowing industries to set minimum prices for goods or a base price below which competition could not drive it. Industries that participated in the NRA were exempt from antitrust laws. The price codes affected Texas less than they did the more industrialized states, although they were applied to Hot Oil production. Of more significance to Texans, provisions of the NRA set minimum wage standards for workers and guaranteed them the right of collective bargaining. After the US Supreme Court struck down the NIRA in 1935, Congress passed the Wagner Act, which threw the powers of the federal government behind the organization of unions by restraining industry from committing unfair labor practices. It guaranteed the right of unions to organize peacefully. Although organized labor never gained a great deal of strength in Texas, federal New Deal legislation spurred its growth. In particular, the collective-bargaining provisions of the law enabled the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) to begin organizing Gulf Coast refineries and unionizing defense industries. Traditional Texan hostility toward unions would recrystallize by the early 1940s, with a spate of state laws designed to restrict their growth.

Title II of the NRA created the Public Works Administration (PWA), an agency that hired unemployed workers to build projects of permanent value. Harold Ickes, its director, issued contracts only after extreme care was taken to avoid any hints of waste or corruption, but his caution slowed down the flow of funds at a time when the unemployed needed direct relief. Nonetheless, the PWA operated through 1939, and it began or completed 922 projects in the state, allotting \$109,601,943 in public funds. Its varied activities in Texas included the construction of 119 schools, buildings on college campuses, the Fort Worth Public Library, and other civic edifices, as well as parks, sewage plants, bridges, and dams. Roosevelt, however, never believed that public works were quite the right answer for relief. One result was that the early New Deal featured a series of overlapping agencies that fought unemployment, and Ickes's care in dispensing money had encouraged other administrators to find quicker ways to employ the needy.

One immediate problem was combating hunger in the winter of 1932–33, during which local private and public charities stopped functioning. In May 1933, Congress authorized the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) and transferred to it \$500 million from the RFC. FERA channeled funds through state and local agencies to the unemployed. At first, the states and the cities matched these grants on a one-third local funding requirement, but the emergency soon stopped the matching of funds. By 1937, Texans received \$80 million in federal funds and a little less than \$30 million

from state and local matching grants. FERA gave primarily direct-relief funds, although it did offer some programs of work relief. It targeted four areas of emergency relief: public education, college student aid, rural rehabilitation, and aid to transients. It oriented itself toward aid to rural Americans, and by 1935, 298,000 rural Texans received some sort of direct relief from the agency. Additionally, FERA created shelters and relief centers for migrant workers and kept rural schools open by supplementing teachers' salaries and aiding students. From 1933 to 1935, the agency spent \$1,595,521 for school aid.

Like others, Roosevelt grew concerned that the careful scrutinizing of contracts by Ickes slowed down the disbursement of relief monies, so in the winter of 1933 the president authorized the creation of the Civil Works Administration (CWA). The CWA was a federal operation with federal payrolls. It took some of its employees from the relief rolls; others were simply the unemployed who could not pass a local means test that would have provided them with direct aid. The CWA employed 239,264 Texans in 1934, with most of them doing repairs on streets and roads. But the alleged waste and extravagance of the agency disillusioned the president. In the spring of 1934, FDR ordered the CWA dismantled.

Instead, he turned to the Works Progress Administration (WPA). This agency was not to compete with private enterprise or take the place of regular government projects, and



**Figure 10.4** Free Nursery School at 122 Nolan Street, San Antonio, a WPA project. Sallie Schurcard, as a child, oiling a staircase railing as an attendant looks on. Source: *The San Antonio Light Collection*, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 359: L-2057-E).

much of its work took on the character of “make work” projects (Figure 10.4). The WPA began at the same time that a drought crippled the US farm economy. Food and supplies were dispensed to an average of 70,549 Texas families a month in 1936. That year the state ranked eighth in the number of people the WPA employed. Besides funding construction projects, the WPA hired numerous white-collar workers, among them teachers, musicians (who performed publicly throughout the nation), artists (through the Federal Theater project) and researchers for the Texas Writers’ Project, a venture that led to the publication of *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State* (1940). By 1939, the WPA had spent \$178,991,802 in Texas.

Other federal legislation targeted specific economic groups. In 1933, Congress created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). This agency, designed to improve transportation facilities, reforest depleted lands, and carry out such conservation measures as flood and erosion control, built camps that housed and employed untrained and unmarried men between the ages of seventeen and twenty-eight. The camps were segregated; 400 black Texans, less than .05 percent of the total number of Texans enrolled, were in the 1935 program. Indeed, in Texas, African Americans were told at first that the camps were for whites only, and this false information held down the number of blacks who participated in the program. All men who did participate in the CCC received room and board and \$30 a month, \$25 of which went directly home to their families. In addition to their salaries, CCC employees could sign up for special educational courses and earn high school diplomas. As of 1936, the federal government spent \$41 million in Texas under this program, which continued to operate until 1942.

Numerous other New Deal programs touched the lives of Texans. The National Youth Administration (NYA) employed needy high school, undergraduate, and graduate students. Lyndon Johnson headed the NYA in Texas for two years; at the age of 26, he was the youngest NYA director in the nation. The NYA hired between 10,000 and 18,000 students per month in 1935 for clerical or maintenance work. During the summers these young people worked on roads and built recreational facilities. Johnson used only need as a criterion for enrollment, and in 1937, 40 percent of those who qualified for NYA assistance were black. The Home Owners Loan Act created the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), which refinanced loans at lower payments for needy home owners. It spent \$103,068,735 in Texas by 1936 to prevent foreclosures on rural and urban dwellings. The Federal Surplus Relief Corporation distributed surplus agricultural commodities to families on relief. It had the dual purpose of feeding the destitute and holding down farm surpluses, thus increasing agricultural prices. It began in 1933, and as late as 1938 it gave 2,644,976 pounds of food valued at \$1,568,000 to 35,849 Texas families and charities.

In addition to temporary relief measures, the national government enacted the Social Security Act in 1935. This measure provided for assistance to the elderly through pensions funded by state and federal taxes or through funds collected by employee and employer contributions. Social security remained a long-lasting contribution of the New Deal to American society, as did those measures that built public buildings, improved roads and the environment, and reforested depleted timberlands. After 1939, the New Deal relief measures waned, although some Texans remained on relief until 1942. World War II eliminated the need for relief for most of the state’s able-bodied citizens. By then, the function of relief had been transferred from the Texas Rehabilitation and Relief Commission to the state welfare department.

**New Deal farm programs**

Most New Dealers thought that the ultimate success or failure of the New Deal would rest on its plans to combat the economic crisis in agriculture, and many Americans hoped for precisely that: Southern farmers voted for Roosevelt enthusiastically, and he won the support of 89.2 percent of all Texas voters in 1932. Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace and his department argued that the lack of purchasing power of farmers thwarted industrial growth, and that the prosperity of the nation consequently depended on restoring disposable farm-family income. Their solutions to farm depressions aimed at reducing production and eliminating crop surpluses through government control. To accomplish these goals, Congress passed the 1933 Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA). The AAA gave direct subsidies to farmers who took land out of production, levied excise taxes on processors (of agricultural goods) to pay for the cost of the program, and authorized marketing agreements among producers' cooperatives, distributors, and processors in order to stabilize the prices of farm products. The planned agricultural scarcity was coupled with an inflationary monetary policy that included abandoning the gold standard.

The AAA restrictions applied to cotton, wheat, corn, rice, tobacco, dairy products, and hogs; cattle products were soon added to the list. By the time the AAA took effect, many of the year's crops had already been planted, so the agency undertook a "plow-up" campaign, paying farmers \$7 to \$20 for each planted acre they agreed to plow under. Texas farmers in 1934 and 1935 took between 5.5 and 6 million acres of cotton, wheat, and corn out of production. Some farmers refused the crop-restriction payments and planted anyway, exploiting the increasing price of cotton. Consequently, Congress passed the Bankhead Cotton Control Act in 1934, which specified that all farmers had to accept cotton controls when two-thirds of a county's voters authorized them. Each farmer was assigned a quota allotment based on prior production. If a farmer produced more than that allotment, a prohibitive tax was charged on the excess. Almost all Texas counties complied (237 out of 254) with the control measure. By 1936, Texans had signed twice as many crop-reduction contracts as had the farmers of any other state. That year, however, the US Supreme Court declared the AAA unconstitutional. The next year, cotton acreage shot up by 20 percent. After new attempts to control cotton acreage failed, Congress passed a new AAA act in 1938, and by the end of that year, Texas cotton farmers had diverted 4 million acres out of production, or three times that of any other state. By 1940, the federal government's agricultural programs paid nearly \$3 billion directly to Texas farmers. The New Dealers also established agencies that loaned money to farmers. The Farm Credit Administration and later the Commodity Credit Corporation pumped \$430 million into the rural economy to prevent foreclosures and to make commodity loans available.

Texas counties also received drought relief in 1934 and 1935. Part of this aid came in the purchase of livestock by the AAA. Texans sold more than 4 million head of cattle, sheep, and goats to the agency. The federal government spent \$27 million to buy these surplus animals, making Texas stockmen by far the largest recipients of such aid. Approximately 1.75 million of the animals were destroyed, with the remainder going to the Federal Surplus Relief Corporation for distribution to the needy. Grain farmers also received drought relief funds.

Finally, the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) provided low-interest loans and WPA labor to electric cooperatives to lay power lines to rural dwellings. Through these efforts, 17,712 miles of power lines reached 54,000 new customers in Texas at a cost of \$16 million.

The work of the REA moved Texas farmers into the era of modern amenities and communications and helped break down the isolation of rural dwellers.

The array of New Deal programs sent \$716,694,849 into the state economy from March 4, 1933, to January 1, 1938. Only New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois received more federal monies. The state deficit dropped from \$24,102,200 in 1935 to \$4,102,000 in 1938. The planned scarcity policy of the AAA increased crop prices until they reached 75 percent of parity in 1939, placing Texas second only to California in value of agricultural products. Undoubtedly, federal assumption of state relief obligations counteracted the potential bankruptcy of Texas and alleviated some of the suffering in the depression.

### **Tenant farmers and the New Deal**

As had been the case for many years, rural life in Texas was a difficult and uncertain one for those engaged in farm tenancy and sharecropping. Still, both these labor arrangements increased throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century; according to some estimates, the rate of farm tenancy stood at just above 60 percent in 1930.

As before, farm tenants and sharecroppers faced dire handicaps and endless obstacles to social improvement. Better-off Texans, for one thing, looked disdainfully on tenants, whether they were white, Tejano, or African American. As ever, constant debt burdened the tenants and sharecroppers, as they borrowed from some creditor or another until the crop came in at the end of the year. Often, nothing remained following the harvest except money to pay off some—rarely all—of the year's loans. The majority of tenants and sharecroppers suffered deteriorating living conditions, making do with meager accommodations and simple housing essentials, while every year begged the question of where the family might be working come the spring. During the Great Depression, moreover, the demands of working the land remained no less incessant. Entire families labored in the fields for as long as fourteen hours a day. In Central Texas during the 1920s, close to 90 percent of African American women were likely to be field hands working alongside husbands and sons; about 60 percent of women of Mexican descent generally did fieldwork, followed by less than 50 percent of white women.

New Deal programs undermined the practice of tenancy and sharecropping (tenant farms declined by 32 percent during the depression decade), but the system's disruption produced unanticipated and ruinous outcomes for tenant farmers and sharecroppers, exacerbating their already precarious condition. The AAA's acreage reduction incentives, for instance, diminished the quantity of land available for cultivation; such a contraction lessened the need for tenants. Former tenants and croppers who knew no other form of work found themselves roving about the state looking for alternative employment. Government payments to landlords (to compensate them for the amount of land they left fallow) also affected tenants adversely, as selfish proprietors wishing to keep the government's aid allowance solely for themselves simply evicted tenants. To fill the loss, property owners turned to seasonal wage workers. Alternatively, farmers might use relief funds to mechanize their farms, thus no longer needing as many field hands. At times, white, African American, and Tejano families found themselves working old lands, but now in the capacity of paid laborers instead of tenant farmers (Figure 10.5). Additionally, the AAA had as another unintended consequence the out-migration of Texans into other states where they looked for relief from their misery.



**Figure 10.5** A quiet moment out of the hard life in the barrio. Source: Russell Lee Photograph Collection, 1935–1977, VN rwl 14920r1\_0033, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

## **Minorities During the Great Depression**

### **Blacks and the New Deal**

Many of the dispossessed fell between the cracks of the New Deal's poverty floor. Critics charged that the surplus commodities program was more concerned with creating a scarcity of agricultural goods than feeding the poor. Consequently, few efforts were made to improve the diet and health of the impoverished. For example, a study of aid from the Texas Relief Commission specified that families on relief did not receive enough assistance to maintain an adequate and balanced diet. In particular, the diets of many African American and Mexican American families caused malnutrition.

Other critics leveled charges of racial discrimination at the New Deal, especially against African Americans (who experienced population growth during the Depression era, from close to 742,000 in 1920 to about 924,000 by the beginning of World War II). Rural blacks faced considerable discrimination in receiving relief aid in East Texas, even though 90 percent of black farm laborers there could find no work in 1935. To escape such dire conditions, African Americans migrated to the city during this period (about 45 percent of African Americans lived in urban sites as of 1940), but once in the city their circumstances improved only slightly. In Houston, blacks averaged only \$12.67 per month in relief



payments, compared to \$16.86 for whites. The national policy of paying wages for work relief that matched regional compensation scales in private enterprise discriminated against black workers. Local relief agencies also placed blacks only in unskilled jobs. The southern states employed only eleven blacks in 1940 among 10,344 WPA supervisors. The Federal Housing Authority (FHA) encouraged segregated housing by granting home mortgages to blacks only in areas distant from white suburbs. An exception to the actions taken by these several agencies were those of the NYA. The NYA became popular in many black communities, as it helped place young blacks in part-time positions, taught them vocational skills at its various centers, and helped some to obtain a college education.

The discrimination notwithstanding, the New Deal caused a growing political awareness among black people. Although the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had declined in membership in the early 1930s, Antonio Maceo Smith, a black Texan who left the state for an education at Fisk and then New York University, moved to Dallas in 1933 to organize an insurance company. Smith quickly became active in the local chapter of the NAACP and the Progressive League. He then contacted other black leaders in urban areas, who convened a statewide convention in 1937. By this time, the Houston NAACP chapter, with financial support from such wealthy African American businessmen as Hobart T. Taylor, Sr., and Carter W. Wesley, was rejuvenated. With the assistance of two other leaders, Juanita Craft of the Dallas branch and Lulu White of the Houston chapter, the NAACP decided to challenge Texas's all-white primary law. Lonnie Smith, a black dentist in Houston, agreed to be the plaintiff. The Supreme Court ruled in its 1944 *Smith v. Allwright* decision that the white primary was unconstitutional. The newly enabled African American voters identified closely with the national Democratic Party that had passed the New Deal relief measures that aided the poor.

### **African American social, cultural, and recreational life**

The social life of black Texans in the first three decades of the twentieth century functioned in a separate sphere from that of whites. Blacks observed Juneteenth as well as the usual state and national holidays. They also held separate county fairs and rodeos, as well as parades, public lectures, picnics, barbecues, and baseball games. In the black sections of some communities, there were separate parks, saloons, dance halls, pool halls, theaters, bowling alleys, and other recreational establishments. In 1920 Andrew "Rube" Foster, a native of Calvert and one of the greatest baseball pitchers of his day, organized the Negro National League. Its teams toured the South, as did regional, semiprofessional ones. The best-known black sports hero, Jack Johnson (Figure 10.6), came from Galveston and held the heavyweight boxing crown from 1908 to 1915. Johnson fought into the 1930s, and the state legislature banned the showing of films of his fights, arguing that they might inspire "Negroes" to riot.

Fine arts seldom exist in areas of poverty, but African American musicians who were born in or often performed in Texas nonetheless contributed substantially to American music during this time, especially to jazz. Black music in its various forms drew on the Texas folk tradition, church spirituals, and the experience of black workers, mainly as field hands. Musicologists trace several forms of black song and composition to the early twentieth century. Scott Joplin, born in East Texas, is credited with pioneering the ragtime rhythm, which had a great influence on later jazz greats such as Louis Armstrong. Country blues made its appearance almost simultaneously with ragtime, popularized by the likes of



**Figure 10.6** Pugilist Jack Johnson. Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division (LC-DIG-ggbain-08094).

guitarists such as Blind Lemon Jefferson who was born in Freestone County and was known as the “King of the Country Blues.” His tunes, characterized by skillful guitar improvisation, included “Matchbox Blues” and “Long Lonesome Blues” and inspired another famous black musician who sometimes performed with him named Huddie “Lead Belly” Ledbetter, who composed such well-known songs as “C.C. Rider,” “Midnight Special,” and “Goodnight Irene.” Lead Belly spent time in a Texas prison for homicide but was pardoned by Governor Pat Neff, who had become a fan of his music. Texas folklorists Alan and John Lomax helped promote Lead Belly’s career in the 1930s, and the singer’s final concert before his death in 1949 was a tribute to John Lomax at the University of Texas.

Still another musical genre that gained widespread popularity during this era was the classic blues. Beulah “Sippie” Wallace of Houston, known as the “Texas Nightingale,” is generally associated with this genre, her songs evocative of church spirituals so familiar to African Americans across the South. Also appearing in black communities in the early twentieth century was boogie-woogie, a piano-led sound that itself would shape the jazz sound. The music, with distinct rural roots, moved to urban areas with black immigrants. “Deep Ellum,” a segregated area of Dallas, became a mecca for musicians who wanted to play any or all of these styles. In the 1920s and 1930s, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Lead Belly, Bessie Smith, and Robert Johnson all performed there.

Despite the formidable barriers caused by poverty, discrimination, and a substandard educational system, some black Texans still found ways to develop their talents as writers.

Between 1900 and her death in 1936, Maud Cuney-Hare published widely in the fields of folklore and music history, though today she is best remembered by Texans for *Norris Wright Cuney: A Tribune of the Black People* (New York: Crisis Publishing Co., 1913), a biography of her father, the famous Republican politician. In her book, *Moral and Mental Capsule for the Economic and Domestic Life of the Negro as a Solution of the Race Problem* (Dallas: R. S. Jenkins, 1905), Josie Briggs Hall of Waxahachie called on fellow black women to uphold high standards of morality so as to disabuse whites of a purported black disregard for moral virtue. In 1925, El Paso's Bernice Love Wiggins published *Tuneful Tales*, which is today critically acclaimed as one of the first published collections of poetry by an African American woman. Novelists found it more difficult to find publishers for their works, but among those who did succeed in placing her fiction was Lillian B. Jones. She decried the racial intolerance that existed in the United States, and in her book *Five Generations Hence* (1916), one of Jones's characters is a farmer who relocates to Africa in hopes of finding greater economic opportunity.

As these titles suggest, blacks who did make it as writers tended to focus on themes of self-help and racial uplift. Many of the state's talented black writers reported for or edited newspapers catering to the African American community and used their skills to oppose segregation. Carter Wesley, a prominent lawyer and publisher, moved to Houston in 1927. He worked for the *Houston Informer* and later became its publisher. The *Informer*, with a circulation of 45,000, was a crusading voice for equality in a time of strict segregation. Wesley also published the *Dallas Express*, which, along with the *Informer* and the *Galveston New Idea*, gave a long-lasting voice to black writers. Local black newspapers flourished for a while, at least, in Amarillo, Austin, Beaumont, Calvert, Denison, Fort Worth, Port Arthur, San Antonio, San Angelo, and Waco. The best-known black Texas writer, J. Mason Brewer, who won fame as a folklorist, collected his data during this period and published anthologies of black folk tales and poems in the 1930s. Less well known by whites but widely read by blacks were the works of Dallas-area native Sutton E. Griggs, who wrote more than a dozen books, including five novels, between 1899 and his death in 1933. His first novel, *Imperium in Imperio*, is considered the first black nationalist novel.

### Tejanos in the 1930s

The depression years made a hard life for Texas Mexicans even harder, and during this time population growth slowed from the pace of the previous two decades. The 1940 census put the figure for US residents of Mexican descent at 484,000. Although this figure is an undercount—much lower than the adjusted totals of 1930—it represented a decline in immigration. Several factors underlay the trend. The economic downturn hardly engendered a climate conducive to immigration, and New Deal programs were not as helpful to Mexican Americans as they were to other Americans. Federal relief in the form of employment did not extend to noncitizens, and many Mexican Americans who could not prove their US birth often lost out in openings available in federal projects. The NYA, however, did assist Mexican Americans, just as did white and black youths. Money that young persons received from their work in the NYA at times served as the only source of revenue for some desperate Tejano families.

The 1930s, moreover, were years of massive deportation and repatriation for Mexicans in Texas. Extensive repatriation during the depression years, mainly from the rural regions of the state, produced the relocation of an estimated 250,000 Texas Mexicans to Mexico.

Many of these persons quickly returned to Texas, and new immigration persisted, although in lower numbers. The Mexican government and many Mexican Americans often helped in repatriation, thinking that those born in Mexico were better off in their native land than they would be in Texas.

Despite the onus of the Great Depression, Texas Mexicans coped, even joining labor unions at a time of intense employer pressure on unskilled employees not to do so. In rural areas, Texas Mexicans working the beet, cotton, onion, and spinach crops took part in the 1937 organizing drives of the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA). In West Texas, 750 Mexican Americans in 1934 joined the Sheep Shearers' Union of North America and asked for increased wages and better working conditions. Threats, arrests, vigilante harassment, and strikebreakers undermined the movement.

Less dramatic but equally bold was activism on the part of the members of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC, mentioned earlier in Chapter 9) activism. Secure in their consciousness as American citizens, LULACers during the 1930s undertook campaigns to eliminate racial prejudice, win legal equality, improve educational facilities, and gain a voice in local, state, and national politics. The LULACers waged their struggle through strictly legal avenues; they opposed labor strikes, protest demonstrations, mass picketing, boycotts, and anything else that might give others the impression of any degree of disloyalty to the United States. They sponsored poll-tax drives, investigated cases of police brutality, undertook efforts to desegregate public places, and dispatched delegations to complain about the second-class status of the Mexican schools. In 1930, LULAC helped fund the first challenge to the segregation of Mexican American schoolchildren in *Del Rio Independent School District v. Salvierra*. In this case, a Texas appellate court held that school authorities could not segregate students merely or solely because they were Mexican American. The school districts of the city of Del Rio successfully argued later that Mexican children's language deficiencies warranted their separate schooling.

### **Tejano social, cultural, and recreational activities**

The social life of Mexican Americans in the first three decades of the century included traditional Mexican forms of entertainment as well as cross-cultural ones. Baseball, for example, was a great favorite; the talent many Tejano athletes displayed on local teams with names such as *Los Osos* or *Los Dorados* might well have qualified them, under different circumstances, for participation in minor league organizations. Boxing ranked high on the list as well; numerous young men entered the ring as amateurs and fought with distinction against both black and white opponents.

Mexican Americans observed special days with traditional festivities of various sorts. Religious holy days included commemoration of the date of the apparition of the Virgen de Guadalupe to Juan Diego in Mexico City in 1531 (December 12), All Souls' Day (November 2), and Christmas. *Fiestas patrias*, which honored the Mexican holidays of historical significance such as independence day from Spain (*Diez y Seis*, September 16) and the date of the victory at the Battle of Puebla (*Cinco de Mayo*, May 5), were held in almost all Tejano communities. Additionally, Tejanos turned out en masse to attend locally sponsored observances of such distinctly American holidays as George Washington's Birthday and the Fourth of July.

Tejano communities naturally comprised aficionados of music. Through corridos, Tejanos celebrated the brave deeds of Mexican and Mexican American heroes: Catarino Garza, who had launched the abortive revolution against Porfirio Díaz in the early 1890s; Gregorio Cortez, who had stood up to the authorities following a shootout with a peace officer in Karnes County in 1901; and Jacinto Treviño, who had avenged the death of a brother at the hands of an Anglo in San Benito in 1910—all of whom had also fought off the despised *rinches* (Texas Rangers).

Emerging as a working-class favorite by the 1920s was the music played by the *conjunto*, an accordion-led ensemble that popularized the regional music of northern Mexico in Texas (Figure 10.7). Although members of the Tejano proletariat found conjunto music quite attractive, those of the incipient bourgeoisie identified it with the vulgarity of the masses, the elites preferring more “cultured” musical expressions, such as those of the *orquesta* (orchestra).

Intellectual and artistic expression took a variety of forms. Tent theater and itinerant acting companies staged performances in various parts of South Texas. Indeed, so many of Mexico’s best artists and troupes fled to Texas during the revolution against Díaz that cities such as San Antonio became among the major theatrical centers in the nation. Texas Mexican writers did not often find English-language publishers for their material; consequently, many of their best short stories and poems can be found only in the archived Spanish-language newspapers of the era. Rediscovered in the 1970s, for example, were the works of the poet and activist Sara Estela Ramírez, who penned several literary pieces from Laredo in the early 1900s. In the 1990s, archivists found two novels that Jovita González wrote during the period between the 1920s and 1940s. Historians are only now making use of various memoirs found in manuscript form or in long-neglected books, such as J. Luz Saenz’s *Los México americanos en la gran guerra* (San Antonio: Artes Gráficas, 1933), which describes Saenz’s experiences in World War I.



**Figure 10.7** Two members of *Conjunto Alamo*: Leandro Guerrero (left) and Frank Corrales. Taken at KCOR radio station, San Antonio, Texas, 1949. Source: University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 91-147).

**Women in the 1930s**

Women experienced double hardships from the Depression: first because the economic downturn hurt everyone but also because under the New Deal, women encountered gender-based discrimination. Texas officials disapproved of work projects that hired women in nontraditional roles, and WPA officials in the state objected to the employment of married women, justifying their action on the principle that men—presumably the head of the household—ought to be given priority. The WPA, CWA, and FERA training centers confined women to sewing lessons, food processing, domestic service, and health care. Moreover, vocational or educational enterprises assumed that women were only secondary or temporary workers who merited aid in depressed times but were not in need of skills for advancement or long-term employment. New Deal codes permitted women be paid less even when performing the same jobs as their male counterparts.

The private sector abided by similar guidelines. If a husband worked (in other than New Deal programs) employers refused to hire his wife, again on the premise that the position should go to an unemployed father. Cities discharged women from city posts to open slots for unemployed males. Public schools frequently refused to hire single women, and they fired women married to other public employees. Women teachers (women outnumbered men in this profession) further agonized over job security, as school boards faced with budget shortages might fire them with little warning. Women who worked in the candy, cigar, and garment industry labored under atrocious conditions (and very low pay). Their discontent with the workplace reached such a high level that in 1935, workers in Dallas belonging to the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) went on strike. The walkout, however, produced much violence among the strikers, the police, and scabs (replacement workers brought across the picket lines by management), and it ultimately failed. For its troubles, the ILGWU subsequently faced a poor reputation and the strikers found themselves labeled as agitators and facing great difficulty finding reemployment.

If women as a group encountered sexism in the job market, black women further grappled with racism. They faced distress acquiring benefits; relief agents either rebuffed them or if conceding them aid, gave them less assistance than they did to white women. Both New Deal officers and private employers brazenly informed black women that they need not apply for possible openings (in the sphere of women's work), as they reserved such spots for white women. The WPA trained black women for vocations as house maids, kitchen helpers, or cooks. WPA officials in San Antonio almost always channeled black women into schools for domestic service; if they took part in sewing projects, they did so segregated from their white counterparts. New Deal codes for fair wages did not extend to domestics or farm workers, the occupations in which most minority women were concentrated. Supervisors for all projects tended to be middle-class whites. Black teachers (in segregated schools) worked amid greater anxiety than white teachers, as the former were at the whim of school boards ever ready to transfer scarce funds to white schools. Even in a school district with adequate funds, black teachers got paid less than white teachers, a reality that led some to initiate equal pay drives. In Dallas, Houston, and Galveston, black teachers successfully won concessions from school boards during the World War II years.

Mexican American women dealt with conditions every bit as bad those afflicting white and black women. Relief officials often dismissed Mexican American women from support by maintaining that they did not qualify for assistance from the federal or state governments due to questions regarding citizenship or, as in the case of black women, that the

agencies simply lacked the resources to extend them a helping hand. Fortunate Mexican American women thus took jobs as housecleaners, dishwashers, cigar makers, or pecan shellers. In many cases, wives and daughters accompanied their husbands and fathers on the Big Swing, whole families joining the army of migrant cotton pickers traveling throughout the state.

Urban workers might have considered themselves lucky to hold jobs, but their oppression in the workplace moved some to take action, even in the face of losing their desperately needed jobs. In El Paso, Tejanas in 1933 organized the Society of Female Manufacturing Workers to protest poor salaries. Tejano pecan shellers led by a young labor Tejana labor activist named Emma Tenayuca (Figure 10.8) walked out of west San Antonio plants in a 1938 strike that demanded better wages, improved working conditions, and a ban on child labor. While making some concessions, the managers of the pecan factories soon turned to new machine technology that replaced most of the workers, thereby voiding their hard-earned gains. On the other hand, Tenayuca's bold leadership had brought attention to the callous exploitation of workers in the city, highlighted the wretchedness that existed in San Antonio's Mexican American community and sparked a class consciousness among Mexican Americans, who responded favorably to the overtures of labor organizers later in the century. In addition, in San Antonio, Mexican American women members of the ILGWU participated in several strikes. Women whose husbands (or fathers) worked in professional capacities, on the other hand, found gratification in volunteerism. For their part, LULAC women (who gave of their time to the League), sought equality within the organization, as in the case of Mrs. J. C. Machuca of El Paso who organized Ladies Councils (after male LULAC permitted the establishment of Ladies Councils in 1933) and Alice Dickerson Montemayor who published feminist essays in the group's official newsletter.



**Figure 10.8** Emma Tenayuca, organizer for the Workers Alliance of America, with those protesting violence by law enforcement officials. Source: *The San Antonio Light Collection*, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 359: L-1540-A).

**State Politics, 1935–1938**

Most of the criticism of the New Deal came not from the left but from the right of the political spectrum. Few such complaints, however, had appeared by the gubernatorial campaign of 1934. By this time, the depression firmly dominated politics, as previous issues of prohibition (Figure 10.9) and Fergusonism disappeared. Seven men announced for the governor's seat. James V. Allred, a lawyer from Wichita Falls and the state's attorney general (1931–35), soon claimed the favorite's role. As attorney general, the personable young Allred earned a reputation as an opponent of monopolies and political lobbies. His campaign for governor focused on creating a public utilities commission, restricting lobbies, authorizing a chain-store tax to limit out-of-state competition, and opposing the imposition of a sales tax. His articulation of these issues and his image as a trust-buster garnered for him a plurality in the first Democratic primary. He won the runoff election by 40,000 votes over Tom F. Hunter, also from Wichita Falls and considered the more liberal of the two politicians. Allred easily triumphed in the general election.

The first Allred administration (1935–37) won attention for its identification with the New Deal. Allred cooperated with the federal programs for combating the depression by establishing the Texas Planning Board (to advise the legislature on the best way to utilize the state's economic resources and coordinate them with the New Deal's relief funds) and by



**Figure 10.9** G. H. Johnson and Gus Brown, officers from the Texas Liquor Control Board, stand beside a captured still. Source: *The San Antonio Light Collection*, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 359: L-1541-00).



issuing the rest of the “bread bonds.” Possibly his major accomplishment was the reorganization of the Texas Rangers and the Highway Department into the Department of Public Safety (DPS). The abuses of the Ferguson administration concerning Ranger appointments aided Allred’s reorganization effort by ensuring some necessary reform of the selection process. The DPS remains the state’s most important law enforcement agency.

In 1936, Allred and the state legislature clashed over the issues of taxes, aid to the elderly, and prohibition. In attempting to effect a measure of compromise, the governor called three special sessions of the legislature. Although the legislators did not agree on a significant increase in taxes, in the first of the three special sessions they did implement a state tax on chain stores. More controversial, however, were various issues concerning the repeal of prohibition. In a statewide referendum, the citizens approved of the state going wet, though the referendum did not affect those counties that had been dry prior to the passage of the national prohibition amendment, nor did it approve of the sale of hard liquor. The second special session defined the issues of prohibition, a battle that continued into the 1960s, by outlawing the sale of liquor by the drink, establishing a liquor control board, and approving local-option elections.

The same statewide referendum that addressed the issues of prohibition also contained a resolution for aid to the elderly. The second special session authorized such assistance, but it failed to create taxes or clear-cut guidelines for pension eligibility. The 1935 national Social Security Act mandated that states appropriate matching federal funds to assist the elderly as well as dependent children, the physically challenged, the vision-impaired, and public-health services. Meanwhile, national proposals, such as Louisiana senator Huey P. Long’s “Share Our Wealth” and California reformer Francis E. Townsend’s scheme to pay \$200 a month to all people over age sixty-five, widened demands in Texas and elsewhere that all elderly people should receive assistance regardless of level of need. Allred argued that aid to all elderly persons violated provisions of the Social Security Act and would therefore cost the state its federal funds. As the election of 1936 approached, Allred’s opponents accused the governor of parsimony toward the elderly and, despite his prohibitionist views, looking only to liquor taxes as a way to pay for pensions.

Allred won the primary election with 52% of the vote. His close identification with the New Deal, Roosevelt’s support, and fame associated with having been named the National Chamber of Commerce’s Young Man of the Year in 1935 aided his campaign. Between the July primary and the January inauguration, however, the issue of pensions intensified. By September, 81,000 elderly Texans had applied for assistance. The governor called for a third special session of the legislature to appropriate monies for the pension fund. The legislature levied increased taxes on oil, gas, sulfur, carbon black, and other items. Increased taxes on liquor paid much of the cost of the pensions, despite Allred’s denial of that intent. Finally, the legislature heeded the governor’s charge and tightened provisions for eligibility for aid. In the summer of 1937, 125,000 Texans received such aid, and the issue of Social Security remained a hot political topic.

Allred’s second term (1937–39) enjoyed no relief from financial struggles. A new Teacher Retirement System of Texas created in 1937 expanded welfare and social security obligations, public schools demanded new appropriations, and financial shortfalls caused by a growth in the prison population and the expensive Texas centennial celebration—in 1932 Texas voters had mandated through a constitutional amendment a costly celebration of the hundred-year anniversary of independence, which, naturally, was held in 1936—all cried out for funds. Yet the expanded financial demands met with an unresponsive legislature in both the regular session and a special one. The legislators did pass bills to address the state’s

problems, but this without the revenue to support their solutions. For his part, Allred used his veto powers liberally. The special session of the legislature repealed the 1933 law that legalized betting on horse races but failed to pass a tax bill. By the time Allred left the governor's mansion, the state was \$3 million in debt.

Late in Allred's second term, President Roosevelt appointed him to a federal judgeship, which he accepted on completion of his stay in office. He resigned from the bench in 1942 to run for the US Senate. After losing that election, he returned to the practice of law. In 1949, President Harry S. Truman returned him to the federal court.

### **National Politics, 1935–1938**

By the time of Allred's second race for the governorship, conservatives had begun to rail against the New Deal. Businesspersons had early on expressed reservations over the NRA and the Bankhead Cotton Control Act. Some bankers objected to the coercive powers of the RFC. This unstructured opposition to federal control gained strength in the second phase of the New Deal, which began in March of 1935. That year, New Dealers passed the WPA, the Social Security Act, the Wagner Act, REA, and measures regulating utilities and banking. Some conservatives claimed that welfare measures, including social security, were brazen tax increases and a violation of traditional American assumptions of self-help and individual responsibility. Indeed, a group of Texas state bankers raised \$20,000 to challenge the social security legislation in the courts. Other conservatives decried the increasing power of the federal government. The Wagner Act (barring unfair labor practices) portended the growth of labor unions in Texas as well as other antiunion states. Despite the presence of discrimination within the New Deal, African Americans received enough relief aid that they switched their political allegiance from the party of Lincoln to the party of Roosevelt. In turn, as a great number of blacks moved from the rural South to urban areas in the North and West and started to vote, northern liberals began to pay more attention to their grievances. The vague illusion that civil rights permeated the New Deal alienated racial conservatives, the anxieties of whom only increased when it became clear that northern urban liberals exercised growing powers in the New Deal coalition. This development inflamed the traditional Texas biases against the Northeast and its big cities.

Roosevelt's immense popularity discouraged most traditional Texas politicians from leaving the Democratic party in 1936, but some Texans joined other conservative Democrats in calling a meeting in Detroit, Michigan, to organize anti-New Deal Democrats into a political coalition in opposition to Roosevelt's policies. These Jeffersonian Democrats, as they named themselves, included such prominent Texans as John Kirby, the lumberman; Joseph W. Bailey, Jr., the son of the famous senator and himself a former congressional representative; and J. Evetts Haley, a West Texas rancher and writer. The organization decided that a third party stood little chance of success, so they planned a political strategy aimed at coordinating all groups opposed to the New Deal. The Jeffersonian Democrats seemed to find ready cooperators in J. S. Cullinan's Constitutional Democrats of Texas and the American Liberty League, a national lobbying group composed of wealthy opponents of the New Deal. Eventually the Jeffersonian Democrats decided that each state organization would use any political tactic conceivable to deny votes to Roosevelt. In Texas, they decided to support selected Democratic candidates for local and statewide offices and to urge voters to support Alf Landon, the Republican candidate, or to "stay home" (not to vote) in the presidential election. Roosevelt won the election convincingly, however, carrying Texas by

734,485 votes to 103,711 for Landon. Although the Jeffersonian Democrats exercised little influence in the 1936 election, they did hammer out a strategy for future conservative politics: support local Democrats, in order to maintain strength within the party, but campaign against the goals of the national party.

Roosevelt used his landslide victory in 1936 to broaden his political aims, which alienated some Texas Democratic leaders and further intensified their suspicions of the New Deal. His attempt, for example, to increase the number of Supreme Court judges and thereby end unfavorable judicial review of New Deal legislation breached his relationship with prominent Texas politicians, including his vice-president, John Nance Garner, and Senator Tom Connally. And it was Representative Hatton Sumners of Dallas who bottled up FDR's "court-packing" legislation in the House, stalling it long enough that the president moved the bill to the Senate, where Garner killed it. In the next year, 1937, an antilynching bill threatened traditional southern race relations. It passed the House, despite the best efforts of Sumners to kill it in the judiciary committee, but Connally led a filibuster that defeated it in the Senate. Meanwhile, the sit-down strikes in northern plants, the growing political power of the CIO, and a federal wage-and-hour law reinforced the perception of Texas and southern conservatives that the New Deal was too favorable to labor unions. A decision to combat the economic slump of 1937 with "pump priming" discouraged Garner and other Texans who wanted a balanced budget. Finally, the so-called 1938 purge of Democratic congresspersons who did not support the president failed but it gave credence to conservative charges that the New Deal represented an unwarranted, even dangerous, extension of federal powers.

The political battles of the late 1930s stalemated other progressive social legislation. With Garner as its acknowledged leader, a southern Democratic and Republican coalition emerged, and this bloc successfully prevented an expansion of New Deal programs and cut some of those in existence. As World War II neared, foreign policy considerations diverted the president from fighting for domestic programs. Moreover, as prosperity returned to middle-class Texans, they returned to the values of an individualistic, success-oriented society: one that asked for limited government and lower taxes. The earlier consensus supporting direct relief for the poor ceased to exist. Indeed, in 1938 the changing political fortunes of Maverick and Dies might best symbolize changing Texas attitudes. That year, conservatives defeated Maverick, possibly the state's strongest congressional advocate of the New Deal, while Dies assumed the chairmanship of the House Un-American Activities Committee. Dies, an early supporter of Roosevelt and the New Deal, now used his committee to attempt to link FDR and his program to Communist subversion in government and labor unions.

## **State Politics, 1938–1944: The End of the New Deal**

### **"Pappy" O'Daniel**

The gubernatorial campaign of 1938 typified the confused state of Texas politics. Thirteen candidates announced for the post that Allred vacated. They included Attorney General William McCraw of Dallas, Ernest Thompson, chairman of the Railroad Commission, Tom Hunter, and W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel (Figure 10.10), a flour merchant from Fort Worth. O'Daniel, who was born in Ohio and raised in Kansas, came to Texas in 1925, working first as sales manager then as general manager for Burrus Mills and Elevator Company, which



**Figure 10.10** “Pappy” O’Daniel campaigning for governor, 1938. Source: Jimmie A. Dodd Photograph Collection, CN 08129, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

sponsored a radio show that featured O’Daniel and the Light Crust Doughboys, a hillbilly band that for a while included the considerable talents of Bob Wills. During his broadcasts, O’Daniel read some of his own poetry, sang some of his own songs, including “Beautiful Texas,” told stories of Texas heroes, and gave listeners advice on family life, child rearing, and business success. The program attracted a sizable following on the three largest radio stations in the state. Its opening phrase, “Please, pass the biscuits, Pappy,” may have greeted more listeners than any other in Texas broadcasting history. By 1938, O’Daniel was a very successful businessman who owned his own company, maker of Hillbilly Flour, and enjoyed the status of a Texas folk hero.

On Palm Sunday of 1938, O’Daniel pointed out to his radio audience that every two years he received letters from listeners asking him to run for governor, and he now invited his fans’ comments on the idea. Favorable responses deluged the prospective candidate. On his “Hillbilly Flour” program that spring, he announced his candidacy and his platform: the Ten Commandments. He organized his campaign much like a combination of a religious revival meeting and a traveling radio show. “Pappy” toured the state, giving free concerts to ever-swelling crowds. He dispensed friendly, seemingly off-the-cuff advice on various economic topics, attacked “professional” politicians, told nostalgic stories, recounted homilies, and collected campaign contributions from the crowd by passing among them containers shaped like flour barrels. At first, other contenders ignored O’Daniel’s candidacy, regarding

it chiefly as an attempt to sell flour. But when they realized he was a legitimate political threat, they focused on forcing O'Daniel to outline his platform, which grew to list specific planks: abolition of the poll tax (which he had not paid, preventing him from voting) opposition to capital punishment, state assistance for all elderly persons, and a promise of no sales tax. He mixed those proposals with endorsements of mothers' love and the Golden Rule, quotes from the Bible, and the slogan, "Less Johnson grass and politicians and more smokestacks and businessmen." O'Daniel won the Democratic primary with no runoff and went on to an easy victory in the general election.

In O'Daniel's first term as governor (1939–41), his office waged open warfare with the legislature. His determination to abolish the poll tax and capital punishment seemingly was entirely forgotten, and his campaign promise of aid to elderly persons transformed into a guaranteed pension of at least \$30 a month for the neediest senior citizens. Although a majority of the legislature supported the latter idea, it failed for lack of appropriations. Determined to find a source of funding for his pension plan, O'Daniel now proposed a transaction tax of 1.6 percent. Opponents pointed out that a "transaction" tax was nothing more than a thinly disguised sales tax. Dubbing themselves the "Immortal 56"—a reference to the "Immortal 40," who secured the presidential nomination of Woodrow Wilson—the Immortal 56 successfully defeated the passage of the transaction-tax bill, and the Forty-sixth Legislature closed with no tax bill to address a growing state deficit. Dispirited, the governor refused to call a special session.

O'Daniel ran again in 1940, making the transaction tax, now admittedly called a sales tax, his primary campaign issue. His campaign tactics resembled previous ones. This time, his six Democratic challengers concentrated on the differences between O'Daniel's promises and proposals and his accomplishments. "Ma" Ferguson announced for the governor's post and aimed her campaign at separating the governor from his rural constituency. All the major newspapers in the state opposed "Pappy" as an ineffective embarrassment to the state. Nevertheless, O'Daniel won the nomination in the first primary; Ernest Thompson, who received most of the editorial endorsements, came in second; Mrs. Ferguson placed fourth and retired from politics. As in 1938, the Republican candidate mounted only token opposition in the general election.

By 1941, the state simply had to address its financial problems. The federal government threatened to withhold payments for the pension plan unless state funds were forthcoming. The deficit in the general fund precluded either state matching funds for teachers' retirement contributions or for needed welfare payments. O'Daniel fought first for the sales tax but eventually compromised on the Morris Omnibus Tax Bill, which increased taxes on oil and natural gas and levied selective ones on gasoline, tobacco, and the gross receipts of some businesses. It did not address the long-term problem of the source of state revenue. The rather unproductive Forty-seventh Legislature closed on an antiunion note.

Possibly, the governor's only deeply held political conviction was hostility to labor unions, although his views on organized labor had played no part in his two campaigns. By 1940, however, a strongly antilabor campaign on the state level would dovetail nicely with the attacks on labor unions by southern conservatives in Congress. Indeed, House Representative Hatton Sumners warned of the threat that organized labor posed to the defense industry at about the same time that O'Daniel called a joint session of the Texas legislature to protect war plants by passing a state anti-violence labor law, which led to legislation that outlawed the use of violence or threats of violence to prevent anyone from working. The intent of the law was to prevent picketers from denying the entry of strike-breakers into idle plants during strikes. It seemed unlikely that union membership, which

made up less than 15 percent of the nonagricultural workers in Texas, posed any real threat to the domestic order of the state. Nevertheless, the act gave O'Daniel a new political issue, with "labor racketeers" replacing "professional politicians" as his chief foes.

O'Daniel's current political stance offered him a new political opportunity when Morris Sheppard, the long-time US senator and New Deal supporter, died in April 1941. The legislature resolved that the governor should appoint himself to the vacated Senate seat, obviously preferring that he be in the national rather than the state capitol. Instead, he appointed Andrew Jackson Houston, the eighty-seven-year-old son of Sam Houston, as senator. The selection was politically astute; clearly the aged and infirm Houston would offer him no challenge in the upcoming special election for the post; indeed, Houston went to Washington, DC, attended one committee meeting, and died. When the special election drew near, twenty-nine candidates announced for the senatorial vacancy, among them O'Daniel, Martin Dies, and the young congressman Lyndon Baines Johnson.

Johnson began his political career in 1931 as a congressional aide to Congressman Richard Mifflin Kleberg. In 1935, Johnson was, as mentioned, appointed Texas's state administrator of the NYA. In 1937, Johnson won a special election in the Tenth Congressional District to fill the unexpired term of Congressman James Buchanan, who had died while in office.

Now ready to pursue the national office, O'Daniel organized one of his typical campaigns, but this time he concentrated on the dangers of "labor racketeers" and promised to introduce antistrike legislation once in Congress. He assured his audiences that his bills would mandate a Senate roll-call vote on the measure to be broadcast on the radio. That way, he promised, politicians would not dare turn down antiunion measures. But O'Daniel's old magic seemed to have waned, as smaller crowds turned out for his rallies.

In response, Johnson mounted a strong campaign that did not shy away from identifying himself with the New Deal and Roosevelt. LBJ traveled in rented planes, hired a large, competent staff, used modern advertising techniques, accrued newspaper endorsements, and claimed the front-runner's spot. On election night, he led by a few thousand votes. Over the next three days, however, returns trickled in from rural East Texas, an area where the O'Daniel candidacy appealed to the poor and those over the age of sixty. When "all" the ballots were counted, the governor had defeated the young congressman by a vote of 175,590 to 174,279. Johnson believed that illicit returns cost him the victory, and he decided to distance himself from the New Deal in future campaigns.

When O'Daniel announced for reelection to the Senate in 1942, former governors Allred and Moody stepped up to challenge him for the office. Again, O'Daniel ran as an antiestablishment candidate, telling his audiences, "Washington is the only lunatic asylum in the world run by its inmates." Going further, he accused both Moody and Allred of having received aid from "Communist labor leader racketeers." The first primary vote eliminated Moody, but Allred gained the support of the urban press, New Dealers, younger voters, Johnson, and Connally. The president also offered him an endorsement, but Allred decided that such an accolade would have strengthened O'Daniel's attempt to depict him as a dupe of Washington politicians. Allred lost the runoff by fewer than 20,000 votes. He blamed his failure on the high preponderance of elderly voters, since many of the nation's young men were abroad in the armed services, and on anti-Roosevelt voters, who were alienated by both the New Deal and wartime controls.

O'Daniel served one regular term in the Senate, where his record was even worse than that as governor, during which time his estranged relations with the legislature saw a record twelve of fifty-seven gubernatorial vetoes overridden. His popularity with Texas voters

baffled many of his opponents and much of the press corps. In a way, though, his campaigns, of which he won four in ten years, pointed to the political past as well as the future. His carefully cultivated anti-establishment, country bumpkin image disguised a shrewd businessman who sold himself as a friend of the poor, the elderly, and all those who believed that no politician spoke for them. The camp-meeting campaigns called forth religious motifs and emotions, amplified by hillbilly music, which reinforced voters' perceptions of O'Daniel as a good, honest, and down-to-earth man who got on well with the boys at the forks of the creek. Less cynical politicians, such as Hogg or the Populists, had used similar campaign tactics. Yet O'Daniel, a college graduate, was also the first gubernatorial candidate to hire a public relations firm and understand the power of the electronic media, in his case, radio. He capitalized, too, on the vague conservative discontent with organized labor and the New Deal. But by 1948, when his full term in the Senate expired, O'Daniel, realizing that a more urban and cosmopolitan Texas voting public was not likely to return him to office, retired.

## Literature and the Arts Prior to World War II

A rural society rarely produces writers or artists whose work attempts to explain or evaluate the contemporary social scene. Early Texas authors tended to write adventure tales or travel accounts that described or drew upon the frontier heritage of the state. Some of these works have lasting value and remain a source for early Texas history, but their importance rests with their topics rather than their literary merit. Books such as John Crittenden's *The Adventures of Big Foot Wallace* (1870), J. W. Wilbarger's *Indian Depredations in Texas* (1889), and James T. DeShields's *Border Wars of Texas* (1912) chronicled the state's frontier past, as did Charles H. Siringo's *A Texas Cowboy, or Fifteen Years on the Hurricane Deck of a Spanish Pony* (1885) and Andy Adams's *The Log of a Cowboy* (1903).

Early histories of Texas tended to romanticize the state's past, but in the early twentieth century professional historians at the University of Texas turned their energies to writing and collecting materials pertaining to Texas history. George Pierce Garrison taught the first course in Texas history in 1897. That year he also organized the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA), the first learned society in Texas, which published the *Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*, now called the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* and still a major source of historical information. Joining Garrison at the University of Texas were Herbert E. Bolton, Eugene C. Barker, and Charles W. Ramsdell. Bolton's work on the Spanish settlement, including *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century* (1915), made him a founder of the field of Borderlands Studies. Barker edited and published the three-volume *Austin Papers* and then wrote the *Life of Stephen F. Austin* (1925) which became a classic. Ramsdell won a lasting reputation as an authority on the South, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. Ramsdell and Barker maintained active careers at the University of Texas (UT) into the 1940s.

The state, however, produced few authors who won enduring literary fame. The work of most Texas writers tended to reflect a regionalist mentality that made them popular in Texas but largely ignored outside the state. J. Frank Dobie is a good example. Growing up on a ranch in South Texas at the turn of the century, he began his teaching career at the University of Texas in the 1920s. Convinced that Southwesterners were unaware of their rich cultural heritage, he turned to folklore, recounting the stories told by the Anglo and Mexican American cowboys and farmers of his boyhood. The Depression era was Dobie's

most productive period, witnessing the publication of *Vaquero of the Brush Country* (1929), *Coronado's Children* (1931), and *Apache Gold and Yaqui Silver* (1939), among others. He edited the Texas Folklore Society's annual publication from 1922 to 1943 and was determined that young Texas writers focus on their own region, rather than on New England or Europe. Also at UT was historian Walter Prescott Webb, whose 1931 work *The Great Plains* catapulted him to national prominence. Joining Dobie and Webb at UT was folklorist and nature-writer Roy Bedichek, who for many years directed the University Interscholastic League (UIL). Indeed, Bedichek kept so busy with the UIL that his three major works, *Adventures with a Texas Naturalist* (1947), *Karankaway Country* (1950), and *The Sense of Smell* (1960), were all written after his retirement. Many critics today consider him the best writer of the three. Dobie, Webb, and Bedichek dominated Texas literary life from the 1930s through the 1950s. Their influence on young writers who wished to explore the cultural heritage of the state cannot be exaggerated.

Several other writers who began their work in the 1920s left Texas for more fertile intellectual environs. Dorothy Scarborough grew up in Sweetwater and Waco and taught at Baylor, but she moved to New York in the 1910s, where she wrote her major works. Her best-known novel, *The Wind* (1925), outraged many West Texans with its unflattering portrait of life in the area. However, she also wrote sympathetic portraits of East Texas tenant farmers in *The Land of Cotton* (1923) and two lesser novels. Similarly, Ruth Cross, who landed in Connecticut, published several novels about East Texas dirt farmers, the best of which was *The Golden Cocoon* (1924).

Neither Scarborough nor Cross won or deserved the high praise that Katherine Anne Porter received. Porter, probably Texas's most distinguished fiction writer, was born in Brownwood, grew up in Kyle and San Antonio, but left Texas in 1919, living at various times in New York City, Mexico City, and numerous other places. In the 1920s she wrote several short stories set in Texas, "Noon Wine" and "The Fig Tree," for example, which earned her an almost instant national reputation. The sway that Texas regionalists like Dobie held, versus the more universal themes pursued by writers like Porter, received stark confirmation in 1939, when the Texas Institute of Letters passed over Porter's nationally acclaimed book *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* for its most prestigious literary prize and instead granted the award to Dobie for the decidedly inferior *Apache Gold and Yaqui Silver*.

Texas poetry prior to the 1930s has been described as "abundant but undistinguished." Like their counterparts in fiction-writing, Texas poets uncritically celebrated the state's romantic past, writing of the Alamo or cowboys, or rhapsodizing about bluebonnets. They tended to emulate minor nineteenth-century southern poets, rather than taking their cues from avant-garde modernists like T. S. Eliot or Ezra Pound. That began to change somewhat in the thirties, when poets such as Berta Hart Nance, Lexie Dean Robertson, and Boyce House brought a new realism to Texas poetry. Still, like Dobie, Webb, and Bedichek, they tended to take regional themes as their subject matter. It would be another decade before Texas poetry would truly begin to come into its own.

The visual arts in Texas did not fare much better. Texas's best-known visual artist prior to the second half of the twentieth century was Elisabet Ney, who came to Texas in 1872 with her husband, Dr. Edmund Montgomery. Ney enjoyed an excellent reputation in Europe for the busts she cast of Schopenhauer, Garibaldi, and King William I of Prussia. Once in Texas, she first lived on Liendo plantation in Waller County, purchased from Leonard Groce, but found rural life stifling; after rearing her family, she moved to Austin in 1893. The next twelve years comprised the zenith of her work, as Ney turned out statues of the Texas heroes Austin and Houston and did a tombstone figure of Albert Sidney Johnston.



Her best piece, *Lady Macbeth Walking in Her Sleep*, now resides in the National Gallery in Washington, DC. Eventually Ney's studio in Austin was purchased by the Texas Fine Arts Association and turned into a museum.

Like the sculptor Ney, Texas painters in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries tended to focus on historical themes and portraits. Among the prominent painters of the era were Henry A. McArdle, whose historic panoramas hang in the state capitol, and William H. Huddle, who similarly painted grand historical themes and a number of sought-after portraits. The Onderdonks—Robert Jenkins and his son Julian—won a local following and today are well known for their paintings of the Texas landscape. Frank Reaugh, whose active career as a painter spanned the 1880s through the 1930s, won acclaim for his almost miniature impressionistic scenes of longhorns, works that continue to be sought by collectors.

Although the Great Depression limited the work of artists, by no means did it end work in the visual arts. The Federal Arts Project (1935–43), a division of the Works Progress Administration, supported needy artists who painted murals and other works of art in Texas and other states. Much of this work is now, unfortunately, lost, but some fine examples of it, particularly of murals, can still be seen on college campuses. The building of the central exposition in Dallas for the 1936 centennial offered employment to some Texas artists. Architect George L. Dahl designed the buildings for the central exposition, and many cited the Hall of State then and now as a prime example of art deco architecture. Tom Lea did some murals for the Hall of State, and the Dallas sculptor Allie Victoria Tennant produced the nine-foot-tall gilded bronze statue, *Tejas Warrior*, that occupies a prominent position above the door of the Hall of State. However, the centennial planners went out of state for many artists, including hiring two French sculptors, Jose Martin and Raoul Josset, to produce many of the art deco sculptures that decorate grounds and the facades of the buildings. (Both men made Dallas their homes after the Centennial.) Notably missing were works from the so-called Dallas Nine, a group of architects who were heavily influenced by Thomas Hart Benton and a movement known as regionalism.

Texas music during the first three decades of the twentieth century continued to demonstrate its regional and heterogeneous character. African American and Tejano forms of music probably constituted the most original contributions to the state's musical heritage, but other genres also proliferated. San Antonio, with its large German population, had beer halls and gardens that featured ethnic music, singing societies, and *Saengerfests*, though German-music performances diminished with the anti-German spirit generated by World War I and the coming of prohibition in the 1920s. The Tuesday music club in San Antonio, Dallas's St. Cecilia Club, and the organization of the Houston Symphony in 1913 all tried to interest their contemporaries in classical music, but with little success. Guest artists toured the state, beginning in 1900 with pianist Ignace Paderewski. Theater facilities in communities not far removed from rural villages remained crude and frequently inadequate; thus, performances were sporadic and mostly located in conveniently reached cities. In 1901, the Metropolitan Opera presented *Lohengrin* in Houston. Several years later, the company visited Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio, but it did not return to Texas until 1939.

Popular music could be heard in the villages and towns that minstrel and vaudeville troupes visited regularly. In 1905, Karl Hoblitzelle organized the Interstate Circuit, which grew to 175 theaters and attracted well-known vaudeville performers. The advent of nickelodeons cut into the audience for stock companies, and beginning in 1920 the Interstate Circuit gradually converted into "motion picture" houses. This development, plus the

increasing popularity of the phonograph after 1910, as well as radio broadcasts, which first started in 1920 with station WRR in Dallas, meant that national live performers and troupes came only to major Texas cities, if at all.

Meanwhile, village audiences enjoyed regional varieties of ethnic music—blues, *rancheras*, Cajun—in addition to the styles of the musicians who played for dances, fairs, parades, weddings, and other celebrations. Indeed, local folk music from the southern United States certainly was well loved by Anglo Texans. By this time, the pure “mountain music” had blended with other strains of folk music, including “cowboy songs,” the work songs of the same genre as the labor songs of union dissenters or miners. The cowboy songs, in turn, blended with Mexican music, just as cowboys and vaqueros had blended on the range. Clearly, black blues influenced white music, not only rhythmically but also in shared Protestant religious traditions and in the emotional themes of rural life: sadness, death, and poverty.

Out of this eclectic mix of music came what is known as hillbilly music, which current scholars suggest differs from earlier musical forms in that its songs always tell a story and that its devotees took it from the countryside to the cities of the South. The commercialization of this musical form began in the 1920s and flourished in the 1930s. Radio station WBAP in Fort Worth originated a not-yet-regularly scheduled country music show in 1923, the popularity of which would earn it a regular time slot on Saturday nights. The new availability of phonographs spurred record companies to broaden their repertoire in search of new customers. The first national hillbilly hit, “The Prisoner’s Song,” resulted from such efforts. Native Texan Vernon Dalhart (he was born Marion T. Slaughter but combined the names of two Texas towns to form his stage name) recorded the piece in 1924. Later in the decade, Jimmie Rodgers, the first nationally known hillbilly singer, began his career. Although not born in Texas (he moved to Kerrville in 1929), Rodgers relied heavily on Texas themes and was the first national performer to incorporate the blues into white folk music. Rodgers dominated the country charts until his untimely death from tuberculosis in 1933.

These trends culminated in the emerging musical genre that became known as western swing. In 1929, a young fiddle player from Turkey, Texas, named Bob Wills moved to Fort Worth. The following year he teamed with Herman Arnspiger and Milton Brown to establish a group called the Light Crust Doughboys, after corporate sponsor Light Crust Flour. Brown left the band in 1932 to form his own group, the Musical Brownies, and in 1933 Wills parted with the Doughboys (following a fallout with future governor W. Lee “Pappy” O’Daniel, who hosted the Doughboys’ radio program) to establish the Texas Playboys (Figure 10.11). Milton Brown died young in 1936, and Wills went on to become the superstar of the new musical style, which creatively combined elements of blues, jazz, pop, and hillbilly music. The band was also among the first to use electrified instruments including, as early as 1938, Leon McCauliffe’s electric steel guitar. Although the band would relocate to Tulsa in 1934 and California in the 1940s, the Texas Playboys became a symbol of the Lone Star State in the nation, and Bob Wills arguably did more to influence modern country-and-western music than any other individual artist. Indeed, Wills’s career can stand as an apt metaphor for Texas in the 1930s. Although his music frequently dealt with rural themes, it was played in cities, was broadcast by radio, utilized modern technology, and drew upon influences from beyond the state’s borders. Like Texas, it looked more to the future than to the past. If the coming world war was to usher in the era of modern Texas, the groundwork for modernity had been laid in the years leading up to Pearl Harbor.



**Figure 10.11** Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys in front of tour bus. Courtesy of the Oklahoma Museum of Popular Culture, Oklahoma Historical Society and the Estate of Bob Wills.

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## War, Prosperity, and Modernization, 1941–1960

On December 7, 1941, Texans began their Sunday much as they had any other. By that afternoon, their world had changed forever, for by then they had heard the news that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Grim reports of the surprise attack continued into the evening: Japanese aircraft had sunk most of the US Pacific Fleet and destroyed more than 150 American airplanes. Casualties were heavy: 2300 servicemen killed and another 1100 wounded. That night, President Roosevelt called a meeting in which he informed the cabinet and some congressmen of the full extent of the tragedy. The next day, Senator Tom Connally of Texas introduced a resolution in Congress declaring war on Japan. Three days later, Germany and Italy honored their treaty commitments to the Japanese and declared war on the United States.

World War II was not unexpected. Japan had invaded Manchuria in 1931 and gradually pressed into other parts of Asia. The totalitarian dictators Adolf Hitler of Germany and Benito Mussolini of Italy took similar aggressive actions in Europe and Africa. At first, the United States attempted to remain neutral in the developing world conflict. Then the German invasion of Poland in 1939 caused England and France to go to war against fascist aggression, and the United States began to aid its allies and prepare for its own defense. Congress passed the Selective Service Act in 1940, sent the Allies needed supplies through the Lend-Lease program, and built defense plants with government subsidies. These war-induced measures turned the national as well as the Texan economy around.

Indeed, a wave of national prosperity continued throughout the next decade. Full employment in wartime suddenly gave many Americans disposable income, monies that often could not be spent until peace removed restrictions on the sale of many consumer goods. Even after the end of World War II, the developing Cold War encouraged the buildup of defense industries and the maintenance of a standing army. Government policies accounted partially for the high postwar prices of farm commodities and the demand for petrochemical products. Returning veterans received national and state aid for schooling, housing, and readjustment to civilian life. World War II had launched Texas into an industrial economy, and postwar changes kept it as such. By midcentury, the lives of most Texans were permanently altered.

The census reported a state population growth from 6.4 million in 1940 to 7.1 million in 1950, and to 9.6 million in 1960, and a corresponding increase in urban dwellers from 45 to 62.7 to 75 percent. The demographic composition also changed in other ways. By 1960, women outnumbered men in Texas for the first time. The African American population of the state grew from 924,391 in 1940 to 1.2 million in 1960, but it declined in proportion to whites from 14 to 12.5 percent. Hispanics, on the other hand, rose from 12 to 15 percent of the state's population, numbering 1.4 million in 1960. The state's net in-migration in the 1950s accounted for about 6 percent of its growth and counteracted the out-migration of 100,000 black Texans to western and northern states. Most in-migration came from surrounding states and Mexico. By 1960, 76 percent of the state's residents were native Texans. Of all the states, Texas ranked sixth in population throughout the postwar period.

## **Texas and World War II**

Texans reacted quickly to the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Long lines of volunteers formed at once in front of recruiting offices. The defense department announced in 1942 that Texas furnished proportionally a larger percentage of men and women for military service than did any other state; 750,000 Texans served in World War II, including 12,000 women. Most of these Texans served in the US Army, which at the time included the Air Force, but approximately 185,000 served in the Navy, Marine Corps (Figure 11.1), and Coast Guard. By the end of the war in August 1945, thirty-six Texans had won the Congressional Medal of Honor. Their number included the two most highly decorated American servicemen, army Lieutenant Audie Murphy of Farmersville and navy Commander Samuel Dealey of Dallas, who died in action.

Certain units won reputations as "Texas outfits." The "Lost Battalion" of the Thirty-sixth Infantry Division served in Java (the battalion was regarded as "lost" because in 1942 the Japanese imprisoned the unit when they captured Java and other Dutch possessions in the Indian Ocean), and in 1943 the remainder of that unit became the first American troops to land on the European mainland. Other noted Texas units were the 1st Cavalry and the 2nd and 90th Infantry Divisions in the European Theater, and the 112th Cavalry Division and the 103rd Infantry Regiment in the Pacific. More than 150 general officers and twelve admirals either resided or were born in the state. Dwight David Eisenhower, the Allied Supreme Commander in Europe, was born in Denison, and Pacific Fleet Admiral Chester A. Nimitz in Fredericksburg. Other Texans made famous during the war included James Earl Rudder, who led the famed 2nd Ranger Battalion during the 1944 Normandy invasion; Walter Krueger of San Antonio, the Commanding General of the Sixth Army; and Oveta Culp Hobby of Houston, who commanded the Women's Army Corps.

Among the 23,022 Texans who died for freedom overseas were members of minority groups who still faced discrimination in their home state. Nevertheless, Texas Mexicans responded to the crisis of World War II with a patriotic zeal equal to that of any other group. Five of them received the Congressional Medal of Honor. At the battlefield, Tejanos usually fought in integrated companies, although others saw duty in such all-Mexican American army units as Company E of the 141st Regiment of the 36th Division. At home, the call for cooperation with the war effort reached into the barrios and ranchos. Service in combat and in patriotic endeavors threw many Texas Mexicans into a common crisis with Anglos. Racial animosity between the groups softened temporarily as the war united so many in a common cause.



**Figure 11.1** Marine volunteers. Source: *The San Antonio Light Collection*, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 359: L-2979-D).

Meanwhile, World War II hardened black Texans' demands for equality. The selective service system registered a total of 257,798 black Texans, about one-third of whom served in segregated outfits usually commanded by white officers. Unfortunately, the wartime treatment of blacks in military service mirrored their condition in American society. The pleasant southern weather and the efforts of southern congressmen secured for the South many of the armed services' training camps. Black troops from all parts of the nation who found themselves stationed at these camps were expected to conform to the segregation practices of the local white communities. Training camps in Texas consequently had "little Harlems," which provided separate and inferior facilities for African American soldiers. At Camp Wolters near Mineral Wells, blacks had to erect their own service club because they were denied entrance to white facilities. Base theaters frequently had separate movie showings or separate seating sections for black troops. A backlash against this racial injustice erupted in 1943 in a fight between black and white soldiers at Fort Bliss near El Paso. Meanwhile, black air force cadets trained at Hondo field with integrated dining and recreational facilities but with separate classrooms and barracks. The navy solved the problem of integration by assigning African American sailors to mess duty. Doris Miller of Waco received a Navy Cross for leaving his segregated duties as messman and manning a machine gun at Pearl Harbor, yet he was still a messman when he was killed in action two years later.

Nevertheless, the economic activities generated by the war effort aided all Texans. An estimated 1.25 million troops trained at fifteen Texas-based army posts. Clear skies and



abundant land encouraged the building of forty air bases in Texas, with major ones near Austin, Corpus Christi, Grand Prairie, Houston, Lubbock, Midland, San Angelo, San Marcos, and Wichita Falls. The national headquarters of the Air Force Training Command was located at Fort Worth's Carswell Field. San Antonio continued as the major military center of the state (Figure 11.2); Randolph Field had been the most important school in the nation for pilots, and nearby Kelly and Brooks fields added to their capabilities after the war began. San Antonio also served as the headquarters of the Third and Fourth armies. After the Allied African campaign, the US government located prisoner-of-war camps in Texas. As of June 1944, more than thirty base and branch camps held 79,982 German, Italian, and Japanese prisoners of war.

The federal payrolls and local business generated by servicing military posts spurred economic recovery. In addition, private enterprise expanded. Aircraft factories soon constituted a new industry in the Dallas–Fort Worth area. Shipyards hired large numbers of employees in the Orange–Beaumont–Port Arthur region, as well as at Galveston, Houston, and Corpus Christi. The necessity for new and better refineries to produce fuel for the American and Allied war machine and the development of synthetic rubber turned a strip of the Gulf Coast near Houston into the center of the largest petrochemical industry in the world. Munitions plants were built throughout the state, and steel mills began operation in Daingerfield and Houston. The world's largest tin smelter plant was located at Texas City. Prosperity returned to the oil fields as the wells pumped to full capacity, and the need for paper and lumber products revitalized the East Texas wood-pulp industry. The census recorded the value added by manufacturing for the state as \$453 million in 1939 and \$1.9 billion in 1944. The Great Depression had ended.

The wartime industrial expansion placed a premium on labor. The number of wage earners in the state tripled during the 1940s. As Texans entered military service and defense industries boomed, labor shortages enticed 500,000 Texans from rural areas into cities. The expanding economy opened new work opportunities in particular for minorities and



**Figure 11.2** Nurses at the Brooke General Hospital, Fort Sam Houston. Source: *The San Antonio Light Collection*, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 359: L-3081-N).

women. Despite wage and price controls, the upsurge in women and minority employment contributed to a higher standard of living for Texas families. Females worked in positions traditionally reserved for males. The song “Rosie the Riveter” hit the airwaves in praise of American women’s new roles as pipe fitters, lathe operators, and assembly-line workers. The number of black industrial workers in Texas doubled. However, most of these new hires, both women and minorities, took unskilled jobs, which left them particularly vulnerable after the war, when so many white servicemen returned and expected to have their old jobs back. Black workers faced discrimination in those war plants that segregated their assembly lines, and in others (such as the Baytown oil refineries) that paid higher wages to whites in the same work categories.

Black leaders protested against discrimination in war-related activities, and during the war the new Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) began to investigate some fifty cities to determine the extent of the unfairness. These federal inquiries only fueled whites’ anxieties about the migration of so many blacks to urban areas. In the Beaumont–Port Arthur area, for example, black persons made up one-third of the population in 1940, with their numbers increasing by 20 percent over the next three years. The influx put pressure on social services and housing, which, coupled with rumors of FEPC actions concerning equal employment opportunities, intensified racial tension. An unfounded report of the rape of a white woman by a black man in 1943 sent a white mob in Beaumont into the black section of town; local police, the Rangers, and the National Guard restored order only after twenty hours of violence that left three people dead and fifty others injured.

Most Texans, however, cooperated enthusiastically with the war effort (Figure 11.3). They held scrap drives, bought war bonds and savings stamps, planted “victory gardens,” and established civil defense units. The civilian population generally endorsed the National Office of Price Administration’s regulation that fixed rents and price ceilings. Although



**Figure 11.3** Judy Garland (left) smiles as she waits for parade to start in line-up on Fifth Street, San Antonio. Source: *The San Antonio Light Collection*, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 359: L-3082-K).

there were rumors of the hoarding of scarce commodities and a black market, Texans, like other Americans, accepted with some grumbling the rationing of sugar, shoes, coffee, meat, canned goods, and, later in the conflict, gasoline. The popularity of the war and a high level of support of the “boys” overseas stifled most local dissent. Indeed, during World War II, the persecution of ethnic Americans in Texas did not play out as it had during World War I. This time, incidents of harassment in the German Hill Country or Italian American communities were almost negligible. Wartime patriotism emphasized the struggle of all Americans against dictatorships and partially undermined the cultural distinctiveness of European ethnic groups.

The need to supply food to a world at war pulled Texas farms out of their slump and up to maximum production. The expanded market for agricultural products and the shortage of farm laborers (with so many people now working in factories) hastened the conversion of many farms to machinery and the growth in farm size. The technology necessary to carry out this economic change in farming had been available since the late 1920s, but it was the impact of the Agricultural Adjustment Act and World War II that finally convinced a great many farm owners facing a shortage of labor to mechanize. The 1945 census showed a decrease in the number of farms, an increase in the size and value of farms, and a 33 percent increase in the value of machinery per farm. The rate of farm tenancy also declined, from about 244,000 tenants and sharecroppers in 1940 to 169,000 in 1946. Although cotton still led all other Texas crops, it was no longer king. Farmers devoted less acreage to cotton in 1946 than they had in any year since 1895. By war’s end, Texas ranked fourth overall in the value of farm commodities, and it led the nation in the production of cattle, goats, sheep, horses, cotton, grain sorghum, tomatoes, onions, spinach, and roses. The planting of vegetables and specialty crops testified to the new diversification of the state’s agriculture. This trend toward a modern agricultural economy caused a shift in the geographic areas of crop concentrations. New methods of irrigation, for example, saw the cotton industry move from East and North Texas to the High Plains and South Texas, while East Texas farmers raised more cattle in 1945 than did West Texas ranchers.

### **Politics during World War II**

Except for the 1942 Senate battle, intrastate politics quieted during World War II. Coke Stevenson, the first person to serve two successive terms as speaker of the state house, won the lieutenant governor’s office in 1938 and then succeeded O’Daniel as governor. A highly popular wartime governor, Stevenson never faced a serious gubernatorial challenger, was reelected in 1942 and again in 1944, and served longer in the state’s highest office than anyone before him. The quiet, pipe-smoking Stevenson exuded an air of poised confidence that matched his personality and political philosophy. He believed in conservative financial policies, which included no tax increases, and limiting the powers of the federal government. He did not see himself as the leader of the state Democratic Party, but as a caretaker of the financial stability of the state. His opposition to central planning led him to oppose rationing and the wartime thirty-mile-per-hour speed limit. His distrust of New Deal legislation and his financial policies helped to prevent an expansion of state services.

Stevenson’s accomplishments included the funding and improving of the state highway system, raising teachers’ salaries, a building program for the University of Texas, and improving public awareness of the need for soil conservation. Exhibiting sympathy for the labor movement, Stevenson, who was not a political extremist, negotiated a no-strike

agreement with the labor unions. In 1943, the legislature passed the Manford Act, which stipulated that labor organizers must register with the state and carry identification cards. It forbade unions to make political contributions and required them to post financial and organizational records. The governor let the bill become law without his signature. He showed some concern about discrimination against Mexican Americans in public places, but no similar sympathy for African Americans. He cooperated with the US State Department's Office of Inter-American Affairs in creating a Good Neighbor Commission for Texas that worked to improve relations between Anglos, citizens of Mexico, and Mexican Americans. He took office with a \$34 million state debt and left with a \$35 million surplus, largely due to wartime prosperity.

The harmony of state politics did not extend to national struggles. Conservative opposition to Roosevelt appeared again in 1940 with the "No-Third-Term Democrats." This political organization hoped to enlist more-traditional Texas Democrats, those who had supported John Nance Garner for the presidential nomination but saw his candidacy collapse with Roosevelt's announcement for an unprecedented third term. Texans and many southern conservatives, moreover, disliked Henry Wallace, who was selected as the vice-presidential nominee after Garner broke with the administration and retired to Uvalde. Some thought Wallace, the former secretary of agriculture, too liberal; others felt his sympathies lay with corn farmers and that his midwestern background had not prepared him to address the problems of southern cotton producers. The No-Third-Term Democrats included many of the old Jeffersonian Democrats, who also urged voters to "stay home" on election day or cast their ballot for Wendell Wilkie, the Republican nominee. As in the past, their strategy aimed at no third party. As it turned out, Roosevelt won easily, carrying Texas by 905,156 votes to 211,707 for Wilkie. The president garnered about 100,000 fewer votes than did Connally, who won reelection to the Senate.

Texas conservatives opposed to the New Deal wasted no time formulating plans for political action in the election of 1944, and the conduct of the war enlisted new members to their cause. The wartime controls had broadened federal powers and thereby increased conservatives' uneasiness over the expanding central government. *Smith v. Allwright* (1944), which, as mentioned in Chapter 10, outlawed the all-white primary, and Roosevelt's executive order that forbade discrimination in defense industries and established the committee on fair employment practices, FEPC, threatened the state's segregation patterns. At first, the anti-New Dealers worked to control the state Democratic conventions, send anti-Roosevelt delegates to the national convention, and nominate anti-FDR presidential electors, whose votes might deprive the president of a majority of electoral votes and throw the election to the House of Representatives. When these strategies failed, they left the party and organized a third party, the Texas Regulars. Its planks included a return to states' rights "which have been destroyed by the Communist-controlled New Deal" and a "restoration of the supremacy of the white race. . . ."

Senator W. Lee O'Daniel and Congressman Martin Dies, along with a number of conservative businessmen, led the Texas Regulars in the 1944 campaign. The new party nominated a slate of uncommitted, anti-FDR presidential electors, again hoping to deprive Roosevelt of the state's electoral votes and now throw the election to Republican Thomas A. Dewey. For his part, Dewey avoided any identification with the Regulars, as Republicans wanted to maintain their separate identity and hoped to capitalize on the growing rift in the Democratic Party. In the end, traditional conservative Democrats nationally stayed aloof from groups like the Regulars and successfully replaced the liberal Henry Wallace with the more mainstream Harry Truman as the party's vice-presidential nominee. Roosevelt won a

fourth term, winning 821,605 votes in Texas to Dewey's 191,425 and the Regulars' 135,439. After the outcome of the election, the Regulars returned to the Democratic Party, but their previous behavior signaled future infighting and political struggles in postwar Texas.

## Postwar Politics

The gubernatorial election of 1946 occurred amid national and state turmoil. Headlines trumpeted 331 strikes nationwide, and some politicians charged that communists had infiltrated labor unions. Work stoppages in Texas took place that year at the General Tire and Rubber plant in Waco and Consolidated Vultee Aircraft in Fort Worth. Police arrested picketing employees at the latter, increasing the tensions over the political role of labor unions, which had begun to encourage workers to pay their poll taxes and vote. African American organizations such as the Progressive Voters League and later the Texas Clubs of Democratic Voters conducted voter-registration drives to exploit the *Smith v. Allwright* decision (1944) that outlawed all-white primaries. The emerging controversy of Heman Sweatt's court suit (initiated in 1946) to enter the University of Texas Law School and the continuing struggle of the anti-Truman Democrats to retain control of the state party machinery intensified political divisions.

The 1946 election for governor saw fourteen aspiring politicians announce for the vacancy created by the retirement of Coke Stevenson. Homer Rainey, the former president of the University of Texas, was the early front runner. After the board dismissed him because he had opposed the firing of liberal professors, Rainey hosted a radio show in which he defended his actions as university president. A groundswell of liberal support encouraged Rainey to announce his candidacy for governor. The political extremism of several major contenders allowed railroad commissioner Beauford Jester (Figure 11.4) to consolidate moderate and conservative support for his candidacy. His well-financed campaign included the use of billboards, radio spots, newspaper advertisements, and paid campaign workers. Consequently, Rainey's underfunded campaign became largely a defensive one, preoccupied with deflecting personal and political attacks. Jester led the first Democratic primary with 38 percent of the vote to 25 percent for Rainey, forcing a runoff between the two men. In the runoff, Jester vowed to support no new taxes, no federal interference with state laws, and firm opposition to labor unions. Rallying conservative support against Rainey's advocacy of a corporate tax and possibly an income tax, Jester won the runoff with 66 percent of the vote and overwhelmed Republican Eugene Nolte, Jr., in the general election.

### Beauford Jester and the Texas "Establishment"

The new governor represented a group known as the Texas "Establishment," a powerful bloc of conservative businessmen and influential state leaders within the Democratic Party. At the age of fifty-three, the affable and distinguished-looking Jester made friends easily. His background was similar to that of many of the postwar Establishment candidates: he had graduated from the University of Texas, practiced law, and made money in the oil business. He was appointed to the University of Texas Board of Regents in 1929 and to the Railroad Commission in 1942.

The actions of the Fiftieth Legislature, from January to June of 1947, seemed to verify the worst fears of liberals who had supported Rainey. Legislators ignored the backlog of



**Figure 11.4** Governor Beauford Jester delivers his inaugural address, Austin, Texas, January 22, 1947. Source: *The San Antonio Light Collection*, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 359: L-3345-G).

problems that had accumulated during the depression and war years: roads and bridges needed repairs; secondary education and the system of colleges and universities had not been upgraded since the era of business progressivism; state-run charitable institutions and the prison system were in disrepair and controlled by nonprofessionals. Instead of addressing these problems, the legislature passed nine anti-labor bills, including the right-to-work law. The legislature devoted much of its energies to thwarting Heman Sweatt's petition to enter the University of Texas (see later), expanding graduate education in teacher training and agriculture at Prairie View A&M College, creating a hastily contrived law school for blacks in an off-campus building in downtown Austin, and laying plans to establish a new public university for African Americans (eventually called Texas Southern University) that, once constructed, would include a law school. After fierce debate, the legislature agreed to instruct a committee to recommend potential changes in the public school system; it also passed some meager appropriations for secondary-road improvements and cost-of-living increases for state employees.

Jester had not been satisfied with the reluctance of the legislature to address the problems of urban Texas. The virulence of the antiunion propaganda, however, prevented him from modifying the legislature's adamant anti-progressive posture. Nevertheless, he and Lieutenant Governor Allan Shivers ran a low-key reelection campaign in 1948 on a plank called "the People's Path," which outlined a program for reform of the public schools and

higher appropriations for roads, prisons, colleges, and state-run charitable institutions. Jester and Shivers argued that they could effect these changes with no increase in taxes, and gained an easy reelection.

It was not the gubernatorial campaign, however, that attracted the most attention from Texas voters in the 1948 elections but rather the races for the US presidency and the Senate. The Texas Regulars went on record as opposing Truman's renomination as Democratic candidate for president. Later actions by President Truman that included integration of the armed services by executive order and the advocacy of an antilynching bill further outraged the Regulars and their supporters. Jester attacked Truman's stands, charging that the 1948 civil rights plan that the president sent to Congress violated states' rights. Yet the governor did not leave the party when it renominated Truman that summer. Jester answered those who criticized him by urging conservative Democrats to change the party's direction from within.

Many Texas Regulars ignored the governor's plea and joined other southern Democratic defectors to form a splinter group called the Dixiecrats, who nominated Governor Strom Thurmond of South Carolina for president. Even so, the dogged Harry Truman held on to win in November in an upset victory over the Republican candidate, Thomas Dewey. The president's margin of victory in Texas—1,322,000 votes to Dewey's 304,000 and Thurmond's 114,000—was larger than in any other state. The Dixiecrats had their best showing in East Texas, where the issue of race relations predominated, but, overall, their poor results state-wide seemed to signal that Texans were not as willing to engage in the same brand of racial demagoguery that would soon come to characterize politics in other southern states.

The senatorial election of 1948 was even more controversial and heated than was the presidential campaign. This race included Lyndon Johnson (Figure 11.5), who still chafed



**Figure 11.5** Lyndon Johnson, Harry Truman, John Nance Garner, and Sam Rayburn. Source: Sam Rayburn Library, from the collections of University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 68-7).

over his questionable loss to “Pappy” Lee O’Daniel in the 1941 senatorial campaign. Johnson had intended to run again for the Senate in 1942, but World War II sidetracked his plans. After the war, he geared up his campaign organization to resume his quest for the Senate in 1948. By this time, Johnson had taken some care to distance himself from what many voters considered his link to the New Deal by voting for the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 (which limited the powers of labor unions and workers), campaigning as an anti-Communist, and attacking Truman’s civil rights platform. Nevertheless, labor-liberal forces preferred Johnson to the opposing Democratic candidate, former governor Coke Stevenson, who denounced government spending and federal encroachment on states’ rights, and who argued that his anti-Communist sentiments ran deeper than Johnson’s. O’Daniel, knowing that his reelection chances were slim, chose not to run. His decision aided Johnson, who received “Ma” Ferguson’s endorsement and garnered support from many former Ferguson voters in East Texas. Johnson ran a hard-driving, up-to-date, and well-financed campaign that featured whirlwind helicopter tours (Figure 11.6), a direct-mail blitz, and radio advertising. Still, Stevenson led in the first primary, by 477,077 votes to Johnson’s 405,617, forcing a runoff.

When the results came in and it was announced that Johnson had won the runoff by eighty-seven votes, Stevenson immediately charged Johnson with having stolen the election. Much of the contentiousness that followed concerned Box 13 in Jim Wells County,



**Figure 11.6** Lyndon Johnson during his 1948 senatorial campaign. Source: Jimmie A. Dodd Photograph Collection, JD/VN 1187/a, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.



where returns came in late and favored Johnson by 202 votes to 1. Stevenson contested the vote to the State Democratic Executive Committee (SDEC), which upheld the count in Box 13 by a vote of twenty-nine to twenty-eight. The state Democratic convention, which featured several fistfights between supporters of the two men, affirmed the SDEC's decision. The convention also saw strong lobbying efforts by former governor James Allred and Johnson's campaign manager, John Connally, to affirm Johnson's nomination and remove Texas Regular delegates who had supported Stevenson, replacing them with Jester/Johnson/Truman loyalists. Thus, the state Democratic Party machinery passed into the hands of moderates.

Still smarting, Stevenson went to the US District Court and secured a temporary restraining order to keep Johnson's name off the ballot in the general election. US Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black set aside the restraining order, and the full court later upheld Black's decision. Naturally, Johnson won the general election. His rise to power in the Senate would be meteoric, first to minority whip in 1952 and then to majority leader in 1955. Meanwhile, Sam Rayburn retained his House seat and continued as Speaker, a position that he had acquired in 1940 and held, except from 1947 to 1949 and 1953 to 1955, until his death in 1961. Together, Rayburn and Johnson would make a formidable legislative team in President Eisenhower's second administration. Nevertheless, the controversy generated by his 1948 victory left an aura of suspicion around Johnson that caused many to characterize the new senator as a wheeler-dealer with a tainted past.

After the 1948 election, Governor Jester turned his attention to Texas politics, and he and Shivers sent to the rural-dominated legislature an agenda that addressed some of the state's problems. An antilynching bill was passed. And in addition to the Gilmer-Aikin Acts, the legislature enacted educational measures that established Lamar College and appropriated more monies for higher education, including the Texas State University for Negroes (later Texas Southern University). The legislature also voted funds for much needed repair and expansion of the state highway system, aid for the elderly, and improvement of state hospitals. Formation of a Youth Development Council to oversee three schools for wayward juveniles also was authorized.

Jester met with a legislative committee that issued a damning report on Texas prisons. Aided by a letter-writing campaign by the Texas State Council of Methodist Women, the governor appointed new members to the prison board who favored reform and convinced the legislature to allocate more funds for the overcrowded prison system. The new board hired O. B. Ellis, a reformer, as manager of the Texas Prison System. Under his direction, the prison system modernized its farms, constructed new buildings and renovated old ones, and generally improved living conditions for inmates. The Texas Department of Corrections, as the prison system was renamed in 1957, operated efficiently until Ellis's death in 1961. The number of prisoners increased as the state grew; in the 1960s the federal courts would question the treatment of those incarcerated in Texas and elsewhere, as issues such as the overcrowding of prisons and the civil rights of inmates came under litigation.

Despite the passage of the many new reforms, the legislature refused to assess additional taxes to support them. Jester vetoed the second-year appropriations bill, forcing a special session of the legislature in 1950 that would have to consider new revenue measures. Jester died before the special session convened, but his administration had scored some impressive victories. Not only did he guide the passage of some progressive legislation, but he had cajoled the legislature into approving constitutional amendments to repeal the poll tax, prohibiting discrimination on grand and petit juries, establishing civil-service guarantees in counties where voters approved of them, and instituting annual sessions of the legislature

and the payment of salaries to legislators. The voters, however, rejected all of these proposals in November 1950. Despite the passage of antilabor bills and the requirement of loyalty oaths for students and teachers at public universities, the Jester administration was one of political moderation. Nonetheless, it was the first to address the problems of what had become a decidedly urban Texas.

### **Allan Shivers and the political battles of the 1950s**

After Jester died in office, Allan Shivers succeeded him as governor. The forty-one-year-old Shivers had served two terms as lieutenant governor and was a former state senator. He hailed from Jefferson County, where he had won a reputation as a prolabor state legislator. As lieutenant governor, he had opposed integration, saying, "I am the kind of Texan who believes colored people do not want to go to school with whites." He also had been the first lieutenant governor actually to influence the state senate by shaping its agenda and controlling committees through appointments. As governor, Shivers directed the creation of the Legislative Council, which researches and drafts bills, and the Legislative Budget Board, which prepares the budget for legislative consideration. Before 1949, the state did not have a budget; rather, each agency submitted a memorandum requesting revenue. The governor, consequently, wielded considerable power in selecting which demands went to the legislature. Ironically, then, although his admirers considered Shivers the strongest of the Texas governors, he effectively weakened the office through his administrative changes, for they enlarged the powers of the lieutenant governor and speaker of the house. Future lieutenant governors would emulate Shivers in their control over the senate, and since the chair and the vice-chair of the budget board and the council were the lieutenant governor and the speaker of the house, those offices essentially became rivals of the governorship for power.

Shivers addressed the special session of the legislature in January 1950 with his famous "Goat Speech," in which he pointed out that Texas ranked first in oil and last in mental hospitals; first in cotton and last in care for those with tuberculosis; first in goats and last in care for wards of the state. The governor coordinated his call for reform with meetings with lobbyists in which he told them that taxes would have to be levied. The legislature moderately increased taxes and appropriations for colleges and hospitals in that session, and the press praised the governor for his effective leadership.

In the election of 1950, Shivers defeated Caso March and five other candidates in the Democratic primary, then Republican Ralph Currie in November. Two strong supporters of the governor—Ben Ramsey, who became lieutenant governor and won reelection to six terms before going to the Railroad Commission, and John Ben Shepperd, who served first as secretary of state and then in 1952 as attorney general—advised and aided Shivers during his terms in office. The governor continued to exercise strong leadership in the 1951 legislature. A redistricting bill, the first in thirty years, passed, as did one to require state inspection of automobiles and liability insurance for drivers. To finance increased appropriations for roads, state-run institutions, teacher salaries, retirement benefits for public employees, and aid to the elderly, Shivers asked for new taxes on consumer goods. The legislature included in the omnibus tax bill a gathering tax on natural gas pipelines, which Shivers opposed. The Supreme Court declared the law unconstitutional, as it was in effect a levy on interstate commerce. Critics of Shivers maintained that Attorney General Shepperd failed to defend the law with much enthusiasm.

Shivers's successes by 1952 included winning control of the state executive committee of the Democratic Party. He then purged from positions of power in the old committee any members of the newly growing liberal wing of the party. Some of the liberal discontent with Shivers came from unions, who objected to his support of antilabor legislation, but most such objections to Shivers stemmed from his endorsement of Republican Dwight David Eisenhower for the presidency. Conservative Democrats had long been unhappy with the Truman administration. They disliked the president's stand on civil rights and accused him of fighting a "no win" war in Korea, being too soft on communism, and overseeing an administration that tolerated corruption. In Texas, these charges dovetailed nicely with conservatives' accusations that Truman and the national Democratic Party intended to deprive the state of its rightful claim to the tidelands.

The tidelands are underwater areas adjacent to the coast. Texas claimed that its historic boundaries as a republic gave the state control of the seabed extending three marine leagues (10.5 miles) out from its shoreline. The federal government did not contest the claim until 1937, when Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes ruled that all of the continental shelf past the three-mile limit belonged to the nation. The issue became more critical after World War II, when it became widely known that the disputed territory held rich deposits of petroleum. In 1946, Congressman Hatton Sumners sponsored a bill that affirmed Texas's claim to the tidelands, but Truman vetoed it. The next year, in a case involving California, the US Supreme Court awarded to the federal government paramount power over disputed territory offshore and the minerals contained therein. US Attorney General Tom Clark, a Texan, nevertheless ruled that the California decision did not apply to Texas, effectively preventing the federal government from issuing leases to oil companies and leaving the status of the tidelands in doubt.

The tidelands controversy carried over into Truman's second administration. Shivers and Sam Rayburn wanted a compromise that would allow the state and national governments to split the disputed royalties gained from the leasing of underwater lands. Most Texas oilmen, however, wanted the state to retain total control, since Texas collected 12.5 percent royalties on their profits, as compared to the federal government's likely take of 37.5 percent. The issue was complicated by the fact that royalties collected on tidelands oil by the state would go into the public school fund. State Attorney General Price Daniel demanded that Texas go before the US Supreme Court and press its historic republic claim. The Court rendered a decision in 1950 similar to its earlier California verdict. Still determined, Rayburn maneuvered a bill through Congress in 1952 that would have awarded the disputed tidelands to Texas. Truman vetoed that one, too. When Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic nominee for president, would not agree to support Texas's tidelands claims, Shivers decided that he would endorse Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower for president in the 1952 election.

Shivers had constructed a strategy early in 1951 that augured a potential party exit. That year he supported a state law allowing cross-filing for public office: the listing of the same candidate on both the Democratic- and Republican-party primary ballots. Much of the political maneuverings for the next two years revolved around shifting loyalties to the Democratic Party. Although the governor hinted that he intended to support the Democratic Party, he made no firm commitment and retained control of the state executive committee. His announcement for Eisenhower consequently surprised few but did persuade liberal Democrats to leave the state convention and denounce the governor. The Johnson/Rayburn forces held the party line and endorsed Eisenhower's Democratic opponent, Adlai Stevenson, yet they did not campaign vigorously in his behalf. The "Shivercrats," as their

opponents labeled those who cross-filed, controlled the 1952 election, in which the governor defeated challenger Ralph Yarborough, a liberal Austin lawyer and ex-judge, by nearly 400,000 votes. Eisenhower, meanwhile, carried the state in the general election, and Attorney General Price Daniel vanquished liberal Democrat Lindley Beckworth to gain the senatorial seat vacated by Tom Connally.

### **Texas politics during the Eisenhower administration**

President Eisenhower fulfilled his campaign promise and signed a quit-claim bill that gave Texas control of the tidelands. Republicans hoped that Ickes's actions, coupled with those of Shivers, would lead conservative Democrats into the GOP. Such was not to be. As Shivers pointed out, the president's victory was more of a personal than a party triumph. Other problems affected the relations between Eisenhower and Texas Republicans. The latter represented the far right, or the Robert Taft wing of the party. Most Texas Republicans had supported Taft for the 1952 nomination and denied the validity of moderate, sometimes called modern, Republicanism. They were uncomfortable with Eisenhower's reluctance to offer his unqualified support to McCarthyism, his sending of troops into Little Rock in 1957 to prevent the Arkansas governor from closing Central High School in opposition to federally mandated integration, and his support of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, which Johnson guided through the Senate.

Moreover, the Republicans lost control of Congress in 1954, and Eisenhower's legislative program depended on the good will of Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson and Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn. If Eisenhower tried to build a Republican Party through patronage and appointments, he would alienate those two powerful Democrats. The president's selection of Texas advisors consisted of moderates: former Democrats Oveta Culp Hobby as secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare and Dillon Anderson as a consultant to the National Security Council, for example. Even though Eisenhower defeated Stevenson once again in 1956, carrying Texas by a larger margin than he had in 1952, state Republicans did not prosper. Cross-filing protected conservative Democratic candidates. Congressman Bruce Alger of Dallas claimed the lone Republican congressional victory in 1956.

Still, Republicans gained credibility during these years. Shivers's attacks on the New Deal and on Harry Truman's Fair Deal, and his conservative position on the national Democratic Party's stand on civil rights, appealed to white Texans from the ranks of the middle class attracted to Republican ideology. His endorsement of Eisenhower in 1952 and again in 1956 further encouraged state Republicans. By opening doors for the Republican Party, Shivers helped to set the state for the development of a "two-party" Texas.

Had Governor Shivers decided to retire after the successful campaign of 1952, his good reputation might have remained secure. He had successfully kept the conservatives in control of the Democratic Party and weathered the long fight over the tidelands. In addition, he had overseen a scandal-free administration, one that had acted to expand state services. Moderate Democrats grew uneasy over his support of cross-filing, but not to the point of advocating an open break with him. Liberal Democrats rallied around Ralph Yarborough (Figure 11.7), the other Democratic contender, but had no reason for optimism about gaining control of the state party machinery.

The year 1954 began auspiciously for Shivers, as he announced for an unprecedented third full term as governor. He then met with oilmen and others who warned him that if his administration did not expand state services, Yarborough might win the upcoming election.



**Figure 11.7** Ralph Yarborough campaigning, 1954. Source: Russell Lee Photograph Collection, CN 08230, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

Now Shivers insisted that higher franchise, beer, and gathering taxes—as opposed to higher taxes on oil and gas—be levied to fund teacher salaries and the construction of new buildings for charitable institutions. The legislature and the lobbies complied with Shivers’s request, thereby establishing his credentials for the 1954 campaign.

The contest started slowly but turned into a particularly vitriolic one. Yarborough also called for new taxes and increased aid to the public schools, but Shivers had somewhat preempted him on these issues. The challenger then focused on an influence-peddling scandal involving the state insurance commission—it was never clear if Shivers had known of the developing scandal before announcing for a third term. Shivers, meanwhile, counter-charged that the challenger owed his support to “Communist labor racketeers.” Then a strike of retail employees unionized by the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in twenty stores in Port Arthur exacerbated the issue. Shivers maintained that Communists had inspired the strike, and he appointed an investigating committee to determine the extent of Communist subversive activities on the Gulf Coast. After the committee reported that such a danger did indeed exist, the governor called a special session of the legislature to confront the “Red menace.” He requested that the legislators pass a bill to make membership in the Communist Party punishable by death. The lawmakers did not go that far, but they did make belonging to the Communist Party a crime punishable by a \$20,000 fine and twenty years in prison, adding another anti-Communist measure to eight existing antismersion laws. Later the investigating committee admitted that it could not actually document any Communist activities in Texas labor unions. Nonetheless, the allegation that labor unions were running Yarborough’s campaign had damaged his chances, particularly with the release of a short commercial titled “The Port Arthur Story.” The film, which was shot at 5 a.m., showed deserted streets and idle refineries as a voiceover narrator warned that all of Texas would resemble Port Arthur if unions won control of the state with a Yarborough

victory. Yarborough lost in the second primary by about 80,000 votes, and Shivers defeated Republican Todd R. Adams in the general election.

In the midst of the Democratic primary, the US Supreme Court had announced its landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), which began the desegregation of public schools in the United States. Yarborough had attempted to hedge on the decision by neither condemning the Court nor endorsing integration. Shivers at first reacted to the decision more moderately than had any other southern governor. But as the race between him and Yarborough tightened, the governor resorted to Negrophobia and charged that Yarborough endorsed a completely integrated society. After his reelection, Shivers persisted in his opposition to the *Brown* decision. He and Attorney General John Ben Shepperd endorsed the doctrine of interposition, or using the powers of the state to block federally mandated integration at the local level. With their support, the July 1956 Democratic primary ballot included three referenda: one opposed compulsory attendance at integrated public schools, another outlawed mixed-race marriages, and a third supported state interposition. Texans approved the measures by a vote of four to one. When a white mob prevented the integration of Mansfield High School that fall, Shivers sent in the Rangers to prevent black students from entering the building. He then appointed an Advisory Committee on Segregation in the Public Schools, which he instructed to prevent "forced integration."

In late 1956, the advisory committee reported twenty-one profoundly racist proposals for the consideration of the legislature. One included shutting down the public schools to avoid integration. Ignoring the opposition of the Young Democrats, Mexican American legislators, and some white church organizations, the legislature considered the committee's proposals and passed two bills in 1957. One denied state funds to school districts that integrated without the approval of local voters, and another authorized a series of reasons—morality, space, and transportation, for example—that a school district might legally cite as justification for not complying with federal integration orders. After an ugly scene in Little Rock, Arkansas, in which President Eisenhower had to authorize the use of federal troops to let nine African American students enter Central High School (1957), the legislature passed a third bill that would close schools if federal troops were called in to integrate them and suspended compulsory attendance laws for children whose parents objected to desegregation. Price Daniel, elected governor in 1956, reluctantly signed the laws, but he made no effort to enforce them. The courts later declared the laws unconstitutional, but one authority maintained that the laws nevertheless effectively delayed Texas's progress toward integration for the remainder of the 1950s.

Besides controversy over integration, scandals rocked the last Shivers administration. The issue of failing insurance companies that had arisen during the 1954 gubernatorial campaign continued, with the legislature responding by enacting stronger regulatory legislation. The more than twenty laws included one that limited the amount of stock insurance companies could sell, and another that allowed the Board of Insurance Commissioners to investigate and pass judgment on the ability of companies and their officers to do business in the state. Still, more insurance companies doing business in Texas continued to fold. In December 1955, US Trust and Guaranty, which controlled seventy-four insurance companies in Texas and twenty-two other states, failed. Indeed, the Lone Star State's regulation of insurance companies was so lax that more of them operated in Texas than in all the other states combined. Another investigation charged some members of the insurance board with gross negligence in accepting gifts from the ICT Insurance Company, which also had gone bankrupt. Ben Jack Cage, ICT's founder, was indicted for bribery and embezzlement. He

fled to Brazil. The investigations that continued in 1957 of insurance company failures led Governor Daniel to appoint a totally new Board of Insurance Commissioners and propose sixteen new insurance regulatory acts. The investigation also revealed that nine state senators and some house members had accepted legal fees and other gratuities from insurance companies.

Other rumors of wrongdoing surfaced over the conduct of State Land Commissioner Bascom Giles. Giles, Shepperd, and Shivers served on the Veterans Land Board, created in 1949 to purchase land for resale to veterans at a low rates of interest on forty-year notes. Irregularities in the program first came to light in 1954, when journalist Kenneth Towery of the *Cuero Record* began investigating reports that local black veterans were being paid by white businessmen to sign deceptive applications for land purchases under the program. Towery, who later received a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting, eventually unraveled a complex scandal that led to the indictment of twenty people, including Commissioner Giles, on charges that they had inflated land appraisals, defrauded veterans, and stolen state funds. Giles pleaded guilty and eventually served three years in prison and was forced to pay heavy fines and restitution for his crimes. Because Shivers served on the Veterans Land Board, many Texans assumed that he and Shepperd should have overseen its conduct more carefully. As a result of these scandals, the governor's popularity in the polls dropped from a 64 percent favorable rating in January 1955 to 22 percent that fall.

The troubles of Governor Shivers's last administration overrode any of its accomplishments. The 1955 session of the legislature once more produced aid for public schools, higher education, and state eleemosynary institutions. Shivers also appointed a citizens' committee to study the impact of the 1950s drought, the worst in the state's history. The legislature empowered a Texas Water Research Committee to look into water problems and authorized more powers for the Board of Water Engineers and the newly created Water Pollution Control Council. These agencies, however, did almost nothing to address the increasingly critical issues of what rights individuals and the state had over the control of water resources. The administration, had, at least, shown some public concern for conservation.

### **Into the 1960s under Price Daniel**

Shivers ended his tenure as governor as a somewhat embittered man. Possibly he had remained governor too long and in seven and one-half years had fought too many political battles. His support of Eisenhower in 1952 and again in 1956 cost him whatever power he might have accumulated in the national Democratic Party. His decreasing popularity led him to step aside in 1956, and Senator Price Daniel, with the support of Johnson and Rayburn, announced for governor. Meanwhile, the liberal wing of the state Democratic Party was optimistic in 1956, with Ralph Yarborough carrying their standard into the campaign. He attempted to link Daniel to the scandals in Austin, since as attorney general Daniel had also been on the Land Board. J. Evetts Haley, W. Lee O'Daniel, and two others joined the race, too. Yarborough forced Daniel into a second primary, which Daniel won by less than 4000 of the more than 1.3 million votes cast.

Unhappy with the press coverage given to Yarborough in the 1954 contest, Frankie Randolph of Houston financed the founding of a liberal-loyalist Democratic paper, the *Texas Observer*, edited by Ronnie Dugger. That group joined with Jerry Holleman of the AFL-CIO (in 1955 the American Federation of Labor [AFL] merged with CIO) in creating

the Democrats of Texas (DOT), an organization committed to abolishing the poll tax, broadening liberal influence in the state party, and endorsing national Democratic goals. The DOT supported Yarborough in the special election called to fill Price Daniel's unexpired Senate term. In a winner-take-all race that had no primary, Yarborough garnered 38 percent of the vote to Martin Dies's 29 percent and Republican Thad Hutchinson's 23 percent. Sixteen other candidates split the rest of the vote. Yarborough won a full senatorial term in 1958, defeating in the primary William A. Blakley, a rich Dallas businessman who owned Braniff Airlines and whom Shivers had appointed to the Senate to succeed Daniel. Yarborough then outpolled Republican Ray Wittenburg in the general election. The DOT and Yarborough lost control of the party machinery in 1956, when Johnson/Rayburn/Daniel forces consolidated a hold on the State Democratic Executive Committee and refused to seat liberal delegations to the state convention. The bitterness of liberals toward Johnson that this move had engendered would last into the next decade.

Daniel retained the governorship in 1958 with an easy primary victory over state senator Henry B. González of San Antonio, and in a closer race in 1960 over the conservative Jack Cox, who later switched allegiances to the Republican Party. Daniel changed from conservative to moderate in his three terms in office, and he was always more popular with the people than he was with the legislature. Some of his problems with the latter came from old Shivers supporters, and some came from combative statements he had made during the legislative battles.

But many of Daniel's problems stemmed from the historic concern over taxes. His first term in office deadlocked over that issue, and the governor never solved the problem. Daniel opposed a general sales tax; he wanted instead a continuation of omnibus tax bills, including so-called sin taxes on tobacco and alcohol, and a larger share of taxes on business interests. Many objected to the sales tax because of its regressive nature—the poor pay a higher percentage of their income in sales taxes than do the middle class and the wealthy. After two special sessions in 1961, the legislature passed a limited sales tax of 2 percent. Daniel refused to sign the bill, and it became law without his signature. The sales tax was a selective one, exempting food, drugs, clothing, farm supplies, and some other items.

The trend throughout the next decade was to broaden the coverage of the sales tax and increase its rate. Correspondingly, the rate of business taxes dropped in proportion to revenue earned for the state. The only changes in business taxes were two slight increases in the corporation franchise tax and a slight decrease in the severance tax on sulfur. By 1970, the sales tax generated 62 percent of the state's revenue. Thanks to the sales tax, for the first time the state had some way to predict annual revenue income and maintain a consistent pool of tax monies. Despite Daniel's objection to it, the sales tax was the most significant legislation of his administration.

When Daniel left office in 1963, he listed what he considered his accomplishments. They included long-range plans for water resources, the construction of more than forty dams and reservoirs, pay and curriculum revisions for public schools, a highway expansion program, aid for the elderly, upgraded law enforcement agencies, and improvements in penal and eleemosynary institutions. Two measures Daniel cited—regulation of lobbyists and a code of conduct for state officials—were modified by the legislature until the final acts were almost useless. Nevertheless, these were the first laws in more than a quarter of a century to look into legislative misconduct. The governor always supported conservative programs at the state Democratic conventions and thus won few liberal allies. His racial policies, supported by Attorney General Will Wilson, moderated sharply the earlier stands of Shivers and Sheppard. No member of the Texas "Establishment" blocked any school doors to



prevent integration. Both Johnson and Yarborough voted for the 1957 Civil Rights Act, and only five of twenty-two Texas congressmen signed the notorious Southern Manifesto, which pledged never to allow integration. During the early 1960s, then, Texas was drifting further from its southern racial heritage.

### **Texas Industrialization**

Many Texans never returned to the farm after 1940. Although the state ranked a distant twelfth nationally in manufacturing in 1950, the 1940s nevertheless marked the state's transition to an industrial economy. Petroleum fueled the change. By the end of World War II, new technology and advancements in refining, metallurgy, and engineering enabled Texas to replace California as the leading oil producer in the nation. Aided by the Railroad Commission's proration policies and favorable federal depletion allowances, the production of crude oil in Texas expanded from 755 million barrels in 1945 to 1.5 billion barrels a decade later, though by then the output of the Middle Eastern oil fields threatened to destroy the Commission's ability to control the price of oil. Fortunately for Texas, national legislation established oil import quotas in 1959 and continued the Commission's power to control production, as Texas oil usually accounted for about 40 percent of the nation's total production and 50 percent of its proven reserves. The value of Texas crude and natural gas throughout the 1950s amounted to between \$2.5 and \$3.2 billion per year. Most of the growth in the oil business came from increased production in older fields, but a major strike brought in new ones in Scurry and Ector counties in the 1950s, as did the drilling of offshore wells. West Texas became an even more important center of the oil business, as witnessed by the huge population growth of Midland and Odessa.

The Texas Gulf Coast benefited enormously as petroleum became the state's leading export and accounted for 80 percent of the products that went through Texas ports in the 1940s. Texas has no natural deep-water ports, but thirteen have been built over the years, six of which are located from fifteen to fifty miles inland. The Port of Houston, which ranked second nationally in total tonnage handled in 1950, led all others. By the 1960s, petroleum exports continued to dominate port trade, followed by agricultural products and petrochemicals.

Economists generally estimated that for every ten jobs in the oil industry, another thirty-seven appeared in other economic sectors. Manufacturing, for example, employed 119,132 more wage earners in 1962 than it had in 1948, and the total value added of manufacturing rose by \$6.18 billion. The transition of Texas to an industrial state brought Texans different kinds of work. Government employment tripled from less than 3 percent in 1940 to more than 9 percent by 1960. The explanation for the increase lay in the continued operation of military bases and the continued importance of the defense industry, which increased with the onset of the Korean War and throughout most of the Cold War years that followed. The state ranked third nationally in income derived from the federal government. The 1958 invention of the silicon microchip by Texas Instruments' Jack Kilby and the 1961 decision to locate NASA's Manned Spacecraft Center near Houston stimulated defense spending in the state. Food processing was the third-largest industry in the state, and wholesale and retail trade and financial services employed one-quarter of the workforce. Automobile assembly plants and the boat (leisure craft) industry, which did not exist in Texas before 1945, were third in employment and fourth in the value added by manufacturing. The older industries of agriculture, which by this time engaged less than 8 percent of the workforce,

and lumber and wood products, which dropped to eleventh place in value, showed the decline of the older Texas and the rise of the new one.

Oil and its related economic activities placed new pressures on Texas's financial institutions. Lone Star bankers had learned their business before 1945 by lending money to farmers and local merchants. The depression years had reinforced the inherently conservative lending practices of Texas banks, and state regulations that required unit banking had prevented the huge concentrations of capital necessary for funding burgeoning industries. After 1947, major banks, particularly in Dallas and Houston, hired specialists in oil lending to structure loans to drilling companies and other related enterprises. Texas's bank resources doubled from 1945 to 1960, as the number of wells drilled annually in the state rose to a level not reached again until the world oil crisis of the 1970s. The linking of interior oil production with Houston cash made that city the center of the oil trade, and particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in petroleum prices, but all of the state's major banks relied on black gold. The deposits in the larger Texas banks never came close to matching the assets of the New York and Chicago institutions, however, and eastern capitalists loaned much of the money for the state's economic growth.

The postwar years also witnessed a continuation of the expansion of Texas's transportation facilities. Even during the depression, the state expanded and attempted to maintain its highway network. The industrial shortages during the war almost halted road construction and created a surplus in the highway funds. A constitutional amendment in 1946 mandated that revenue realized from a tax on gasoline and motor vehicle registration fees be used to construct new roads. In the 1950s, the state highway system expanded at a faster rate than in any other period, and between 1941 and 1963, total highway mileage tripled to more than 60,000 miles of maintained roads. The number of motor vehicles registered by Texans went from less than 2 million in 1945 to more than 5 million in 1962, the new reliance on the private automobile hampering the development of the state's mass-transit systems.

The beginning in 1956 of the federal interstate highway system determined the future of many small Texas towns, much as railroads had done in the nineteenth century. The communities bypassed by interstate highways stagnated, and those served by them grew. The population of Irving, for example, increased from 2621 in 1950 to 54,985 in 1960.

Now, motor vehicles limited railroad expansion, just as the railroads had replaced earlier forms of transportation. Texas still led the nation in miles of track, but that figure declined steadily after 1932. Net profits per mile of track in operation also fell, as passenger traffic almost ceased to exist and railroads relied on freight revenues to take up the slack.

Air passenger traffic, on the other hand, boomed. In 1945, the legislature created the Texas Aeronautics Commission to stimulate airport and aviation development. By 1951, Texas had 638 airports, and eleven airlines enplaned 1.5 million passengers; three times that many boarded planes in 1962, ranking Texas fourth among all the states. Dallas enplaned more than one-third of all passengers, and Braniff Airlines, headquartered there, led the other ten national and three international airlines in passenger service.

## **Texas Workers and Urban Growth**

The industrialization of Texas continued to spur the migration of its citizens from rural to urban areas. The state grew at a rate of 20 percent in the 1950s, with an out-migration in the economic downturns of 1953–54 and 1957–58 and an increase in in-migration of 24 percent during the 1960s. Metropolitan counties received 50 percent of the more than one

million persons who changed residence from 1955 to 1960. Indeed, those areas accounted for more than 90 percent of the state's total growth. In 1960, thirty-three Texas cities had more than 30,000 inhabitants, with Houston (938,219), Dallas (679,684), and San Antonio (587,718) drawing the largest number of intra- and interstate in-migrants. Of the standard metropolitan statistical areas (SMSAs, a census classification of a county or group of contiguous counties that have a population exceeding 50,000), Houston ranked seventh nationally, Dallas, fourteenth, and San Antonio, seventeenth, and Texas led the nation with twenty-one SMSAs.

Postwar urban growth effected a change in the state's demography, as rural populations became both older and more isolated. The state's median age of twenty-seven was lower than the nation's twenty-nine in 1960. Median income totaled \$5693 for white urban families, \$4110 for rural nonfarm families, and \$3201 for rural farm families. Black families ranked significantly lower by earning \$2915, \$1684, and \$1430, respectively. Rural areas, then, still relied on local wholesale and retail trade or on such specialized industries as oil or recreation, and they were marked by an aging population and a declining income. Cheaper land, improved transportation—particularly the trucking industry—and advancements in communication, and the nature of Texas industries allowed the growth of commerce in suburban areas. That, coupled with a decrease in transportation time caused by automobiles and highways, saw the migration of a good portion of the population to the suburbs. The suburbs of Dallas, for example, had 400,000 residents in 1960. Although both the inner cities and the suburbs grew in the population in the 1950s, the suburban population was a year younger on average than that of the downtown core.

Most suburbanites were white, as blacks tended to live in the central city, where segregated residential patterns and the unskilled jobs they took usually kept them. The mass movement of blacks to cities had begun in the 1930s and increased steadily during and after the war years. By 1960, 75 percent of black Texans, like white Texans, lived in urban areas. By this time, the concentration of blacks in East Texas had declined, with no county having a majority black population, whereas the cities of Dallas, Houston, Fort Worth, and Beaumont all registered more than a 20 percent black population. Meanwhile, school integration mandated by federal courts accelerated "white flight" from the cities to the suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s.

The rapid industrialization of the war years improved the per capita income of southern states, and Texas most of all. The next twenty years witnessed the rise of per capita income in Texas to about 90 percent of the national average, ranking the state twenty-sixth in the nation. Even though the cost of living more than doubled during the inflationary period after World War II and during the Korean War, Texans' real income increased. Of the fifty-seven national cities rated, the cost-of-living index ranked Dallas and Houston in a tie for fiftieth. Per capita income varied sharply throughout the state. Midland topped the national average by 18 percent in 1959, and Dallas, Houston, and Austin also exceeded it. On the other hand, Brownsville and Laredo fell about 50 percent below the national per capita income. Those counties with high Hispanic populations remained mired in poverty.

Urbanization, however, proved a watershed in the transformation of the Texas Mexican community. Many Hispanics severed their contacts with rural roots during the post-World War II rise of mass industrialization and consumer culture. By the 1950s, definite trends of upward mobility, urbanization, acculturation, and social diversification had surfaced. At this time, about 25 percent of employed Texas Mexican males worked in middle-class occupational categories, defined as professionals, managers and proprietors, clerks/ salesmen, and skilled craftsmen. By 1960, this figure had increased to slightly more than 30 percent.

In the face of these impressive gains, however, one should take into consideration that the prewar period was a trying one for Texas Mexicans, marked by inflexible Jim Crowism and depression-stimulated deportation. The economic gains, therefore, represented an increase in opportunities but did not undo what for many Hispanics was still a second-class citizenship. The per capita income in 1960 was \$980 a year for Tejanos, as compared to \$1925 for white Texans. Mexican Americans living in the cities fared slightly better, with a median income of \$1134 per year.

The same disparity appears in any analysis of the African American community. The median income for black Texans rose slightly, from 37 percent of that of white Texans in 1940 to nearly 50 percent in 1960. The number of black people classified as professionals by the census increased dramatically, but the percentage of black Texans in this category still ranked significantly below that of white Texans. In 1960, black professionals still served a detached community. The combined forces of urbanization and segregation encouraged the rise of black-owned businesses; more than 75 percent of the black-owned establishments that existed in 1950 had not been in operation in 1940. These enterprises mostly fell into the "mom-and-pop" categories of grocery stores, general service establishments, restaurants, and amusement businesses that served black neighborhoods.

The lack of capital severely limited the growth of black enterprises in Texas. Few white bankers were willing to loan money to establishments serving a clientele who had a low disposable income and lived in deteriorating neighborhoods with high crime rates; therefore, loans to most black-owned businesses necessarily came from the nine black insurance companies or credit unions that had developed in some of the larger cities. Although the Fraternal Bank and Trust of Fort Worth existed in 1950, black banking services were inadequate. Other problems existed for black businesses. They competed with white establishments for black customers. Moreover, and ironically, the increasing trend toward manufacturing and industrialization that had brought so many black businesses into being would destroy a lot of them. Few small enterprises could compete successfully with outlets of the giant supermarket chains and department stores.

Most of the black workforce continued in unskilled or semiskilled positions that offered tenuous employment. In 1960, the rate of black male unemployment (7.3 percent) exceeded that of white males (4 percent), white females (4.3 percent) and black females (6.7 percent).

The number of working women grew from 23 percent of the workforce in 1940 to 33 percent, or 1,051,404, in 1960. That year, urban women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four were more likely to work outside the home than were their rural counterparts. More and better job opportunities continued to draw working women to city life, and older women, typically less burdened with child-care responsibilities, returned to the job market. The percentage of married women in the workforce also grew, with that group being particularly vulnerable to economic cycles. Certain professions remained feminized; one-third of employed women did clerical work, and women dominated the traditional feminine professions of elementary-school teachers, librarians, nurses, and social workers but made up less than 5 percent of lawyers, dentists, and engineers. Hispanic and black women still composed most of the private household laborers. Of the 165,000 black women employed in 1960, 159,000 of them worked in private households, domestic services, or as cooks, bartenders, and food servers.

Activism by organized or union women during the 1940s and 1950s brought improvements to workplace conditions or, at the very least, focused attention on problems specific to women workers. In 1941, for example, pressure from a woman's policy committee

produced state legislation allocating financial resources for a retirement system for teachers. In 1947, telephone operators from Texas locals joined a national strike against telephone companies in a demand for better wages, though with little success. As members of the Communications Workers of America, however, many of the same telephone operators struck several years later and persuaded the management of Southwestern Bell to air-condition their workplace. Women working in the meatpacking industry won concessions at midcentury for maternity leave and equal pay with male coworkers. In 1959, Mexican American women in San Antonio walked off the job at the Tex-Son Company (a garments factory) but failed to win concessions from management.

## Labor Unions

Membership in labor organizations grew during the war years, from 110,500 in 1939 to 374,800 in 1953. Ten years later, the number had risen by only another 20,000. As it had before, public sentiment in Texas worked against the growth of unions. The opposition stemmed from the traditional hopes and fears. Some insisted that outside industries would build new plants in the South only if labor remained cheap and compliant, meaning unorganized. Others saw labor unions as potential agents for unwanted political and social reforms, citing forced integration and alleged Communist infiltration. Indeed, the antiunion rhetoric of such politicians as “Pappy” O’Daniel and Martin Dies kept union bashing alive and well in postwar Texas.

The conservatives’ fear of unions only mounted with organized labor’s support of Roosevelt and the New Deal and President Harry Truman’s subsequent Fair Deal. The opposition to unions brought forth in 1947 a number of state antilabor laws, the most important of which was a “right-to-work” law that prohibited requiring any employee to join a labor union as a condition of employment. Other acts forbade deducting union dues from wages without the employee’s consent; mass picketing, defined as two or more picketers within fifty feet either of a plant entrance or another picketer (this was struck down by the US Circuit Court of Appeals in 1988); strikes by public employees (meaning those in government jobs or police officers, fire fighters, and others working for municipalities); secondary boycotts (meaning boycotts called in support of strikers); and the picketing of utilities. Another law made unions subject to antitrust legislation. Finally, that year the Republican-controlled Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act, which outlawed closed shops (a practice that required employers to hire union members only) and further weakened unions by mandating that even those employees who refused to join a union and pay dues would enjoy all the benefits of any union-negotiated contracts. State restrictions in 1951 further limited labor agreements that might otherwise have required union membership as a condition for employment.

Seventeen other states passed right-to-work laws; most of them in the South, among which only Texas could claim an industrial base. Union leaders maintained that state restrictions in particular and federal ones in general retarded the growth of labor organizations. The percentage of workers who belonged to unions in Texas never reached national levels, and the state maintained its reputation as a hostile one toward unions. Other factors contributed to the problems organized labor faced in the Lone Star State. Service and “high-tech” industries, of which Texas had many, expanded faster than did manufacturing, and therefore did not traditionally attract unions. Finally, immigrants from Mexico joined others in the competition for unskilled jobs, depressing wages and further discouraging

unionization. The successes that unions did enjoy were greatest in the centers of the oil and auto industries (Houston, Beaumont–Port Arthur, and Dallas–Fort Worth), although labor activists also experienced advances in unionizing parts of the garment, communications, brewery, and transport industries. Several reasons explain union survival at midcentury: many Texans considered unions as sensible representatives and spokespersons for workers' in their fight for better pay and working condition; by this time extreme attacks by the Establishment on so-called labor racketeers had waned; and Texas politics in general had moderated following the election of politicians more sympathetic to the problems of working people.

## **Texas Farms**

The postwar period from 1945 to 1960 witnessed the transformation of the family farm, with only 10 percent of the population still farming by the end of it. The trend toward larger, mechanized farms had led to the development of professional managers, absentee owners, scientific farming, and a dramatic reduction in the use of farm laborers. The number of farms had dropped to 227,000 by 1960, but over the same period, the size of the average farm had risen from 367 to 630 acres, and the total value of land and buildings per farm had increased fivefold to nearly \$50,000. Capital investments to begin farming on this scale were impossible for most family farmers, and the return on investment was higher in most businesses than in farming. The perfection of the mechanical cotton picker revolutionized the cotton farm. It encouraged farming on vast expanses of flat terrain, spurring the continued movement of cotton and cereal crops to the Rio Grande Valley and the High Plains. Concurrent advances in irrigation techniques and the application of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers allowed mass spraying and watering of large contiguous areas. Families that stayed in farming usually converted their operations into corporate entities that stressed efficiency, growth, and entrepreneurialism.

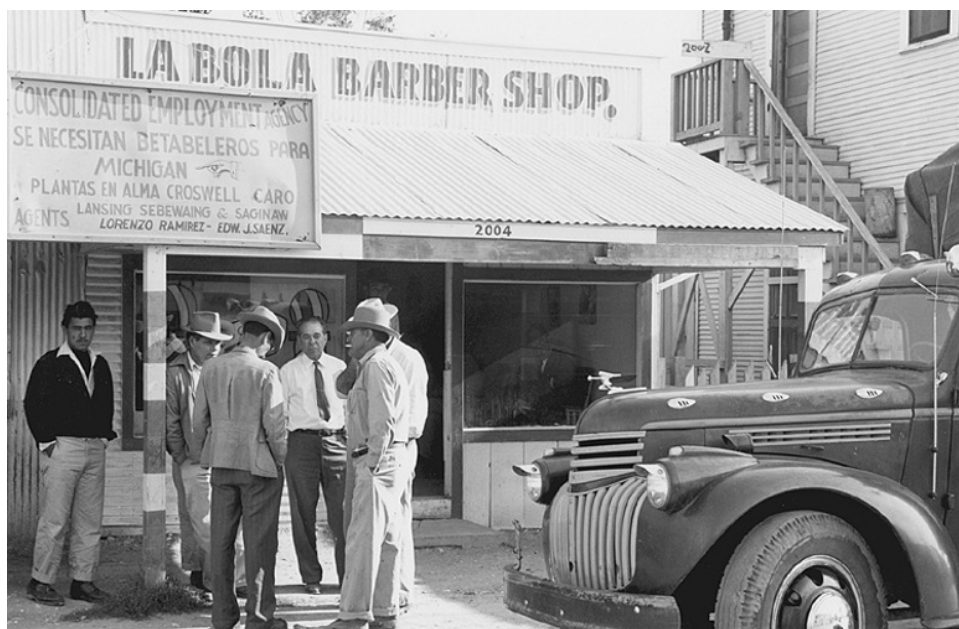
Statistics from 1960 verified the rapid growth of large farms. Texans owned more tractors than farms, led the nation in the number of trucks, and had 40,723 combines. Mechanization completed the labor shift begun during the 1920s: the 1960 census listed no croppers, and it revealed that tenants operated only one-fifth of the farms. Irrigation grew in importance, particularly during 1950–57, the worst drought in the state's history, and the irrigated acres in 1960 produced 50 percent of the state's cotton and 40 percent of its wheat. The drought prompted the legislature to appoint a committee to look into the problem of water resources in 1956, but legislators never acted on its recommendations; most people did not yet consider water a critical resource. Meanwhile, farmers generated more than \$2 billion in agricultural revenue in 1960, ranking the state number two, behind California. Texas usually vied with Iowa for second place throughout the period but led the nation in 1960 in the production of cotton and cottonseed, grain sorghums, rice, cattle, and sheep.

Economists gave a new name after World War II to the development of commercial agriculture and the supplying, manufacturing, processing, and merchandising industries that serviced it—agribusiness. Agribusiness soon outstripped the gross revenues from the sale of farm and ranch crops. In 1960, farmers spent more than \$17 million on pesticides, usually DDT, and more than \$50 million on fertilizers. Feedlots and beef-packing houses dotted the Texas landscape. The agribusiness receipts for \$6.2 billion in 1962 testified to the importance of agriculture to the state's economy, as did the ranking of food processing as the leading manufacturing employer.

Agribusiness attracted people to the major agricultural distribution centers of the High Plains and South Texas. The population of cities such as Lubbock actually increased at about the same rate as did those of the larger metropolitan areas. This meant that Texas urbanization differed from that of the northeastern United States, where big cities were politically dominant. The widely scattered urban areas of Texas tended to promote their own regional interests. Therefore, Texas cities quarreled over legislative priorities, and their lack of unity allowed representatives of rural areas to dominate the legislature, which largely ignored urban problems well into the 1960s.

The low pay for agricultural labor and increasing urban job opportunities also lured many minority farm laborers to the city. So, too, did the Bracero program, a contract labor agreement between the United States and Mexico between 1947 and 1964, and the rise of corporate, vertically integrated farms that preferred cheap migratory labor from Mexico to a local, permanent workforce (Figure 11.8). Wildcat strikes led by Mexican Americans in the Rio Grande Valley in the 1960s were, in part, a response to the depersonalization of the workplace.

Furthermore, the Texas Mexican community was subjected to disruptive drives designed to remove Mexican nationals from the state. In July 1954 the Border Patrol, in coordination with police authorities at the local and federal levels, implemented “Operation Wetback” and began roundups of foreign-born *Mexicanos*. As in the case of the 1930s repatriation efforts, the operation deported many undocumented workers, as well as intimidated many other immigrants into leaving Texas for Mexico. The sweeps proved divisive for Tejanos; many complained about the arbitrary nature of the arrests, citing the fact that some of Texas’s Hispanic citizens had been illegally detained. Other major organizations, such as the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), countenanced the removal on the



**Figure 11.8** Recruiters attempt to hire Texan Mexicans for migrant farm work in 1949. Source: Russell Lee Photograph Collection, VN II EF 23, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, the University of Texas at Austin.

grounds that “wetback” laborers were exploited and lowered the wage standards for resident laborers.

As farms grew larger and more affluent, the disparity between the quality of farm and city living narrowed. By 1960, 98 percent of all Texas households had electricity. The back-breaking work of farm housewives lessened, as many farmers could now afford washing machines and other household appliances. New technology improved the efficiency and lowered the cost of air conditioners, and Texas summers became nearly bearable. Similarly, the development of improved refrigeration technology allowed for more varied diets through the use of home freezers and regional locker plants.

Farm isolation decreased with the spread of radio and television. By 1955, the state supported 211 AM and 32 FM radio stations. The first television station, WBAP, went into operation outside Fort Worth soon after the war, and by 1950, San Antonio, Dallas, and Houston received television programming. The first public educational television station in the nation began at the University of Houston (KUHT), a 1953 gift of the former facilities of KPRC-TV from the Hobby family. By 1960, antennae dotted the rural landscape and adorned many a suburban roof, with 81 percent of the state’s households tuned in. Texas ranked seventh nationally in the number of telephones in 1960, by which time 55.6 percent of all farm houses had their own phones. The revolution in communications and transportation brought all Texans, at least all white Texans, into closer contact with each other and with the dominant value system of the nation.

## **The Texas Family**

Improvement in health care facilities and medical science meant that Texans, like all Americans, lived longer. Those born in 1958 had a life expectancy of 73.7 years for white females, 67.2 for white males, and 65.6 and 60.6 for black women and black men respectively. Part of the explanation for the newly lengthened life spans lay in the near-eradication of childhood diseases that had plagued prewar Texans. From 1934 to 1954, the percentages of deaths per thousand caused by influenza, measles, and whooping cough—the triple killers of the state’s children at midcentury—declined sharply. A corresponding decrease in the number of deaths per thousand for Texas children under the age of one testified to the positive impact of changes in diet and health care. Despite the improving conditions, in 1950 the national ranking of Texas for deaths before age one stood at forty-fifth for whites and thirty-third for blacks. The escape from the Great Depression and the impact of the return of so many veterans from war led to a rise in both marriages and births in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, the so-called Baby Boom. American culture of the 1950s celebrated women’s return to their traditional roles as wives and mothers and the concept of the stable family. These economic and social pressures helped explain the drop in the median age for marriage in Texas from 24.3 years for males and 21.5 for females in 1940 to 22.8 and 20.3 in 1950, where they remained for ten years. The percentage of married Texans over the age of fourteen increased from 62 percent of both men and women in 1940 to 70.4 percent for men and 67 for women in 1960.

Nationally, the divorce rate increased each decade, belying the popular image of the stable American family. The percentage of divorced Texans exceeded that of the nation. In 1960, 17 percent of Texas women were divorced, widowed, or separated, and their inability to earn incomes comparable to those of men pushed many in this category below the poverty line. Black Texan women fared worse than did white ones; black women led Texas in



1960 in the percentage of divorces, separations, and widowhood and fell below their white counterparts in the percentage (60.2 to 68.8) of married women. The percentage of married white males rose each decade from 1940 to 1960, whereas that of black males, although higher in 1960 than it had been in 1940, fell in the 1950s. The collapse of the African American family that began in the depression accelerated after the war, as limited job opportunities and discrimination exacted a high psychological toll on black males, particularly on young ones who had recently migrated to inner cities. By the middle of the 1960s, 24 percent of all African American families in Texas had female heads of household.

The average family size in the state decreased from 3.74 in 1940 to 3.36 in 1960. Black Texans' families (3.60) were larger than white ones (3.33), but their average household size had remained the same since 1940. The sharpest decline in family size was in rural towns with populations between 1000 and 2500, and the largest increase was in the urban fringe areas. The lack of need for children as agricultural laborers probably accounted for the smaller families. The size of African American families in rural farm areas, where blacks owned fewer and poorer farms, was larger than it was in the suburbs, while white population per household in the more-affluent suburbs led all other census classifications. The Baby Boom was ending by 1960, and new problems of a graying nation loomed for the near future.

## **Texas Schools**

The arrival of an urban economy and population accented demands that the state provide a better system of public education. The argument concerning schools that had started with the advent of business progressivism had changed little by the mid-twentieth century: improved schools, reformers urged, would invite new industry into the state by making it more attractive to prospective migrants and providing a better-educated workforce. These ideas clashed with older demands that taxes be held down at any cost and that teachers should receive minimum pay. Attempts to maintain a segregated system limited school reform, as did the assumption that local communities should retain control over their own school districts.

World War II and urbanization helped focus these issues for Texans coping with expanding cities and increasing school populations. In 1947, the legislature established a committee to propose revisions in the public education system. Three important laws, sponsored by Representative Claud Gilmer and Senator A. M. Aikin, came out of the recommendations of that committee, which had taken into consideration the facts that most Texas public schools had added a twelfth grade, broadened their curricula to include vocational training and the fine arts, and ranked in the lowest quarter nationally for funding of state school systems. Therefore, the three so-called Gilmer-Aikin laws of 1949 reorganized the public schools. One law established a state board of education, its members elected from each congressional district, which appointed a commissioner to supervise the Texas Education Agency. The other two laws required nine-month school terms for all Texans of school age, set minimum training standards for teachers, mandated the improvement of facilities, and established a formula for minimum teachers' salaries that included shared funding between the state and the local school districts.

These changes produced positive results almost immediately. Teachers went back to school to meet new state certification requirements, and teachers' salaries rose. Black teachers, who had received 79 percent of white teachers' incomes in 1947, now earned equal pay.

Special equalization funds to aid poorer school districts were instituted. The expanded powers of the state over the administration of local schools hastened the school consolidation movement, as did improved roads and transportation. The 6409 school districts were reduced to 1539 in 1960. Now, independent school districts outnumbered those of the common schools, and the one-room school had disappeared. In 1960, Texas ranked third in the nation in public school enrollment.

Nevertheless, critics of the Gilmer-Aikin acts were quick to list their inadequacies. The new legislation was financed by consumer taxes, and insufficient funding would continue to haunt the state's educational system. The minimum salary requirements for teachers, though improved, were still too low. Moreover, under the new laws those school districts that made the least effort to raise taxes received the greatest amount of aid from the state. Possibly, the best evaluation of the Gilmer-Aikin acts would be that they at least moved the state educational system into the early twentieth century.

Pressure for further changes in the public school system continued. The Russians' successful launching of *Sputnik I* (the first satellite) in 1957 made Americans suddenly worry that the United States lagged behind the Soviet Union in science teaching and caused some to question the general effectiveness of the nation's educational institutions. Texans, as did most of the nation's citizens, demanded that their schools return to the basics and improve academic subjects. The fear that the Soviet Union might outstrip the United States in the struggle for world supremacy prodded the federal government to increase federal aid for public colleges and secondary schools. The professed need for high-quality instruction in the state, did not, however, push Texas into the forefront of education. Critics cited the unwillingness of the legislature to appropriate enough money for substantial reform as the reason. Although Texas teachers' salaries rose from an average of \$3231 in 1955 to \$5421 ten years later, as late as 1960 the state ranked twenty-seventh in the level of pay for public school instructors. State per-pupil expense followed a similar pattern; although state appropriations had more than tripled, the state ranking of thirty-two in 1955 dropped to thirty-nine in 1965.

After World War II, higher education in Texas blossomed and became a growth industry of importance to the state economy. Soldiers returning from service in World War II in 1945 for the first time had a government subsidy for a college education. Indeed the "GI Bill of Rights" sent so many veterans into the classroom that Texas and national colleges grew rapidly and changed in character. The veterans worked hard, brought a new level of maturity to the classroom, and demanded the offering of new intellectual disciplines of study. Through the efforts primarily of Senator Ralph Yarborough of Texas, the GI Bill, with some modifications, was extended to veterans of the Korean War. Another federal government stimulus to higher education was the 1958 National Defense Education Act (NDEA). Passed in response to the launch of *Sputnik*, the NDEA loaned money and gave outright grants to college students. These measures began the era of direct aid to students. The government additionally awarded grants to institutions and faculties involved in military and other research projects. The impact of these measures on higher education cannot be overestimated.

The total enrollment in Texas colleges numbered 39,000 in 1940, decreased during the war, then boomed to exceed 50,000 after the conflict. By 1960, 186,000 students took classes at a Texas institution of higher learning. The Baby Boom and more usual population increases maintained the growth of the student body until the 1980s. The integration of the public schools and an increase in the number of women seeking college degrees also contributed to the university population. The need for new institutions to serve expanding

urban areas led to the creation of Lamar State College in 1951, and integration controversies prodded the legislature in 1947 to absorb the private Houston College for Negroes and rename it Texas State University for Negroes, later called Texas Southern University. Expansion of public institutions of higher learning continued, and between 1960 and 1980 the state established thirty new public senior colleges, systems, or branch campuses.

Although private colleges have always played a significant role in the education of Texans, most students chose to attend public institutions. Several factors contributed to this development. The size of the state system allowed students to go far away from home or stay nearby and still attend a public college. By the end of senior and community college expansion in the 1970s, all of the Texas population was estimated to reside within fifty miles of a public college. Tuition for in-state students was a bargain. As late as 1970, 94 percent of those attending a Texas college were born in the state.

The changing economy defined new roles for the state's institutions of higher education. With more demands for technical training and a greater number of older students returning to college, the community college expansion that had started before the war continued thereafter. Most of these colleges separated themselves from public school administrations after World War II. The community colleges changed their curricula accordingly, their course offerings including technical subjects and, generally, more closely resembled those of four-year campuses. Four-year institutions, in turn, began to emphasize more research output from their faculties and the granting of more graduate degrees, with the University of Texas leading the way. The new designation of most state colleges as universities signaled this change in emphasis. Private and public universities in 1960 granted about 4000 graduate degrees.

Many of the struggles for improvements in education took place against the backdrop of fights to end segregation, campaigns waged separately by the state's largest minority groups, Mexican Americans and African Americans. Although racism, discrimination, and segregation victimized both peoples, they did not find mutual agreement for fighting a common battle. Several obstacles thwarted any such possible alliance, foremost among them, each group harbored racial stereotypes of the other. Neither side, moreover, had particular interests in the other's struggle. In fact, their respective organizations—the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and LULAC—had different aims: the former worked for rights of blacks while LULAC for the rights of Mexican Americans as “white” citizens. Whereas the NAACP defined integration as a right to mix on a basis of equality with both Anglos and Mexicans, LULAC and other Tejanos looked at integration as involving only themselves and white Texans. Indeed, a preference for established traditions separating blacks from Mexicans led some Mexican American leaders to resent gains made by African Americans, for they foreboded black/Mexican mixing. African Americans, in turn, felt that Mexican Americans profited from black advances, which also augured the elimination of Jim Crow for Texas Mexicans.

In the case of Texas Mexicans, LULAC and the American GI Forum led the drive for educational rights. The latter organization grew out of the frustrations experienced by Hispanic World War II veterans who faced difficulties in acquiring financial and medical benefits from the Veterans Administration. Founded in 1948 by Dr. Héctor P. García, a Corpus Christi physician and combat veteran in the European Theater, the GI Forum gained national notoriety in 1949 when it publicly challenged a funeral director at Three Rivers, Texas, who refused to handle chapel services for Félix Z. Longoria, a soldier killed in the Philippines during World War II. (The funeral director never gave in, and Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson arranged for Longoria to be buried with honors at Arlington National Cemetery

and attended the funeral personally. A state legislative investigation ended inconclusively.) Although both LULAC and the GI Forum fought to address similar issues, the latter organization more boldly challenged dominant institutions and white stereotypes about Mexican Americans. Together, the organizations worked with an outstanding group of Texas Mexicans, many of whom belonged to both. Among these professionals were Alonso S. Perales, J. T. Canales, James Tafolla, George I. Sánchez, Carlos E. Castañeda, Héctor P. García, Gus C. García, John J. Herrera, Félix Tijerina, and numerous others whose distinction as a group was not rivaled by any previous Tejano generation.

The organizations encouraged wider participation in mainstream institutions to break down prejudices against Mexican Americans. They conducted poll-tax drives—paying people's poll taxes and getting them out to vote—to awaken politicians to the demands of Texas Mexicans, and they sued in the federal courts for legal and educational rights. In *Delgado v. Bastrop Independent School District* (1948), Texas Mexican lawyers convinced a federal court that the segregation of Mexican Americans violated the Fourteenth Amendment. Gus C. García and other distinguished Tejano attorneys won another landmark case in 1954, when the US Supreme Court ruled in *Hernández v. The State of Texas* that qualified Mexican Americans could not be excluded as jurors in their communities of residence.

The organizations combined legal actions with self-help drives for better educational opportunities for Tejanos. They conducted back-to-school drives, held fundraising dances for scholarships, and pressured local school boards to stop de facto segregation. In 1957, LULAC national president Felix Tijerina of Houston introduced the "Little School of the 400." The project won legislative support in 1959 and may have been the model for the present Head Start program. The activism of LULAC and its liberal allies slowly eroded the old system of race relations. By 1960, schools were legally integrated in theory if not in fact, as were juries. Virulent forms of racism began to dissipate in the late 1950s, as court decisions and agitation by labor unionists, minorities, and liberals within the Democratic Party fought against prejudice. The election of new leaders to national office such as Ralph Yarborough and Lyndon Baines Johnson gave new voice to minority complaints. In the state legislature, Henry B. González of San Antonio (Figure 11.9) and Abraham Kazen of Laredo joined other liberals in the fight against institutionalized segregation.

The issue of segregation of public education focused, however, on the African American community. The demand of black leaders for educational equality had begun during World War II, but the integration of the public schools met far more white opposition than had the ending of the all-white primary system. Americans had always believed that the public schools were agents for social advancement, and the possibility of integration conjured up white people's fears of interracial marriages, moral decay, and collapsing academic standards. Besides, for most white Texans, segregated public institutions validated the presumed inferiority of black persons.

The 1940 convention of the NAACP, which outlined goals of equal suffrage and education for African Americans, knew well the attitude of many whites and therefore decided to first use the courts to secure the vote and then to end segregation. Thurgood Marshall argued that lawsuits to force the enrollment of qualified black students in professional and graduate schools would least antagonize whites. After the successful 1944 dismantling of the all-white primary in Marshall, Texas, Antonio Maceo Smith, Carter Wesley, and John J. Jones, president of the NAACP, decided to sue the University of Texas (UT, 1946) for the admission of a black student to its school of law on the grounds that no school in Texas offered black people a law education. At the recommendation of Lulu B. White, the executive director of the NAACP's Houston chapter, Heman Marion Sweatt (Figure 11.10), a post



**Figure 11.9** Henry B. González (center) conferring with supporters during the 1958 governor's race. Source: Russell Lee Photograph Collection, DI 00237, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, the University of Texas at Austin.

office employee in the Bayou City, agreed to become the plaintiff and seek admittance to UT's law school. The conservative leadership in the state attempted to thwart the suit by broadening educational programs at Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College and changing the name of that institution to Prairie View University, incorporating Texas Southern University into the state system, and establishing an all-black law school in a building roughly a block away from the state capitol. In response, NAACP attorneys changed their strategy to one that argued that the University of Texas's excellent reputation in law meant that any rival segregated institution necessarily offered an inferior degree. The Supreme Court agreed in the 1950 *Sweatt v. Painter* decision and ordered the integration of UT's law school.

Integration of undergraduate education soon followed. Del Mar Junior College, Amarillo College, and a few others integrated in 1952, and by 1955 Texas Western (University of Texas at El Paso) accepted (twelve) black undergraduates; it was the first public four-year college to do so. The University of Texas and Southern Methodist University (SMU) admitted black undergraduates by 1956, although the dorms and cafeterias at UT remained segregated until 1959.

Except for disturbances that prevented black Texans from enrolling at Texarkana Junior College in 1955 and another that failed to do so at Lamar State College in 1956, the integration of the state system of higher education proceeded without a great deal of tension. Still, other black educators and students met other hurdles. Faced with more choices of schools and disparities in tuition costs, black students chose public colleges more often than they did one of the thirteen private black institutions, which consequently suffered a decline in enrollment and increased financial difficulties. New fights for equal status arose over such



**Figure 11.10** Heman Sweatt in registration line at the University of Texas. Source: UT Student Publications, Inc., CN 00323B, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, the University of Texas at Austin.

issues as minority faculty appointments, integrated dormitories, and percentages of minority students in previously all-white colleges. Those calls would blend with other demands to characterize the turbulent search for reform in the 1960s.

College students and their parents accepted integration with less complaint than did those in the public schools. In *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), the Supreme Court ruled that segregated schools were inherently unequal and thus unconstitutional. A public opinion poll reported in 1955 that white Texans opposed integration by four to one, whereas black Texans supported desegregation by two to one. Although later polls would show a weakening of white support for Jim Crow schools, the integration process in Texas was both a slow and a painful one. Not willing to comply with federal mandates, school districts redrew their boundaries to maintain all-black schools, instituted very gradual methods of integration for black children, and simply appealed the court rulings to keep their institutions segregated as long as possible. By 1957, some 120 school districts had instituted some form of integration. Among those that had not were some in Dallas and Houston. Ten years after the decision in *Brown*, only about 5 percent of the state's black children attended integrated schools—that paltry figure exceeded the percentage in other ex-Confederate states. Although the bitter violence that marked the Deep South's response to the struggle for racial equality mostly bypassed Texas, the maintenance of segregation and the issue of social justice would shape many of the state's political battles in the 1950s and 1960s.

Other issues brought Texas's public educational institutions under attack in the 1950s. Many Texas Regulars, the group that had originated with campaigns against the New Deal and for the endorsement of segregation, thought that University campuses, particularly the University of Texas, harbored faculties who were too liberal. Governors O'Daniel and Stevenson appointed a number of the Regulars and others of similar political persuasion to UT's board of regents. The regents voted in 1942 to fire four economics professors because of their New Deal tendencies, but the president of the university, Homer Price Rainey, refused to do so. In turn, the regents tried to abolish faculty tenure. The conflict between Rainey and the board heated up in 1944 over the regents' demands that John Dos Passos's novel *USA* be removed from the English Department's supplemental reading lists. After Rainey denounced this action at a faculty meeting, the board fired him. The controversy spilled over into the political campaign for governor in 1946 when Beauford Jester defeated Rainey in that race. But the issue of academic freedom that the Rainey episode raised continued into the 1950s. On several occasions, the University of Texas regents censored the *Daily Texan*, a paper edited by Willie Morris, who later achieved some literary fame. The editor responded by printing the paper with blank columns as a protest against censorship. Elsewhere, there seemed a demand for conformity on college campuses that implied that any change or debate threatened society. Conservatives' suspicions of university communities, who in turn doubted the state's commitment to free academic inquiry, pointed the way to the campus battles of the 1960s.

The political conflicts in higher education illustrated a broader problem in society. The Cold War tensions of the late 1940s and early 1950s caused deep anxieties and frustrations in the North American psyche. Despite huge expenditures for national defense, the United States could no longer unilaterally direct international events, and the Soviet Union's acquisition of atomic weapons threatened the very existence of the nation. Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin rose to national prominence by hurling unsubstantiated allegations of mass subversion of North American institutions by Communists, which resulted in the nation's second Red Scare. Quickly, this anti-Communist fervor known as "McCarthyism" dominated much of early postwar politics. The Red Scare merged with societal tensions produced by urbanization and the new willingness of minority groups to challenge openly the old power structure. Consequently, many decried any action that lessened the power of local elites—for example, calls for civil rights, expanded powers of the federal government, and labor union growth—as "un-American."

In Texas, McCarthyism might have fueled the Red Scare, but W. Lee O'Daniel and Martin Dies had laid the groundwork for militant anti-Communism before the end of World War II. And in several of their political races in the 1940s, both Coke Stevenson and Lyndon Johnson campaigned on platforms that accentuated their tough stance against the spread of Communism. The anti-Communist hysteria also affected local politics in Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio, where organizations such as the Minute Women crusaded against what they identified as threats to the American way of life. The Minute Women of Houston and their allies forced George W. Ebey, the superintendent of the Houston public schools, out of office. The attack directed at Ebey brought together those who opposed integration, New Deal reforms, and progressive education. Smaller communities and local organizations embraced the Red Scare, too. The drive to stop subversion included removing suspect books from library shelves, not permitting liberal speakers or performers to appear at public forums, purging exhibitions of presumed left-leaning art, and the removal of teachers or texts with allegedly socialist tendencies. A rigorous investigation to rid the state school system of subversive teachers turned up a total of one Communist among 65,000 employees.

McCarthyism faded away in the state and in the nation in the mid-1950s, but the residue of the Red Scare remained. Its militancy framed a pattern of resistance in the public schools that discouraged the discussion of controversial topics or the state adoption of textbooks that contained them. One obvious long-term effect of the Red Scare was that the legislative requirement that students and public employees sign loyalty oaths lasted well into the 1960s.

### **Texas Society and Culture at Midcentury**

The pressures that industrialization exerted on society in the 1950s were not apparent to most observers at the time. Contemporary social commentators wrote of a society that endorsed middle-class values and strove for consensus and conformity. The advent of World War II and the ending of the Great Depression fostered a robust consumer culture fueled by a growing middle class and an explosion in new advertising media. Blue-collar workers and young executives alike returned from work to their suburban homes, changed into leisure clothes, and went out for recreation (Figure 11.11). In addition, the decline of European immigration by this time added to the sense of a homogenized society. Folk festivals in celebration of the German or Czech roots of Texas communities had become more events of nostalgia than sources of ethnic identification. Still, with at-large voting determining the outcome of most elections for local offices of Texas cities, white elites still controlled positions of community power.



**Figure 11.11** Recently returned World War II veteran purchasing a shotgun in a general sporting and dry goods store, Azle, Texas, late winter, 1945. Courtesy of Robert A. Calvert.



## Religion

All of the many changes in the postwar years notwithstanding, Texas retained its Protestant roots. Church attendance fell during the 1930s, but national estimates placed church membership at 60 percent of the population by 1960. Texans undoubtedly matched and probably exceeded the national average. An unofficial census based on figures some individual denominations provided for the *Texas Almanac* in 1953 verified several trends. The Roman Catholic Church had more than doubled in adherents, from 604,000 in 1936 to 1,332,187, and it remained the largest single denomination. The Southern Baptists, the fastest-growing Protestant denomination, quadrupled in the same period, to 1,262,451 members. Their number did not include the more than 500,000 African American Baptists, who held similar theological, if not racial, views. Another approximately 100,000 black people belonged to Methodist church bodies, and 679,000 whites cited membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The Presbyterians at this time claimed 228,000 adherents. The Disciples of Christ, with 74,990 members in 1936, was the fourth-largest white Protestant denomination, with 117,421 members, in 1953. Other Protestant faiths of some size included the Episcopal Church, 94,626, the American Lutherans, 69,042, the Evangelical Lutherans (Missouri synod), 53,302, and The Assemblies of God, 50,000. The number of Jewish congregations fell from 60 to 40 in the period, but the total membership rose to 50,000.

The electronic church, a sobriquet popular in the 1980s, did not yet enjoy an enthusiastic following in the 1950s. Nevertheless, with the growing influence of television and radio, evangelical sermons were broadcast throughout Texas. Many of these messages were received by an audience well schooled in fundamentalist values. The growth of the new media pointed toward a change in the political directions of some fundamentalist philosophies. Although a blending of fundamentalism and politics was certainly not unknown in Texas history, in the 1960s new programs such as *Life Line* from Dallas and Billy James Hargis's *Christian Crusade* out of Tulsa, Oklahoma, flooded the airwaves with anti-Communist rhetoric. The programs turned many of their followers into "holy warriors" who stood firm against "infidels" advocating any kind of reform. The 1960 presidential election of John F. Kennedy, a Roman Catholic whom many in Texas considered a northeastern elitist and proponent of integration, contributed to the growth in Texas as well as the other Sunbelt states, of what became known as the "religious right."

## Leisure activities

The types of leisure activities undertaken by the more affluent Texans changed with urbanization. There was no state allocation for the Texas Park Board until 1933. Soon after the war, however, some two million persons visited the thirty-eight state parks, and the advent of tourism in Texas had begun (Figure 11.12). The tourist industry evolved into an important segment of the state's economy by the end of the 1940s, with San Antonio becoming the leading tourist destination. The film industry that had flourished during the depression continued to attract huge numbers of moviegoers in the 1950s. The Lone Star State sent its fair share of natives to silver-screen stardom, including Ginger Rogers, Audie Murphy, Linda Darnell, Gene Autry, Debbie Reynolds, and Ann Sheridan. *The Alamo* and *Giant* were the two best-known films made in Texas in the 1950s. They captured in a cultural sense the outsiders' view of the state, a land of bold adventurers and wealthy oil moguls.



**Figure 11.12** “Horseback swimming” in Brackenridge Park, August 1938. Source: *The San Antonio Light Collection*, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 359: L-1920-E).

Another image long held by natives and strangers alike was that in Texas, sports were extremely important. High school football, for one, became a passion throughout Texas during the period after World War II. Several factors accounted for the newly generated interest and excitement. For one, with more leisure time available more people could regularly attend athletic competitions, giving sport at all levels a boost. Then there was the postwar prosperity. More money available to school districts permitted administrators to invest funds in modernizing athletic facilities, hire good coaches, purchase better playing gear, install lights, and finance Friday night trips to neighboring towns for weekly football showdowns. Football coaches during that era acquired increased community recognition, and respect for them locally heightened with their records of success. Many were the high schools that enjoyed wondrous times during the 1950s, among them some in West Texas such as Abilene High School and Brownwood High School. The former won forty-nine straight games in the mid-1950s and Brownwood High set incredible records under the storied coach Gordon Wood, who won nine state championships during a forty-seven-year career and today remains the most victorious high school football coach in Texas history.

Especially attractive to Texas sports fans was Southwest Conference football. In the 1930s, “Slingin’” Sammy Baugh and Davey O’Brien, both of Texas Christian University, and “Jarrin” John Kimbrough of Texas A&M captured the national spotlight. Baugh was an All-American in 1935 and 1936, and then was all-pro six times between 1937 and 1947. O’Brien won the Heisman and Maxwell trophies in 1938 and led his team to the college national championship. Kimbrough and A&M captured the national title the next year. Not until after World War II, however, did college football win the allegiance of so many Texans. Doak Walker of SMU symbolized the Southwest Conference’s national notoriety. The first

and only Texan named All-American three years in a row, Walker received the Maxwell and the Heisman trophies in 1948 and was elected to both the college and pro football halls of fame. In 1957, Texas got its third Heisman winner in Texas A&M's John David Crow, who went on to play in four Pro Bowls during his eleven-year professional career.

The so-called minor sports also attracted many Texas athletes, if not as many spectators. Fort Worth's Ben Hogan, one of the greatest golfers of all time, won sixty-eight PGA tournaments between 1938 and 1959, including nine major championships. Waxahachie-born Byron Nelson's record was only slightly less illustrious, with fifty-two career wins and five majors. During the same era, Houstonian Jemmy Demaret won thirty-one tour events, including three Masters' titles. Sports historians credit Mildred "Babe" Didrikson Zaharias of Beaumont–Port Arthur as the original driving force behind women's professional golf, and cite her as the greatest American woman athlete ever would be no Texas tall tale. As an amateur, for example, Didrikson set four world records in track and field, and she dominated the 1932 Olympics. She also won professional golf tournaments well into the 1940s. Rodeos retained a large following, with major expositions in Fort Worth and Houston, and the growing professionalism of the sport was apparent as early as the 1950s. Texas has not had much of a boxing tradition. Blacks and whites could not meet in the ring until 1955.

### Cultural activities

Texas may have accrued more fame for its sports than for its artistic endeavors, but along with city living the state acquired desirable urban amenities. The little theater movement that supported numerous local companies statewide in the 1920s lagged in the 1930s, but after World War II, several theatrical groups of note entertained Texas audiences. Paul Baker brought fame to the Baylor University Drama Department when his staging and direction of plays received favorable national commentary. After the university administration objected to Baker's production of Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*, Baker went to Trinity University, where he continued to win accolades. Baker staged productions, too, at the Dallas Theater Center in an innovative building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Margo Jones of Dallas, until her untimely death in 1955, and Nina Vance, the founder of the Alley Theater in Houston, drew much critical praise for their commitment to staging avant-garde and original works. Although Dallas and Houston remained the state's centers of artistic merit, local theater groups proliferated in other major cities and most minor ones.

In the visual arts, the group of regionalists known as the Dallas Nine, whose best-known member was Jerry Bywaters, continued its work into the 1940s. O'Neil Ford, an important Texas architect who made major contributions to the rise of historic preservation, became well known in the 1950s. Many of the state's artists were probably best recognized for their choice of regional topics, such as José Cisneros, known for his pen-and-ink illustrations of the Spanish Borderlands, or E. M. "Buck" Schiwetz, who painted watercolors of the Texas landscape. Others possibly earned somewhat more of a national standing—Allie Victoria Tennant and sculptors Octavio Medellín and Charles Umlauf—but the move of artists to nonobjective art in the 1950s impressed the faculties of Texas college art departments more than it did general Texas audiences. Nevertheless, Dallasite James Brooks, an important figure in the so-called New York school, and Robert Rauschenburg of Port Arthur left the state and earned national and even international fame. The artists of the 1950s also moved more into a search for their ethnic roots. John Biggers, long-time head of the Art Department at Texas Southern University, went to Africa in 1956 and produced a number of paintings on his experiences there, as well as other works on African Americans.

Texas supported three major symphony orchestras by the 1950s. San Antonio drew upon its broad musical heritage to create a symphony that appealed to mass audiences, featuring guest soloists and providing traditional programs as well as repertoires that resembled those of the Boston Pops. The modern Dallas Orchestra really started in 1945 with the appointment of Antal Dorati as conductor. It has since enjoyed varying degrees of success under a number of talented conductors. The Houston Symphony claimed the greatest prestige of any Texas symphony orchestra. First with conductor Efrem Kurtz and then under John Barbirolli the symphony gained national fame. In the 1963–64 season, Barbirolli took the orchestra on a tour of the East, becoming the first southwestern symphony to play before eastern audiences. Community symphony orchestras developed throughout the state, drawing on local musicians and guest artists, and those in Austin, Fort Worth, Odessa-Midland, and Amarillo have obtained regional notoriety. The exceptionally strong music programs at the University of North Texas, the University of Houston, and the University of Texas at Austin, as well as very good fine arts programs at many other Texas colleges, added to the availability of serious music for Texans. Two UT-trained composers, Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt, made history with their off-Broadway show *The Fantasticks*, which was the longest-running musical ever.

San Antonio established the state's first resident opera company in 1945. Fort Worth soon followed in 1946, and by the late 1950s the Houston Grand Opera Company and the Dallas Civic Opera had been formed. The Dallas company opened in 1957 with Maria Callas in concert, and by the 1960s it was considered a regional company of national significance. Famed tenor Plácido Domingo is among the international stars who made their American debuts in Dallas. Dallasites could also hear world-class opera; starting in 1939, the Metropolitan Opera's touring company performed in Dallas each spring. All told, if one added the increasing prestige of the Houston Grand Opera, the touring companies, and the development of dance companies—in particular the Houston Ballet—a fair assessment might be that Texas struggled but made significant progress in the fine arts.

Popular music had fewer problems capturing a statewide following. Since World War II, the State Fair of Texas has brought recent Broadway attractions to Dallas (including Texan Mary Martin in 1947). The State Fair extended its control over the Starlight Operetta and put on summer musicals of a similar nature. The Casa Mañana, started by Billy Rose in Fort Worth to celebrate the Texas Centennial, started hosting musicals after the war, as did Houston. By the 1960s, most Texas cities had community theaters, and Dallas and Houston were beginning to attract touring Broadway productions.

The major cities also hosted jazz performances. The music program at North Texas State University even offered a major in jazz, and the university's official jazz ensemble, the One O'Clock Lab Band, entertained a national following through its tours and records. In addition, students formed local groups that played throughout the area, and some of the young musicians went on to join national orchestras and bands. Although Texas never developed a distinctive "jazz" sound, as did some other southern states, black Texans Ornette Coleman on the saxophone and Teddy Wilson on piano are listed as influential in the development of the genre.

The blues continued its influence on other forms of music, particularly rock and roll, which made Roy Orbison of Wink, Buddy Holly of Lubbock, and Janis Joplin of Port Arthur famous. By the 1950s, most large Texas cities had rhythm-and-blues radio stations that broadcast to white and black audiences, and local black Texans performed with regularity at clubs and in concert. Although not as well-known as blues musicians of the Deep South, Texans such as Lightin' Hopkins, Mance Lipscomb (Figure 11.13), and T-Bone Walker all became famous for their influence on the blues.



**Figure 11.13** Texas blues great Mance Lipscomb. Source: University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 77-215).

Country-and-western music, as it is now called, was the music most identified with Texas, and today Texas boasts of having more performers in the Country Music Hall of Fame than does any other state. Bob Wills, who pioneered “western swing” in the 1930s, along with such singing cowboys as Maurice Woodward “Tex” Ritter, were instrumental in creating the genre called western music, whose lyrics came from Tin-Pan-Alley but whose sentiments rested in a nostalgia for an older way of life. Long after the end of prohibition, Texas honky-tonk music thrived in local taverns and received wide play on the radio. New technology and noisy taverns encouraged the electrification of instruments. The country sounds of Texans Ernest Tubb, Ray Price, and George Jones, among others, incorporated all of these traditions, and their music followed Southerners to cities and became a national phenomenon.

The contributions of Texas Mexicans to country music had a long historical heritage dating back to the *corridos* (folk ballads) of vaqueros. Other types of Spanish-language music appeared in the early decades of the twentieth century, among them songs and dances known as *polkas*, *boleros*, the *valz*, and *huapangos*. Also popular then (and now) was the *música nortehña* (music with roots in northern Mexico but shaped by the Mexican American experience and musical tradition), best performed by Lydia Mendoza (1916–2007) (Figure 11.14), the legendary Houston-born “La Alondra de la Frontera” (“The Meadowlark of the Border”) whose singing career spanned from the 1920s to the 1980s. But by the 1960s, such performers as Sunny and the SunGlow, Trini López, René and René, and Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs had hits in mainstream musical circles. Most Tejano musicians, however, stayed with the traditional forms of music popular in the Mexican American



**Figure 11.14** Lydia Mendoza, whose singing career began in the 1920s, received the National Medal of Arts (September 1999) from President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hilary Rodham Clinton. Courtesy of William J. Clinton Presidential Library.

community, primarily that played by the conjunto and the orquesta. The most acclaimed of the former by the 1960s was Paulino Bernal and his conjunto, and among the most accomplished of the latter was Little Joe y La Familia.

The emergence of new graduate programs in history at regional state universities and the expansion of existing ones in the 1950s stimulated the writing of nonfiction works on Texas history. New faculty members in history departments frequently chose to publish on Texas topics, joining writers already working in the field such as Carlos E. Castañeda, who began his seven-volume *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas* in the 1930s, and Ruben Rendón Lozano, who produced *Viva Tejas* in 1936 to add the story of ethnic groups to the state's history. Business and economic history defined new lines of inquiry, as Joe B. Frantz, *Gail Borden, Dairyman to a Nation* (1951) and John S. Spratt, *The Road to Spindletop* (1957) pointed to new methodological ways to look at economic changes. Ernest Wallace and Rupert Richardson wrote extensively on Indians and the closing of the West. Biographies of major Texans appeared through the efforts of Robert C. Cotner, Llerena Friend, Herbert Gambrell, and Ben Procter. J. Milton Nance wrote a massive two-volume work on the Texas Republic. New approaches to western history came through the work of Frantz, J. Evetts Haley, W. C. Holden, C. L. Sonnichsen, Wayne Gard, and others. Most of these Texas historians, though, continued to focus on nineteenth-century topics: the Texas Revolution and Republic, the Civil War, Cowboys, Indians, the "frontier," and biographies of great men. Any significant movement away from the heroic topics and themes would have to wait for a new generation of scholars who began writing in the 1970s. This coterie of academicians would focus on social history, urbanization, pre-Depression rural life, particular regions, and pay more serious attention to neglected periods such as that of the colonial era.

The decades since World War II offered new outlets for historical scholarship about Texas. The founding of the University of Texas Press in 1950, first directed by Frank

Wardlaw, and the publications of the Texas State Historical Association, which include the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* and *The Handbook of Texas* (now online), guided scholarly interest in the state in the 1950s. Since then, the establishment of the Texas A&M University Press, also first directed by Wardlaw, and the creation of the *East Texas Historical Journal*, the *West Texas Historical Association Year Book*, and the *Journal of South Texas* furnished additional opportunities to publish scholarly writings.

A distance of another generation may be necessary for the judgment of literary trends. Nevertheless, as early as the 1970s, scholars asserted certain tenuous evaluations of Texas literature. From the 1930s until their deaths, the work of J. Frank Dobie (d. 1964), Walter Prescott Webb (d. 1963), and Roy Bedichek (d. 1959) cast an aura over Texas literature. Although later critics faulted Dobie for his unscientific approach to folklore, his influence in the Texas Folklore Society encouraged the work of William A. Owens, John and Allan Lomax, Mody Boatwright, Wilson Hudson, Francis Abernathy, J. Mason Brewer, and Américo Paredes. Brewer's poetry and work in folklore led the Texas Institute of Letters to elect him as its first black member. Paredes's study of the corrido, *With His Pistol in His Hand* (1958), told the Texas-Mexican view of Gregorio Cortez, a poor tenant farmer in Karnes County who in 1901 ran into a deadly encounter with the law over a mistranslation concerning a stolen horse. Both of these writers, plus the others mentioned previously, were more selective and systematic in their treatment of folk tales than was Dobie, and their work and that of younger scholars made the Publications of the Texas Folklore Society an important source for the culture of the state. The final evaluation of the art of Dobie, Webb, and Bedichek awaits the further passage of time, but any writer who turns to the cultural and historical traditions of the state owes all three men an unspoken debt.

The Texas literary mainstream historically neglected an interest in the works of women writers, although the previously mentioned Dorothy Scarborough and Katharine Anne Porter were gaining national attention as novelists by the 1920s and 1930s. In the 1930s and 1940s, Jovita González wrote at least two novels set in South Texas, although they were not published until the 1990s. Certainly a figure of much accomplishment during the period was Mary Lasswell, who wrote four novels (1942–53) about a trio of free-spirited matronly women who travel from one coast to the other helping strangers. Women scholars in the 1950s included Llerena Friend whose *Sam Houston: The Great Designer* (1954) remains a classic, and Julia Nott Waugh, who during the 1950s published works on the folk traditions of San Antonio's Texas Mexicans.

Other Texas writers left the state to locate close to the publishing houses of New York or in environments they identified as more conducive to intellectual endeavors. Katherine Ann Porter, who had left Texas in the 1910s, continued to write in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Her *Collected Stories*, published in 1965, won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize. George Sessions Perry wrote his classic *Hold Autumn in Your Hand* (1941), a sympathetic novel about a Central Texas tenant farmer, before going to Connecticut to pursue a career in journalism; he ended his troubled life in 1952. Edwin Lanham, who also moved to Connecticut, wrote about sharecroppers in *The Stricklands* (1939) and the oil fields in *Thunder in the Earth* (1941). These novels still attract a limited audience. Of those who left the state in the 1950s and 1960s and used their homeland for the setting of their books, William Humphrey of Clarksville and William A. Owens of Pin Hook may be the best known. Humphrey's *Home From the*

Hill (1958) and *The Ordways* (1965) rank as major Texas novels. Owens wrote a number of novels, including *Walking on Borrowed Land* (1954), which touched on the very tender nerves of race relations in telling the story of a black principal in the 1930s, but his best work may be nonfiction. His books on Texas music, tales from the oil fields, and *Three Friends: Bedicheck, Dobie and Webb* (1969) all established him as a scholar of note. Most readers will evaluate his autobiographical *This Stubborn Soil* (1966) and *A Season of Weathering* (1973) as two of the finer books on growing up in Texas, matched only by such classics as Stanley Walker's *Home to Texas* (1956), Mary Lasswell's *I'll Take Texas* (1958), and Willie Morris's *North Towards Home* (1967) as perceptive comments on life in the state. Other expatriates of note include Terry Southern, Donald Barthelme, William Goyens, Max Crawford, and Allen Wier.

Some writers stayed with traditional themes and evoked a particular feeling of the state and its geography: John Graves's *Goodbye to a River* (1960) and his later works bring together regrets of a passing Texas with problems created by the emergence of the new one. One might classify in this same vein the important contributions of A. C. Greene and Elroy Bode. Others have turned to historical fiction and written accounts of the West. Tom Lea, a painter as well as a writer, enjoyed wide acceptance for *The Wonderful Country* (1952) and *The Hands of Cantú* (1964). Benjamin Capps's *Trail to Ogallala* (1964) was chosen by other western writers as one of the top twenty-five westerns. Fred Gipson, author of *Hound-Dog Man* (1947) and *Old Yeller* (1956), was initially regarded as a storyteller for children but later as a quality writer about the Old West.

As the state attracted a more cosmopolitan and heterogeneous population, opportunities for journalists have become more plentiful, and the reflections on Texas of these various writers attracted a wide readership. John Howard Griffin published *Black Like Me* in 1961, a powerful personal account of living in a segregated society. Other reporters, such as Hamilton "Tex" Maule and Dan Jenkins, worked for *Sports Illustrated* and helped change the direction of sports reporting in the 1960s. Edward "Bud" Shrake and Gary Cartwright left the sports pages to write novels and articles for magazines. Other native Texans who acquired a sizable readership from newspaper columns or as freelance journalists included Bill Porterfield, Thomas Thompson, and Larry L. King. King and Willie Morris were but two of the influential Texas writers of the 1950s or 1960s who had served as editors or writers for *The Texas Observer*, a liberal political magazine published in Austin. The *Observer's* original editor, Ronnie Dugger, went on to write a biography of Lyndon Johnson; another *Observer* editor, Billy Lee Brammer, wrote *The Gay Place*, the best political novel by a Texan. Furthermore, *Observer* editor Lawrence Goodwyn became a well-known historian. The *Observer's* presence in Austin, along with the University of Texas and the state government, made the capital city the gathering spot for those who wished to evaluate the state.

In the 1960s, a young writer from Houston (by way of Archer City) used his fiction to paint a portrait of life in twentieth-century Texas. Larry McMurtry's first three novels, *Horseman, Pass By* (1961), *Leaving Cheyenne* (1962), and *The Last Picture Show* (1966) take place in a small West Texas town that has been decimated by changes wrought by people leaving for the city and the passing of a rural way of life. Later, in a brilliant collection of essays (*In a Narrow Grave*, 1968), he explored the changes in Texas and what the end of rural society boded for the state. McMurtry's early works seemed to point Texas literature in a new direction—away from the Texas of cotton and cattle and toward a more complex and realistic view of the urban present.



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## Texas in Transition, 1960–1986

The 1960s ushered in a quarter-century of change in Texas, an era when the state's politics seemed to move beyond their parochial past, the economy reached new heights, and women and minorities made successful bids for rights long denied them. These changes seemed largely positive, and some of them can be traced, directly or indirectly, to the role of Lyndon B. Johnson, who ascended to the US presidency after the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas. Yet many of these changes were also paradoxical. Although Johnson's enormous influence served as a moderating influence on the Texas Democratic Party and in many ways enabled the growth of its liberal wing, it also elicited a conservative backlash that fueled the growth of the Republican Party, a trend that culminated in the election of Republican Bill Clements to the governorship in 1978.

The Texas economy prospered in this period, a prosperity that included significant diversification into such areas as the aerospace industry and biomedical science, yet it was the old Texas standby, oil, that brought to the economy to new heights—perhaps dangerous ones. And although the civil rights movement empowered minorities and women in ways that would have been unthinkable a generation earlier, the era ended with poverty and discrimination still common and many reformers disillusioned.

In its cultural life, Texas continued to move into the national mainstream, leaving behind the parochialism of its frontier past. Yet the romantic frontier themes would continue to have resonance, not just for ordinary folk who savored their unique identity as Texans, but even for artists and intellectuals, who continued to wrestle with what it meant to be Texan.

### **The Decade of Johnson and Connally**

Texas politics in the 1960s focused on the career of Lyndon Baines Johnson, who persuaded the legislature in 1959 to move the primary election to May so that he could simultaneously seek renomination to the Senate (Figure 12.1) as well as the nomination as the Democratic candidate for the presidency. That accomplished, Johnson maneuvered carefully between controlling the state Democratic convention and convincing the national party that he



**Figure 12.1** State Capitol Building. Credit: Ed Uthman.

represented western rather than southern values. Meanwhile, the Democrats of Texas organization attempted to extract a pledge of loyalty from each convention delegate but only secured a general resolution endorsing loyalty to the national party; conservative Democrats retained the state party machinery.

### **The 1960 presidential election**

Johnson campaigned vigorously for the presidential nomination. Sam Rayburn and other Johnson advocates worked to portray LBJ as an experienced statesman who offered wisdom and stability in comparison to his young challenger, Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts. But Kennedy was not to be denied. He projected an image of youth and vitality that many present-day candidates still emulate. Johnson, on the other hand, seemed like an establishment candidate, more at home in the Senate wheeling and dealing than he would be in the Oval Office. At the Democratic national convention in Los Angeles, Kennedy claimed the nomination on the first ballot. Then, to the surprise of the convention delegates, to the consternation of liberals, and to the bewilderment of many of Johnson's supporters, JFK offered the Texas senator the vice-presidential nomination, which Johnson accepted. Nonetheless, conservative Democrats doubted that they could campaign for a platform that endorsed civil rights and denied (antiunion) right-to-work laws.

Meanwhile, the Republicans nominated two-term vice president Richard M. Nixon for president and Henry Cabot Lodge III for vice president. Allan Shivers organized the Democrats for Nixon and joined with a very strong Republican Party organization that hoped to duplicate its successes of 1952 and 1956. Both candidates considered Texas's twenty-four electoral votes crucial to their victory. Extreme conservatives decried Kennedy's Catholicism and the civil rights planks of the Democratic platform. Johnson tried both to relieve liberals' doubts about his own beliefs and abilities and to keep Texas Democratic.

Then there was the ballot, on which Johnson's name appeared twice: for reelection as senator and for the vice presidency. The Democrats carried Texas by 45,907 votes of the 2,290,553 cast. The national election was equally close, with the Democrats winning by 118,574 votes out of the 68 million cast. Johnson's efforts and the "Viva Kennedy" clubs (organized by Mexican American leaders to rally the Hispanic vote in support of the Kennedy-Johnson team) helped carry Texas for the ticket. The Democratic machine in Illinois secured that state's electoral votes. Nixon's supporters would always argue that dubious votes from South Texas and Chicago had tainted the election. Those contentions never were proven, but Johnson's efforts in the South and in Texas undoubtedly made Kennedy president.

### **The Texas Republican Party after 1960**

Republicans in Texas looked upon the 1960 loss with a degree of optimism. Nixon and Lodge had received more votes in Texas than had any previous Republican candidates. Moreover, the Republican challenger for the Senate, John Tower (Figure 12.2), garnered more than 900,000 votes in his race against Lyndon Johnson—by no means a victory but a strong showing for a Republican. Tower had run for the Texas House of Representatives in 1954 and lost, but he remained active in the Republican Party and by 1958 was well known as a strong supporter of the national Republican leader Robert Taft of Ohio and an opponent



**Figure 12.2** John Tower. Source: *The San Antonio Light Collection*, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 359: L-6309).

of regulation of the oil and gas industries. A former college instructor at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Tower had been an unknown to most of the Texas electorate. He ran a spirited race against Johnson, however, capitalizing on Johnson's pursuit of the vice presidency while simultaneously running for reelection to the Senate. Tower's ability as a campaigner made him a strong contender in the 1961 special election to replace Johnson in the Senate.

After Yarborough's earlier victory, the law had been changed to require runoffs in special elections. Liberal Democrats split their vote for senator among Henry B. González of San Antonio, Jim Wright of Fort Worth, and Maury Maverick, Jr., of San Antonio. Republicans voted for Tower and conservative Democrats for William Blakley, once again an interim appointment to the US Senate. In the Blakley-Tower runoff, many liberal Democrats "went fishing," meaning that they voted Republican. Their argument for doing so was that if they helped to defeat extreme conservative Democratic candidates in runoffs, it would force the party to run moderate candidates, as well as force rock-ribbed conservatives to switch to Republicanism. Indeed, progressive voters' refusal to support a conservative Democrat may well have helped John Tower win election as the first Republican US senator from Texas since Reconstruction. Tower went on to win three more Senate terms. In 1966, the *Texas Observer* endorsed Tower over his conservative Democratic opponent, the former attorney general Waggoner Carr. In 1972, President Nixon's landslide reelection victory over Democrat George McGovern carried Tower to another victory, and he narrowly won a fourth term in 1978. Tower gave the Texas Republicans statewide visibility and credibility.

Despite the contentions of some observers, the growth of the state Republican Party did not ride on the coattails of Senator Tower. There was a strong grassroots movement afoot in Texas cities. Women volunteers had organized Republican clubs in 1952 and 1954 in the suburbs of Dallas, Houston, Midland, San Antonio, and other areas. Some of these clubs had sprung from attempts to control school boards or oversee the book acquisitions of libraries. Support among Texans for the Republican Party dipped after President Eisenhower sent troops to enforce school desegregation at Little Rock, Arkansas, but it rebounded after the 1958 Republican state convention condemned the national party's alleged liberalism. By 1960, the network of clubs had burgeoned from a dozen to more than twenty; by 1963, there were more than one hundred. The growth of these clubs demonstrated that many white middle-class Texans were moving into the Republican Party. The philosophy of these new Republicans even led many of the more-conservative Democrats to switch parties. The Republican Party then tilted even further to the right in the early 1960s. Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, whose opposition to federally mandated integration and big government made him the national hero of the Texas Republicans, gave the party strong and unified ideological roots, and Goldwater became the GOP's standard bearer in the presidential election of 1964.

### **Texas under Governor Connally**

The Democrats, meanwhile, remained badly divided, with the forces of Johnson and Yarborough vying for control of the state party. The liberals in 1962 supported Houston attorney Don Yarborough (no relation to Ralph Yarborough) for governor. John Connally, closely identified with Lyndon Johnson, vied with Price Daniel for conservative and moderate support. Other candidates included former attorney general Will Wilson and retired US general Edwin A. Walker, who flew the American flag upside down in front of his Dallas

residence to signal that the nation was in danger of collapsing from the central government's policy of forced integration. Connally led in the first primary and Yarborough finished second. The press characterized Daniel's campaign as lackluster, and one burdened by the passage of the sales tax during his administration. In the second primary, Connally defeated the liberal Yarborough by 26,250 votes. Meanwhile, Preston Smith, a West Texan who had served three terms in the state house of representatives and six years in the state senate, led all contenders for lieutenant governor. In November, Connally defeated the ex-Democrat-turned-Republican Jack Cox and was elected governor of Texas. The very conservative Cox, however, won 45.6 percent of the vote, and the Texas GOP added a congressman and won seven legislative contests: six in Dallas and one in Midland. The Republicans eagerly looked ahead to 1964, relishing the opportunity to challenge a divided Democratic Party, one that furthermore was led by President Kennedy, a man most Texans perceived as a liberal.

Then fate intervened. In Dallas, on November 22, 1963, Lee Harvey Oswald shot and killed President Kennedy and seriously wounded Governor Connally. Dallas had been home to a group of wealthy ultraconservatives who railed against the federal government, supported segregation, and dabbled in conspiracy theories. On the day of Kennedy's assassination, a full-page ad in the *Dallas Morning News*, paid for by members of the John Birch Society, had accused Kennedy of communist sympathies. As Kennedy had left Fort Worth for Dallas that morning, he had remarked to his wife that "We're heading into nut country today."

Ironically, it was a communist sympathizer, Lee Harvey Oswald, and not a right-winger who killed the president. The assassin's bullets, however, changed the direction of Texas politics. John Connally, little known to most Texans before 1962 when he won his first elective office, now was unbeatable. He had long been a friend of Johnson, serving as his secretary and organizing the famous 1948 senatorial campaign. In the 1950s, Connally had worked for oilmen Perry Bass and Sid Richardson and had lobbied for the passage of legislation in both the Texas legislature and the US Congress. Connally nominated Johnson at the Democratic convention, campaigned for the ticket, and in return was appointed secretary of the navy. His resignation from that post to campaign for and win the governor's office caught Texans by surprise. As governor, Connally achieved a national reputation and was reelected in 1964 and 1966 with only token opposition. Although he probably could have retained his post in 1968 or been elected to the Senate shortly thereafter, he chose to "retire" from public office. He served subsequently as President Richard Nixon's secretary of the treasury, switched parties, and conducted an unsuccessful campaign for the Republican presidential nomination.

In many ways, Connally was a conservative; he had little sympathy for the efforts of African Americans and Mexican Americans to secure civil rights. However, he believed, as had the old business progressives, that economic growth came from long-range planning, improved higher education, increased tourism, and attraction of out-of-state industry. He assumed that an active government should pass legislation to secure these goals. His first administration was only moderately successful. By the time of his second, he had survived the assassination attempt and through television had developed a positive image of strength and leadership. By this time, too, Ben Barnes had replaced Byron Tunnell as speaker of the Texas house, after Connally appointed Tunnell to fill a vacancy on the Railroad Commission. The Connally/Barnes team increased faculty salaries and university building programs, created a coordinating board for higher education, a fine arts commission, new intergovernmental agencies for water control and health care, and revised the state penal code.



Under Connally, the community college system was upgraded, the University of Houston joined the state system, and San Angelo College became a four-year school. The governor did not, however, enjoy unqualified successes. In Connally's last term, Lieutenant Governor Smith opposed many of his policies in the state senate. The legislature turned down a constitutional revision effort, the extension of gubernatorial terms to four years, annual legislative sessions, and legalized gambling on horseracing.

Liberals argued that the governor's vision of economic expansion for Texas was based on regressive taxation and excluded minorities and the poor. Liberal Democrats also chafed at Governor Connally's control of the state party machinery. In the 1963 congressional debates over what would become the historic Civil Rights Act of 1964, Connally separated himself from the Kennedy administration by opposing the public accommodations section of the bill. Connally later objected to several of the Great Society measures advocated by his good friend Lyndon Johnson. Moderate and conservative Democrats could consequently support the governor with enthusiasm and endorse his hegemony over the state Democratic executive committee. Connally exercised such control over the state Democratic Party that he led its delegation to the 1968 national convention even after he had announced he would not seek reelection. The governor's prestige and political philosophy, then, retarded the development of liberalism within the state party and—ironically, given his later conversion to the GOP—lessened the appeal of the Republicans.

### **The Johnson presidency**

Republicans faced other problems. The assassination of Kennedy sent Johnson to the White House. Now, with a Texas Democrat as president, any Republican hopes for statewide election victories in 1964 seemed dubious. Moreover, the assassination had occurred in Dallas, where *Life Line*, the Red-baiting radio program originated, where Edwin Walker lived, and where Adlai Stevenson, ambassador to the United Nations, had been spat upon and jostled by an angry mob. Dallas, the Republican Party's greatest stronghold in Texas in 1964, was a city anxious to claim an image of conservative moderation and escape from a national media representation as a city of racists and radical right-wingers. Moreover, Johnson brought temporary unity to the Democratic Party. He stifled conservative challenges to Senator Yarborough in the primary (Figure 12.3). He won endorsements by Shivers and Oveta Culp Hobby for his presidential election. Johnson's 1964 presidential campaign successfully identified the Republican presidential candidate, Barry Goldwater, as well as Texas Republicans with extremism and the radical right. When the ballots were counted, Johnson defeated Goldwater in Texas by more than 700,000 votes, and the Republicans had lost both of their congressional seats and all but one of their state legislative positions. Furthermore, George H. W. Bush, who had served as congressman from Houston and was considered by many to be the Republican candidate most likely to win a statewide race, failed in his bid to unseat Senator Yarborough.

The Johnson triumph did not damage the Republican Party in the same way, however, that Franklin Roosevelt's overwhelming victory in 1932 had. Now that Johnson represented a national and not a state constituency, he instituted the Great Society, an expansion of the programs pioneered in the New Deal and Fair Deal. Declaring a "War on Poverty," Johnson pushed through Congress programs including Head Start, Medicare, Medicaid, and Food Stamps. His Community Action Program, Jobs Corps, and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) initiatives sought to combat poverty by preparing the poor for work. Many



**Figure 12.3** The Johnsons, Humphreys, Connallys, and Yarboroughs deplaning in Austin, 1964. Source: Russell Lee Photograph Collection, VN RY9 64 4 3, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, the University of Texas at Austin.

conservative Texans and other Americans viewed such legislation with disdain. When programs failed to eliminate poverty, the programs became handy targets for conservatives who had opposed them all along. In addition, by 1967 the nation was sharply divided over the nature of the Vietnam War, the direction of the civil rights movement, and the rise of the youth movement—what became known as the “counterculture”—advocating radical social change. The Republican Party seemed a natural home for those who opposed societal changes. For those on the left who saw US involvement in the Vietnam War as a failed Democratic enterprise, the answer was to remove the party’s leaders. The ensuing divisions in the national and state Democratic parties would take more than a decade to heal. Johnson announced his decision not to seek renomination on March 31, 1968. The anguish of Vietnam ended his political career.

### **The 1968 elections and their aftermath**

The 1968 announcements by both Johnson and Connally that they would not run for reelection offered opportunities both to conservative and liberal politicians. The Democrats nominated Vice President Hubert Humphrey for the presidency. Humphrey, however, was not a unanimous choice; antiwar Democrats thought him too closely identified with

Johnson, and some conservatives objected to his earlier strong stands for civil rights. Governor George C. Wallace of Alabama ran for the presidency as an independent on the American Party ticket. His blatantly racist campaign was aimed at preventing any candidate from receiving a majority in the electoral college. As their candidate, Republicans chose Richard Nixon, now the acknowledged leader of the conservative wing of their party. Connally, Johnson, and Yarborough united their efforts on behalf of Humphrey, who carried Texas by less than 40,000 votes but lost the national election to Nixon. Although Wallace won the electoral votes of five southern states, he polled only 584,000 out of the more than 3 million popular votes cast in the Lone Star State. Texas political issues had obviously severed their southern moorings.

Although cheered by the national victory, state Republicans did not celebrate many successes. Senator Tower and three congressmen, including George Bush (Figure 12.4), constituted the party's national congressional delegation. Eight members of the Texas house and two state senators were Republicans. Liberal Democrats were equally disappointed. Don Yarborough led in the first Democratic gubernatorial primary, but Preston Smith defeated him in the runoff. Smith, in turn, triumphed over Paul Eggars, the Republican nominee closely identified with Tower, by a margin of 57 percent. Speaker of the House Ben Barnes garnered more than 2 million votes in the general election for lieutenant governor, the first



**Figure 12.4** George Bush at the University of Texas during his unsuccessful 1970 senatorial campaign. Source: UT Student Publications, Inc., DI 00236, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, the University of Texas at Austin.

Texas politician to poll that many votes. Many observers considered Barnes the heir apparent to the Connally/Johnson mantle and a future national political star.

The conservative Democrats, meanwhile, had adopted a strategy by 1968 that saw them win hard-fought primaries by rallying middle- and high-income voters to edge out candidates supported by African Americans, lower-income whites, and Mexican Americans. After defeating their liberal opponents, conservatives persuaded the traditional Democratic constituency to support them. Although some of the higher- and moderate-income voters deserted the conservative Democrats for Republican candidates in the general election, the willingness of the dispossessed and labor unions to support the Democratic Party nominees offset these defections. Nonetheless, the Republican Party in Texas displayed growing appeal. Many voters in the state's larger cities were now inclined to vote Republican, while new arrivals to Texas from other parts of the country did not possess the historical consciousness that had traditionally tied Texans to the Democrats.

Still, the 1970 election showed the continued success of conservative Democrats in Texas and the shrewdness of their political strategy. Smith again defeated Eggars, and more important, Lloyd Bentsen, Jr., a Houston millionaire and former congressman whom Johnson had forced out of the 1964 Democratic senatorial primary, defeated Ralph Yarborough in the primary. Bentsen attacked Senator Yarborough for his "dovishness" on Vietnam and his ties to the national Democratic Party. Yarborough defended the national party's stand against vested interests and pointed out his positive accomplishments as a supporter of civil rights and the originator of the GI Bill of Rights for Korean and Vietnam War veterans. But Bentsen prevailed, and after vanquishing Yarborough he turned back George Bush's challenge in the general election by warning labor, African Americans, and Mexican Americans that a second Republican senator would support Nixon's economic policies, which aided the wealthy. As the *Houston Chronicle* pointed out, Bentsen's victory dampened once again liberal Democratic and Republican hopes for a two-party Texas.

### **Challenges to the White Male Elite for Control of Texas**

Forces had risen in Texas by 1970 that both moderated and weakened the grip of white male Texans on the political system of the state. One of the major factors was federal intervention. The US Supreme Court ruled in *Baker v. Carr* in 1962 and *Reynolds v. Sims* in 1964 that both houses of a state legislature must be regularly reapportioned so that every senator or representative acted on behalf of roughly the same number of voters. This so-called "one man, one vote" principle altered Texas politics. In 1963, for example, after redistricting to conform with 1960 census figures, 42 percent of the Texas population could elect a majority of the house and 30 percent a majority of the senate. These figures betrayed the fact that rural and small towns, the center of conservative Democratic politics, gave the white elites disproportionate strength in the legislature, even as their role in the direction of the state's economy and society was diminishing. The control of the legislature by rural Texans also discriminated against minorities and Republicans. The inner cities were evolving into mostly ethnic ghettos and the suburbs into middle- and upper-middle-class enclaves. The former supported liberal Democrats and minority candidates, and the latter tended to elect Republicans. Court-ordered redistricting aided the growth of these political groups. Eventually, the concept of one man, one vote necessitated the abolition of multimember congressional districts, and in 1972, court suits restricted countywide legislative races in Bexar and Dallas counties. Some effects of these redistricting efforts were apparent by that

year, as Republicans won seventeen seats in the state house, three in the state senate, and four in Congress.

Another round of federal intervention had begun in 1964 when the states ratified the Twenty-fourth Amendment to the US Constitution, which barred the poll tax as a possible requirement for voting in federal elections. The Texas legislature retained the poll tax as a requirement for voting in state elections (one of only five states to do so) until the US Supreme Court ruled that a poll tax as a prerequisite for any type of voting violated the Fourteenth Amendment. Connally called a special session of the legislature, which passed a voter registration act that required annual registration by all voters during a four-month period that ended on January 31. This shortened registration period, purposely timed to end a full nine months before election day, was designed to hold down the number of voters. The Court struck down the Texas registration law in 1971 as an unconstitutional deterrent to minority voting. Since then, Texans have been able to register to vote at any time during the year, have been automatically reregistered by voting, and have been eligible to vote as long as they were registered thirty days before an election. The Twenty-sixth Amendment to the US Constitution in 1971 accorded the right to vote to eighteen-year-old citizens, lowering the minimum-age requirement by three years.

The third round of federal intervention involved controlling state election codes; it was manifested in the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Congress recognized that the low voter turnout among African Americans in the South was due to state or local voting restrictions. The 1965 act outlawed such procedures and provided for federal observers and officials to monitor elections and voter registration. Furthermore, southern states had to submit proposed election procedural changes to the federal government. Congress extended the Voting Rights Act in 1970, and in 1975 it broadened it to include Hispanics. It was extended for another twenty-five years in 1982, placing all Texas election procedures under continual federal scrutiny. The federally mandated changes in election procedures helped explain why the percentage of African Americans of voting age who actually registered to vote in the state grew from 35 percent in 1960 to 56.8 percent in 1970 and to 65 percent in 1976. During the same period, the percentage of whites who registered grew from 42.5 percent to 69 percent.

The lessening of voting restrictions changed the governing of many Texas cities. Ever since the Progressive Era, conservative white business leaders had used a variety of techniques to limit the influence of African Americans and Hispanics in urban politics. One such approach was the use of at-large elections, in which geographic districts or wards are abolished and the entire city is essentially made into one large district. Candidates then run in citywide or countywide races for city council or legislative seats, thus diluting the potential voting strength of racially or ethnically segregated neighborhoods.

Another way that the Establishment sought to limit the influence of the newly enfranchised voters involved the creation of well-organized political “associations,” such as the Citizen’s Charter Association in Dallas and the Good Government League in San Antonio. By law, city government in most Texas cities was nonpartisan, so in the absence of political parties, these political associations took it upon themselves to recruit and endorse whole slates of candidates and to manage and finance their campaigns. The associations, of course, selected their candidates from among their fellow elites, defending their actions on the grounds that businesspersons could bring disinterested rather than partisan political judgment to the governing of cities.

These practices came under attack, beginning in the 1960s. African Americans, Hispanics, and liberal whites put considerable pressure on cities to modify at-large voting.

In several cases, after 1970, these groups instituted legal actions based on the Voting Rights Act that eliminated or modified at-large districts.

The Establishment machines also came under attack. In the early 1970s, the Citizens Charter Association of Dallas, for example, lost the mayoral election and ceased to exist, and the conservative Good Government League of San Antonio was defeated by a combination of liberal and Mexican American voters. After the dilution of Establishment influence across the state, local political contests became more heated, and blacks and Hispanics won more posts. In 1970, forty-one African Americans held local office in Texas, ranking the state nineteenth nationally in total number of offices held by blacks; seven years later, the number more than tripled to 158, for a ranking of fourteenth. In 1970, local elective officials in Texas with Hispanic surnames totaled 723. Clearly, the number of minorities elected to local office did not match the percentages of minorities in the population, but by the 1970s Texas was overwhelmingly an urban state, and the majority of its citizens resided in areas where municipal governments made decisions each day that affected their lives. These changes and the increase in minority representation in local government were profound.

## **The Civil Rights Crusade**

### **Black Texans**

White elites did not voluntarily surrender power, nor did the federal government voluntarily decide to advocate minority rights. World War II gave racism a bad name, and struggles during the Cold War in the Third World further encouraged attacks upon segregation at home. The exodus of southern blacks to northern cities made the African American vote the “swing” vote in urban congressional districts and in those states with a large number of electoral votes. Philosophy, pragmatism, and politics combined to encourage national stands against segregation. Black organizations fought for the right to vote against the segregated society. New groups such as the Progressive Voters League and the Texas Club of Democratic Voters disseminated information on voter registration and worked otherwise to inform blacks about politics. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and allied organizations instituted suits against suffrage restrictions and gerrymandered legislative and congressional districts. The successful attacks on voting restrictions sent the first blacks since the nineteenth century to the Texas legislature in 1966: Barbara Jordan (Figure 12.5) to the state senate, and Curtis Graves, a graduate of Texas Southern University, and J. E. Lockridge, an attorney from Dallas, to the house. Jordan, who also graduated from Texas Southern University and held a law degree from Boston University, was the first African American woman to serve in the state senate, the first woman to give a keynote address at a national (Democratic) party convention, and the first African American congresswoman from Texas and the South. Furthermore, Jordan’s poise and eloquence as a member of the congressional Judiciary Committee, as it conducted its investigation of the illegal acts of President Richard M. Nixon and his administration in 1974 (the Watergate hearings), won for her a national following.

Increased political strength for black Texans doomed de jure segregation, just as voting restrictions in the early twentieth century had made de jure segregation possible. Blacks’ struggle to reestablish their civil rights, however, included court suits and the direct confrontation of segregated institutions. In 1954 and 1956, the Interstate Commerce



**Figure 12.5** Barbara Jordan, US representative of the 18th Congressional District of Texas, receiving honors after christening the USS Miller, the first US Navy ship named after an African American. Source: US Navy photograph from the collections of the University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio (MS 362: 73-1032).

Commission and the Supreme Court ruled against segregation on buses. Cafeterias in bus stations, airports, federal buildings, and the offices of municipal agencies desegregated by the early 1960s. Through negotiations with public officials and some court suits, public facilities such as libraries, parks, golf courses, beaches, and the restrooms and eating areas that served them, were integrated during the same period.

The idea of direct confrontation of segregated institutions (rather than relying on lengthy court cases) through nonviolent sit-ins that had begun in 1960 with student protests in Greensboro, North Carolina, spread to Texas. That year, students at Wiley and Bishop colleges staged nonviolent demonstrations. Protests and other forms of dissent against segregated theaters and restaurants were carried out by black and white students and their allies nearby the campuses of Texas Southern University, the University of Texas at Austin, North Texas State University, and other schools in 1961. In protest of segregation, the NAACP, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), headed by Texan James Farmer, and students at Prairie View A&M and some other colleges led boycotts of merchants in Hempstead, San Antonio, Austin, and Houston, as well as a few other places. Fear of bad publicity or loss of business persuaded most hotels, theaters, and restaurants to desegregate by the early 1960s. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and five state acts in 1969 that overturned older Jim Crow legislation ended de jure segregation.

Nationally, the nature of the civil rights movement changed after 1965. Young African Americans adopted the slogan “black power,” renounced a commitment to nonviolence, and demanded an end to de facto segregation. One result was a series of riots and fires in ghettos that began in the Watts area of Los Angeles in August 1965 and lasted through 1968; another was that the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and CORE abandoned black/white coalitions. In some cases, black power came to mean black separatism, or at least denying whites positions of power in African American organizations.

No ghettos burned in Texas, and only a few violent confrontations between the police and African Americans occurred. At Texas Southern in 1967, African Americans called a meeting to debate grievances over the public schools and police conduct in the ghetto. The arrival of the police called forth a hail of stones and bottles, and the confrontation evolved into an exchange of gunfire between police and students. One police officer was killed, possibly by a ricocheting police bullet, and five black students were indicted for inciting a riot; because of lack of evidence, they were never tried. The People’s Party Two, whom the police and the press considered a revolutionary group, and the Houston police engaged in a shoot-out three years later. Carl Hampton, the party chairman, was killed. Black bystanders said that the officers fired first, but the white media and public opinion backed the police. Black persons were similarly suspicious of the nature of justice in Texas when a Dallas court sentenced Ernie McMillan and Matthew Johnson, SNCC leaders, to ten years in jail for a protest that did \$211 worth of damage to a ghetto grocery store. Similarly, Lee Otis Johnson, a black activist from Texas Southern University, received a prison sentence of thirty years for allegedly passing a marijuana cigarette to an undercover Houston police officer. To African Americans, the sentences seemed too harsh, and good examples of white determination to suppress the black power movement.

By 1971, the backlash had set in. White Texans joined the national consensus that argued that the federal government had gone far enough in correcting societal inequalities with the civil rights acts. Pressures from state and federal agencies and infighting within the various movements themselves dissipated much of the reformist energies. Like most other Americans, blacks had grown weary of the controversies of the 1960s. The Texas political Establishment as well as many ordinary Texans took a dim view of President Johnson’s “War on Poverty,” which had created “welfare” programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Medicaid, and food stamps. These programs, which replaced the minimal aid that the poor had previously received through Social Security, were widely seen as government “handouts” to minorities, even though, numerically, poor whites were the largest group of recipients. By 1973, 120,245 Texas families were receiving AFDC, but Texas still ranked forty-first in per capita aid for all categories of public assistance from state and local governments. The decade closed, then, with legal segregation dead but with Texas not entirely desegregated, and with a War on Poverty that had not eliminated poverty. Many blacks believed that equality before the law simply did not exist and that the problems African Americans faced—rampant unemployment and unequal access to education and certain professions—would persist into the next decades.

### **Texas Mexicans**

The same kind of political activism that swept the African American community activated Texas Mexicans, and indeed, at key moments the two movements came together in



important, if fleeting, coalition. The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the GI Forum remained strong defenders and protectors of the interests of Mexican Americans as the 1960s began, but these organizations resembled the NAACP in that they shied away from active involvement in politics. The election of Raymond Telles as mayor of El Paso in 1957, and especially Henry B. González's campaign for governor in 1958, mobilized the Mexican American community and intensified the political activities of Tejanos. Although the Texas state senator lost the race, he left behind a political organization that plunged into the 1960 presidential campaign of John F. Kennedy. The veterans of the González campaign joined with other politically minded Tejanos, including some members of LULAC and the GI Forum, to create the "Viva Kennedy" clubs. The grassroots movement generated by these organizations did not die after Kennedy's election; rather it worked to buoy the political spirit, because Kennedy soon defaulted on his promise to appoint Hispanics to federal posts. The result was the founding of the Political Association of Spanish-speaking Organizations (PASO).

PASO endured growing pains in its early years, as moderates and militants argued over what direction the organization should take. The liberal element was in control of PASO by 1963 when, working with the Teamsters, it elected an all-Mexican American slate to the city council of Crystal City. The Crystal City revolution was short lived, however; a new coalition reclaimed the council two years later. Nevertheless, the Crystal City victory was both symbolic and very important because it notified Anglos that no longer could the white minority in heavily Hispanic South Texas rule unchallenged. In other words, Crystal City portended the passing of the old order.

A much broader and more intense political movement that united the various ideological and economic interests of the heterogeneous Texas Mexican community began in the mid-1960s. This groundswell, known as the Chicano movement, paralleled similar social revolts in the nation and in the state. LULAC leaders had opposed protest marches, criticism of mainstream institutions, or dramatic shows of discontent, but by 1965 they also began to adopt the newer strategies of protest marches employed by Mexican American college students, African Americans, women, and antiwar groups. The *movimiento*, as its adherents dubbed it, took on its distinctive characteristics with the summer 1966 farm workers' strike and march in the Rio Grande Valley.

The South Texas farm workers toiled under deplorable conditions and without benefit of union representation. PASO members in Starr County had considered striking before 1966, when a wildcat strike against eight major growers occurred almost spontaneously. The strike seemed preordained to fail, and the importation by the growers of Mexican laborers to replace the striking workers ("scabs") and the overt hostility of the Texas Rangers and local Starr County law enforcement officers swiftly broke it. Still determined, the organizers of the strike undertook a march to the steps of the state capitol to protest the plight of farm workers and generate sympathy for them. Governor Connally, accompanied by Speaker of the House Ben Barnes and Attorney General Waggoner Carr, met the hundreds of marchers at New Braunfels and informed them that by no means would he call a special session of the legislature or approve or address a Labor Day Rally in Austin to be dedicated to the exploited farm laborers. Now, thousands of sympathizers, including members of LULAC, the GI Forum, and PASO, joined the marchers for the last leg of the 290-mile journey. The sixty-five-day march became synonymous with courage, adventure, and justice, and it had only been strengthened by Connally's offering of a cold shoulder to the marchers. The whole affair galvanized the Texas Mexican community, and it catalyzed a militancy that would last until the mid-1970s.

The Chicano movement, so-called by the younger activists, actually comprised several movements, and these different strains clashed ideologically at times over the agenda of reform. The older middle-class organizations, although more outspoken than they had been in the past, still preferred to use mainstream channels to win concessions for their constituents. They, along with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) founded in 1968, instituted court suits to desegregate schools and challenge voting inequities. Younger groups, on the other hand, tended to be more militant and engendered more grassroots support. They prepared for direct confrontations with the Anglo establishment. Through the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) and the Raza Unida Party (RUP), they articulated a militancy that denounced white society for its oppression of Texas Mexicans and accused middle-class Mexican American leaders of being both fainthearted and accommodationist. The trademarks of the young included the use of the term *Chicano* and the embracing of the fashions of the 1960s (such as the wearing of long hair), the exhibition of pre-Columbian symbols of Mexicanism, proclamations of ethnic integrity, and the outcry for self-determination.

School boycotts, protest marches, and lawsuits against social wrongs marked the movimiento. Politically, RUP offered an alternative to the other two parties, which, RUP members argued, ignored the needs of Mexicanos. Two RUP candidates and the party's founder, José Ángel Gutiérrez, won seats in 1970 on the Crystal City school board, implementing a new curriculum and enacting other changes such as a federal free-lunch program. Ramsey Muñiz, the RUP candidate for governor in 1972, polled 6 percent of the popular vote and almost machinated a Republican victory by draining off Democratic voters. The example of Crystal City and the 1972 RUP race inspired similar efforts throughout South Texas. RUP had disappeared by the mid-1970s, having fallen victim to problems common to all third parties: they tended to revolve around a single issue, lacked strong organizational roots, and saw the initial enthusiasm they generated recede quickly. The 1976 conviction of Muñiz for engaging in a conspiracy to distribute marijuana also lessened RUP's appeal. The movimiento, like black power, moderated in the mid-1970s, but the social protest of the 1960s had dismantled Jim Crow and created a racial pride and awareness that broke old assumptions and the limits of ethnic advancement.

### **Efforts at coalition**

From the Great Depression on, there had been efforts on the part of African Americans and Mexican Americans to form coalitions with one another and with white liberals. In the 1930s and 1940s many of these efforts had come about as the result of the actions of labor unions, especially in the wake of the passage of the 1935 Wagner Act, which gave new powers to unions. The record of Texas unions where race was concerned was uneven, but in some cases "civil rights unionism," as it came to be called, offered the first real opportunities for grassroots cooperation across racial lines.

The first successful biracial political coalitions in the mid-twentieth century were local ones. Most notably, in San Antonio in the late 1940s, African Americans from the city's east side and Mexican Americans from the west side joined forces to get a black leader, G. J. Sutton, and a Tejano leader, Gus García, elected to local offices. Calling itself the Bexar County Democratic Coalition, the alliance remained strong for a decade or more, and in the late 1950s, its members joined forces with local unions to support two major strikes. The San

Antonio organization of African Americans, Mexican Americans, organized labor, and white liberals became something of a model for a statewide Democratic Coalition of Texas, which took shape in the early 1960s. This organization eventually supplanted the mostly white Democrats of Texas as the left wing of the state party. By 1963, the Democratic Coalition was a force to be reckoned with, and it lent its influence to a dramatic “Freedom Now” march on Austin, held the same day as the famous March on Washington, aimed at forcing Gov. Connally and the legislature to support civil rights legislation. That same year the Coalition formed Voters of Texas Enlist (VOTE), a campaign working to repeal the poll tax and to register voters. Although the poll tax remained, and legislative action on other civil rights issues was slow to come, the Coalition contributed significantly to the reelection of LBJ and Sen. Ralph Yarborough in 1964.

While it lasted, the Democratic Coalition supported numerous demonstrations and sit-ins, as well as the multiracial *Marcha* on Austin in 1966 seeking rights of farmworkers and a \$1.25 minimum wage. But political cooperation between African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Anglos has always been difficult, as the different groups often had—or perceived they had—divergent interests. Nor have the so-called black or Hispanic “communities” themselves ever been monolithic. Indeed at those important moments, such as that of the early 1960s, when multiracial coalitions did come together, it was often because the coalition members felt forced to reach out across racial or ethnic lines owing to *intra*-group disagreements. Nevertheless, the times when black, brown, and white activists did come together led to some of the most important achievements of the civil rights movement in Texas, and their significance should not be understated.

### Texas women

Urbanization and the rise of feminism also challenged the long-held restrictions that marginalized women’s role in society. Although they made up a majority of the population, women faced problems in employment and in public affairs similar to those of racial and ethnic minorities. The women’s movement of the 1960s and 1970s could build on the failed expectations of women’s experiences in the 1950s. In 1950, for example, women earned only 24 percent of degrees awarded nationally in professional studies and the liberal arts; by 1965, the number had grown to more than 40 percent. But these new degree earners found that the jobs offered to them were still mostly as salesclerks or secretaries. The 1960s, however, witnessed an increase in women’s demands for social and economic opportunity. Young women in Texas were involved in the civil rights movement, worked on such underground newspapers as the *Austin Rag* and Houston’s *Space City*, read earlier works by such women as Betty Friedan (who advocated equal wages and equal opportunity for women) and debated what role feminism should have in their lives. The impact of new birth-control techniques (such as the “Pill”) and the sexual revolution, as well as a willingness on the part of both sexes to delay marriage in order to first achieve a higher degree of financial stability or education, changed the primary goal of women in the 1950s of marrying and quickly rearing a family.

The federal government aided the cause of women. Although women had secured the right to serve on juries in 1954, it was not until after Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and later court suits that married women’s equal property rights were enforced and actions taken against discrimination of women in the workplace. Under Title IX of the Educational Act of 1972, colleges were required to institute affirmative-action programs.

That year, too, Sarah Weddington, an attorney from Texas, won a landmark case in the US Supreme Court, *Roe v. Wade*, legalizing most abortions during the first six months of pregnancy.

The political and legal activism of women's groups forced the male establishment to take note of their demands. The National Organization for Women (NOW), founded by Friedan to end discrimination in the workplace based on gender, established chapters in Texas in the 1960s. Women's rights advocates in 1971 organized the Texas Women's Political Caucus (TWPC) to promote political activism and participation in party politics. The efforts of these organizations and the Business and Professional Women's Clubs helped secure the 1972 equal legal rights amendment to the state constitution and the 1973 legislative approval of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the federal Constitution. Moreover, in 1972 Frances (Sissy) Farenthold's unsuccessful but popular campaign for the Democratic nomination for governor made many more Texans aware of political opportunities for women.

In 1977, with approval and funding from Congress, the National Women's Conference met in Houston. Led by prominent feminists such as Bella Abzug and Gloria Steinem, the conference embraced abortion rights, the Equal Rights Amendment, and gay rights. Across town, led by Fort Worth religious author Lottie Beth Hobbs and the Illinois-based Phyllis Schafly, conservative women held a massive counter-rally. That rally not only launched the "Pro-Family" movement but helped to spark a serious backlash against the women's movement. By the late 1970s divisions between not only liberal and conservative women but also within the ranks of the feminists, stagnated reform efforts, which had never succeeded in expanding much beyond the middle class. The ERA failed to achieve national approval. And the very success of NOW and other national organizations in changing abortion laws called forth a tremendous negative reaction among Catholics and fundamentalist Protestants, and Texas eventually enacted a law banning third-trimester abortions in 1987. The emergence of the Religious Right, organized around a "right to life" crusade, pointed toward a political ideology that stressed the virtues of home, motherhood, and what its adherents described as traditional "family values." It seemed opposed to many of the feminist aspirations of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

But the apparent decline of the women's movement was misleading, as it continued long after the militant rhetoric of the 1960s had softened. Women entered the workplace in the next decades in increasing numbers. Whether by choice or by necessity, two-income households became the norm rather than the exception, and that fact modified traditional gender roles and childbearing practices. Women as a majority of the population introduced new issues that politicians could not ignore. Consequently, a rather quiet revolution took place. Texas cities subsidized rape crisis centers and shelters for battered women, and national campaigns endorsed daycare centers and other issues of importance to working women. The state legislature, for example, enacted a spousal rape law in 1986.

Moreover, women entered politics more frequently and with more success. Women won 698 public offices in 1982, including the election of Ann Richards as state treasurer. Richards was the first woman to hold a statewide office in fifty years. Furthermore, she gave the keynote address at the 1988 Democratic nominating convention and was elected governor of Texas in 1990. Three women served in the state senate in 1987 and thirteen in the house, and Mayor Kathy Whitmire of Houston and Mayor Annette Straus of Dallas led the two largest cities in the state. The urbanization that produced new jobs and the feminism that demanded an increased role for women was finally eroding, albeit gradually, the prewar image of a macho Texas.

## Sharpstown and the End of an Era

The impact of minorities and women on Texas politics was not readily apparent in the administration of Governor Preston Smith (1969–73). He advocated a moderately conservative stance that differed little from that of the previous administration. Given his conservative philosophy, that moderation alone made his administration somewhat surprising. The governor himself, however, sharply contrasted with John Connally: Smith was not as articulate, nor did he present as attractive a figure on television. Smith represented West Texas, and his political support came from rural areas and small cities, not from suburbs, middle-class voters, or the urban business community. He encountered additional difficulties in that the public perceived of him as something of a political accident. Although he won two comparatively easy victories, many saw those as resulting from the weakness of liberal challengers, and they consequently saw Smith's administration as one in a holding pattern, waiting for Barnes to claim the governorship. Lieutenant Governor Barnes, handsome and well spoken—a national magazine ranked him as a leading young politician with the potential to become a US senator and possibly president—stood in the wings and sapped the governor's political clout.

Smith's two terms reflected his ambivalence about how forcefully a governor should push a program through the legislature, as well as the weakness of his political position vis-à-vis the state senate. Moreover, Speaker Gus Mutscher ran the house, and he held in disdain any legislation that hinted at reform. Ultimately, the governor's program met mixed success. He secured a minimum-wage law, development of medical schools in Houston and Lubbock, and spending for vocational education. The legislature turned down his request for a slight increase in taxes. The governor tentatively endorsed a 1969 Barnes/Mutscher proposal that would have eliminated the sales-tax exemption on food, but he then was embarrassed when a "housewives' revolt" forced the house to kill the bill unanimously. Urban voters rejected a water proposal that favored West Texas and seemed very expensive. The electorate also had turned down a proposed increase in legislative salaries, but it approved of lowering the voting age to eighteen and the legal sale of liquor by the drink.

Smith won in 1970 by a smaller percentage over his Republican opponent, Paul Eggars, than he had garnered in 1968. Some maintained that the Bush race against Bentsen, who had defeated Yarborough in the Democratic primary, turned out more Republican voters, while Smith's administration and Bentsen's victory convinced liberals to "stay home." Many viewed the second Smith administration as a lame-duck one before it even began, citing the assumed challenge of Barnes in 1972. But political arguments and personal ambitions gave way in 1971 to scandals that implicated or besmirched a number of the members of the legislature, overshadowed the governor's last term in office, and torpedoed Barnes's political career.

The federal Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) announced in 1971 a probe of Texas officials and some businessmen who allegedly profited from illegal manipulation of stock-market transactions. In a special session in 1969, a banking bill that would have exempted state banks from the regulation of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation was guided through the legislature by Gus Mutscher. Frank Sharp, who controlled the National Bankers Life Insurance Company and the Sharpstown State Bank, was the lobbyist and chief advocate of the measure. While Sharp lobbied for the bill, several legislative leaders bought stock in his life insurance company with money from unsecured loans from his bank. The officeholders then sold their stock to a Jesuit organization, which took Sharp's advice and paid over-the-market price for the shares. Smith and Dr. Elmer Baum, chairman

of the state Democratic Executive Committee, netted about \$125,000 from the transaction. Mutscher, two of his aides, and some other legislators also attempted to profit from the scheme. Smith, explaining that he had not understood the legislation, vetoed the bill. Sharp's empire promptly collapsed, the Jesuits lost their stock investment, and the SEC moved in to investigate the scandal.

Despite the charges of malfeasance, Mutscher attempted to retain his rigid control of the house. He appointed a committee of his friends to investigate the charges, and its report exonerated those accused. Nevertheless, a coalition of liberals, Republicans, and mavericks nicknamed "the Dirty Thirty" joined to denounce the speaker and the report and proceeded to rebel against Mutscher's heavy-handed tactics. The speaker in turn picked a committee to redistrict the house based upon the 1970 census. The 1971 plan drew most of the Dirty Thirty into districts in which they would have to run against each other or in which they could not win. A federal district court overturned the Mutscher plan in January 1972, but by that time the speaker and two of his legislative henchmen had been indicted by a Travis County grand jury. Tried in Abilene in March 1972, they were convicted on charges of conspiracy and bribery.

The turmoil of the scandal, dubbed "Sharpstown," led to a groundswell for reform. The 1972 election, consequently, sent seventy-two new members to the house and fifteen to the senate. Mutscher, who ran for reelection despite his conviction, lost. So did Smith, who ran fourth in the primary. But to the surprise of many political observers, Barnes placed third. Although he had not been implicated in the scandal, the lieutenant governor had borrowed money from Sharp's bank and fell victim to the anti-incumbent fervor. Frances "Sissy" Farenthold, a member of the Dirty Thirty, placed second, and Dolph Briscoe, a millionaire rancher and former state legislator from 1947 to 1957, led the first primary.

Farenthold's campaign was a fitting final hurrah for the 1960s. She spoke on college campuses to jubilant student audiences. She proposed that the state pass corporate taxes, increase social services, consider a gun-control law, and upgrade education. Her volunteers knocked on doors, posted placards, and campaigned zealously. Her campaign lacked adequate financing, however. Business and financial interests rallied to Briscoe, who defeated Farenthold by 1,095,168 to 884,594. In the general election, Briscoe won over Republican Hank Grover by a little less than 100,000 votes. Ramsey Muñiz, La Raza party candidate, collected 214,118 votes. Finally, 1972 saw President Richard Nixon trounce the Democratic nominee, George McGovern, by more than 1 million ballots nationwide. The president's landslide reelection helped win for Senator Tower a 300,000-vote margin over moderate Democrat Barefoot Sanders, who had derailed Ralph Yarborough's comeback attempt in the Democratic primary.

Overall, the Sharpstown scandal wrought fewer changes than observers supposed it might. New and open politics did not come to Texas, although the next session of the legislature in 1973 did adopt some reforms, including registration of lobbyists, requirements for open public meetings of most state agencies, reports on campaign financing, and a law requiring state officials to disclose their sources of income. In any event, the election of 1972 did symbolize the end of an era. Barnes was the last candidate of the Johnson/Connally mold. Although the Establishment would find new candidates, they would be more moderate than those who had gone before them. Briscoe ran open conventions and generally had good relations with labor organizations. Indeed, one of the reasons why the Farenthold campaign was underfinanced was that union leaders failed to endorse her. They saw Briscoe as no threat, and the slight division between organized labor and Farenthold represented a problem with the liberal/labor alliance. Labor had never been comfortable with liberal votes for Republicans over their conservative Democratic opponents, nor had many minority voters, who identified the Democrats

as the party of civil rights. Briscoe, for example, included Tejanos in his administration and got along reasonably well with the Mexican American community. The rancor of the previous Democratic infighting softened after the end of the Farenthold campaign and the diminishing of La Raza Unida Party. Her race against Briscoe in 1974 failed to generate the enthusiasm of the previous quest. Democratic politics of the 1970s and 1980s would stress party harmony, moderation, and the inclusion of minorities—both to ameliorate the tensions of the 1960s and to beat back the growing Republican challenge.

## **The Texas Economy**

In 1960 the population of Texas stood at 9.6 million, approximately 75 percent of whom lived in urban areas. By 1970 the state's population had risen to 11.2 million, a growth rate for the decade of about 17 percent. But the 1970s saw even more dramatic growth than the 1960s—nearly 27 percent—and that trend continued into the mid-1980s.

Several factors accounted for this growth. As the Cold War heated up, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations continued the postwar trend of showering Texas with federal military spending. This federal largesse was augmented by the 1963 opening of the Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston, which provided thousands of lucrative jobs, brought millions of research dollars to the state's universities, and spurred the growth of related high-tech industries. The Connally administration increased state spending on higher education, including the state's medical schools, and in the 1960s and 1970s Texas established itself as leader in the healthcare industry and biomedical sciences.

Agriculture also generally prospered in the 1960s. Researchers perfected hybrid varieties of grain sorghum in the late 1950s, doubling yields, and this led to the rise of the large-scale cattle-feeding industry in the 1960s, principally on the High Plains. Similar technological advances led corn to flourish as cattle feed, starch, fuel, and a sweetener, and the introduction of soybeans, sugar beets, and new strains of citrus fruits and peanuts all helped Texas agriculture branch out from its long, debilitating dependency on cotton.

Immigration was both a cause and an effect of economic growth. Between 1970 and 1990, about a million people immigrated to Texas. The total foreign-born population of the state increased from 310,000 in 1970 to 856,000 in 1980 to 1.5 million in 1990. The rate of legal immigration was estimated to be about 50,000 per year through the 1980s, and the 1986 federal immigration act, which granted amnesty to certain undocumented immigrants, legalized about 446,000 aliens in Texas. In short, immigration accounted for about 20 percent of the population growth in the 1970s and 1980s, and the children of these immigrants accounted for even more.

Some of those new Texans found jobs in the oil and gas industry. From the late 1950s into the early 1970s, the domestic price per barrel for Texas crude oil stayed at around \$3. Then the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) gained control over the international price of oil, effectively ending American influence over prices. In 1973 the Arab-nation members of OPEC declared an oil embargo against the United States, in retaliation for US support of Israel during the Yom Kippur War. The embargo ended the stability in oil prices that had existed for the previous twenty-five years. As a result, the price of crude quadrupled and held firm through 1979. With the Iranian revolution, the subsequent Iranian-Iraqi War, and cutbacks in Saudi Arabian production, oil prices doubled again in 1979–80, briefly reaching \$40 a barrel before stabilizing at \$34 in October 1981. Rig counts in the state jumped from an average of 770 in 1979 to 1319 two years later.

The sudden increase in energy prices came at a time when the nation suffered from stagflation, that is, a combination of high rates of inflation and high rates of unemployment. The energy crisis, therefore, had two powerful effects on the state. Texans, like all Americans, naturally suffered from inflation and rising energy costs, but the money flowing into Texas from the escalating price of oil created a sense of exuberance about the state's economic future. Workers arrived in Texas in droves, and the rate of unemployment was less than half the national average. Banks, which scurried to loan money to energy-related companies, grew in number and more than tripled in total resources from 1974 to 1986. Real estate prices and the number of construction firms skyrocketed. Construction contracts totaled \$1.75 billion in 1975 and \$4.80 billion ten years later (urban wags joked that the state bird of Texas was the crane). Towns like Laredo, Alice, Bryan, Giddings, and Odessa experienced booms reminiscent of the Ranger or East Texas booms of half a century earlier. Some Texans credited the state's fabulous prosperity to the frontier spirit of self-reliance and the Texas entrepreneurial character, prompting editors of out-of-state newspapers to groan about what they considered stereotypical Texas braggadocio. Others argued that low taxes and antiunion laws had created a favorable business climate, which in turn made the economic boom possible. For such Texans, the optimistic, free-market conservatism of President Ronald Reagan seemed consistent with the state's go-ahead economic spirit, and for the first time in modern history, the Republican Party began to receive a fair hearing in the Lone Star State.

### **Toward a Two-Party State?**

Since the days of the Shivercrats in the 1950s, the Republican Party had sought to sell itself to Texans as the party of conservatism. The liberalism of Lyndon Johnson's presidency, with its embrace of civil rights and its war on poverty, frightened conservative Democrats and made the Republican Party look increasingly attractive to them. In Texas, Republicans increasingly pursued a state version of Nixon's "southern strategy," appealing to conservative whites by painting Democrats as being too cozy with blacks.

The elections of 1978 and 1989 demonstrated the strength that grassroots Republicanism had obtained in Texas. As their choice for governor, the Republicans nominated Dallas oilman William P. Clements, Jr. (Figure 12.6), and the Democrats chose Attorney General John Hill over the incumbent, Dolph Briscoe. Like most Democratic candidates for the governor's mansion before him, Hill ran a complacent campaign, and when November arrived, the unthinkable occurred: Clements beat Hill by a razor-thin margin to become the first Republican governor since Reconstruction. This major political upset refurbished and energized the Republican Party of Texas, as did the winning presidential ticket of Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush in 1980, which carried on its coattails 35 Republicans to the Texas state house, 8 to the state senate, 166 to county and district offices, and 5 to the US Congress.

Clements's first term in office was only a moderate success for Republicans. His relations with his own party were harmonious, but his frank and sometimes abrasive manner alienated Democratic legislators and many prospective independent voters. Although Clements had mixed success with the legislature in pursuing his conservative agenda, one that stressed tougher law enforcement and reducing the size of state government, most political pundits believed that he would easily be reelected. The 1982 campaign once again proved the experts wrong.

For governor, the Democrats nominated Secretary of State Mark White, a Briscoe ally with a conservative political record. Clements spent \$13 million on his campaign, twice the





**Figure 12.6** William P. Clements, Jr., left, during his term as US Deputy Secretary of Defense, in his office at the Pentagon, Washington, DC, on November 15, 1976. Source: National Archives Office of the Secretary of Defense. Photo by Ron Hall, CIV (6682514).

amount spent by White. Meanwhile, the economy had begun to slide, and by November an unemployment rate that topped 6 percent dampened voters' enthusiasm for Clements. White won with 54 percent of the vote, aided by high minority turnout. Even more surprising was the fact that the full slate of Democratic candidates won, including liberal Ann Richards as state treasurer.

White soon confounded most predictions that he would be another conservative Democrat in the Briscoe mold. His administration pursued a liberal agenda, including healthcare for the indigent, a mandatory seatbelt law, workers' compensation and unemployment insurance for farm workers, tougher pesticide regulations, a state ethics advisory commission, health insurance for retired teachers, higher nursing-home standards, and major education reforms. But White's administration soon encountered political difficulties. The long economic boom began to falter; schoolteachers quarreled over education reforms; and the prison system continued to be a political hot potato. Despite White's progressive bent, minorities expressed discontent with his administration. Polls reported that many Texans questioned his leadership in a time of crisis, particularly when it came to taxes. Clements and White would face off again in 1986, and it seemed to many that a two-party political system, mirroring that of the national level, had indeed arrived in Texas.

## Leisure and the Arts

### A sporting society

The post-World War II trends toward more leisure time for the middle and lower classes and a wider variety of ways to spend it continued in the 1960s and beyond. Sports remained

more of a religion than a pastime for millions of Texans, and for many of them, *sports* was synonymous with *football*. Measured by numbers of participants and spectators, high school football remained (and remains) king in Texas, but the rise of television and the state's growing prosperity made college football accessible to a broader audience than ever. Leading in popularity was the storied Southwest Conference, whose greatest achievements came during the reign of Darrell Royal, coach of the University of Texas from 1957 to 1976. Royal's teams won eleven conference titles, three national championships (1963, 1969, 1970) and went to sixteen bowl games. Texas Tech and the University of Houston joined the conference after World War II, rounding out its complement.

The 1969 University of Texas team was the last all-white national championship football squad. The tradition-laden Southwest Conference integrated its teams a decade later than did Texas's lesser-known colleges. Abner Haynes entered the football program in 1957 at North Texas State, and his instant success as a running back encouraged other programs to recruit African Americans. Sid Blanks went to Texas A&I in 1958 and led the Javelinas in both rushing and receiving en route to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics national championship in 1962 and All-American honors. The breakthrough for the Southwest Conference came when Jerry LeVias went to Southern Methodist University (SMU) in 1965 and took the team to the championship in 1966. The conference nonetheless remained largely lily-white until the 1970s.

Professional football cast its spell on Texans in the 1960s. Dallas tried briefly to support a professional franchise in 1952, but the undercapitalized Dallas Texans moved to Baltimore and were renamed the Colts by the end of the season. Texas millionaires Lamar Hunt and K. S. "Bud" Adams helped found the American Football League in 1960 and secured franchises for Dallas and Houston. That same year, oilman Clint Murchison, Jr., received a National Football League expansion franchise for Dallas, the Cowboys. The recognition that the city could not support two pro teams in 1963 prompted Hunt to move his franchise to Kansas City and rename it the Chiefs. Meanwhile, the Cowboys' organization received accolades for its stable management, and when the team reached the playoffs in 1965, it proved to be the first of twenty consecutive postseason appearances for the Cowboys under Coach Tom Landry, who had grown up in Mission and starred at the University of Texas. In the late 1960s, the Cowboys entered a golden age, during which the team played in five Super Bowls, winning two (1972, 1978). During Landry's twenty-five years as head coach, the Cowboys won thirteen division championships. The team's twenty consecutive winning seasons (1966–85) remains an NFL record.

Pro football in Houston never enjoyed the success of the Cowboys. From 1970 to 1977, the Houston Oilers managed just two winning seasons. In the late 1970s, however, under the coaching of O. A. "Bum" Phillips and the bruising running of University of Texas Heisman Trophy winner Earl Campbell, the team made the playoffs three straight years, 1978–80. But the Oilers never reached a Super Bowl, and the franchise later relocated to Nashville, where they became the Titans.

Other professional sports in Texas included a strong minor-league baseball program throughout the twentieth century. The warm and sunny climate made the Texas League an important place for the training of future major leaguers. Other minor leagues also fielded teams in Texas. The late 1940s and the mid-1950s were the heyday of minor league baseball, but the advent of televised major league games cut sharply into attendance at minor league ballparks. Major league baseball arrived in Texas with the Houston Colt 45s, later renamed the Astros, in 1962. In 1964, the Astros moved into the first domed stadium, fittingly named the Astrodome (Figure 12.7). College baseball also boasted of a reasonable following in the



**Figure 12.7** Inside the Astrodome. Source: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

state, with the University of Texas dominating the Southwest Conference. Several Texas-born players went on to star in the major leagues during this era, including Hall of Famers Frank Robinson and Ernie Banks. Texas acquired a second major-league franchise in 1972 when the Washington Senators moved to Arlington and became the Texas Rangers, but neither the Rangers nor the Astros would enjoy much success for many years to come.

One humorist described basketball as the game Texans play between the end of football season and the beginning of spring training. SMU fielded some nationally competitive basketball teams in the 1950s, and North Texas State and the University of Houston also enjoyed some success. Elvin Hayes, who played his college ball at Houston (1964–68), may well have been the state's best-known basketball player until the sport grew in popularity with the advent of television and professional franchises. Led by Hayes and coached by Guy Lewis, the University of Houston reached the NCAA Final Four in 1967 and 1968. The team did so again in 1982, 1983, and 1984, sparked by the play of Hakeem Olajuwon and Clyde Drexler. Professional basketball reached Texas in 1967 with the Dallas Chaparrals of the old American Basketball Association. That club moved to San Antonio in 1973 and was renamed the Spurs. The Houston Rockets (1971) and the Dallas Mavericks (1980) rounded out the professional franchises of the state. Houston collegiate stars Hayes, Olajuwon, and Drexler went on to play professionally for the Rockets and were inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Once considered exclusively country-club sports, golf and tennis have both enjoyed phenomenal growth in Texas since the 1960s. Native Texans Byron Nelson and Ben Hogan ruled the golf world in the 1940s and early 1950s, winning fourteen major championships

between them, and the tournaments they were associated with—the Byron Nelson (Dallas) and the Colonial (Fort Worth)—are still prestigious stops on the PGA tour. Numerous Texas golfers since the late 1960s have become major stars. El Paso's Lee Trevino won six major titles: the US Open twice (1969, 1971), the PGA twice (1974, 1984), and the British Open twice (1971, 1972). Ben Crenshaw won the Masters title twice (1984, 1995); and Charles Coody once (1971). Texas produced three standouts in women's golf: Monahans-born Kathy Whitworth recorded 88 career wins between the mid-1960s and mid-1980s, more than any pro golfer in history, male or female, and six major championships; Dallas's Sandra Haynie and Midland's Judy Rankin recorded forty-two and twenty-six Ladies Professional Golf Association tour victories, respectively.

Tennis rivaled golf in popularity and growth as a participant sport. One of tennis's most famous events took place in the Astrodome in 1973, when female star Billie Jean King played Bobby Riggs in a much-hyped "Battle of the Sexes" match. Riggs, a fifty-five-year-old former pro player, had disparaged the abilities of women on the court and boasted that even at his age, he could beat the world's best female player. Before a national prime-time television audience, King proved Riggs wrong, winning in straight sets. Although largely a publicity stunt, the match brought tennis to a whole new audience, especially women.

Texas high school and collegiate sports continue to draw more participants and spectators than do pro sports. An important recent development is the rise of women's sports. By the 1960s, women's programs were appearing on college and high school campuses, and they were an important part of university life by the 1980s. The rise in women's participation (sometimes accompanied by a loss of programs for men) owed much to a 1972 federal law known as Title IX, which required equal funding for men's and women's sports in any educational institution receiving federal funding. In many smaller towns, girls' high school basketball came to rival the traditional male sports in popularity.

### Entertainment, culture, and the arts

The quarter-century after 1960 marked a period of transition in entertainment, culture, and the arts in Texas. By the 1970s, symphony, opera, and ballet companies existed in all the state's major cities, and some of these were beginning to establish national or even international reputations. For example, under the leadership of John Herbert, the Houston Grand Opera earned a reputation for staging seldom-heard European works and for its innovative revivals of Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha* and the Gershwins' (George and Ira) *Porgy and Bess*. The Dallas Opera likewise earned acclaim, staging the state's first complete cycle of Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen* in the early 1980s and hosting the world premiere of Dominick Argento's *The Aspern Papers* in 1988. In 1976 English dancer Ben Stevenson became artistic director of the Houston Ballet, building its small regional ensemble into one of the nation's largest and most critically acclaimed ballet companies.

As in the case of opera and ballet, Houston has led the way in theater. By the early 1970s, that city's Alley Theater had moved into its new downtown home, and it had helped to promote the careers of American playwrights such as Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller, and Edward Albee. The Dallas Theater Center produced a wide variety of plays, including Texas playwright Preston Jones's *Texas Trilogy*, which went on to the Kennedy Center and Broadway. By the late 1980s, the Dallas Theater Center rivaled the Alley as the state's best resident company. Individual Texans also have made their mark on the world of drama. Edward Albee, who lived in Houston and was associated with both the University of

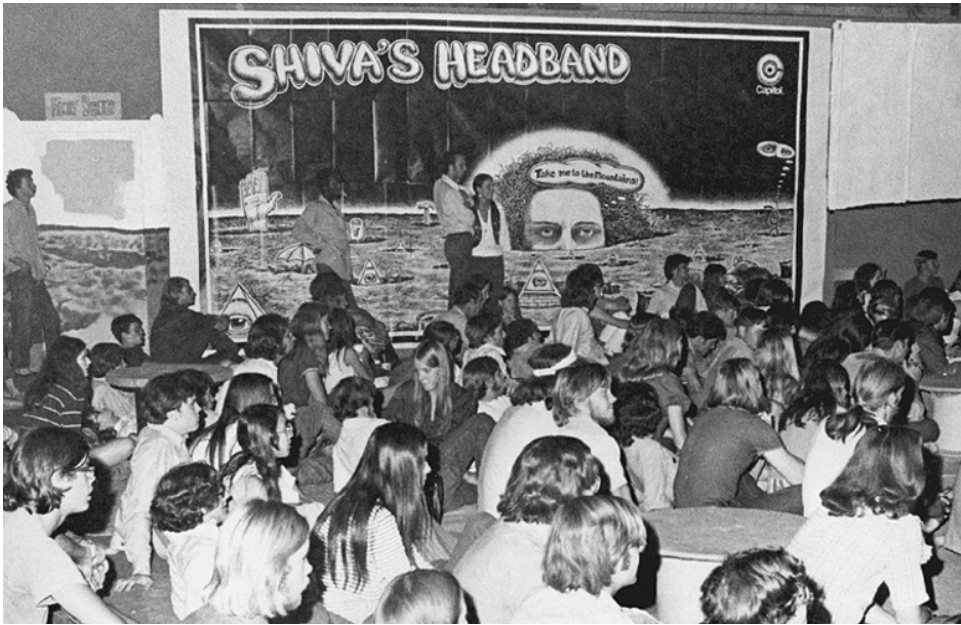
Houston and the Alley Theater, continued to write plays in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, two of which won the Pulitzer Prize. Wharton-born Horton Foote, who had risen to prominence as a playwright and screenwriter in the 1960s, remained productive, writing the screenplays for the films *Tender Mercies* (1983) and *The Trip to Bountiful* (1985) and winning a Pulitzer for his play *The Young Man from Atlanta* in 1995. Texan Larry L. King wrote several dramatic works, but he is best known for the story that became the 1977 Broadway smash, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, which enjoyed a run of 1703 performances. In one of Broadway's most versatile careers, dancer-singer-choreographer-director Tommy Tune of Houston won nine Tony Awards—the only person in theatrical history to win a Tony in four different categories.

Achievements in classical music, dance, and drama notwithstanding, popular music is the area in which Texas has made its greatest mark in recent decades. By the end of the 1960s, the genre of popular music most associated with Texas—country-and-western—stood at a crossroads. Throughout the 1960s, rock-and-roll had taken the nation by storm. At this time, virtually all commercial country music was produced and recorded in a handful of Nashville studios, and to an urban nation in turmoil, that music seemed increasingly formulaic, corny, and largely irrelevant. Moreover, breaking into the Nashville scene and becoming a recording star was nearly impossible—even for those with real talent—as a young Texas singer-songwriter named Willie Nelson discovered.

In 1970, after ten frustrating years in Nashville, Nelson moved to Austin, where he grew his hair long, dressed in faded jeans, and began making music his own way. His early Austin albums made him something of a cult figure in the nascent Austin counterculture, although the music was mostly traditional country and honky-tonk, shorn of the slick orchestration that had come to characterize the “Nashville Sound” of that era. In 1973, as his popularity grew, Nelson began hosting annual Fourth of July “Picnics,” rowdy, all-day outdoor music festivals that attracted tens of thousands of fans. In 1985, he founded Farm-Aid, a nationally broadcast, all-day benefit concert for family farmers.

The music scene that began to coalesce in Austin in the early 1970s attracted other self-styled musical “outlaws,” among them Waylon Jennings, a singer-songwriter from Littlefield who had played bass for Buddy Holly, and New Yorker Jerry Jeff Walker, whose 1973 album *Viva Terlingua*, recorded live in the Hill-Country hamlet of Luckenbach, became the signature album for the entire genre. Other important figures in the movement's early days included Guy Clark, Gary P. Nunn, Billy Joe Shaver, Michael Murphey, and a western swing band called Asleep at the Wheel, which introduced a new generation to the music of Bob Wills. Ground zero for the Austin music scene was a club in a converted National Guard armory, the Armadillo World Headquarters, which opened its doors in 1970 (Figure 12.8).

“Progressive country,” as the new Austin music was being called, remained a well-kept secret nationally until 1975, when Nelson's *Red-Headed Stranger* album, a collection of sparsely arranged ballads, rocketed to the top of the country and pop charts—the first country album ever to do so. A second album the following year, a collaboration with Waylon Jennings titled *Wanted: The Outlaws*, became the best-selling country album in history. The Austin music scene also received national exposure from the PBS television program *Austin City Limits*, founded in 1974. By 1990, 280 television stations broadcast this program. Austin was beginning to attract singers and songwriters from all over the state and beyond, artists who played much more than just country music. Joe Ely, Butch Hancock, and Jimmy Dale Gilmore all gravitated to Austin from Lubbock, bringing a harder-edged rockabilly sound to Texas music.



**Figure 12.8** Indoor shot of the Armadillo World Headquarters, the place many consider the birthplace of Texas rock music. Source: Burton E. Wilson Photograph Collection, CN 01547, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, the University of Texas at Austin.

While Texas became a center of music performance and recording, some Texans continued to make their musical mark in Nashville. George Jones and Ray Price, prominent since the 1950s, were still making hits in the 1970s and beyond. In 1972, Tanya Tucker of Seminole scored her first country hit at the age of thirteen, and over the next three decades she recorded thirty albums and twenty-nine top-ten singles. Even more successful during the same era was Houston-born Kenny Rogers, who recorded 58 country-pop albums and sold more than 100 million records worldwide, making him one of the most popular American entertainers of the twentieth century.

Another Texas singer, George Strait, pointed country music in a new direction in the 1980s. Eschewing both the counterculture trappings of a Willie Nelson and the pop tunes of a Kenny Rogers, the clean-cut son of a South Texas rancher appeared onstage wearing immaculate boots, cowboy hats, pressed jeans, and button-down western shirts, and he recorded songs in both the classic honky-tonk and western-swing styles. In the process, Strait almost single-handedly inaugurated the so-called New Traditionalist movement in country music. He scored his first top-ten hit in 1980 and would eventually record thirty-one No. 1 country songs.

Although Texas is best known for country music, the state has also produced its share of pop and rock stars since the 1960s. Houston's ZZ Top began gaining a local and statewide following with their gritty, blues-influenced rock tunes in the early 1970s, and they continued to tour and produce albums and videos into the twenty-first century. Rivaling ZZ Top's success was the Steve Miller Band, fronted by Dallas-raised Steve Miller, whose catchy pop-rock albums and singles topped the charts several times. The best-selling rock act of all in the 1970s was the Eagles, led by Don Henley, who grew up in Linden and attended North Texas State University. The Eagles sold more than 100 million albums and won four Grammy awards, and their greatest-hits collection was the best-selling album of all time in

the United States. Following the group's breakup in the 1980s, Henley enjoyed a successful solo career and returned to Texas, taking up residence in Dallas.

In the 1970s, Texans continued to build on the state's storied reputation as a producer of jazz artists. As one of the creators of "free jazz" in the late 1950s, Fort Worth's Ornette Coleman was credited with liberating jazz from the prevailing conventions of harmony, rhythm, and melody. This towering figure in the jazz world continued to make innovative music in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, traveling and studying in Africa, recording with stars such as guitarist Pat Metheny and the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia, writing a critically acclaimed ballet (*Architecture in Motion*), and composing the soundtracks for films such as *Naked Lunch* and *Philadelphia*. Coleman's contributions earned him a prestigious MacArthur fellowship in 1994. A number of his Texas protégés also earned national reputations as jazz artists, including tenor saxophonist Dewey Redman, drummers Charles Moffett and Ronald Shannon Jackson, alto saxophonist Prince Lasha, and reedman Julius Hemphill—all of whom, like Coleman, hailed from Fort Worth. Another Fort Worth jazz artist influenced by Coleman was clarinetist John Carter, whom some credited with restoring the clarinet to prominence as a jazz instrument. But Carter is perhaps even better known for his five-album recording, made in the 1980s, titled *Roots and Folklore: Episodes in the Development of American Folk Music*, which traced African American history through jazz. Jazz has continued to grow in popularity, as the number of jazz clubs has multiplied in the larger cities. Several universities offered formal programs of study in jazz, led by the nationally ranked graduate program at the University of North Texas.

Texas long had provided popular subject matter for television and film, a trend that continued into the modern era. In the 1970s, the nighttime soap opera *Dallas* (Figure 12.9) took the nation by storm, as the devious Texas oil tycoon, J. R. Ewing (played by Weatherford native Larry Hagman) became the villain that everyone loved to hate. The series became a sensation internationally as well, and when the 1980 season finale ended with a cliffhanger shooting of the main character, the show snagged the highest ratings in history. During the entire offseason, fans of the show debated the question: Who shot J. R.? The amazing popularity of the program served to reinforce a whole set of Texas stereotypes in the eyes of the world; the men were all cowboy boot-and-hat-wearing oil millionaires, the women as beautiful as supermodels, and nearly everyone owned ranches and shopped at Neiman-Marcus Tog.

Films also began to present a somewhat more sophisticated view of the state, although they, too, have sometimes perpetuated stereotypes. In 1980, the Paramount film *Urban Cowboy* touched off a national craze for country-and-western music, country dancing, cowboy clothing, and honky-tonk culture. The film, which was actually about the lives of oil-industry workers, further served to bring Texas into the national spotlight, and for a while made "Texas chic" an identifiable fashion trend.

Movies about Texas, or with a Texas setting, are too numerous to mention individually. A short list would include two film adaptations of Larry McMurtry novels: *The Last Picture Show* (1971) and *Terms of Endearment* (1983), which together won seven Oscars, and *Tender Mercies* (1983), about a down-and-out country singer from a small Texas town—for which Texas playwright Horton Foote won a best-screenplay Oscar.

In the decades after 1960 Texas also began to come into its own in the visual arts. By then, Texas artists worked in so many diverse styles and media that short categories would not do their efforts justice. However, changes in the concept of how museums should operate allowed Texans to judge for themselves the major artists and artistic trends. By the 1970s



**Figure 12.9** The cast members from the television series *Dallas*: (standing L-R) Larry Hagman (as John Ross “J. R.” Ewing, Jr.), Linda Gray (as Sue Ellen Ewing), Jim Davis (as John Ross “Jock” Ewing), Patrick Duffy (as Bobby Ewing), Victoria Principal (as Pamela Barnes Ewing), (center, seated) Barbara Bel Geddes (as Eleanor Southworth “Miss Ellie” Ewing), and Charlene Tilton (as Lucy Ewing), pose for a picture on the property of the Southfork Ranch in 1979. Source: CBS/LANDOV/Press Association Images.

Texans had art-viewing opportunities that simply had not existed a generation earlier. The major Texas cities have built new museums or renovated old ones to accommodate their expanded collections as well as traveling exhibitions. Dallas’s Museum of Fine Arts, which first opened in 1917 and has expanded several times to become one of the largest art museums in the United States; Fort Worth’s Kimbell Art Museum, designed by Louis I. Kahn (1972); and the Edward Larabee Barnes designed Dallas Museum of Art (1984) are all considered world-class museums for their collections as well as for their buildings. Today, these institutions focus on national and international trends, rather than on Texas regionalism and the showcasing of local artists.

The state’s mark on the literary world since the 1960s has been significant, if uneven. In fiction, as in so many other facets of Texas life in the late twentieth century, Texas’s distinctiveness began to fade. Being a “Texas writer,” like being a Texas poet or artist, no longer automatically meant dealing with the rural, regional themes so long associated with the state. Of course, some writers continued to do work that was clearly “Texan” in theme. Novelist Elmer Kelton of San Angelo, who had written popular cowboy novels since the 1950s, began to write more “serious” fiction in the 1970s. Works such as *The Day the*



*Cowboys Quit* (1971), *The Time It Never Rained* (1973), *The Good Old Boys* (1978), and *The Wolf and the Buffalo* (1980) received critical acclaim and numerous awards, and won Kelton a national following.

Possibly the most important change in Texas literature has been the growing importance of Latino writers. A number of Tejanos emerged from the Chicano movement of the 1960s to become major figures in the Chicano Literary Renaissance. Tomás Rivera's 1971 novel, *Y no se lo tragó la tierra* (*And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*), established him as one of the nation's leading Hispanic writers. The Crystal City-born writer went on to serve as chief executive officer of the University of Texas at El Paso and president of the University of California at Riverside before his death in 1984. Rolando Hinojosa of Mercedes has been one of the most prolific Tejano novelists since the early 1970s, publishing more than a dozen novels set in the lower Rio Grande Valley, including the acclaimed multinoval *Klail City Death Trip* series. Tejana poet-playwright-novelist Estela Portillo Trambley, who died in 1998, was one of the pioneering women in the Chicano Literary Renaissance. The older tradition of Texas literature, and nonfiction, written to reflect only an Anglo past, is clearly passing.

Larry McMurtry (Figure 12.10), the state's best-known writer, can possibly serve as an example of the state's transition from a rural to an urban society, and of a writer who grappled with the impact of that transition on people's lives. Whereas McMurtry's novels of the 1960s had been set in rural and small-town Texas, in the 1970s his work began to focus on urban themes. In a trilogy consisting of *Moving On* (1970), *All My Friends Are Going to Be Strangers* (1972), and *Terms of Endearment* (1975) he created a group of interlocking characters from Houston who dealt with the vicissitudes of urban living. Then, in something of a literary surprise, McMurtry published *Lonesome Dove* (1985), a long, Pulitzer-Prize-winning novel about two ex-Rangers on an epic cattle drive. McMurtry subsequently wrote



**Figure 12.10** Larry McMurtry, the famed Texas novelist, screenwriter, and bookseller, who won a Pulitzer prize for his book *Lonesome Dove*, marks the price on a book at his bookstore, Booked Up No. 1, before auctioning off more than 300,000 books at “The Last Booksale,” Wednesday, August 8, 2012, in Archer City. Source: Michael Paulsen/AP/Press Association Images (# PA. 14389276).

a long series of books set in the Old West, confounding literary critics who had applauded his earlier calls for Texas writers to abandon Old West themes and confront Texas's urban present. His literary odyssey perhaps embodies the story of Texas literature, and indeed Texas history as a whole in the late twentieth century—a moving away from the traditional regional themes, but at the same time, a lingering fascination with the state's frontier past.

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## A New Texas? 1986–2001

The last fifteen years of the twentieth century witnessed striking changes in Texas. In the mid-1980s, following one of the state's great oil booms, world oil prices plummeted. When the state's economy entered a severe recession, all but the strongest oil-related companies collapsed, followed by hundreds of banks and other financial institutions. Hard times forced the state government to raise taxes and cut services. Population growth slowed.

The state slowly recovered in the 1990s. Texas emerged from the oil-bust years with a more diversified economy. Strong population growth resumed as well, and by the year 2000, Texas had passed New York to become the nation's second-largest state, with nearly twenty-one million people. Demographically, several trends stood out. The number of Hispanics, children, and elderly persons in Texas grew significantly, and foreign immigration accelerated.

In state politics, the Republicans and Democrats competed vigorously for a while, but by the end of the period the trend of conservative voters leaving the Democratic Party was nearly completed. In the late 1990s, the Republicans emerged triumphant; the GOP won every statewide race in 1998, and two years later the popular Texas governor, George W. Bush, captured the US presidency. However, the state's Republican leadership continued to wrestle with many of the same issues that Democrats faced previously, including education, prisons, environmental policies, and the tax system.

By the end of the 1990s, the contours of a new Texas seemingly became clearer. Conservative Anglos may have still dominated the state's politics, but foreign immigration, the integration of Texas into the national and international economy, and the continuing process of cultural homogenization meant that Texas now resembled the rest of the nation—particularly other industrialized states—more so than ever. Citizens of the Lone Star State still celebrated what they believed to be Texas's uniqueness, but in most respects that exceptionalism tended to be more imagined than real.

## **The Texas Population in Transition**

The migration to Texas of people seeking employment modified the state's traditional population configuration. As recently as 1970, 71 percent of Texans were natives of the state; by 2000 that figure had fallen to 62 percent. New Anglo Texans tended to come from the Midwest, breaking the older in-migration pattern of whites from southern states. About 12 percent of the population in Texas was African American in 2000, roughly the same as in 1980 and close to the national figure. The Hispanic population grew from a little less than 21 percent in 1980 to 32 percent in 2000, and Asian Americans increased from less than 1 percent to more than 3 percent.

The most significant change in the Texas population—a change that began in the preceding decades but that accelerated dramatically in the 1990s—was the increase in the number of Hispanics. Several factors account for this rise. Hispanics had a higher percentage of people of childbearing age and a higher fertility rate than whites or blacks. Moreover, despite increased efforts to prevent illegal immigration, the border remained porous for Texas-bound immigrants. In the 1990s, immigrants continued to arrive in Texas from Mexico—and increasingly from other Latin American nations—both legally and illegally. The Immigration Act of 1990 boosted total immigration into the United States by 40 percent, with most of the increase going to family members of resident aliens already legally in the country and to skilled workers and professionals. By 2000, the legal immigrant population stood at two million. They were joined by an estimated 1.4 million illegals, a figure that had doubled since 1996.

These changes in population explain, in part, the persistence of poverty in the state. In 1980, two million Texans (15 percent of the population) lived below the poverty line—a rate worse than the national average. Although the figure fluctuated along with the economy, the overall picture had not improved two decades later; in 1999, 15 percent of Texans still lived below the poverty line, a ranking that placed Texas in the bottom eight nationally.

As had long been the case, poverty remained closely associated with race, ethnicity, and age. Poverty rates in 1999 showed a disproportionate percentage of people of color below the poverty line—23 percent of blacks and 25 percent of Hispanics, compared to 8 percent of whites. Twenty-three percent of the state's children lived in poverty (ninth worst in the nation), most of them in single-parent households. Although Texas ranked among the twenty best states in regard to infant mortality (6.4 percent in 2002), the rate for blacks doubled that of whites. In inner-city minority neighborhoods and in the Rio Grande Valley, rates of infant mortality approached those of some Third World countries.

Texas continued its historical tendency to devote minimal state funds to poverty programs, with predictable results. At the end of the century Texas ranked forty-seventh among the states in the amount spent on public welfare. Accordingly, it ranked second worst among the states in the percentage of the population that went hungry and third worst in the percentage that was malnourished.

## **The Oil Bust and Its Aftermath**

The oil boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s had created a euphoria not seen in Texas since the great oil strikes of the early twentieth century. Unfortunately for Texas, the inflated oil prices that had created the boom failed to hold. Conservation measures, increases in non-OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) oil sources, and the failure of

OPEC nations to obey the cartel's production quotas caused oil prices to tumble, starting in 1983. When OPEC suspended all production controls in 1986, oil prices collapsed. That summer, the price of oil briefly fell below \$10 a barrel. A gradual upward trend began in 1987, and from 1989 to 1999, the price fluctuated in the range of \$17–\$22.

The economic hangover from the bust of the mid-1980s quickly set in. Oil and gas production provided 28 percent of the state's tax revenue in 1981, but not quite 12 percent at the close of 1994. Energy-related industries employed one out of twelve nonfarm workers in 1982. By 1989, those industries had lost 282,000 jobs, and by 2001, only about 158,000 Texans worked in oil-related occupations. Economists speculated that for each drop of \$1 in the price of a barrel of oil, 25,000 jobs and \$1 million in state and local tax revenues were lost. To close the budget gap, the legislature raised the state sales tax, the corporate franchise tax, and taxes on such items as gasoline, hotel rooms, cigarettes, and insurance premiums, among others. Altogether, the tax increases totaled \$5.7 billion for the 1987–1988 biennium, the largest of any state in history up to that time. Meanwhile, outstanding real estate and energy loans caused many banks to fail.

Indeed, the banking industry lost nearly \$4 billion in the late 1980s, and the number of banks in Texas declined from nearly 2000 in 1986 to 1091 in 1992. Among those to go under was the state's largest bank holding company, InterFirst Corporation of Dallas. The 1980s savings-and-loan scandals only complicated the problem of collapsing financial institutions. The number of savings and loans (S&Ls) in Texas decreased from 318 in 1980 to 64 in 1992. Many of these S&Ls would have failed in any case, due to collapsing real estate prices, but a relaxation of regulatory oversight had led to reckless lending practices. Furthermore, in more than a few cases, fraud by S&L executives compounded the problem. By December 1993, the federal government had spent \$21 billion to bail out depositors and investors in insolvent Texas savings and loans—71 percent of the national total and the greatest government bailout in American history up to that time. With banks failing left and right, the 1986 legislature rewrote banking laws to allow out-of-state holding companies to purchase Texas banks, and by 1990, out-of-state banks owned the ten largest Texas institutions.

The oil bust of the 1980s cast a dark cloud over the Texas economy, but that cloud had a silver lining. In the years following the oil bust, the state's economy diversified and matured. After a brief but painful national recession in the early 1990s, Texas led all states in the number of new jobs created. Of the nine largest states during the 1990s, Texas's economy grew the fastest. By the end of the century, most major sectors of the state's economy—manufacturing, transportation, utilities, financial services, communications, transportation, oil, construction, wholesale and retail trade—were enjoying robust growth. Falling interest rates made it easier for businesses to raise capital and for individuals to finance houses and consumer goods. In addition, the US Senate ratified the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993, removing most trade barriers between the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Although controversial, the treaty spurred the growth of manufacturing, construction, and trade along the Mexican border. Texas soon tripled the next-closest state, California, in income realized from trade with Mexico, and in 1999 that trade generated nearly \$35 billion for the Lone Star State. Oil no longer dominated economic growth in the state, as it had for most of the twentieth century. In 1988 Alaska replaced Texas in as the nation's top oil-producing state, and in 1999 Texas produced only one-third as much oil as it had in 1972.

The major growth in job opportunities in Texas during the 1990s lay in the service sector, with particular growth in the retail trade, telecommunications, and health services.

By 2001, three-quarters of all nonagricultural Texas jobs were in the “service-producing” (as opposed to “goods-producing”) category. Nevertheless, manufacturing did well in the 1990s, as Texas added nearly 100,000 jobs in that sector, more than any other state. One out of every four new manufacturing jobs was in computer-related industries, making Texas one of the leaders of the nation’s “high-tech” revolution. By 2001, the world’s two largest manufacturers of personal computers—Dell and Compaq—were Texas-based companies. The growth of service-sector jobs and high-tech manufacturing has further weakened labor unions nationally and in the state. In 2000, about 505,000 Texans belonged to a labor union, or roughly 6 percent of the workforce—less than half of the 1965 figure.

Military-related employment entered a long period of decline when the Cold War ended. Between 1991 and 1999, the number of people employed directly by the military fell nearly 30 percent, from 321,000 to 233,000. However, defense contractors such as Lockheed-Martin and Raytheon continued to play an important role in the state’s economy, providing some of the best-paying jobs.

Despite the general impression of Texas wealth, the per capita income of the state reached the national average for the first time ever in 1981, an achievement that the oil bust promptly reversed. After bottoming out in the early 1990s, Texans’ income rebounded significantly. From 1989 to 1999, per capita income rose from \$12,904 to \$19,617—but that was still only 91 percent of the national average.

## **Rural Texas in Crisis**

As the urban, industrial economy grew and matured in the late twentieth century, agriculture struggled to remain profitable. The kinds of crops grown and animals raised by Texas farmers and ranchers changed little between 1970 and 2001. Livestock (mainly cattle) consistently accounted for about 68 percent of the total value of the state’s agricultural output. Cotton remained the single most valuable cultivated crop, roughly 7 percent of the agricultural total, but the value of all grain crops combined surpassed that of cotton, totaling about 9 percent of agricultural products. Nursery and greenhouse crops quadrupled from 1969 to 1997, reflecting an urban and suburban demand for landscaping plants and exotic fruits and vegetables. Overall, by the end of the century about 100,000 fewer acres of land were devoted to agriculture than were in 1970, a consequence of “urban sprawl” and hard times for farmers (Figure 13.1).

Serious trouble in the agricultural sector began in the mid-1970s, as overproduction and foreign competition drove down farm prices. Federal assistance to farmers sunk to historic lows from 1974 to 1977, and high interest rates made it difficult for farmers to finance their operations. In addition, the price of fertilizer, pesticide, fuel, and electricity rose by 63 percent between 1975 and 1981, driving many small operators into bankruptcy. In the late 1980s, prices began to stabilize and income began a modest recovery, which continued into the early 1990s. Average farm income for the years 1990–94 was more than double that of 1985–89, but in the second half of the 1990s, the recovery stalled, due in part to severe drought conditions over large portions of the state in 1996, 1998, 1999, and 2000. To make matters worse, in 1999 the prices of cattle, cotton, and grain dropped to their lowest levels in more than ten years. Not surprisingly, farm income for the rough years of the late 1990s was down 30 percent from the good years earlier in the decade.

The federal government had long played a major role in determining the fate of Texas farmers and ranchers. From the 1960s well into the twenty-first century, direct government



**Figure 13.1** Willie Nelson at the Verizon Wireless Amphitheater on October 4, 2009 in St. Louis, Missouri. © All rights reserved by Farm Aid. Photo by Paul Natkin/Wire Image.

assistance payments to Texas farmers and ranchers averaged in the hundreds of millions of dollars annually, with large fluctuations from year to year, depending on growing conditions, commodity prices, and the political climate. Historically, government subsidies, crop insurance, loan programs, and disaster relief did not bear much relationship to which political party was in power: both major parties supported federal farm programs. The most significant departure from the policies of the previous forty years came in 1996, when a Republican Congress passed and a Democratic president, Bill Clinton, signed the “Freedom to Farm Act,” a bill lifting many of the regulations that had propped up prices for agricultural products for so many years. The bill was designed to wean farmers off federal assistance, but it could not have anticipated the drought of the late 1990s. As the world supply of agricultural products expanded and Texas crops withered, farmers again teetered on the brink of insolvency. Pressured by farm-state representatives, Congress in 1998 enacted massive drought-relief legislation. The ironic consequence was that federal aid to Texas farmers jumped to \$1.9 billion in 1999 and to \$2 billion in 2001. Rural Texans, who by the late twentieth century numbered among the most vocal advocates of low taxes and limited government, depended heavily upon this federal assistance for their very survival.

Tough times on the farm and the growing opportunities in cities resulted in a continuing exodus to urban areas. The urban population of the state in 1980 was 81.2 percent of the total, which exceeded the national average. By 1999, it had grown to 84.6 percent. The ongoing movement to the cities greatly affected rural areas. In the 1990s, seventy of the



most isolated Texas counties actually lost population, with West Texas and the Panhandle hardest hit. A US Department of Agriculture classification system aptly described these as “lonely counties.” Loving County headed this list, with only sixty-seven persons in the 2000 Census.

### Religion in Texas: A Force for Tradition

Texans remained a very religious people in the late twentieth century. In 1990 Texas led the nation in the number of churches (16,961) and church members (5,282,341). Nearly 65 percent of Texans said that they regularly attend church—10 percent more than the national average. Measured by the number of adherents (rather than full church members), the largest religious group overall was the Baptists, followed by the Catholics, Methodists, Churches of Christ, Lutherans, and Presbyterians.

The greatest single statistical change in religion in Texas since the 1970s was the increase in the number of Catholics. Between 1980 and 1990, Roman Catholics (3.6 million adherents) passed Southern Baptists (3.3 million adherents) as the largest individual denomination in the state, although Baptists as a whole—the Southern Baptists, the Black Baptists (816,000 adherents), and other smaller Baptist groups—still outnumbered Catholics. The increase in the number of Catholics was mainly due to the growth of the Hispanic population (Figure 13.2).

Among Protestants, evangelical denominations and congregations grew faster than did mainline Protestant churches, in which membership and attendance remained mostly stagnant. Ironically, evangelical churches, which tended to be very conservative or fundamentalist in their theological orientation, were often the quickest to embrace nontraditional modes of worship, such as the use of electronic musical instruments in church and televised services. Statistically, most Texas congregations (and especially evangelical ones) remained small, with fewer than 100 members, but a few evangelical churches in big cities grew into “megachurches,” such as Houston’s Lakewood Church, a nondenominational congregation that in 2000 claimed weekly attendance of 11,000 (a figure that had quadrupled



**Figure 13.2** A statue of Our Lady of Fatima in Buddhist-like pose in present-day Port Arthur. Courtesy of Robert A. Calvert.

ten years later). Usually led by a charismatic preacher exercising strong authority, these urban congregations enjoyed rapid growth by featuring enthusiastic “praise services” backed by orchestras or rock bands, as well as by offering a wide range of other attractions and services such as schools, childcare, and recreational facilities. Although the megachurches were more successful than mainline churches in attracting a diverse body of worshipers, overall the old saying remained true in Texas: Sunday morning is the most segregated time of the week.

Texas churches in the late twentieth century endured wrenching political and ideological controversies, primarily over the issues of fundamentalism and modernism. The fundamentalist upsurge in Texas churches coincided with the rise of the political right in the Reagan era, when opposition to abortion, homosexuality, and feminism became the hallmarks of the so-called “religious right.” Harkening back to the fundamentalist crusades of the 1920s, modern fundamentalists proclaimed the Bible as the inerrant word of God, literally true in all matters of science and history as well as theology. In their view, homosexuality, abortion, and feminism should be condemned as sin. All of the state’s traditional Christian denominations have wrestled with these issues, but none more so than those of Texas’s largest Protestant denomination, the Southern Baptists.

Beginning in 1979, fundamentalists in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), who explicitly identified themselves as conservatives in both politics and theology, mounted a concerted campaign to purge all nonfundamentalist perspectives from the denomination nationwide. Engineered primarily by two Texans—Paul Pressler, a Houston judge and former legislator, and Paige Patterson, a minister from a prominent Texas Baptist family—the fundamentalists’ takeover of the SBC was virtually complete by the early 1990s. In the process, nonfundamentalist faculty and administrators at Baptist seminaries were fired, and the SBC adopted new creedal statements condemning homosexuality and abortion and instructing women to “submit” themselves “graciously” to the leadership of their husbands. However, a sizable majority of Texas Baptists, and their state-level organization, the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT), fell into the “moderate” camp and thus vigorously opposed the fundamentalist takeover. The Baptist moderates (who always claimed to be theologically conservative) fought back in a number of ways. In 1990, Baylor University, concerned that fundamentalists might gain control of the BGCT as they had the SBC, removed itself from the control of BGCT. Four years later, after the fundamentalist takeover of the state’s leading Baptist seminary, Southwestern Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Baylor opened its own school of theology and hired the recently fired president of Southwestern, Russell Dilday, as a distinguished professor. Many Texas Baptists ceased giving financial support to the SBC, and some congregations formally severed all ties with the national Convention.

As the case of the Baptists illustrates, the line between religion and politics was becoming increasingly blurred. Starting in the 1980s, Protestant fundamentalists and other religious conservatives increasingly identified with the Republican Party. Their religious views led them, as in the 1920s, to oppose the teaching of the theory of evolution in the public schools, to advocate school prayer, to oppose the ordination of women and gay persons as ministers, and to condemn abortion. As the state became more Republican, the influence of religious conservatives grew. The state legislature restricted abortion in the third trimester of pregnancy in 1987 for the first time since the passage of *Roe v. Wade* (1973). In 1999, Governor George W. Bush signed a law requiring parental notification before a minor can obtain an abortion. Throughout the 1990s, the Christian Coalition organized local campaigns to elect school board candidates and endorse local Republican office seekers,

apparently with considerable success. State Republican platforms soon began to show the strong influence of the religious right, endorsing anti-abortion measures, school prayer, education vouchers, and other causes that religious conservatives describe as embodying “family values.”

The continuing influence of religion—and its strong conservative bent—suggests that religion has been a major force in upholding Texas tradition, but as the state became more diverse, so did the religions practiced in it. By the end of the twentieth century, in all of Texas’s major cities, the number of Muslim mosques, Buddhist temples, and other non-Christian houses of worship grew rapidly. Texas was home to an estimated 124,000 Jews in 1998, and the number of Mormons grew from an estimated 111,000 in 1990 to 198,000 in 1999. Ethnic Christian congregations, from Korean Baptists to Mexican Assemblies of God to Chinese Lutherans, enjoyed brisk growth along with the immigrant population. Religious people often bemoan the decline of morality in the modern world, but if churchgoing is any indicator of one’s moral fiber, Texans at the dawn of the twenty-first century could still fairly claim to be an upstanding people.

## Texas Culture in the Late Twentieth Century

With the rising prosperity of the late twentieth century, cultural life in the Lone Star State entered a new phase of its history. The days when Texas took a cultural back seat to the East or West Coast were largely gone; in essence, the state became the “Third Coast,” with music, theater, film, art, and literature that could rival the best of other states and regions.

### Music and film

In classical music, the symphony orchestras of Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio built upon the foundations laid in earlier decades. Following the hard times of the 1980s, the Houston Symphony reclaimed its standing as a nationally renowned orchestra under the leadership of Christoph Eschenbach, who became its music director in 1988. By 1995, the orchestra boasted an annual budget of \$17 million and employed 98 full-time musicians, presenting 200 performances a year. The Dallas Symphony grew in size and quality as well, especially after the completion in 1989 of the Meyerson Symphony Center, a spectacular hall designed by architect I. M. Pei and built by the City of Dallas at a cost of \$81.5 million. The Fort Worth Symphony benefited from the exposure it received as host orchestra for the acclaimed Van Cliburn International Piano Competition and from its new home, the \$67-million Bass Performance Hall, completed in 1998. The Houston Grand Opera moved into the magnificent Wortham Center in 1995, and its annual budget topped \$14 million. Finally, in 2009, Dallas dedicated its new AT&T Performing Arts Center, a complex anchored by the Winspear Opera House (housing the Dallas Opera) and also including new homes for the Texas Ballet Theater, the Dallas Theater Center, and two other performing groups.

In popular music, one of the major developments was the rise of Tejano artists. In the 1970s, Freddie Fender and Johnny Rodríguez topped the country charts with tunes sung in both Spanish and English, but most Tejano musicians catered to the demands of the Mexican American community, with *conjunto* and *orquesta* remaining the most popular musical forms. However, by the 1990s, Texas-Mexican radio stations had appeared in major urban areas, and Spanish-language TV reached almost all households. Soon, a new

group of young recording stars had emerged, including Selena, a native of Lake Jackson. At the time of her tragic murder in 1995, she had just wrapped up her first English-language album; released posthumously, it became the first Tejano album to reach No. 1 on the pop charts. More recently, the group Los Lonely Boys, featuring brothers Henry, JoJo, and Ringo Garza of San Angelo (Figure 13.3), achieved national stardom with their mix of rock, blues, country, soul, and Tejano styles. The group won a Grammy for best pop performance in 2005.

In recent years, two Dallas–Fort Worth-area pop singers have rocketed to stardom. Norah Jones, a Dallasite who attended the University of North Texas, reached No. 1 on the charts with her first album in 2002, which ultimately sold twenty million copies and won eight Grammys. Each of her next two albums debuted at No. 1. Burtleson’s Kelly Clarkson came to national attention when she was named winner of the first season of the hit television talent show *American Idol*. Her first album subsequently debuted at No. 1, and her second album won Grammys for best pop album and best female pop vocal performance.

Surpassing all Texas musical acts in popularity since the late 1990s were the Dixie Chicks. Between 1998 and 2007, the all-female trio sold tens of millions of albums and won thirteen Grammys. Although originally a country group, the Chicks’ music also incorporated elements of pop and rock, which gained them a crossover audience and enabled them to survive a boycott by country stations and fans following controversial antiwar remarks by lead singer Natalie Maines, who in 2003 complained to a London concert audience that her group was “ashamed” that President George W. Bush “is from Texas.”

Austin continued to build on the reputation established in the 1970s as a mecca for live music. In 1987 the first South by Southwest music festival was staged there, and by 2000 it was attracting 7000 registered attendees and nearly 1000 bands. Although it was country music—specifically the so-called “progressive country” epitomized by Willie Nelson—that had first made Austin the capital of the Texas popular music scene, Austin now featured



**Figure 13.3** Henry Garza of Los Lonely Boys, Tejano musician (and father of Henry Garza) Enrique Garza, Sr., and Willie Nelson performing at the 21st century Farm Aid. Tweeter Center, Camden, New Jersey, United States, September 30, 2006. © All rights reserved by Farm Aid. Photo by Paul Natkin/Wire Image.com.

more live music than Nashville on any given night, and the genres ranged from punk to pop and everything in between.

By the 1990s Texas had also become an important center for filmmaking. Beginning in 1971, a state agency, the Texas Film Commission, offered a variety of free services designed to encourage and assist film-production in the state. In 1995, the state was the site of sixty-nine major film projects, with budgets totaling \$330 million. Between 1991 and 2000, 240 feature films, 62 made-for-TV movies, and 61 national TV series were produced in Texas. Among these was director John Sayles's *Lone Star* (1996), an Oscar-nominated film starring Brownsville-born Kris Kristofferson in a suspenseful drama about racial tensions on the Texas–Mexico border. The annual South by Southwest music festival in Austin added a film and multimedia festival to its slate of activities in 1994, and by 2000 it was considered one of the nation's best, drawing 2500 filmmakers, suppliers, and fans annually.

### Literature, journalism, and history

In literature, the last two decades of the century saw a continuation of trends begun in the 1970s. Larry McMurtry continued producing novels through the 1990s (and beyond). Some of these were set in Texas, some not; some were sequels to his earlier works set in contemporary Texas, while others pursued western themes in the mode of *Lonesome Dove*. McMurtry's back-and-forth between the modern and the traditional signaled that Texas literature, while moving ever-closer to the national mainstream, still found the state's mythic past an appealing subject.

In the 1980s and 1990s McMurtry's acclaim and influence was rivaled by another admired Texas novelist, Cormac McCarthy, a Rhode Island-born writer who made his home in El Paso from 1976. Although they dealt with ostensibly "western" themes, his novels, such as *Blood Meridian* (1985) and the "Border Trilogy" of *All the Pretty Horses* (1992), *The Crossing* (1994), and *Cities of the Plain* (1998), had a complex, brooding, and often nightmarish quality that set them apart from conventional western literature. His professional honors have included the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize.

In the 1990s, the Texas Review Press at Sam Houston State University was the only Texas press routinely publishing book-length collections of poetry. A handful of modern Texas poets established national reputations, including William Barney of Fort Worth, Vassar Miller of Houston, and several poets affiliated with university creative-writing programs: Texas Tech's Walt McDonald, Robert Phillips of the University of Houston, and R. S. Gwynn of Lamar University. However, the quality of most Texas poets' work still awaits judgment. The Poetry Society of Texas, headquartered in Dallas, had 600 members in 25 chapters across the state by 1994, suggesting that there are sizable numbers of poets and poetry lovers in Texas.

Nonfiction by Texans, or about Texas, endured numerous changes in the late twentieth century. In the newspaper business, the major trend was toward consolidation, often in the hands of out-of-state corporations. In 1965 there were 114 daily newspapers in Texas, 62 of which were family-owned concerns, 59 of which were owned by 11 Texas-based chains, and only three of which were owned by out-of-state chains. By 1994, the number of daily papers had declined to eighty-three; most of these belonged to one of some twenty corporate chains, many of which were out-of-state companies. The trend toward consolidation was particularly striking in the big-city dailies. Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio all began the 1990s with two major papers; by 1995, each city had only one. Faithful readers mourned the

passing of their favorite papers, reporters and columnists scrambled to find jobs with their former competitors, and consumer advocates worried that the lack of competition would drive up prices and stifle freedom of expression.

The magazine industry experienced similar trends. In the 1970s and 1980s, local and regional magazines flourished. Most of the state's larger cities boasted at least one slick, city-based magazine that covered stories of local interest and provided movie, restaurant, and music reviews. Increasing publication costs, the oil bust of the mid-1980s, and the proliferation of alternative media sources such as the Internet spelled the demise of most such city magazines: by the end of the 1990s, only Dallas's *D Magazine* survived. Nonetheless, the pioneering state-level features-and-culture magazine, Austin-based *Texas Monthly*, proved very successful and provided an outlet for the writing of many of the state's most talented print journalists. In Austin and the other large cities, so-called "alternative" newspapers such as the *Houston Press*, the *Dallas Observer*, and the *Austin Chronicle* filled some of the void left by the departure of the city magazines and the second dailies.

Several Texans established national reputations as journalists in the last decades of the twentieth century. Longtime CBS news anchor Walter Cronkite retired in 1981 and passed the torch to another Houstonian, Dan Rather, who stepped down in 2005. Beaumont's Jim Lehrer anchored the highly respected *Newshour* on PBS and moderated several important presidential debates. After serving as Lyndon Johnson's press secretary, Bill Moyers of Marshall had a long and distinguished career, especially as a producer of public-television documentaries. NBC's Sam Donaldson, who began his career as a teenage disc jockey in El Paso, became a high-profile member of the White House press corps and a fixture on Sunday-morning TV talk shows. Liberal syndicated columnist Molly Ivins, who died in 2006, acquired a national following for her barbed political columns and books, especially those aimed at George W. Bush. In addition, Larry L. King, Edwin "Bud" Shrake, William Broyles, Jr., Gary Cartwright, and Stephen Harrigan all made national reputations as Texas magazine journalists before writing best-selling books. In the 1990s, former state land commissioner Jim Hightower hosted a liberal radio talk show that was syndicated on more than 100 stations nationwide.

Historians, in and out of academia, also contributed to the growing body of Texan-produced nonfiction. Before the 1970s, the University of Texas boasted the only history department in the state with much of a national reputation. In the decades since, other history programs have improved dramatically. A nationwide glut of PhDs allowed Texas A&M, the University of Houston, Texas Tech, and the University of North Texas to begin filling their faculty ranks with professors holding terminal degrees from nationally prominent programs. The same held true at Rice, Texas Christian University (TCU), Southern Methodist University (SMU), and Baylor. In the 1990s, the University of Texas (UT)-Arlington, UT-El Paso, and SMU inaugurated new doctoral programs in history. By the turn of the century, historians working at Texas universities were producing monographs in the full range of historical fields.

In the field of Texas history, historians began moving away from the uncritical celebrations of the frontier past. That meant, among other things, that Texas history would cease to be told exclusively from the Anglo, male perspective. In the 1970s and 1980s, young scholars such as Alwyn Barr and Arnolde De León produced seminal works on blacks and Hispanics in Texas. Paul D. Lack, Walter L. Buenger, Carl H. Moneyhon, Alwyn Barr, Lewis L. Gould, Norman D. Brown, and George Norris Green all produced new syntheses of specific eras of Texas politics; many of their books showed the influence of the liberal trends that had swept the American academic world in the 1960s. By the 1990s, more high-quality historical studies of Texas women were being written, including books by Elizabeth Hayes

Turner, Rebecca Sharpless, and Elizabeth York Enstam. Randolph B. Campbell produced the first modern scholarly study of slavery in Texas, and Donald L. Chipman wrote a new general history of Spanish Texas. Increasingly, scholars deemphasized Texas exceptionalism and instead placed Texas history in a regional or national context: books by Lawrence Goodwyn on Populism, David La Vere, Gary Clayton Anderson, and F. Todd Smith on Indians, and David Weber on the Spanish borderlands are good examples. Scholars also applied the techniques of the so-called New Social History to reexamine the histories of specific Texas communities. The result has been community-studies such as the work of Jesús F. de la Teja on San Antonio, Gilberto Hinojosa on Laredo, and Randolph B. Campbell on Harrison County. A few independent scholars not affiliated with a university also produced cutting-edge historical works, including Jack Jackson and Robert Weddle, both of whom wrote on Spanish Texas. Historian Dan L. Flores, journalist Stephen Harrigan, and naturalist Joe C. Truett wrote books in the tradition of John Graves, blending history, natural history, and personal memoir. By and large, though, the public was slow to embrace the new approaches to Texas history, and works on traditional topics like the Texas Revolution and biographies of great men continued to garner the most popular attention.

Public history organizations had to navigate the sometimes-treacherous waters of academic and popular history with care. The Texas State Historical Association (TSHA) enjoyed strong growth in the last three decades of the twentieth century and emerged as arguably the best-run state historical society in the nation. The TSHA was more successful than most such organizations at reconciling the tastes and interests of academic and amateur historians. Its most ambitious project, the *New Handbook of Texas* (1996), took fourteen years to complete, at a cost of more than \$5 million. With some 23,000 entries by 3000 authors, the *Handbook*, which the TSHA put online in 1999, was deservedly hailed as the most comprehensive state-level historical reference work ever compiled. The new Bob Bullock Texas History Museum in Austin opened its doors to favorable public reaction in 2001, and several of the state's important historical museums and sites received major renovations and restorations, including the Sam Houston Memorial Museum, the San Jacinto Museum, the Star of the Republic Museum, and the Texas State Cemetery. In each case, as in the magnificent \$98-million restoration of the State Capitol building in the 1990s, the public enthusiastically supported the project and for the most part seemed not to object to the expenditure of public dollars to help create it.

## **Texans at Play: Sports and Leisure**

If many aspects of Texas life changed in the last years of the twentieth century, one thing did not: Texans remained a sports-crazy people. And for a majority of them, sport was still synonymous with football. Nonetheless, as the state grew more diverse and more urban, other pastimes competed with football for the time, attention, and leisure-spending of the state's people.

### **Professional sports**

Even in down years, the Dallas Cowboys remained among the most successful pro sports franchises of all time, consistently at or near the top in television revenues and sales of team apparel and memorabilia. In the late 1980s, the Cowboys' on-field fortunes declined, and in

1989 the team was sold to Arkansas oilman Jerry Jones, who outraged many fans by dismissing the legendary Tom Landry and hiring Port Arthur native Jimmy Johnson as the Cowboys' new head coach. Even if he was not exactly embraced by fans at first, Johnson led the Cowboys back to prominence, winning Super Bowls in 1993 and 1994. A rift between the coach and owner led Johnson to leave the team in 1994, and Jones replaced Johnson with Barry Switzer, who led the team to its fifth Super Bowl win in the 1996 championship game. Over the next sixteen seasons, with a succession of coaches, the Cowboys managed only one playoff win.

After enjoying some success in the late 1970s, the Houston Oilers lapsed into mediocrity, punctuated by occasional good seasons, but with no championships to their credit. Finally owner Bud Adams moved the franchise to Tennessee in 1997. Houston went several years without a team, but the city was granted an expansion franchise, the Texans, beginning with the 2002 season.

Texas's two major league baseball franchises enjoyed only limited success on the field. The Texas Rangers ranged between mediocre and awful for a quarter-century after the franchise moved to the Dallas–Fort Worth Metroplex in 1972. Only in 1996, after moving into its state-of-the-art stadium, Rangers Ballpark in Arlington, did the team finally win a divisional title, a feat it repeated in 1998 and 1999. Each time the Rangers lost in the first round of the playoffs. Houston's pro team, the Astros, performed somewhat better, earning its first playoff berth in 1980, followed by four more in 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2001, each time failing to advance past the first round. In 2004, however, the team reached the National League Championship Series; the following year the Astros finally went to the World Series, only to be swept in four games by the Chicago White Sox. Perhaps the greatest moment in Texas pro baseball history came at the hands of a player who was born and raised in Texas and who played for both of the state's teams. On May 1, 1991, forty-four-year-old Alvin native Nolan Ryan, whom the Rangers had signed away from the Astros as a free agent two years earlier, pitched a seventh major-league no-hitter in Arlington—a record that many baseball experts believe may stand forever. Ryan went on to become the president and part-owner of the Rangers, and under his leadership the franchise went to two World Series—in 2010 and 2011—losing both.

By the 1980s, Houston, San Antonio, and Dallas all had professional basketball teams. The Houston Rockets won back-to-back NBA titles in 1994 and 1995, and the San Antonio Spurs claimed the championships in 1999, 2003, 2005, and 2007. The Mavericks' won their lone championship in 2011. Women's pro basketball came to Texas in 1997 under the auspices of the Women's National Basketball Association, and Houston's team, the Comets, won the new league's first four championships.

New stadiums and arenas for pro teams—funded in part by tax dollars—became major public issues in Texas, as in the nation. In the early 1990s, Mayor Henry Cisneros pushed the City of San Antonio to build the Alamodome, arguing that a major city needed a first-class stadium. About the same time, the city of Arlington funded the construction of Rangers Ballpark in Arlington. Not to be outdone, Houston taxpayers helped to finance the construction of the Astros' Minute Maid Park (Figure 13.4) (completed in 2000) and also approved public funding of new stadiums for the Rockets (Toyota Center, 2003) and the city's NFL expansion team, the Texans (Reliant Stadium, 2002). In 2001, the publicly financed arena in Dallas for the Mavericks and Stars (the American Airlines Center) opened for business, followed shortly by new facilities for the San Antonio Spurs (AT&T Center, 2002). Dwarfing all of these projects, however, was the new stadium for the Dallas Cowboys. Built with public financing from the city of Arlington, Cowboys Stadium could accommodate over 100,000 fans and was completed in 2009 at a cost of \$1.15 billion. Critics cried that





**Figure 13.4** Minute Maid Park, 2010. Photo by Mick Watson.

public funding for such projects amounted to “corporate welfare” and that other, more pressing needs such as public transportation and city schools went neglected, but owners argued that the cost of modern professional sports required help from the public sector and that the new facilities would increase city revenues.

Ice hockey was slow to catch on in Texas. However, in 1993 Minnesota’s National Hockey League team, the North Stars, moved to Dallas, where they were renamed the Stars and became a consistent winner, culminating in a Stanley Cup championship in 1999. Before long, a dozen Texas cities boasted minor-league hockey teams, and with the growth of club- and school-sponsored hockey, there are now opportunities for amateurs across the Lone Star State to learn the game.

Texans continued to distinguish themselves in the sports of golf and tennis. In golf, UT’s Tom Kite captured the US Open title in 1992, and fellow UT golfer Ben Crenshaw repeated as Masters champion in 1995. Payne Stewart, who went to SMU, won the PGA Championship in 1989 and the US Open in 1991 and 1999, prior to his untimely death in a freak airplane accident. Dallas’s Justin Leonard won the British Open in 1997. Famed Austin golf teacher Harvey Penick collected his tips and tales in his 1992 work, *Harvey Penick’s Little Red Book*, the best-selling sports book of all time.

Texas has produced few major pro tennis stars, but the 1990 Wimbledon women’s finals had a distinctly Texas flavor, pitting Houstonian Zina Garrison against Martina Navratilova, a Czech native who made her home in the Dallas–Fort Worth area after immigrating to the United States in the 1970s. Navratilova won the 1990 match, one of fifty-six lifetime Grand Slam titles, making her arguably the greatest female tennis player of all time.

Other sports have enjoyed more limited popularity in Texas in recent decades. Rodeo remains popular at both the amateur and professional levels (Figure 13.5). The greatest individual star of rodeo, Ty Murray of Stephenville, won pro rodeo’s all-around championship seven times, an all-time record. Houston boxer George Foreman proved to be one of that sport’s most durable stars, winning the gold medal at the 1968 Olympics, capturing the



**Figure 13.5** Lifelong Texan and eight-time World Champion calf roper Fred Whitfield is shown here on his famous horse, Moon, during the 1997 San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo. Photograph by David Jennings, courtesy of Fred Whitfield, <http://www.fredwhitfield.com>.

world heavyweight championship in 1973, and then reclaiming it in 1993 at the age of forty-five. In track-and-field, the Texas Relays in Austin rated as one of the major events in the nation. In 2001—its seventy-fourth year—the meet attracted more than 5000 high school and collegiate athletes, including many Olympians. Cycling has grown in popularity, aided by the celebrity of seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong of Austin, even though Armstrong was stripped of his titles after admitting to steroid use in 2013. Houston and Dallas both had pro teams in the North American Soccer League, but soccer was slow to catch on with the public as a spectator sport, and the league itself folded in the 1980s. In 1996, however, Dallas acquired a franchise in the newly created Major League Soccer. By the start of the new century, soccer rivaled little-league baseball in popularity among school-age children of both sexes, and the flood of immigrants from soccer-playing countries, including Mexico, further ensured the future of the game in Texas.

### College sports

In Texas college sports, as in professional, football still rules. Since 1970, Texas teams have finished in the Associated Press Top Twenty list sixty-two times: twenty-three times for the University of Texas; seventeen times for Texas A&M; ten times for the University of Houston; five times each for SMU and Texas Tech; and four times for Baylor. In 2005, UT won its third national championship. Five players at Texas colleges have won the Heisman Trophy since 1970: UT's Earl Campbell (1977) and Ricky Williams (1998), the University of Houston's Andre Ware (1989), Baylor's Robert Griffin III (2011), and A&M's Johnny Manziel (2012). In small-college divisions since 1970, national championships have been

won by Texas A&I (five times); Southwest Texas State and Abilene Christian (twice each); and Angelo State, East Texas State, and Austin College (once each).

The 1980s and 1990s were times of upheaval in Texas college football. After decades of prominence, the Southwest Conference entered a period of decline in the 1980s. Part of the problem was scandal, as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) placed several teams on probation for recruiting violations, paying players, or other infractions. Most famous was the case involving Southern Methodist University. In 1987, the NCAA learned that SMU boosters, including Governor Bill Clements, had regularly paid players. The NCAA gave the school the first-ever “death penalty,” which forced SMU to abolish its football program for two years. Similar scandals tarnished the conference’s image nationally, and contributed (along with the intense competition for high school players) to the decline in its competitiveness. In an era when college football was a multimillion-dollar industry, the large schools suffered financially by having to play private schools such as Rice and TCU, which were rarely competitive and thus had difficulty drawing a substantial television audience. In 1990, the University of Arkansas left the Southwest Conference for the Southeastern Conference, and soon UT and A&M were searching for a new home as well. In 1994 Lieutenant Governor Bob Bullock, who held degrees from both Baylor and Texas Tech, and Lubbock’s John Montford, who chaired the senate finance committee, helped to broker a deal that brought UT, A&M, Texas Tech, and Baylor into the Big 8 (which became the Big 12), and the Southwest Conference ceased to exist. The remaining Southwest Conference teams ended up in various second-tier conferences. Further conference realignments in 2011–12 led to A&M joining the Southeast Conference, TCU becoming a member of the Big 12, and the University of Houston and SMU ending up in the new American Athletic Conference.

### **Recreational activities**

When Texans were not watching or playing sports, they spent much of their leisure time pursuing other recreational activities. In 2001, there were more than 17 million visitors to Texas’s 108 state parks and natural areas. Hunting remained a principal fall and wintertime activity for millions of Texans, and thanks to the state’s warm climate, those who love to fish had the opportunity to do so year round—both in fresh and salt water. Wagering on horseraces became legal in 1987, and tracks soon opened in Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio. In 1997, the Texas Motor Speedway, which can accommodate more than 200,000 spectators, was completed near Fort Worth, bringing professional auto racing to the Lone Star State. The nation’s largest open-air flea market, First Monday Trade Days in Canton, attracted an estimated 100,000 buyers, sellers, and browsers each month. On any given weekend, Texans could attend a plethora of yearly events—everything from the Renaissance Festival in Magnolia to the Black-Eyed Pea Festival in Athens to the Mosquito Festival in Clute. The variety of leisure activities illustrates how much things had changed since the days when attending a church ice-cream social, fishing in a local creek, or watching a Friday night high school football game were about the only available means of relaxing after a hard week’s work.

### **The Paradox of Texas Politics**

Texas politics in the late twentieth century posed a paradox. On one hand, the era witnessed the end of a century of Democratic dominance and, for a while, a seemingly competitive party

system in statewide races. In five consecutive gubernatorial races (1978 to 1994) the party in power lost the governor's office to the party that had been out of power. Yet this apparent competitiveness was deceptive. During all this time, Texas never ceased being a conservative state; it merely took some years for conservative voters to find their new political home. In the end, Texas was once again primarily a one-party state dominated by conservatives.

### **State politics in transition**

As the national Democratic Party's embrace of civil rights and other liberal causes continued to alienate conservatives, the Republican Party in Texas enjoyed strong growth. As mentioned in Chapter 12, Bill Clements had become the first Republican to hold the governor's office since Reconstruction when he was elected in 1978. But many observers thought his election was an aberration caused by the rising rate of unemployment at the time, large expenditures of his personal wealth during the campaign, and blatant overconfidence on the part of his Democratic opponent. The 1982 elections seemed to bear out this assessment, as Mark White recaptured the office for the Democrats. It was not a long stay on top, however, for the 1986 elections proved that Clements's first win of the governor's office had been no fluke. This time, due to low turnout among minorities and rural voters, and aided by his association with the popular Ronald Reagan (who carried Texas by a million votes), Clements prevailed over White. The Republicans also gained legislative and congressional seats that year, and elected former Democratic congressman-turned-Republican Phil Gramm to replace retiring senator John Tower. The number of local GOP officeholders rose to 504. Although Democrats captured all the other statewide offices below the gubernatorial level, it was becoming clear that Republicans now stood a chance of attracting the traditional Democratic small-town voters, who joined many suburban voters in pulling straight Republican-party tickets. The Democratic Party found itself at a crossroads: it needed its traditional white East Texas voters, but at the same time it also needed to mobilize voter turnout in the minority and low-income precincts. The creation and then maintenance of such a coalition was problematic, to say the least.

The 1988 presidential election fully revealed the Democrats' problems. The party nominated Massachusetts governor Michael S. Dukakis for president and Texas's own Senator Lloyd Bentsen for vice president. Texas Democrats pinned their hopes on the theory that the conservative Bentsen might be able to bring back to the party those Democrats from rural areas and small towns who had voted for President Reagan in 1980 and 1984. However, the Republican national ticket also included a Texan, presidential nominee George H. W. Bush, who had served as Reagan's vice president. Helped by a tough campaign run by prominent Houston lawyer James A. Baker III, Bush easily won, carrying 56 percent of the vote in Texas. Moreover, the Republicans won their first down-ballot races since Reconstruction, electing three state supreme court justices and one railroad commissioner. Republicans predicted that soon theirs would be the majority party in Texas.

Meanwhile, Bill Clements was halfway through his second stint in the governor's office (1987–91), a term that proved to be less contentious than was his first. The state's political energies were sapped by a depression and the need to settle the issue of court-ordered prison reform. Clements, nonetheless, vetoed a record fifty-five bills in his two terms as governor, and the divisions between his office and Democratic legislators prevented any overall legislative agenda. Attempts to modify the Mark White education reforms failed, and Texans legalized wagering on horseracing. Clements said early on that he would not stand for reelection in 1990.

On the Democratic side, State Treasurer Ann Richards (Figure 13.6) emerged victorious in the primaries over Attorney General Jim Mattox and former governor White. The Republicans nominated Clayton Williams, a rancher and oilman from Midland. The conservative Williams looked like an easy winner, because he was a political outsider in a time of increasing voter dissatisfaction with career politicians. He was also rich, having already spent \$9 million in winning the Republican primary. But Williams's campaign soon turned into a shambles, as he made numerous political gaffes, including publicly telling a joke about rape, refusing to shake Richards's hand after a state-televized debate, and admitting that he had paid no income tax in 1986. Richards won the election, even carrying many of the traditionally Republican urban counties. Most credited her victory to Williams's blunders, which drove many suburban women voters into the Richards camp.

Republicans had expected to win some top offices in the state, perhaps even the legislature. They got part of what they wanted. Senator Gramm easily won reelection and fellow Republican Kay Bailey Hutchison was elected state treasurer. In the agriculture commissioner's race, Republican Rick Perry defeated liberal Democratic incumbent Jim Hightower. But for the first time since 1974, the Republican Party did not gain any seats in the legislature. Also, the Democrats mustered some able candidates besides Ann Richards. Former State Comptroller Bob Bullock handily won the powerful post of lieutenant governor, and Dan Morales, a legislator from San Antonio, was elected attorney general, becoming the first Hispanic to win a statewide elected executive office.



**Figure 13.6** Ann Richards. Source: National Archives Office of the Secretary of Defense. Department of Defense photo by Robert D. Ward (6681304).

As governor of Texas, Ann Richards rose to national political stardom. Economic growth started in 1990 and continued throughout the next several years, and her approval rating soared above 60 percent. Governor Richards appeared around the nation and on television, lauding Texas and its advantages. She ably chaired the 1992 Democratic presidential convention, thereby gaining more national exposure and popularity. The governor seemed to epitomize the arrival of women in national politics. Some critics argued, however, that she did not exert strong executive leadership at home. During her tenure in office, the fiscally conservative Democratic lieutenant governor, Bob Bullock, largely ran the legislature, but with tight budgets, little happened beyond the establishment of a state lottery and the continued building of prisons. Richards's legacy, then, lay not in legislation but in her fulfillment of campaign promises to make state government reflect the diversity of the state's people. The governor appoints about 4000 persons to terms on boards and commissions; 48 percent of Richards's appointees were women, 25 percent were Hispanic, and 12 percent were African American, ending decades of mostly-white, mostly male governance.

Texans continued to play important roles in presidential politics. In 1992, Dallas billionaire Ross Perot challenged President Bush and Arkansas governor Bill Clinton for the presidency. Perot's only real political experience had been as chair of the committee that designed the Mark White education reforms. Championing a balanced budget and opposing the passage of NAFTA, the eccentric Perot proved to be the sensation of the 1992 campaign. In the end, though, his only real impact may have been to cost Bush the election and, indirectly, to give Texas another Republican senator. After defeating Bush, President Clinton tapped Senator Lloyd Bentsen for the office of treasury secretary. Kay Bailey Hutchison won the special election to fill the vacant Senate seat, and Texas now had two Republicans in the US Senate.

### **The Republicans triumphant**

In 1994, the Republicans felt that Governor Richards was vulnerable and rallied around George W. Bush, a co-owner of the Texas Rangers baseball team and son of the former president. This time, Richards's campaign did not go well. She was perceived as running a negative campaign and as being soft on crime, despite having added 75,000 new beds to the state's prisons. Taking no controversial stands, Bush won an easy victory, with 53.4 percent of the vote (Figure 13.7). His victory would usher in a long era of GOP dominance in statewide elections.

Bush's confident campaigning style carried over into his administration as governor. Having run as an educational reformer, he successfully pursued his plans for standardized testing and charter schools. He bolstered his standing with the right wing of the Republican Party by supporting the death penalty and school vouchers. Although the legislature defeated school vouchers and his most ambitious program—a wholesale restructuring of the state tax system—Bush succeeded in winning a modest reduction in homeowners' property taxes. When he ran for reelection in 1998, the state's economy was booming and his approval ratings were high.

The elections of that year confirmed the Republican Party's arrival as the majority party in Texas. Bush defeated liberal Gary Mauro with 69 percent of the vote, but what was truly significant was the party's showing statewide: for the first time, Republicans swept all fourteen statewide elections. They now held every one of the twenty-nine offices elected by statewide vote, including all eighteen judgeships on the state supreme court and the court of criminal appeals. Only in the state house of representatives did Democrats maintain a semblance of power at the state level. There, a 78–72 Democratic margin enabled the



**Figure 13.7** George W. Bush taking the oath of office as governor of Texas, January 17, 1995. Courtesy of the State of Texas Library and Archives Commission.

popular conservative Democrat Pete Laney, a Panhandle cotton farmer, to retain his powerful position as speaker of the house. But the days of Democrats in any position of leadership in Austin seemed clearly numbered.

Bush's landslide reelection as governor of Texas positioned him for a presidential run. His campaign organization shattered all fundraising records, and he also benefited from his good relations with the late Democratic lieutenant governor, Bob Bullock, who crossed party lines to endorse Bush's candidacy. On the campaign trail, Bush repeatedly cited their relationship as proof that he could work with Democrats, a quality voters found appealing after the vitriolic partisanship of the Clinton years.

In the November 2000 election, Bush lost the popular vote to Democrat Al Gore, Clinton's vice president, by some 500,000 votes, but, following a controversial vote recount in Florida and a favorable ruling by the US Supreme Court, the Texas governor was declared the winner. It was an inauspicious start, but Bush was eager to get to work. He brought many Texans to Washington with him to serve in his administration, and Texas Republicans also occupied prominent positions in Congress, including House Majority Leader Dick Armey of Irving and Majority Whip Tom DeLay of Houston. In Texas, Lieutenant Governor Rick Perry, a Democrat-turned-Republican who had come up through the ranks of the state government, succeeded to the governorship.

### **The rise of minority-group politics**

The 1980s marked the beginning of a trend whereby the Democratic Party in Texas increasingly became the party of inner-city and minority voters, while the Republicans

have swept the suburbs and West Texas and have made major inroads into the rural East Texas vote. One of the Democrats' biggest problems has been voter turnout; African American and Hispanic turnout tends to be significantly lower than that of whites. Democrats have also been frustrated by their inability to forge strong coalitions across racial and ethnic lines, as black and Hispanic political interests have tended to evolve along separate paths.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Hispanic political power had grown, almost always operating within the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. The number of Hispanics registered to vote increased from 488,000 in 1976 to more than 1.3 million in 1995, and that year voters elected 2215 Hispanics to public office. That number included twenty-five state legislators and Attorney General Dan Morales. Texas sent five Tejanos to Congress, led by longtime San Antonio congressman Henry B. González, who chaired the powerful House Banking Committee and retired in 1998 after a thirty-seven-year career in the House. An alliance between sympathetic Anglos and middle-class Hispanics had shaped the new ethnic politics, and the best-known Hispanic politician became Henry Cisneros, who had served as mayor of San Antonio during the 1980s without overtly using his ethnicity to win office. Increasingly, middle-class whites (as well as African Americans) found they could support Hispanic politicians when the issues involved concerned all urban citizens—law enforcement, better streets and highways, education, economic development, and the like. Thus, political activism among Hispanics in the 1980s and 1990s represented a return to the mainstream and a move away from the militancy of the 1960s. Indeed, Republicans like George W. Bush even made some inroads into the Hispanic vote; Bush, who frequently addressed Hispanic audiences in Spanish, got between 37 and 39 percent of the Hispanic vote in 1998, and 35 percent nationwide in the 2000 presidential race. Hispanics in the 1990s were also hurt by the withdrawal from public life of two of their highest-profile leaders: Henry Cisneros, who resigned from his position as housing secretary in the Clinton administration following a scandal; and state attorney general Dan Morales, who voluntarily retired from politics. The 2002 gubernatorial candidacy of Tony Sánchez, who garnered only 40 percent of the vote despite spending \$63 million of his own money in the race, suggested that Hispanics still have a long road to travel before coming into their own in state politics.

African American voters remained more wedded than Hispanics to the Democratic Party in the 1990s, with only 10 percent of them indicating a Republican-party preference. The number of black elected officials in the state in 1992 was 472, including two US congressional representatives, two state senators, and fourteen members of the house. By 2000, about 11 percent of all registered voters in Texas were African American and 19 percent were Hispanic. Democrats still controlled about 4000 of the 5000 county-level offices in Texas, and it is here that black political power remained most influential. George W. Bush often spoke of reaching out to African Americans, but his standing with them was injured by his refusal as governor to sign the James Byrd Hate-Crimes Act, a bill named for a black man from Jasper who in 1998 was abducted by three white supremacists, chained to a pickup truck, and dragged to his death.

Black political power was most strongly evinced in city politics, especially in Dallas and Houston. There, the dynamics have been similar to Tejano politics in San Antonio. In the 1990s, black mayors Ron Kirk in Dallas and Lee Brown in Houston succeeded in building coalitions across racial lines around issues such as city services and economic development, sometimes butting heads with more traditional minority politicians who had come to politics through the civil rights movement of the 1960s.



With the examples of black and Hispanic civil rights movements as a guide, gay and lesbian Texans also began to demand more explicit protection of their rights. In the early 1990s, those demands focused primarily on protection against physical violence perpetrated because of a victim's sexual orientation. The only hate-crimes law on the books in Texas was a vague 1993 statute that enhanced sentences for offenses motivated out of bias, but it did not list protected categories and thus was rarely invoked. In 1995 the Lesbian and Gay Rights Lobby of Texas (LGRL) proposed a bill that would explicitly list categories, including sexual orientation, but conservative lawmakers defeated the bill. That same year, in the wake of several high-profile murders of gay men, the LGRL organized a march on Austin that effectively highlighted the issue. Representative Glenn Maxey, the state's first openly gay legislator, became the leading advocate for the legislation in the House, but actual movement on the issue had to wait until George W. Bush moved to the White House, then, in 2001, the new governor, Rick Perry, reluctantly signed the James Byrd act, which toughened penalties for certain crimes committed because of the victim's race, religion, color, gender, disability, sexual preference, age, national origin, or ancestry. Notably, the legislation did not cover gender identity; that phase of what would later be referred to as LGBTQ rights would have to wait for generation.

In summary, Texas politics in the 1980s and 1990s was a roller-coaster ride, with plenty of excitement, controversy, and colorful personalities. But none of this could conceal the fundamental reality of political life at the end of the twentieth century: Texas remained true to its conservative political heritage.

### **Historic Assumptions in Transition**

In the late twentieth century, Texans found many of their institutions and policies inadequate or ill suited to the needs of a diverse, modern, urban, and industrial state. Among these were such fundamental matters as public and higher education, the criminal justice system, the water supply, environmental protection, and the tax system. Citizens and their elected leaders were torn over whether new approaches were needed, or whether long-held assumptions about taxes and the role of government would continue to guide policy and budgetary decisions. The consequence was a halting, piecemeal approach to many of the state's most difficult problems, with predictably mixed results. A "new" Texas may have needed more creative problem-solving, but the pull of tradition remained strong.

#### **Public education: An ideological and financial battleground**

In the 1980s a consensus began to emerge that the state's system of public education needed reforming. There, however, the consensus ended; the debate on education evoked strong opinions, heated emotions, and conflicting ideas concerning what to do about the public schools of Texas. Disagreements generally revolved around three related issues: How could the quality of education be improved? How should the system be funded? And how could a high-quality education be made available to all Texas children?

The first issue—how to improve the quality of instruction—was the source of much ideological disagreement. The state government had grappled with educational inadequacies since the 1960s. Between 1969 and 1975, the legislature sought to improve the system in piecemeal fashion, extending the school year to 180 days, buttressing special-education

programs, creating bilingual programs, and increasing state funding for teachers' salaries, school operating expenses, and student transportation costs. Although the state tinkered with methods of state funding to school districts several times between 1977 and 1981, Texas still ranked thirtieth nationally in pay to teachers in 1980 and thirty-eighth in expenditures per pupil. The state also languished near the bottom on Scholastic Achievement Test scores.

In 1984, the concern over education led Governor Mark White, with a strong push from Lieutenant Governor Bill Hobby, to appoint a committee on school reform. Headed by Dallas billionaire Ross Perot, the committee's recommendations led to House Bill 72 (HB 72), which enacted school reforms at a cost of \$2.8 billion. Among the many provisions of HB 72 were higher salaries and competency testing for teachers, stricter teacher-certification rules, and the requirement that secondary-school teachers earn degrees in specific academic subjects rather than in education. But the most controversial aspect of the law was actually one of its minor components, the so-called "no-pass, no-play" rule. HB 72 raised the minimum passing grade to 70; students failing to make that mark in any required course would not be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities, including sports, unless the grade report for the next six weeks showed a passing grade. Despite widespread praise, some parents and coaches organized campaigns to modify no-pass, no-play. (In 1995, the legislature watered down the rule, cutting the suspension period from six weeks to three and allowing students below the cutoff to continue to practice but not participate in interscholastic competition.) Voters also demanded that the appointed school board be made elective, despite opposition from major newspapers, Lieutenant Governor Hobby, and Ross Perot. Otherwise, the reforms stayed in place, and most Texans approved of their general parameters.

By the mid-1990s, there was a widespread perception that the education reforms of the 1980s had not solved the problem. The new Republican governor, George W. Bush, ran for office in 1994 as an education reformer. At his urging, when the legislature convened the following year, it enacted the Public Schools Reform Act. The centerpiece of the bill was a school accountability system, under which schools and districts received ratings based on their students' performance on a statewide standardized test, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). Schools were required to meet minimum standards on TAAS and to lower dropout rates. Another reform was the charter-school program, which allowed the creation of public schools that are exempted from many state regulations, allowing them to be more innovative in both educational and administrative matters. By 2001, the state had 163 operational charter schools, with more slated to open in the future. As another component in their "school-choice" philosophy, the Bush and Perry administrations also supported the idea of school vouchers, which would allow parents to use a proportion of state education dollars to pay the cost of tuition at a private school. Nonetheless, voucher bills failed in every legislative session over the next decade, despite generous funding from pro-voucher groups and individuals.

The Bush reforms had their share of critics. Opponents of standardized testing complained that students and teachers have become slaves to TAAS (and its successor, known as TAKS, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills), with far too much classroom time devoted to prepping for the yearly test. Likewise, critics branded the charter-school program a failure, citing lower-than-average TAAS scores at those schools and a few well-publicized examples of malfeasance at individual campuses. Enemies of vouchers depicted them as the first step toward abolishing the system of public education. Whether these ideas will prove successful in the long run remains an open question. In any event, George W. Bush

touted these ideas in his successful 2000 presidential campaign as a model for the nation to follow.

The issue of education reform can never be separated from questions regarding funding. Even as the state wrestled with the 1984 reforms, a group of poor school districts, represented by the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF), sued the state in a case known as *Edgewood ISD v. Kirby* (1989). The plaintiffs contended that the state's method of financing public schools was unconstitutional. In the Texas system, local property taxes paid for nearly half of the cost of public education, and, as everyone knew, property in affluent areas produced far more tax revenue than property in poor areas. As a consequence, the 100 wealthiest of the state's 1086 school districts spent \$7233 per pupil in 1986, whereas the poorest 100 spent \$2978. A state court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and the state supreme court upheld the ruling in 1989.

Facing a court-ordered deadline after several failed efforts to address the issue in the early 1990s, in 1993 the legislature passed a law that took a share of property taxes from the 100 high-property-wealth districts to balance the overall funding. Dubbed the "Robin Hood" bill, the law was upheld by the Texas Supreme Court in 1995, but it faced widespread criticism and legal challenges from wealthier districts that are forced to send millions of dollars to the state, which in turn redistributed the funds to poorer districts. Changes in the state's population led the inequities in public education to grow because of the changes in the state's population. The Dallas school system in 2001 was 52 percent Hispanic, 37 percent African American, 9 percent white, and 2 percent Asian American. Houston's statistics were similar. Giving up on ever achieving racial balance in schools, city leaders in the 1980s and 1990s began to stress the need to improve minority academic performance and reduce the dropout rates, whatever the racial balance of a particular school or district. Republican proponents of school-choice measures and standardized testing sometimes found allies in the minority community, where failing schools were a source of much concern. On the other hand, urban parents and school officials clamored for the state to commit significantly more financial resources overall to public education, something the legislatures of the late 1990s and early 2000s were reluctant to do. In the final analysis, despite many efforts to make public education more effective and accessible to all, long-held assumptions about the proper role of the state in achieving these goals held sway. If there was much that was new about Texas at the end of the twentieth century, the state's approach to public education hearkened back to a decidedly traditional mindset.

### **Higher education: A world-class system?**

In the last two decades of the twentieth century, enrollments in state institutions of higher education grew slowly but steadily. A total of 984,473 students attended Texas's 101 public and 39 private colleges and universities in the fall of 2000. Approximately 90 percent of them attended publicly supported institutions; nearly half of them (438,730) were enrolled in the state's fifty public community-college districts. The gender makeup of the campus populations had changed. In Texas, as in the nation, more females than males now attended institutions of higher learning. Although certain degree programs remain feminized, the numbers of women enrolled in the sciences, business schools, and masters of arts programs are all now roughly equal to those of males. Although men still dominated PhD programs, by the 1980s professional programs such as law and veterinary science were no longer male preserves. In the 1990s, nearly 42 percent of new faculty hired were women, although,

overall, male professors still outnumbered females by three to one. The college population aged slightly since the 1970s, partially because of the growth of community colleges and the number of students who were working. Compared to students of previous generations, the average student now took longer to graduate, with more than five years constituting the norm. The student bodies also turned toward political conservatism and occupational pragmatism (trends that largely began in the 1980s); one-third of all Texas college students majored in business.

One change in the 1980s and 1990s was the effort to increase racial and ethnic diversity on college campuses. In 1983, the state implemented the first of several Equal Educational Opportunity Plans for Higher Education. These were five-year affirmative-action plans aimed at increasing the enrollment of minorities at Texas's major universities. Under these plans, universities undertook extensive minority recruiting and retention programs and made efforts to increase the diversity of faculty. A second five-year plan was initiated by Governor Bill Clements in 1989 and a third by Governor Ann Richards in 1994. These plans produced modest results. By 1992, African Americans accounted for about 9 percent of state university students (up about one percentage point from 1989), and Hispanics comprised 16 percent (up two percentage points). Of the 2000 doctoral degrees conferred in 1991, only seventy-two went to blacks and fifty-six went to Hispanics.

In 1996, a landmark court case brought a major policy shift. Denied admission to the University of Texas Law School, four white applicants sued the state of Texas, claiming that the university had violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment when it used racial preferences in making admission decisions. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals found in favor of the plaintiffs, and Texas Attorney General Dan Morales soon ruled that the decision, *Hopwood v. State of Texas*, required all of the state's universities to administer admissions, financial aid, and student retention programs on a race-neutral basis.

The *Hopwood* case and its aftermath have had mixed effects. Overall, minority enrollments at state universities did not decline significantly—in large part because UT and A&M were the only state institutions that openly used race or ethnicity as an admissions factor. Those two institutions immediately saw significant decreases in the numbers of African Americans and Hispanics enrolled. By 2001, however, minority enrollments at the two flagship universities had essentially returned to pre-*Hopwood* levels, in part because of a bill passed in 1997 (HB 588) that provided automatic admission at Texas public universities to any student in the top 10 percent of his or her high school class. Subsequently, black enrollment at UT and A&M rose 29 percent between 2000 and 2005, and Hispanic enrollment grew by 35 percent. Nationally, the laws concerning affirmative action remain in flux; in the case of *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003) the US Supreme Court overturned *Hopwood* and held that race can be used as one of many factors in determining admissions decisions. Then, in *Fisher v. The University of Texas* (2013), the ruling of a more conservative Supreme Court called for a reexamination of the legality of the university using race as even one among many factors in its admission system, remanding the case of Abigail Fisher, a white student denied admission to UT in 2008, back to the Court of Appeals, a step seen as favorable for the plaintiff. Although this ruling did not effectively change the university's admissions policy, it did reopen the question of constitutionality.

A different sort of equal-access issue involved the geographic availability of higher education. In 1987, MALDEF filed a suit on behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) against the state, charging that the lack of graduate and professional programs in South Texas constituted discrimination against Mexican Americans. After a lower court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, the legislature created the South Texas Initiative,

which allocated millions of extra dollars to the nine state universities in San Antonio, Corpus Christi, Kingsville, and along the Rio Grande. Nearly 100 new academic programs were created. Although the state supreme court eventually overturned the lower court's decision and ruled that the state had not intentionally discriminated against border residents, the initiative continued. In 1993 alone, it pumped \$460 million into the South Texas schools. The additions in 1989 of the Brownsville and Edinburg campuses to the UT System, and the Laredo, Kingsville, and Corpus Christi schools to the A&M system, were another part of the overall effort to improve the quality of higher education in South Texas.

As in the case of the public schools, the fate of higher education in Texas depended, in large measure, on money. Funding for Texas colleges and universities traditionally came from two sources: general tax revenue and the Permanent University Fund (PUF). In any given year, more than 90 percent of the funds that state-supported colleges and universities receive from the state government comes from general tax revenues; the PUF endowment accounts for the rest. Since 1931, Texas A&M and the University of Texas have shared PUF funding, with A&M receiving one-third of the revenues and UT two-thirds. On an inflation-adjusted basis, state spending on higher education (apart from the PUF) remained virtually unchanged from the mid-1980s through the end of the century. The PUF, the value of which was pushed up by the oil boom to more than \$2 billion in 1986, had long created a general feeling that the university system discriminated between the haves (the University of Texas and Texas A&M) and the have-nots. In 1984, voters ratified a constitutional amendment allowing the other member schools of the UT and A&M systems to draw upon PUF funds—the first major change in PUF rules in half a century. The following year, in an effort to secure more dependable funding for the schools outside the A&M and U.T. systems, the state created the Higher Education Assistance Fund (HEAF) to pay for capital improvements on the other campuses. Beginning in the mid-1990s, the legislature earmarked \$50 million annually to be placed in a permanent endowment for HEAF, with the goal of eventually making it a self-sustaining fund like the PUF. To counteract rising costs and declining revenues, the legislature raised resident tuition in 1985 for the first time in three decades; it increased steadily over the next fifteen years, from \$4 per semester hour in 1985 to \$42 in 2001. Much like K-12 education, public higher education faced an uncertain future as voters and lawmakers resisted paying the higher taxes that would keep the state's educational system competitive with other states.

### **The challenges of criminal justice**

In 1972, Texas inmate David Ruiz filed a handwritten lawsuit against the director of the Texas Department of Corrections (TDC), W. J. Estelle, in the court of US District Judge William Wayne Justice of Tyler. Ruiz charged that conditions in the prison at Huntsville violated inmates' civil rights. *Ruiz v. Estelle* went to trial in 1978, and Judge Justice's ruling in 1980 ordered the state to clean up the problems of prison overcrowding, inmate brutality, and other shortcomings. The ordered changes were expensive as well as broad, and they could not be made overnight. In 1983, the legislature appropriated \$750 million to build new units and upgrade older ones. Failure to hold the prison population below the court-ordered 95 percent of capacity led the state to refuse to admit some prisoners, overcrowding county jails and prompting the early release of some inmates. In December 1986, Judge Justice found the TDC in contempt of court and threatened to fine the state up to \$24 million per month until the prison system's inadequacies were rectified.

By 1990, the situation had improved, and federal supervision of the prison system had been relaxed somewhat. But the issues of overcrowded prisons and high rates of crime persisted well into the 1990s. The prison population grew from 18,151 in 1975 to 92,000 at the end of 1994. When the crime rate continued to climb in the 1990s, the state embarked on the largest prison-expansion program ever. Between 1990 and 1998, the state spent more than \$2.3 billion on new prisons. By 2001, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, or TDCJ (as it had been renamed in 1989), was operating fifty-one prison units and thirty-nine other assorted facilities, and the inmate population had topped 150,000—the largest in the nation.

The crime rate in most categories dropped from 1992 to 1999; the rate of recidivism (when a felon commits another felony after release from prison) followed a similar trend. Some credited longer prison terms for these improvements in crime statistics, whereas others argued that the improvements were simply due to the long economic expansion of the 1990s. In 2001, Judge Justice pronounced Texas prisons “vastly improved” and removed most remaining federal supervision of Texas facilities.

The 2000 presidential campaign of George W. Bush focused national attention on the Texas prison system. Bush touted the fact that crime had declined in the state during his tenure as governor, suggesting that tougher sentencing had worked in Texas. Opponents focused on the death penalty, which Texas has used liberally. Between 1982 and the end of 2001, the state executed 256 inmates; 152 of these executions occurred during Bush’s tenure as governor, including a record forty executions in 2000. By a large margin, Texas consistently led all other states in the number of executions. On the campaign trail, Bush repeatedly responded to criticism by asserting that the death penalty was applied fairly in Texas and that the state had never executed an innocent person. A poll conducted in 2000 revealed that nearly three-quarters of Texans supported capital punishment, but more than half of them also believed the state had indeed executed innocent people. In 2001, after Rick Perry succeeded George W. Bush in the governor’s office, legislators debated two highly publicized bills regarding the death penalty. One would have instituted a moratorium on executions while the system was reassessed, and the other would outlaw the execution of the mentally retarded. The first failed in the legislature; Governor Perry vetoed the other.

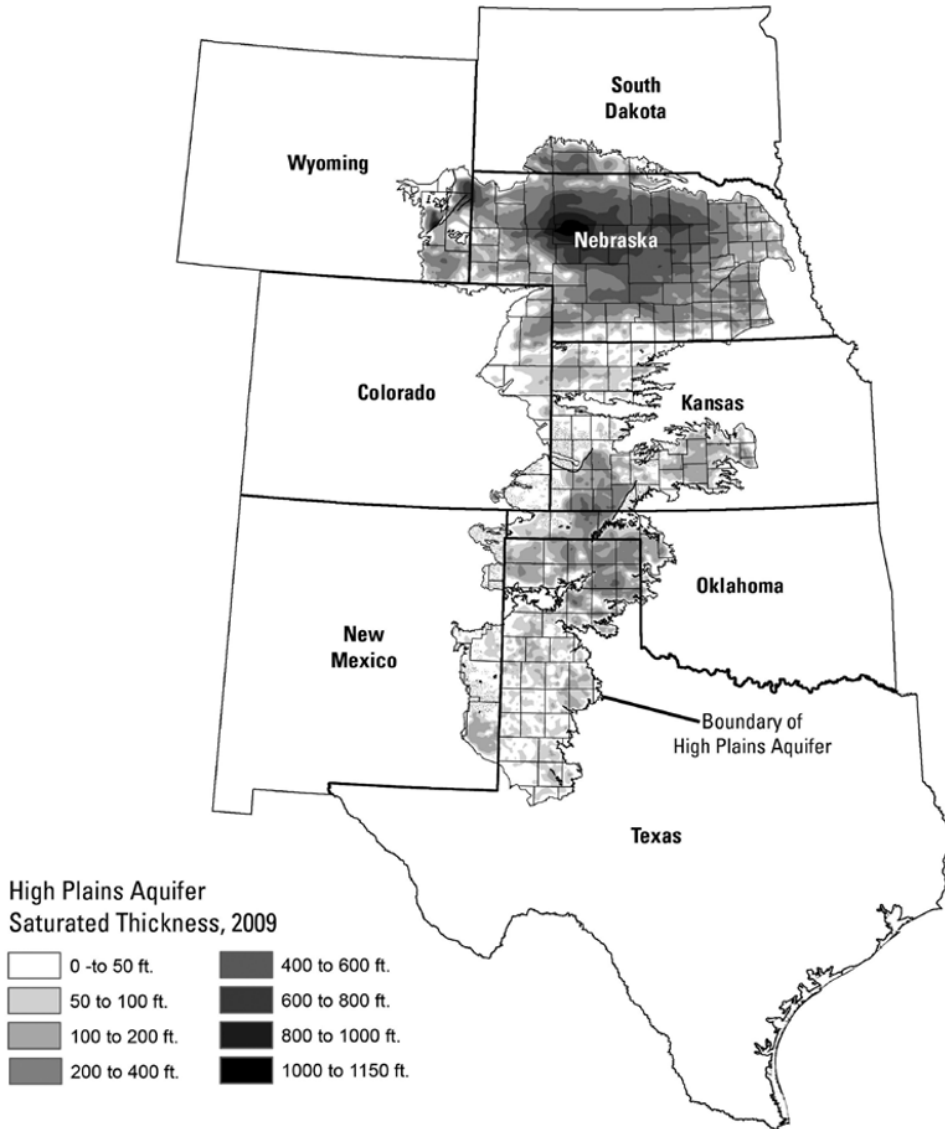
Those who studied the state’s criminal justice system acknowledged that in some ways the system was on a sounder footing than it had been in many years. But such experts also noted that the ever-growing number of prisoners would soon necessitate the building of even more prisons, which would inevitably mean either higher taxes, or overcrowding, with all the problems that accompany it. The new century would clearly demand new thinking about crime and punishment, and it remained to be seen if that new thinking would translate into new approaches.

### **The water dilemma**

Another pressing problem that became more apparent in the last decades of the twentieth century was water. Texas water comes from two sources, surface water (rivers and lakes) and the state’s seven major and sixteen minor underground aquifers. By the 1990s, underground water (or groundwater) accounted for more than half of all water used in the state; nearly three-quarters of which was used for agricultural irrigation. Many small and medium-sized Texas cities, and some large ones (including San Antonio), get most of their municipal water from underground sources. Because most Texas rivers are small and often

dry for part of the year, and because there are no natural lakes within the borders of the state, surface water mostly comes from humanmade reservoirs.

In Texas law, the state holds all surface water in trust for the people and regulates its use through the issuance of permits. Underground water, on the other hand, historically has been governed by an entirely different law: the “rule of capture,” which allows landowners to pump unlimited amounts of water from wells on their land. Aquifers recharge from surface water percolating down through the ground, but at varying rates. Some, like the giant Ogallala Aquifer that underlies most of the Panhandle (Figure 13.8) and contains 90 percent



**Figure 13.8** The Ogallala Aquifer, as part of the High Plains Aquifer System. Source: V. L. McGuire, K. D. Lund, and B. K. Densmore, *Saturated Thickness and Water in Storage in the High Plains Aquifer, 2009, and Water-level Changes and Changes in Water in Storage in the High Plains Aquifer, 1980 to 1995, 1995 to 2000, 2000 to 2005, and 2005 to 2009*, US Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Report 2012-5177, p. 6, Reston, VA: US Geological Survey, 2012.

of the state's groundwater, recharge so slowly that pumping them is basically a mining operation. The dual legal system, then, means that the most renewable part of the state's water supply—surface water—can be regulated, while the least-renewable part—the underground aquifers—has been left in the hands of individuals with little personal incentive to practice conservation. With so much of the state dependent on groundwater and with the demands rapidly growing as the population expands the need for some sort of effective, comprehensive water plan became increasingly urgent.

In the decades following World War II, a bewildering array of state agencies, often with overlapping or conflicting jurisdictions, attempted to exert authority over sources of water. The growth of cities and the demands of modern agriculture led to intense regional and rural–urban conflicts over this vital resource.

In the late 1940s, concerns in the High Plains over depletion of the mammoth Ogallala Aquifer—and fear that the state government might take matters into its own hands and start regulating groundwater from Austin—led Panhandle leaders to lobby for the creation of groundwater districts. The lobbying succeeded, and in 1949, the Ground Water District Act provided for the creation of local regulatory agencies with the power to regulate the spacing of wells and the amount of water pumped from aquifers. The High Plains Underground Water Conservation District was the first groundwater district created under the law's provisions. By 1992, thirty-four groundwater districts had been established.

The record of these districts was mixed. Some, like the High Plains district, enjoyed modest success in slowing the depletion of aquifers. Others, like the Edwards district, which is supposed to conserve the Edwards Aquifer in the Austin–San Antonio area, got caught up in a battle between urban and agricultural interests and proved largely ineffective. By the 1990s, Texas was using groundwater at about double the rate that it took to replenish naturally.

Every Texas governor since Price Daniel acknowledged the need for a comprehensive water plan, but all their efforts failed, due either to opposition from powerful interest groups or the seemingly prohibitive cost of such projects. In 1969, West Texans and their allies pushed through the Texas Water Plan, a constitutional amendment that authorized the transfer of water from the Mississippi River to the High Plains. The project was both costly and environmentally unsound. The legislature submitted the proposed amendment to the voters, who turned it down by a narrow margin. West Texas remained dependent on underground water.

In 1997, the legislature created sixteen regional groups to provide more comprehensive planning for both surface and groundwater resources. The groups soon identified nearly \$17 billion in new water-project needs, plus \$80–\$100 billion in needs for repair and replacement of existing water-related infrastructure. A bill proposed in the 2001 legislative session was intended to fund \$200 million per year of these needs, but by the time the bill passed, opponents had stripped it of its funding. Like the criminal justice system, long-term solutions to the state's water problems would have to wait until some uncertain point in the future.

### **Protecting the Texas environment**

For many years, Texans thought of pollution as something that happened in Los Angeles or the industrial cities of the North. The relatively small size of Texas cities, the relative lack of heavy industry, and the state's wide-open spaces allowed people to adopt a *laissez-faire*



attitude toward environmental protection. The assumption that the natural environment could take care of itself went virtually unchallenged until the 1960s, and for many years thereafter it remained very low on the priority list of most Texans.

Between the 1960s and 1990s, a crazy-quilt of state agencies was charged with protecting water quality: first the Texas Water Pollution Control Board, then the Texas Water Quality Board, then the Texas Department of Water Resources, later the Texas Water Commission, and finally the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission (TNRCC). Air pollution control followed a similar trajectory. The state's first Air Control Board was appointed in 1966; in 1993, along with the Water Commission, it was consolidated into the TNRCC, which would have jurisdiction over all air, water, and solid-waste regulatory programs. These agencies expanded over time, primarily because of federal mandates imposed by the various Clean Air and Clean Water acts of the past four decades.

By most standards, these state agencies and their efforts were inadequate. In 1990, Texas ranked worst among all fifty states in carbon dioxide emissions, a principal component in air pollution and a widely suspected cause of global warming. In 1992, the EPA identified twenty-eight hazardous-waste sites in Texas bad enough to entitle them to cleanup under the federal Superfund program. By the end of the century, pollution in Texas had become even worse. Texas released more ozone-producing chemicals into the air, produced more carcinogenic benzene and vinyl chloride, and operated more hazardous-waste incinerators than any other state. In 1999, Houston passed Los Angeles as the city with the worst air quality in the nation. Health alerts due to smog became common by the late 1990s in Houston, Dallas, and Austin.

No part of Texas faced greater environmental challenges than the Texas–Mexico border region. As the *maquiladoras* (American-owned factories built to take advantage of cheap labor) proliferated on the Mexican side of the border in the 1980s and 1990s, the population of the region grew dramatically, with negative effects on the local environment. Demands for water at times reduced the flow of the Rio Grande to a trickle, and it became one of North America's most polluted rivers. Smog became a visible problem even in Big Bend National Park. Mexico's poverty made it hard for that nation to enforce its already inadequate environmental laws. Soon after becoming president in 2001, Bush met with Mexican president Vicente Fox and secured his assurances that Mexico would begin to abide by international agreements on water use.

### **Taxes: A decision deferred**

Few assumptions have been as firmly rooted in the Texan mindset as the proposition that low taxes bring economic growth. Texas's tax structure, consequently, has evolved in an almost topsy-turvy manner. The state raises revenue through a franchise tax on corporations; various "sin taxes" (taxes on cigarettes, alcohol, etc.); excise taxes; gasoline and motor-vehicle taxes; severance taxes on oil and natural gas; local property taxes; and, since 1962, a general sales tax. Since then, when taxes have had to be raised, the sales tax has been a handy choice. During the 1970s and early 1980s, Governors Smith, Briscoe, and Clements all promised not to raise taxes and to raise revenue instead through economic growth.

The population swell of the 1970s and 1980s put pressure on schools and other institutions and necessitated increased appropriations. But rising oil prices boosted revenue from the severance tax, so the state once again could avoid raising taxes—unless, of course, government services needed to be expanded, which the legislature was reluctant to do. Critics

of the tax system pointed out other problems. Although food purchases were exempted from it, the sales tax fell hardest on those who could least afford it. The *Dallas Morning News* estimated in 1988 that low- and middle-income Texans paid, respectively, five times and three times more proportionally of their earnings in taxes than did the wealthy. The franchise tax applied only to about 15 percent of the businesses in the state, and, because it taxed investment rather than profits, it actually discouraged economic growth.

When oil prices collapsed in the 1980s, so did much of the state's revenue. In 1982, severance taxes on oil provided 30 percent of the state's revenue; by 1988, this proportion had fallen to 8 percent. Because the state constitution mandated a balanced budget, the legislature had to raise taxes in 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990, and 1991. The largest of these, the \$5.7 billion hike of 1987, raised various sin taxes and fees, increased the franchise tax, and boosted the state's share of the sales tax from 5.25 percent to 6 percent. This occurred at the same time that the federal government declared state sales taxes nondeductible from federal income taxes. A smaller \$528 million tax increase in 1990 raised the sales tax again, this time to 6.25 percent, the third highest in the nation. It also raised the state tax on cigarettes from twenty-six to forty-one cents per pack, the highest in the nation. The 1991 tax bill raised gasoline taxes from fifteen to twenty cents per gallon. Because such taxes fall disproportionately on the poor, they made the system even more regressive.

In 1988 a legislative Select Committee on Tax Equity issued a report implying that Texas needed to restructure its tax system radically. Two suggestions stood out: first, that the state should change the antiquated 1907 franchise tax so that businesses making money in the new service economy would pay their fair share; and second, that the state should consider a personal income tax. Lieutenant Governor Bill Hobby and state comptroller Bob Bullock both endorsed an income tax in 1989. Negative public reaction was swift, and almost all candidates in the elections of 1990—and in all major races since then—promised to oppose it. At the end of the century, a state personal income tax remained taboo. Governor George W. Bush in 1997 proposed the most sweeping structural changes in the state's tax code in thirty years, calling for a reduction in property taxes and the elimination of the franchise tax, to be financed by higher sales taxes and a new, broader tax on businesses. Most of his proposals, however, did not survive the legislative process, and the state remained heavily dependent upon the sales tax.

## Conclusion

Had a "new" Texas truly arrived by the start of the twenty-first century? The answer is only a qualified "yes." The historical trends of the 1980s and 1990s certainly made Texas more like the rest of the nation. Despite the fluctuations in oil revenue, personal incomes moved closer to the national average. The state clearly had departed from its traditional economic reliance on a boom-or-bust, raw-material economy. Although Texans and non-Texans alike continued to think of the Lone Star State as the domain of cowboys and oil tycoons, its inhabitants more closely resembled those of other urban states in transition to a service economy. Politically, the migration into Texas of many Hispanics moderated the Democratic Party by making it less politically conservative and led to many rural leaders being replaced with those from urban areas. Meanwhile, the Republican Party in Texas, as elsewhere in the South, attracted increasing numbers of white voters by representing conservative political values. For a while, it appeared that a viable two-party system might have arrived in the Lone Star State.

Texans, however, steadfastly clung to many of their traditional outlooks and habits. The conservative majority that elected Republicans to every statewide office in 1998 displayed a deep antipathy to higher taxes or a more activist government. A libertarian attitude toward natural resources and the environment persisted. As Texas entered the twenty-first century, the future direction of the state seemed anything but clear.

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## Into the New Millennium, 2001–2018

Texans in the new millennium face significant challenges. A population with burgeoning numbers of children and elderly persons will place unprecedented burdens on the education system and social services. Despite generally strong economic growth since the early 1990s, the gap has widened between well-educated, affluent Texans who command high wages in the “new economy,” and poorer, less-educated people laboring in low-paying service jobs. Sections of the state that remain dependent on agriculture, such as parts of West Texas and the Rio Grande Valley, have not prospered to the degree that have most urban areas.

Politically, Republicans consolidated their hold on the state, regularly amassing huge majorities in statewide races. Moreover, within the GOP, the far right wing of the party seized control from mainline conservatives. As the demographic profile of the state continued to change, however, Democrats, fueled by the growth of the Hispanic population, showed new signs of life in the state’s major cities. In 2005 whites became a minority of the state’s population—a development that will have far-reaching consequences, politically and otherwise.

In late 2008, the United States experienced the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. Texas was not insulated from the crisis, but compared to most other states, the Lone Star State weathered the storm fairly well, in part because of rising oil prices, the development of large new oil and gas deposits, and enhanced recovery techniques that sparked a new petroleum boom in parts of the state. As the national economy slowly rebounded, Texas led the way with an economic expansion that persisted over a full decade.

### A Changing Population

Between 2000 and 2017, Texas added 7.5 people, more than any other state. With a total population of 28.3 million, the state has led the nation in annual growth every year since 2010. Of this growth, about half comes from natural increase; Texas has the nation’s second-highest birth rate, after Utah. The other half comes from migration, with migrants from

other US states outnumbering international arrivals by a nearly two-to-one margin. When broken down further, these growth figures highlight the major demographic trend of the early twenty-first century: the explosive growth in the Hispanic population. Indeed, by 2005 the combined population of Hispanics, African Americans, and Asians living in Texas already had inched above 50 percent of the state's population, making Texas a so-called "majority-minority" state. But the growth rate for Hispanics far exceeded all other groups; the Hispanic population increased from 32 percent of the population in 2000 to 39 percent in 2017. The Census Bureau estimates that Hispanics will become the largest population group in the state by 2022.

Of the 11.1 million Hispanics living in Texas in 2017, an estimated 1.7 million were undocumented, a figure that has held steady since 2012. As policing techniques grew more effective in border cities in the twenty-first century, increasing numbers of illegal immigrants resorted to crossing the Rio Grande at isolated points, thereby undertaking a perilous trek across hundreds of miles of desert; hundreds die each year, although precise numbers are not known. With the election of Republicans Greg Abbot as governor and Donald Trump as president, both of whom ran on promises to crack down on illegal immigration, enforcement measures have been strengthened. At the same time, drug-, gang-, and politically related violence in Mexico and Central America has created periodic surges of people crossing the border, leading to new tensions and political controversies. Despite the dangers and difficulties, as long as there are plentiful jobs in Texas and low wages and instability abroad, it seems unlikely that immigration, legal or otherwise, will decline any time soon.

Estimates vary, but experts generally agree on what the state will look like in the foreseeable future: the population of Hispanic immigrants (as well as immigrants from Asian and African countries) will continue to grow, as the proportions of blacks and whites stabilize. One can argue, then, that today the state is witnessing a Texas Revolution in reverse: Economic conditions in the 1830s pushed and pulled Anglo settlers into Mexican territory, where they promulgated a war for independence and spread Anglo American culture; in recent decades, economic and social conditions in the United States and south of the border have attracted millions of immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American nations. The political and cultural changes that are likely to occur as a result of the Hispanicization of Texas may in some respects rival those that took place as a consequence of the first Texas Revolution.

Some of the most important demographic ramifications of this immigration involve age. The immigration of the last three decades kept the median age of Texans (34.6 years as of 2017) three years beneath the national average (37.8), largely because of the continuing arrivals of Hispanics, whose birthrates are nearly 50 percent higher than those of Anglos. Texas remains the second-youngest state in the union, and the state's median age would have been even lower if not for the migration of so many retirees to the state. People over the age of sixty still constitute only 3 percent of recent immigrants to Texas, but that figure ignores the "snowbirds," retired northerners who live in South Texas during the winter. In 2015–16, 96,000 snowbirds wintered in South Texas, spending \$760 million. In any case, Texas will not escape the national phenomenon of people living longer. By 2014, life expectancy for Texans had risen to 78.3, up from 76.2 in 1989.

These population trends, in which the numbers of both the very young and the very old are rising, signal some sobering realities for Texas in the coming years. As the Baby Boomers retire (a process well under way), there will be fewer productive workers to support them during their retirement. Those dwindling numbers of workers will also be supporting a

much larger population of children, many of them poor and Hispanic. Experts predict a growing competition between the young and the elderly for available tax-resource expenditures. If political decisions hinge on whether to aid a youthful ethnic population that wishes to obtain educational or job training, or a graying Anglo population that wants lower taxes and better medical care, the problem of setting the state's priorities could become even more acute.

### **The Modern Texas Economy**

The Texas economy had increasingly mirrored that of the nation in the 1990s, and that trend continued in the new century. Like America as a whole, Texas continued its transition into a service economy: In 2018, 20 percent of Texans in the nonfarm economy worked in the trade, transportation, and utilities sector; 15 percent worked in government; 14 percent in educational and health services; 14 percent in professional and business services; and 11 percent in the leisure and hospitality sector. Only 7 percent worked in manufacturing and 6 percent in construction. With the structure of its economy increasingly paralleling that of the nation, Texas tended to follow the same business cycle as the national economy. Even with a resurgent oil and gas sector that protected the state somewhat from the national economic downturn that began in 2008, it was nonetheless true that “as goes the nation, so goes Texas.”

### **Terrorism, Enron, and recession**

When Texan George W. Bush was sworn in as president of the United States following the controversial election of 2000, the nation was already slipping into recession. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, however, made a faltering economy worse, and as the stock market tumbled and the overall economy reeled, the Texas economy did likewise. From a low point of around 4 percent in 2001, unemployment in the state rose to nearly 7 percent in 2003.

Houston was particularly hard hit by the 2001 bankruptcy of Enron Corporation, an energy-trading company that collapsed in the aftermath of massive accounting frauds. The company's four highest-ranking executives all were convicted of felonies and sentenced to prison, and the company's accounting firm, Arthur Andersen, was dissolved. The debacle cost 4000 Texas jobs, and state budgets suffered accordingly.

But the downturn was temporary, and by 2006 the state and national economies were recovering, with the unemployment rate in Texas back down to 5 percent. The doubling of oil prices between 2003 and 2006 breathed new life into the Texas oil industry, although consumers suffered from the high prices of gasoline at the pump. Increased military budgets due to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq bolstered defense-related sectors of the economy.

### **Texas and the “Great Recession”**

The recovery continued through 2007, as jobs grew by 3.1 percent that year, but then the economic crisis of 2008 hit—and hit hard. Triggered by a national housing price bubble, which spectacularly burst, resulting in mass foreclosures, plummeting home prices, and

record losses by banks, the rate of unemployment in Texas nearly doubled, from about 4.3 percent in mid-2007 to a little over 8 percent in early 2009, where it remained for two years. Although the so-called Great Recession technically ended (with the resumption of economic growth) in June 2009, only in 2011 did the slow economic recovery finally lead to some improvement in employment, as the state's jobless rate finally dipped below 7 percent in April 2012. By 2015 unemployment was down to 4.5 percent, and by mid-2018 it had fallen to 4 percent, which many economists consider effectively to be full employment. During all of this time, however, the Texas economy significantly outperformed the national economy, with the national unemployment rate consistently running from one to two percentage points higher than that of Texas.

In recent years politicians touted the Texas economy as evidence of the beneficial effects of low taxes, lax business and environmental regulation, and a probusiness judicial system. There is some truth to these claims: Only sixteen states have a lower state and local tax burden, and Texas is one of only seven states with no state income tax. The state's right-to-work law, which has weakened labor unions, and its proximity to Mexico have held down wages, making it attractive to prospective employers seeking low labor costs. Republican-enacted tort reform has limited corporations' losses due to lawsuits. In 2017, Texas was the nation's



**Figure 14.1** Governor Greg Abbott. Courtesy of the Governor's Office.



top exporting state, a distinction it has held for sixteen years in a row. In 2008 it moved past New York as the nation's second-largest economy. If Texas were an independent country, its economy (as measured by gross domestic product) would be the tenth-largest in the world, just ahead of Canada's.

### The resurgence of oil and gas

But the Texas economy was also helped by an old standby, oil. Although Texas was no longer as dependent on oil as it had been for most of the past century, the industry was still important. Alaska had briefly passed Texas in 1988 as the top oil producing state, but Texas had regained its lead by 1990. Nevertheless, in the late 1990s oil and gas extraction accounted for only 4 percent of the state's economic output, but by 2008 it had rebounded to 11 percent. Production then rose sharply beginning in 2009, growing from about 345 million barrels a year to over a billion barrels in 2017. Oil prices have fluctuated wildly, from the \$60-per-barrel range in 2006, to as high as \$145 in mid-2008. But when the Great Recession took hold in 2008, prices briefly collapsed, reaching a low of \$31 in December. The collapse, however was short lived, and by the end of 2009 prices were back up to nearly \$80, with further increases in 2011. Another severe price decline occurred in 2015, as prices again dropped below \$50, but with world demand high and production in the state soaring, the oil and gas industry remained strong overall. Since 2012, some parts of the state have experienced boom-like conditions not seen since the last great oil boom of the early 1980s. In 2018, with production double what it had been only six years earlier, the boom showed no signs of slowing.

High prices were only one factor in the resurrection of the Texas oil industry. New technologies, such as horizontal drilling, and improvements in existing technologies—particularly the procedure known as hydraulic fracturing (or “fracking”)—enabled drillers to reach hard-to-get deposits and recover a much larger percentage of the reserves. These technologies opened up old fields thought to have been tapped out as well as previously untapped oil and gas fields, including the Barnett Shale in North Texas and the Eagle Ford Shale in South and Central Texas, two of the largest new fields in the nation. In 2010, the average Texas oil well produced barely six barrels a day; by 2017 that figure had risen to fifteen.

### Texas and Mexico

The state's proximity to Mexico has boosted the economy. Since the 1990s, Texas border cities have benefited from *maquiladoras* (factories) on the other side of the border. Those plants rely on supplies and technical expertise from Texas, and their employees spend much of their income on the US side of the border. (One 2001 study found that Mexican shoppers spent \$2 billion annually in Texas retail stores.) Texas firms importing goods from Mexico have also made handsome profits, especially at times when the peso has been weak. Texas exported \$87 billion worth of goods to Mexico in 2011, accounting for about 35 percent of all the state's exports. In recent years, drug-related violence in northern Mexico has virtually ended American tourism to Mexican border towns, so Texans spend more of their consumer dollars in state. At the same time, there has been a sizable exodus of affluent Mexicans immigrating to Texas cities—bringing their money with them—to escape the wave of violence.



**Figure 14.2** A Newfield Exploration reservoir engineer stands in front of the H&P FlexRig 389, operating in the Eagle Ford, where Newfield is drilling its first 10,000-ft lateral. Image courtesy of Newfield Exploration, <http://www.newfld.com>.

### **An uneven prosperity**

After briefly surpassing the national average in per capita income back in 1981, Texas again lagged behind the nation, a condition that has persisted through the first two decades of the new century. From 2000 to 2016, per capita personal income in the state rose from \$28,145 to \$46,704. Texas still lagged behind the national average (\$51,631), but it had closed the gap slightly. Income varied throughout the state; in 2017, affluent metropolitan areas like Dallas–Fort Worth boasted per-capita income of \$51,099, whereas income in the McAllen–Edinburg–Mission area along the Rio Grande was only \$24,805, making South Texas one of the poorest regions in the nation. Growth also has eluded much of deep East Texas and far West Texas, places that have traditionally depended on farming and other raw-material production (including oil). The primary industrial and business development of Texas has occurred in a triangle defined by Dallas on the north, Houston on the south, and Austin/San Antonio on the west. Despite sharp variations along racial, ethnic, and gender lines, this core region has generally prospered.

As the regional disparity in incomes demonstrates, the state still has its share of chronic economic problems, many of them structural and destined to grow worse as inexorable demographic trends play out in coming years. Texas, as mentioned, has been attractive to business in part because wages are low, but this also means that many Texans are poor. In



**Figure 14.3** Texas Longhorn. Source: Photograph in the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division (LC-DIG-highsm-12660).

2016, 15.6 percent of Texas families officially lived in poverty, compared to the national average of 14 percent. Moreover, the state continues to fall behind in investment in its human capital: One in seven Texans lacked health insurance in 2016, and only nine states spent less per capita on healthcare. The state ranked forty-first in the number of doctors per person. Education was a similar story, with Texas ranking fortieth among all the states in spending per pupil and forty-ninth in the percentage of people having at least a high school diploma. Whatever one's political persuasion, nobody believes that a poor, unhealthy, and inadequately educated population is the path to more prosperous economic future.

### **Texas farmers: The end of a dream?**

The passing of the family farm from the landscape evokes nostalgia from many Americans. Deep within both the American and Texan psyches there still resides a Jeffersonian-like belief that family farms preserve republican values such as self-reliance and freedom. But economic and political change in the nation and the world has made the small family farm an endangered species. Today, fewer than 3 percent of all employed adult Texans work directly in agriculture (including forestry and fisheries). In short, the concept of Texas as an agrarian state is no more. Nevertheless, the state still leads the nation in the number of

farms and ranches and the amount of arable land, and cash receipts from agriculture average \$20 billion annually. As a vital sector of the state's economy, Texas agriculture cannot be ignored.

Farming has always been a risky enterprise, subject to unpredictable price swings, capricious government policies, and the always unpredictable Texas weather. Ever since the New Deal, American farmers have been heavily dependent on the federal government, which has sought to stabilize prices, encourage conservation, guarantee an adequate food supply, and ensure the financial survival of farmers. The government does this by passing a new farm bill every fifth year. Always a complex mix of programs including price supports, crop-insurance subsidies, payments for conservation measures, and expenditures for the food stamp program, the farm bills have fluctuated in their generosity to farmers depending on the political environment in Washington. As Congress has grown more dysfunctional, farm bills have become harder to pass; the 2012 bill was two years late, and the 2018 bill seemed hopelessly deadlocked as this book went to press. One problem is that the single largest item in the bill is the federal appropriation for food stamps, a program that is a perennial target for lawmakers hostile to welfare programs. Texas farmers thus find themselves in a frustrating bind: Like rural folk in many places, they are inclined toward social conservatism and a small-government ideology, yet they know that they cannot survive the gyrations of world markets and the uncertainties of the weather without government intervention. The year 2017 epitomized the fortunes of Texas agriculture: Although Hurricane Harvey completely wiped out crops along a broad swath of the middle Texas Gulf Coast, favorable weather conditions in West Texas and the Panhandle led to an all-time record cotton harvest there. Many of the hurricane-stricken farmers would not have survived without federally subsidized crop insurance, while those with the record harvests could, for the moment at least, long for a free market.

Increasingly, farming has become a business, and a capital-intensive one at that. According to census data, the number of farms between 180 and 2000 acres declined by 4782 farms between 1997 and 2007, while the number of farms with 2000 acres or more increased by 415. Rural areas continue to lose population to urban areas: The 2010 census revealed that the ten counties that had lost the largest percentages of their population since 2000 were all rural Panhandle counties; their population declines ranged from 14 to 21 percent. By contrast, the ten fastest growing counties were all suburban counties adjacent either to Harris (Houston), Dallas, Bexar (San Antonio), or Travis (Austin) counties. The high cost of getting into farming or ranching, the financial uncertainties in agriculture, an urban political majority uninterested in farm problems, and the lure of city life and city jobs have all combined to make farming increasingly unattractive or infeasible for younger Texans; the average age of a Texas farmer in 2007 was almost fifty-nine. Optimistic farmers reason that no new farmland is being created, and that as global populations grow, farming will become more profitable. But in the near term, Texas farmers face an uncertain future, and the century-long exodus from farm to city continues.

### **The Changing Face of Urban Texas**

Urban areas, on the other hand, have seen dramatic growth in recent years. In 2017, forty Texas cities numbered more than 100,000 people, eleven more than in 2010. As of 2017, the greater Dallas–Fort Worth–Arlington metropolitan area was the state's largest (and nation's fourth largest), with 7.4 million people—a population larger than that of 33 US states. The

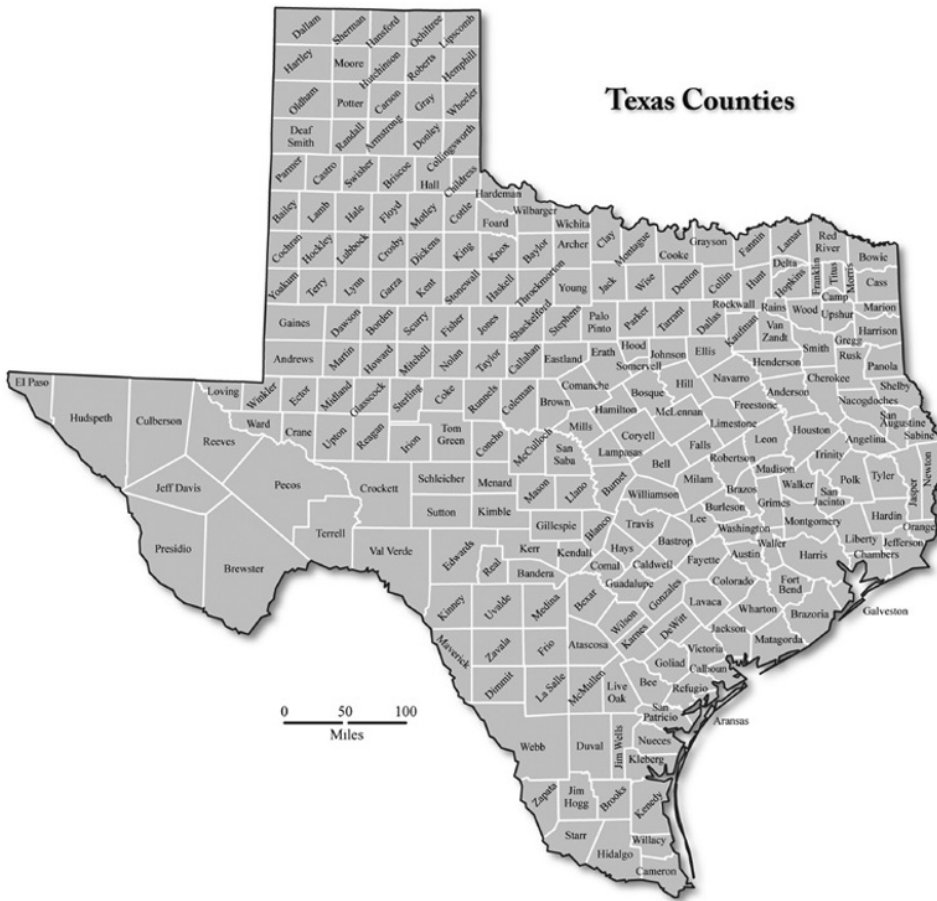


Figure 14.4 Texas counties.

Houston–The Woodlands–Sugar Land metropolitan area ranked second in the state, with a population of 6.9 million; San Antonio–New Braunfels ranked third, with 2.5 million. Three individual Texas cities (as opposed to metropolitan areas) ranked in the top ten nationally in 2011: Houston (fourth, with 2.3 million), San Antonio (seventh, with 1.5 million), and Dallas (ninth, with 1.3 million). In Texas’s largest cities, an explosive increase in the suburban population fueled growth. For example, Collin County in suburban North Dallas underwent a stunning increase, from 264,000 in 1990 to 492,000 in 2000 to 970,000 people in 2017.

Several factors underlay this dynamic urban growth. Open spaces once surrounded all Texas cities, and these inexpensive collars of land easily became suburbs. Furthermore, the state’s proximity to Mexico made Texas cities natural destinations for Mexican immigrants seeking jobs; new international air connections encouraged immigration from overseas; and the warm climate gave Texas cities an advantage over their northern counterparts. The ample availability of land, coupled with a lack of urban planning and Texans’ traditional laissez-faire attitudes toward development, led Texas cities to grow out rather than up. The consequence was urban sprawl, with superhighways cutting through and virtually destroying older neighborhoods in order to link central cities with their immediate ring of suburbs. By the 1970s, urban highways had become the principal corridors of growth; strip malls and frontage-road office centers usurped the functions of many downtown buildings. By the

1990s, with little land left to develop in the central cities and suburbs, the urban sprawl had begun to transform rural farming communities beyond the original suburban rings into bedroom communities for their neighboring cities. For example, Pflugerville, north of Austin, grew from a population of 16,335 in 2000 to 59,507 in 2017. Frisco, north of Dallas, expanded from 33,714 people in 2000 to 163,816 in 2017.

The central cities also have continued to grow—just not as fast as the suburbs. As they had since 1945, the inner cities attracted a larger minority population. In 2000, the census reported that Anglos constituted 73 percent of the state's suburban population, whereas they composed only 46 percent of the central-city population. As of 2017, Anglos are a minority within the city limits of Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio, with Hispanics comprising at least 40 percent of the population in all three. Far from being the “melting pot” of legend, Texas urban areas are better described as “salad bowls,” sprawling hodgepodes of neighborhoods heavily segregated along racial, ethnic, and economic lines.

Although urban growth in Texas has been impressive, in order for growth to continue—and for the quality of urban life to improve at the same time—other issues must be addressed, one of the most important of which is the transportation system. Historically, Texans have loved their automobiles. This, along with a suspicion of comprehensive urban planning and the desire to keep taxes low, has made cars and freeways the primary means of getting around Texas cities. Unfortunately, Texans only began to realize the need for alternative, more economical forms of transportation at a time when federal largesse for urban mass-transit systems had largely ended. Thus, Texas cities got a late start in dealing constructively with the problems of urban transportation, with seriously detrimental consequences: according to one study, urban congestion cost the state \$14 billion in 2014. In 2018, Dallas was the tenth-most-congested city in the nation, followed by Houston (eleventh), and Austin (fifteenth). Urban congestion was estimated to cost Texas commuters in the state's largest cities more than 50 hours and \$1000 in wasted time and money annually. In keeping with its status as an urban state, 76 percent of Texans in 2016 reported dealing with traffic congestion on a daily basis.

Recognizing the need to modernize urban mass transit, the legislature in the 1970s authorized cities to create metropolitan transit authorities (MTAs) and allowed them to fund their operations with sales taxes. All of the state's largest cities eventually took advantage of this source of funding. Despite these developments, ridership on the main form of public mass transit, city buses, continued to decrease. In 1990, only about 2 percent of urban commuters used public transportation. In the late 1990s, though, ridership began to increase, as cities improved their mass-transit systems and traffic gridlock made mass transit more attractive to commuters.

Many saw commuter- and light-rail systems as the long-term solution to the urban transportation problem. In 1984, the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) system was created to build a light-rail system for that city. For years thereafter, however, suburban–inner city rivalries and budgetary concerns stalled actual construction. Critics argued that light rail was impractical in spread-out Texas cities and that ridership would never make a dent in the traffic problem. But when the first twenty-six-mile phase of the system was completed in 1996, the public's response was enthusiastic, and ridership grew for DART's first few years. But the system has consistently failed to break even, and since the early 2000s ridership has remained flat at about 200,000 riders a day, even as the city's population has grown dramatically. In 2010, DART had to strip almost all new construction projects from its long-term plan.

DART's woes have provided fodder for opponents of mass transit in other cities. Voters in San Antonio and Austin defeated proposed light-rail projects in 2000. However, in 2004, Austin voters approved a scaled-back version of the 2000 plan using existing freight tracks, and Capital MetroRail inaugurated service in 2010. In Houston, the Metropolitan Transit Authority opted to build a short, seven-mile line that would serve only the central city—a plan that required no referendum because existing funds would finance it. Even this modest proposal met opposition from limited-government “property-rights” groups, who filed suit to stop it, and from Republican Congressman Tom DeLay, who sought to block federal funding for the project. Nevertheless, construction finally began in 2001 and was completed in 2004. Meanwhile, voters in 2003 approved adding an additional sixty-five miles to the system over the next two decades. By 2015 the original line had been extended to serve Rice University, the Texas Medical Center and the NRG Park Complex, and two additional lines added another ten miles to the system, for a total of twenty-eight miles. The line's ridership has gradually increased to about 60,000 riders per day in 2018. By 2012, three new lines were under construction with two more planned.

Plans to link Texas's major cities together with high-speed “bullet trains” such as those in Europe and Japan have met similar opposition, often with financing and lobbyists provided by commuter airlines. In 2001 Governor Rick Perry proposed the idea of constructing the Trans-Texas Corridor, a multiuse superhighway, rail line, and communications system, to be paid for largely through user tolls. The plan, however, proved unpopular with voters and property-owners, and the legislature cancelled the plan in 2011. In 2014 a private firm announced plans for a high-speed train to link Dallas and Houston, and as of 2018, plans for the line, dubbed the Texas Central, were moving forward despite opposition from land-owners and environmental groups.

The problems encountered by mass transit have many sources. Cost is certainly one, as is the late start that the state got in building transit systems. Texans' well-documented individualism, their reluctance to raise taxes needed to pay for new infrastructure, and their love affair with the automobile have also contributed. A Texas Transportation Institute poll in 2016 found that 93 percent of Texans still rely on their personal auto as their primary means of getting around, a figure that has actually been on the rise for the past several years. The trend lines for those who bike or walk to work are likewise pointing downward. A major push to build additional toll lanes on the state's major urban freeways has eased congestion in a few high-traffic areas, but overall the traffic situation has only grown worse with continuing population growth. One manifestation of this problem is the increase of severe congestion on rural highways, especially on the state's busiest interstate, the Dallas–Austin–San Antonio stretch of I-35.

In contrast, Texas's commercial transportation system is relatively healthy, and it has contributed to economic growth. The state is either first or second in the nation in a number of transportation indicators, such as railroad-track mileage, paved mileage of highways and rural roads, the number of motor vehicles, and the number of aircraft. In 2017, Dallas–Fort Worth airport was the nation's fourth-busiest in terms of aircraft movements and the twelfth-busiest in terms of passenger traffic. Texas's ports handled 506 million tons of cargo in 2014, the most of any state and fully a quarter of all foreign tonnage handled in the United States. The Port of Houston led all other ports nationally in foreign waterborne commerce and ranked second in total tonnage. The transportation systems connected Texas to a thriving tourist industry. In 2017 Texas attracted 68.5 million visitors from outside the state, who added an estimated \$75 billion to the state's economy. According to industry spokespersons, 678,000 Texans owe their jobs to tourism, and tourists generated \$7 billion in state and local tax revenue.

One good way to increase the vitality of a city and add to its tourist-dollar appeal is to improve its offering of fine-arts and other cultural institutions. Texas has traditionally lagged behind the nation in aid to the arts, ranking always among the bottom-five states. Yet many urban areas have instituted bond drives for the building of downtown art districts, focusing on the construction of performing-arts centers and museums. The Texas frontier tradition discourages tax expenditures for cultural development, even if business progressives argue that money spent for cultural enhancement will bring a net profit in the attraction of visitors, new industries, and new residents. For example, when Dallas lost out to Chicago in a highly publicized competition to lure the Boeing aircraft corporation's headquarters to the Metroplex in 2001, company officials said they based their decision in part on the superior cultural attractions of downtown Chicago. The experience prompted much public debate and hand-wringing by city leaders over whether Dallas should spend more on such things as museums and parks. The city, utilizing mostly private funding, subsequently built a major new downtown arts complex anchored by the Winspear Opera House. The complex adjoined the Dallas Museum of Art, Nasher Sculpture Center, the new Perot Museum of Nature and Science, and the city's new five-acre Klyde Warren Park, another public-private partnership which received nearly half of its \$100 million funding from private donors. Boosters pointed toward the decision of Toyota to relocate its billion-dollar North American headquarters to Plano in 2017 as evidence of the newfound appeal of Dallas's cultural attractions.

Many Texas cities have looked to Austin as a model of how to combine economic growth with environmental sustainability and cultural attractions such as city's fabled live-music scene. The capital city has consistently ranked high as one of the nation's best places to live and work. High-tech companies continue to choose it as a site for expansion; Apple, for instance, in December 2018 announced plans to build a new 133-acre campus that will eventually add 15,000 new jobs, making it the city's largest private employer. But such



**Figure 14.5** Turning basin of the Houston Ship Canal. The fifty-five mile long canal helped make Houston an important center in the world oil-petrochemical industry. Source: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.



growth always comes with its down-sides, sometimes in less visible ways than simply the inconvenience of bad traffic. Austin's dynamic economy and the desirability of its central core as a place to live have increasingly pushed the poor—who are disproportionately black and brown—out of the neighborhoods where they had grown up. The “gentrification” of inner-city neighborhoods, where housing prices have begun to rival those of New York or San Francisco, along with well-meaning efforts to “clean up” and “green up” urban areas, have thus taken a toll on members of those communities who lack the resources and job skills of the new arrivals. The incontestable success story of a place like Austin, then, must be tempered with a recognition that sometimes such stories have a darker side.

## **Texas Politics in the Twenty-First Century**

The most significant development in Texas politics since the year 2000 has been the nearly complete dominance of the Republican Party in Austin. Not as obvious to the casual observer—but in some ways just as important—have been the struggles *within* the state GOP, struggles that have pitted what might be termed “mainstream” or “establishment” Republicans against party insurgents on the far right.

### **Social conservatives and the rise of Rick Perry**

The insurgents first flexed their muscles at the 1996 Republican state convention. At that gathering, arch-conservatives rebelled against what they viewed as the moderate views of Governor George W. Bush and US Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. (As governor, Bush had cooperated with Democrats in the legislature, and Hutchison was seen as untrustworthy on the abortion issue.) Traditionally, the sitting governor is accorded the honor of heading the delegation to the national convention, but this time conservatives nominated a leader of the Christian Coalition for that role; they also attempted to block Hutchison from becoming a delegate. Although both moves ultimately failed, social conservatives effectively seized control of the party. Their influence has been strong ever since, and it grew even stronger a decade later with the creation of the Tea Party movement.

One of the first politicians to recognize this shift was James Richard “Rick” Perry. First winning election to the state House of Representatives in 1984 as a Democrat, Perry changed parties in 1989 and defeated Jim Hightower to become agriculture commissioner in 1990. Elected lieutenant governor in 1998, he succeeded to the governorship when George W. Bush prevailed in the 2000 presidential election. He easily won a term in his own right in 2002, defeating Laredo Democrat Tony Sanchez by a lopsided 58 percent to 40 percent margin. Perry had never been an outspoken social conservative, but over the years he moved increasingly to the right, embracing conservative positions on abortion, homosexuality, the teaching of evolution, school prayer, and a number of other issues. Perry's political evolution was emblematic of the state's as a whole.

### **Redistricting and party strife**

Perry entered office promising to make higher education his top legislative priority, within an overall fiscal- and social-conservative framework. The state budget passed by the 2001

legislature saw an 11.6 percent increase in state spending, with education and health and human services receiving the bulk of the increases. The legislature failed to pass several measures championed by the governor and other social conservatives. Bold legislative initiatives, however, often took a back seat to strictly political concerns, especially those centering on redistricting.

In 2001 a divided legislature unsuccessfully attempted to redraw legislative districts to reflect population changes from the 2000 census, thus leaving the customary decennial redistricting process in the hands of a federal court. The court-drawn map favored Republicans, who, assisted by \$190,000 in campaign funds from the Republican National Committee, managed to wrest control of the house from the Democrats in the 2002 election. Democrats retained a narrow 17–15 majority of the state’s congressional seats. When the 2003 legislature convened, Republican leaders announced their intention to redraw the state’s congressional districts a second time. Spearheading the action was US House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, whose political action committee had been instrumental in funding the recent Republican takeover of the state house.

The unprecedented mid-decade reredistricting effort outraged Democrats and sparked a major partisan showdown in Austin. Fifty house Democrats, dubbed the “Killer Ds,” secretly fled to Ardmore, Oklahoma, thus avoiding a quorum and defeating the bill. When Governor Perry called a special session to press the matter, eleven senate Democrats likewise fled to Albuquerque, New Mexico. It took a third special session before the Republicans succeeded in passing the new map, which resulted in the GOP capturing six formerly Democratic seats and completing the Republican takeover of the Texas congressional delegation. DeLay was subsequently indicted and convicted for illegally funneling corporate money to the Republican legislative candidates whose 2002 victories made the takeover possible.

### **Republicans and the challenges of governing**

The partisan rancor produced by the long-running redistricting saga poisoned relations between Democrats and Republicans in the legislature. When a slowing economy and a legislature reluctant to raise taxes led to a \$10 billion shortfall in the 2003 state budget, the funding of public education again took priority, but this time there would be little of the bipartisan cooperation of past years. Democrats and Republicans argued bitterly through a regular session and three special sessions in 2005 without passing a funding bill. When lawmakers found time to pass a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages but failed to fix the education system, they came under particularly heavy fire for their failure, and several high-profile Republicans lost primary reelection bids in the aftermath. (Voters nonetheless approved the same-sex marriage ban.) Only in 2006, faced by a court-ordered deadline, did the legislature finally pass an education bill that satisfied the state supreme court, giving Governor Perry and legislators an issue on which to run in the fall elections.

Dissatisfaction with the state government’s performance over the past several years led to a most contentious gubernatorial election. In 2006 Republican state comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn announced that she would run as an independent against Rick Perry. Entertainer-novelist Richard “Kinky” Friedman likewise mounted an independent campaign, featuring the slogan, “How hard could it be?” The Democrats nominated Chris Bell, a one-term congressman who had lost his seat in the DeLay-engineered redistricting effort. With a

big lead in fundraising and the solid support of business interests and his social-conservative base, Perry won reelection with 39 percent of the vote. The Democrats, however, picked up six House seats, cutting the GOP majority in half. They also gained two congressional seats.

When the 2007 legislature met, members had a \$14 billion surplus with which to work. Lawmakers reduced local school property taxes but defeated a cap on property taxes that Perry and conservatives had championed. A voter-identification bill that Republicans pushed failed. Perry suffered further defeats when conservatives voted down a school voucher bill, overturned his executive order mandating teenage girls to be vaccinated for the HPV virus (which would prevent a sexually transmitted disease), and enacted a two-year moratorium on new private toll roads, which had been a Perry priority. With funds available, the legislature modestly augmented funding for state parks, and increased funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and for Medicaid reimbursements. After Perry exercised his veto power on a number of measures, a new \$152 million budget for 2008–09 was adopted, 12 percent higher than the previous biennium. House speaker Tom Craddick, a long-serving conservative from West Texas with an autocratic governing style, faced a rebellion at the end of the session but narrowly escaped being removed from his position.

The 2008 elections gave some hope to Democrats, as voters seemed weary of President Bush's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, fiscal profligacy, and the growing national financial crisis. Four years earlier, in 2004, Texans had given Bush a lopsided 61 percent to 38 percent victory over Massachusetts Democrat John Kerry, but this time, when the Democrats nominated a rising political star from Illinois, Barack Obama, Texas Democratic voters were energized—just not enough for victory. Making excellent use of the Internet to garner donations and rally support, Obama became the nation's first African American president by defeating the Republican candidate, Senator John McCain of Arizona, by a margin of 53 percent to 46 percent nationwide. But in Texas, reliable Republican voters bucked the national trend, giving McCain a 55 percent to 44 percent victory over Obama. In the legislature, Democrats gained six House seats, reducing the GOP majority there to just one seat. Obama carried five of the state's six largest urban areas. Despite these improvements, the most significant electoral victory that Democrats could point to was their sweep of Dallas County races, along with major gains in Houston.

By the time the state legislature convened for its 2009 session, the national economic crisis that had begun in 2008 had grown worse. Their numbers bolstered by the previous year's elections, House Democrats were able to block one of the Republicans' top priorities, a voter ID bill, but in doing so they also blocked passage of hundreds of other bills, further exacerbating partisan divisions. Ultimately, lawmakers fashioned a \$182 million budget (balanced as required by the state constitution), avoiding a tax increase only by the use of \$12 billion in federal stimulus funds—a measure that most Republicans had bitterly denounced. The most dramatic development of the session, though, was the overthrow of the longtime House speaker, Tom Craddick. The Midland Republican, who had served in the legislature for forty years, ruled the House with an iron fist. After narrowly failing to remove him in 2007, eleven Republicans joined with Democrats to replace Craddick with a little-known two-term Republican from San Antonio, Joe Strauss, who promised a less heavy-handed rule. The victory of Strauss, a moderate, eased some of the rancor that had characterized the House under Craddick. But it also meant that the House, already unruly with the recent influx of antiestablishment Tea Partiers, would be increasingly difficult to manage.

## **The rise of the Tea Party**

The modest Democratic gains that had blocked parts of the GOP agenda and led to the overthrow of Craddick were short lived. In 2010, fueled by a still-weak economy and the rise of the ultraconservative Tea Party movement, Republicans scored sweeping victories in Texas and the nation. Nationally, the Tea Party claimed to be primarily an expression of economic conservatism, but in Texas it was difficult to differentiate between Tea Party economic conservatives and the social conservatives who had dominated the Republican Party since 1996. In any event, in the 2010 elections Republicans took a 101–49 majority in the House and retained a 19–12 edge in the Senate. Three congressional seats swung to the GOP. The popular US Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison made a gubernatorial bid, running against Rick Perry in the Republican Primary, but with the Tea Party at the peak of its influence, Perry, who had enthusiastically cast his lot with the movement, defeated the moderate Hutchison by a 51–30 percent margin. Perry went on to garner 60 percent of the popular vote in the general election, defeating Democrat Bill White, a former mayor of Houston.

Perry and dozens of Republican legislators had run with the backing of the Tea Party, and they were easily able to push through much of their legislative agenda. With the economy wounded by the Great Recession, the main job of the 2011 legislature was to produce the balanced budget mandated by the Texas Constitution. Having pledged never to raise taxes, the Republican majority faced a \$23 billion budget shortfall, which it addressed by chopping \$4 billion from the public schools, \$2 billion from higher education, and cutting 5700 state jobs. Complicated accounting maneuvers and the deferring of certain Medicaid payments to future years accounted for several billion dollars in additional temporary savings, thus closing the budget gap without raising taxes, though these measures would only add to future shortfalls. Republicans finally succeeded in passing their long-sought-after voter ID bill, which Democrats claimed disproportionately targeted the poor, the elderly, and minorities. Lawmakers also found time to pass a new redistricting map favoring Republicans, and to declare western swing the official music of Texas. Perry and his Tea Party allies, however, failed on two key issues: a so-called “sanctuary cities” bill that would allow police to ask immigration status of people they arrest, and an airport “antigroping” bill that would have criminalized intrusive security pat-downs.

Tea Partiers, who championed lower taxes and smaller government, found the constrained economic conditions in the aftermath of the Great Recession conducive to their agenda of cutting state spending. The \$172 billion budget adopted in 2011 was \$15 billion lower than that of 2009, despite the continuing strong population growth and increased demands for social services in a weak economy. The Tea Party further exhibited its strength in 2012, when former state solicitor general Ted Cruz, a Tea Party favorite who had never held elected office, scored a surprise victory in the GOP primary for US Senate over long-time lieutenant governor David Dewhurst, himself a staunch conservative who had been endorsed by Rick Perry. Cruz went on to an easy victory in the 2012 general election.

Meanwhile, Republicans eagerly sought an alternative to the early presidential frontrunner, former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney. They seized on Perry, whose record in Texas had made him a favorite of social and economic conservatives alike and a hero to the Tea Party movement. When Perry finally announced his candidacy, he shot to the top of the polls. The Perry boom, however, proved short lived. A poor debater unaccustomed to the intense media scrutiny of a national campaign, the governor performed poorly in several debates and made a series of embarrassing gaffes that quickly eroded his support. Within a

few weeks, he had withdrawn from the race. He returned to Texas and resumed his gubernatorial duties but refused to rule out a future run for the White House.

Due to a rising tide of prosperity, the 2013 legislature convened with an \$8 billion surplus, making it possible to pass a record \$197 billion budget without raising taxes. The harmony of the regular session, however, dissolved into acrimony when Governor Perry called a special session that focused, among other issues, on a bill that banned abortions after twenty weeks of pregnancy and required facilities to meet the standards of surgical centers, a stringent requirement that would close most of the state's abortion clinics. Debate over the bill focused national attention on Texas when state Sen. Wendy Davis mounted a dramatic all-night filibuster, which drew massive crowds of protestors to the capitol in support of her cause. Davis managed to defeat the bill, but Perry called a second session and succeeded in passing it. Even as they limited access to abortions (and, in the process, many other healthcare services for poor women), conservatives in the legislature succeeded in killing the proposed expansion of Medicare under the terms of the Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare") and refused to establish a state health-insurance exchange under the terms of the Act. Tea Partiers groused over the \$25 billion overall increase in the state budget, giving them a platform to run on in 2014, but social conservatives' successes only emboldened that wing of the Republican Party.

### **The Abbott-Patrick era and further polarization**

By 2014, Rick Perry was by far the longest-serving governor in Texas history. The real significance of his long tenure, however, was not just that he had set a record for longevity. Having been governor for thirteen years, he had now appointed every member of every state board and commission. This meant that a historic shift had taken place: the Texas governor's office—a weak office by constitutional design—had become more powerful than at any point since Reconstruction.

That spring Perry announced his retirement, creating a vacuum that was soon filled by the state attorney general, Greg Abbott (Figure 14.1), who faced only token opposition in the GOP primary. Democrats nominated Wendy Davis, a heroine to the left for her prochoice filibuster in 2013. When the votes were counted, the full force of Texas conservatism was on display: Abbott defeated Davis by nineteen percentage points. Even more encouraging to the conservatives was the election of Dan Patrick, a state senator and former radio talk-show host. Patrick's easy victory over Democratic state senator Leticia Van der Putte starkly revealed that in Texas at least, there was no discernible line between the professed economic conservatism of the Tea Partiers and the social conservatism of the Religious Right. Patrick's firebrand style contrasted with the more reserved manner of Abbott, but both men drew enthusiastic support from the large Republican majority in Texas.

The new political leadership in Austin, bolstered by infusion of Tea Partiers in the state House and Senate, approached the 2015 legislative session keen to cut taxes and enact more of the GOP's conservative social agenda. With the largest majority they had ever had in the Senate (20–11 over the Democrats) and now holding two-thirds of the House seats, Republicans made good on many of their promises, cutting the business franchise tax by 25 percent and increasing homestead exemptions that gave homeowners a modest tax cut. Social conservatives succeeded in passing bills allowing for the "open carry" of firearms by those with concealed-carry licenses and for the carrying of firearms on college campuses, but the moderate Republican House speaker, Joe Straus, frustrated conservatives' efforts to

pass several other bills, including a \$100 million school voucher bill that would have provided public funding for parents to send their children to private or religious schools.

When the 2016 elections rolled around, two Texans announced their intention to run for president in the GOP primaries: former governor Rick Perry and US senator Ted Cruz. Perry exited the crowded, seventeen-person field after the first debate and soon endorsed Cruz. By March the field had been narrowed to three, including Cruz and Ohio Gov. John Kasich. By that time, however, Donald Trump had emerged as the clear frontrunner, and by May he had secured the nomination, although favorite-son Cruz did win the Texas primary by sixteen percentage points. The latter stages of the race had proven exceedingly bitter and personal between Cruz and Trump, but Cruz eventually endorsed Trump, who narrowly won an electoral-college victory over Democrat Hillary Clinton. In Texas, Trump polled 52 percent of the vote to Clinton's 43 percent.

Trump's victory heartened the GOP's right wing, whose members rallied behind Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, an ardent Trump supporter who had chaired the president's state campaign. When the 2017 legislature convened, Patrick and like-minded Republicans announced an ambitious agenda that included a "sanctuary cities" bill aimed at forcing cities to enforce federal immigration laws, further restrictions on abortions, and a so-called "bathroom bill" that would limit the use of public restrooms by transgender Texans. According to many observers, the regular session and one called session marked a new low in incivility, as the deep divisions between GOP conservatives and moderates was on full display. After attempting to maintain a low profile on some of the more contentious issues, Governor Abbott ultimately sided with Lt. Gov. Patrick on most issues. Speaker Strauss, however, leading the House moderates (sometimes with Democratic backing), managed to defeat the bathroom bill and the perennial push for school vouchers. But the sanctuary cities bill passed, as did two bills further restricting abortion rights. After the legislature adjourned, Strauss announced his retirement, leading many liberals and moderates to fear that the last bulwark against the far right in Austin was gone.

As the statewide races of 2018 neared, the Democratic Party again showed the effects of its long decline. The race for the gubernatorial nomination featured two weak candidates, former Dallas County sheriff Lupe Valdez, and Andrew White, a Houston businessman and son of former governor Mark White. Enjoying strong support in South Texas, Valdez secured the nomination. With the popular Governor Abbott heading the Republican ticket, the GOP easily maintained its stranglehold on the state's top elective office, with Abbott winning by thirteen percentage points. The controversial administration of President Donald Trump, however, energized Democrats, making several races far closer than they would have been. Lt. Gov. Patrick, for example, defeated a little-known opponent by only five points. But most significant was the race run by Democratic congressman Beto O'Rourke against incumbent Ted Cruz in the US Senate race. In a campaign that attracted national attention and set a new national record for senatorial fundraising (O'Rourke raised \$80 million), the El Paso Democrat lost by a mere 2.6 points. (Figure 14.6) He carried the state's five most populous counties and even won in suburban GOP bastions such as Fort Bend (near Houston) and Williamson (near Austin). O'Rourke's coattails also proved significant, as Democratic challengers defeated two incumbent GOP congressmen, one in Dallas and the other in Houston. Even in the heavily gerrymandered legislature, the Democrats picked up two seats in the state senate and twelve in the house. Whether the Democrats' gains in 2018 foreshadowed the long-anticipated "purpling" of the longtime red state or were simply an expression of President Trump's unpopularity remains to be seen.



**Figure 14.6** Beto O'Rourke speaks at a town hall meeting in Austin. Photo by Bill McCullough. Courtesy of Beto for Texas.

## Current Issues, Future Challenges

No matter who occupies the state capitol, Texans will have to come to grips with a number of pressing problems in the coming years. Some of these issues are as old as the state itself: education, criminal justice, taxes, and poverty. Others have only become urgent in more recent times: water resources, environmental protection, healthcare, and the implications of dramatic demographic change and explosive urban growth. The state's ability to address these problems will determine whether Texas will be able to maintain the generally favorable economic position and improving quality of life it has enjoyed since World War II or regress into a place of declining opportunities, growing inequalities, and a diminished quality of life.

### Public education

Historically, among the states of the union Texas was a latecomer to public education and never devoted the resources to it that many other states did. In the mid-twentieth century, oil-born prosperity and the postwar modernization of the Texas economy enabled the state's system of public education to improve, but by the 1980s and 1990s the system was in trouble. That trouble has deepened into something resembling a crisis in the early twenty-first century. Education is a complex subject, but the roots of that crisis lie in three interrelated factors: race, ideas about the role and scope of government, and the special needs of a student body that is increasingly poor and immigrant. In 1954 (the year that the Supreme Court ordered the desegregation of public schools in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision), 87 percent of the children enrolled in the state's public schools were classified as

“white”; by 2000, that figure had fallen to 42 percent, and in 2016 it stood at 29 percent. In the largest cities, however, the phenomenon of “white flight”—whites either moving to the suburbs or placing their children in private schools—was even more dramatic. For example, in the Dallas Independent School District in 2016, whites comprised only 5 percent of the district’s enrollment; in Houston the figure stood at 8.5 percent. As more-affluent whites pulled their children from the public schools, their commitment to public education—and especially to funding it—waned. When combined with Texans’ professed fondness for small government and their corresponding opposition to taxes, public schools faced a growing financial crisis. This crisis was made worse by the fact that in many districts a majority of the students, having come from poverty-stricken, often immigrant, households, needed expensive remedial and bilingual curricula. State and federal mandates relating to special education, and the costs of administering the new regime of standardized tests, further added to the fiscal woes of the public schools.

Since 1993 the state had funded K-12 education through the formula known as “Robin Hood,” in which wealthier districts were required to share funding with poorer ones. In 2005 the state supreme court ruled this system unconstitutional, and the following year a regular legislative session and three special sessions failed to resolve the issue. Finally, in a 2006 special session, the legislature succeeded in passing a funding bill that passed constitutional muster. The bill broadened the state tax on business in exchange for cutting local school property taxes by about one-third over a two-year period, thus boosting the state’s share of school funding from 38 percent to about 50 percent. Although the law modestly increased the overall amount of funding for schools, including a one-time \$2000 teacher pay raise, the court still warned that the latest “fix” provided barely adequate funding levels, and it hinted that more-sweeping changes would likely be required in the near future. Even after the 2006 reforms, Texas ranked thirty-fourth among the states in per-pupil spending (about \$900 less than the national average), and teacher pay remained below the national average.

Then came the Great Recession of 2008–2009, and, as mentioned, the 2011 legislature, rather than raise taxes, cut \$4 billion from the public school budget, which resulted in an across-the-board reduction of about 6 percent for districts, or about \$537 per student over the following two years. Many districts were forced to lay off teachers and increase class sizes. With antitax, antigovernment, anti-immigrant Republicans in a stronger position in the legislature than ever before, any substantial reversal in these trends seems unlikely in the near term. In 2013 an improving economy convinced legislators to restore some of the cuts made the previous session, but the following year the courts again ruled the state’s school finance system unconstitutional. More patchwork fixes ensued; the legislature modestly increased state spending for schools for the second straight session in 2015, but even then, the deep cuts of 2011 had not yet been fully restored. Later that year the state supreme court upheld the current finance system. The 2017 legislature again failed to reform the system, and although the overall dollar amount of state funding was held constant, per-student spending again declined. Over the past decade, then, a clear pattern has emerged: In tight budgetary years, education bears much of the brunt of cuts that are needed to balance the state budget. In good years, some funding is restored, but legislators prioritize tax cuts over education spending. As the school-age population continues to grow robustly, the state’s share of overall public-school funding continues to decrease, meaning that local districts must raise property taxes just to keep per-pupil funding levels steady. Lawmakers then hear anguished cries from voters demanding that they do something to slow the rate of property-tax increases. A few basic statistics illustrate the effects of this vicious cycle: Adjusted for



population growth and inflation, state government spent 26 percent less in 2017 than it did in 2009. For the average school district, the amount of its total funding paid by the state dropped from 46 percent in 2012 to 41 percent in 2017. In 2017–18, Texas ranked thirty-sixth among the fifty states in per-student funding, a ranking that has changed little in a decade. In the 2015 written decision upholding the current finance system, Chief Justice Don Willett nonetheless characterized the system as “a recondite scheme for which the word ‘Byzantine’ seems generous,” and he declared that the children of Texas “deserve transformational, top-to-bottom reforms that amount to more than Band-Aid on top of Band-Aid. They deserve a revamped, nonsclerotic system fit for the 21st century.” As long as enough Texans with enough political influence rank low taxes over education on their list of public priorities, the state will struggle to educate all its children in a manner that will keep Texas economically competitive.

### **Higher education**

Public higher education has fared only marginally better than K-12 education in recent years. Rather than increase taxes to meet rising college costs, in 2003 the legislature passed a bill allowing individual university boards to set their own tuition rates. Critics warned that the measure would result in runaway tuition increases, and they were right: between 2003 and 2012, the average semester cost for students rose by 72 percent; at some campuses the cost more than doubled. Even as costs have skyrocketed, the amount of their funding that state universities received from state government sources has fallen. Public universities in Texas now correctly describe themselves as “state assisted” rather than “state supported.” In 1984, 59 percent of UT-Austin’s annual budget came from the state (including proceeds from the Permanent University Fund); in 2012, the figure was 21 percent. And even for those students not priced entirely out of a college education, the burdens have increased dramatically: the average student now graduates with more than \$20,000 in student loans, double the rate a decade earlier. Nonetheless, higher education is still a relative bargain in Texas. As of 2010, the total cost (including tuition, fees, and cost of living) of a year of college in Texas averaged \$19,305, compared to the national average of \$20,669.

Of course, cost figures alone do not indicate the quality of the education being received. In recent decades, however, the realization has slowly grown that a world-class system of higher education is not a luxury but a necessity if Texas is to excel in the twenty-first century. A mediocre university system eventually will mean lower wages and incomes, depressed tax revenues, and a loss of good-paying “new-economy” jobs to those states that have invested adequately in higher education. But universities will have to compete with prisons, public schools, health care, and other programs for their share of the state’s budget.

When Governor Rick Perry took office in 2001, he placed higher education at the top of his list of priorities. After eleven years in office, his record—and that of the state—was mixed. At his urging, the legislature created a \$200 million Emerging Technology Fund to recruit scientists and engineers; he signed a \$1.9 billion bond package for repair and construction projects on college campuses; and by 2011, the principal state aid program for low-income students, the Texas Grant (established in 1999) had spent about \$2 billion assisting 310,000 students, mostly from low-income families. But in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis, the 2011 legislature cut the Texas Grant budget by 9 percent for the 2012–13 biennium, meaning that nearly 30,000 fewer students would be eligible for the

grants. With overall state funding of higher education also taking a 9 percent across-the-board cut, the prospect of graduating from college dimmed for many Texas students, and the state's ability to remain competitive in the national and international economies was diminished.

A key component in the quest for that competitiveness is research. For many decades, Texans believed that the two flagship universities—UT-Austin and Texas A&M—plus a few other second-tier colleges, would be adequate to the task of attracting top faculty, research dollars, and the economic development and good jobs that come with them. In 2009 Governor Perry backed a program that made \$600 million available to universities aspiring to achieve “Tier One” status. Although Texas Tech, the University of North Texas, UT-Dallas, UT-Arlington, and the University of Houston all aspire to that status, the budget cuts of 2011 and the poor prospects for increased funding have rendered that goal unreachable any time soon.

Simultaneously, Perry pushed university regents to enact reforms in the ways that professors' job performance is evaluated and rewarded. Employing market-based ideas from the business world, Perry's plan—called “Seven Breakthrough Solutions”—would separate teaching from research, measuring teaching productivity primarily by how many students professors teach and by student teaching evaluations, and judging research productivity by how much grant funding a faculty member brings in. Perry's proposals ignited a firestorm of opposition from university faculty and administrators, including a strongly worded report from the University of Texas rejecting virtually all aspects of the plan. With Perry having appointed every member of every state university board, the plan enjoyed considerable support among regents, but the boards backed down in the face of the united front presented by the universities, and the controversial proposals were never implemented. Many Texans have applauded Governor Perry's call for a \$10,000 bachelor's degree, but how such dramatic cost reductions can be achieved in an era of shrinking state budgets without seriously compromising quality remains to be answered. In the end, the combatants in the higher-education wars only seem to agree on one thing: without a world-class university system, Texas seems destined to fall behind in the race for good jobs and economic development.

### **Criminal justice**

Historically, the criminal justice system in Texas has struggled against two strong but mutually incompatible impulses: the desire, especially on the part of the conservative majority, to be “tough on crime,” and the reluctance to impose taxes sufficient to fund a massive corrections system. Texas has historically had one of the highest incarceration rates in the nation. After the prison-building spree of the 1990s, in which the state tripled the capacity of its system, the state was able to house all its inmates—barely. The state's crime rate slowly rose through the first half of the 2000s, but then leveled off and actually declined after 2008. By 2016 the overall crime rate was the lowest in fifty years. This decline was reflected in incarceration rates: in 2010 Texas ranked second in the nation, but by 2017 the rate had fallen to seventh. The 141,500 prisoners in the system in 2018 was down 15,000 from the all-time high. Texas's recidivism rates (that is, the rate at which released prisoners return to prison) declined almost 50 percent between 2006 and 2016; only about 20 percent of individuals released from prison return within three years.

These changes mark a significant reversal from the trends of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. They were made possible by a rare convergence of liberal and conservative opinion: the realization that handing out ever-longer sentences and building more and more prisons does not make society safer. During the early years of his administration, Gov. Rick Perry had vetoed most proposed reforms of the criminal justice system, but when conservative and liberal think-tanks began agreeing that expanded drug- and mental-health treatment was cheaper and more effective than prison, he signed onto the reform agenda. Beginning in 2007, the state reduced the rate at which nonviolent criminals are incarcerated, and it likewise reduced the number of people returned to prison for technical violations of parole or probation. Special drug courts, veterans' courts, and mental health courts were established, giving offenders support that often kept them out of prison.

Much remains to be done. In 2017 the state spent \$5.8 billion on prisons. Texas spends more than \$50 a day to house a prisoner, which comes to \$22,000 per prisoner per year, more than double the yearly cost for sending a student to a public school. Of those sent to prison in recent years, three-quarters are functionally illiterate. Despite the encouraging signs from recent reforms, more than half of state inmates are drug or alcohol abusers, and 20 percent are incarcerated for drug- or alcohol-related offenses. In 2018 the Trump Justice Department called for a renewed war on drugs, including harsher penalties for offenders. It remains to be seen whether Texans, who heavily support the president, will respond to his calls for a return to a renewed emphasis on "law and order," or if the tentative steps toward reform will continue.

The juvenile justice system has been a particular focus of attention in recent years. In 2007 the press broke a series of stories alleging child sexual abuse at several facilities of the Texas Youth Commission (TYC). As the scope of the scandal became apparent, Governor Rick Perry placed the TYC under the control of a special conservator. Lawmakers then overhauled the agency, closing several facilities and requiring counties to keep more youthful offenders closer to home, where they would receive rehabilitation treatment and counseling. The population of the renamed Texas Juvenile Justice Department dropped from 3000 to around 1200, and the reorganization was widely praised. By 2010, however, a federal report found that rates of sexual abuse of youths in Texas facilities were among highest in the nation. A new round of allegations surfaced, however, in 2012, charging, among other things, that 89 percent of the agency's facilities lacked adequate counseling sessions. Recidivism rates were higher than in state prisons for adults, and annual staff turnover reached almost 80 percent. In 2017, advocacy groups called for the five remaining juvenile lockups to be closed. Governor Abbott ordered the Texas Rangers to investigate, and the probe led to several arrests, a shakeup of leadership in the agency, and the formulation of a reform plan that sounded much like the one from 2007. Meanwhile, legislation in the 2018 session that would have raised the age for criminal responsibility from seventeen to eighteen—thus keeping seventeen-year-olds out of the adult prison population—failed in the state Senate, a casualty of budgetary considerations and conservative senators' "tough on crime" stance. The continuing problems with juvenile justice threaten to offset many of the gains made in the adult system, since youthful offenders have a vastly higher chance of becoming adult offenders.

In recent years, mass incarceration, particularly of African American males, has become a national issue, and Texas is no exception. In 2018 African Americans comprised 33 percent of the state prison population, although they were only 12 percent of the overall state population. A US Justice Department study found that one in three African American men born in 2001 will serve time in prison sometime in their life. Racial disparities in

sentencing—particularly for drug-related offenses—are well-documented. The social and economic consequences are massive: families with one parent in prison are far more likely to be poor; children from such families are more likely to perform poorly in school; people released from prison face severe hurdles in finding employment; those who have been incarcerated have more health problems, are more likely to smoke, and have a shorter lifespan.

Except for the occasional headline-grabbing scandal, such as that involving the juvenile system, and the recent flurry of publicity resulting from the Black Lives Matter movement, prisons and criminal justice have largely been relegated to the back pages of Texas newspapers in the twenty-first century. Modern Texas, however, stands at a historic crossroads where the criminal justice system is concerned. Virtually all experts agree that new approaches are critically needed. There are some signs that these new approaches are gaining adherents, but sustaining the sorts of reforms that are needed will require much more public support and political will. In a state with a growing gap between the rich and poor, an education system in crisis, and fewer good-paying jobs, a rational and effective justice system will be a necessity, not a luxury.

### **Water resources**

As Texas's population has grown, water shortages—a problem that first became apparent in the late twentieth century—grew more severe. And like many other issues, it has too often become a matter of political dispute, with liberals generally championing more stringent state regulation and conservatives favoring free-market solutions.

Texas's first State Water Plan was developed in 1961, as the state was coming out of the worst drought in its history. Since then, the Texas Water Development Board has issued new plans every few years. The 2007 plan predicted that water demand would increase by 27 percent by 2060, while existing supplies were expected to decline by 18 percent. This plan raised the estimated price of new projects, including fourteen new reservoirs, in excess of \$30 billion. But in an era of tight state budgets and severe ideological opposition to new taxes or user fees, relatively little of the plan was funded. The 2007, 2009, and 2011 legislatures appropriated less than \$2 billion for the plan. When the plan was updated in 2012, the price tag for the next half-century had mushroomed to \$53 billion. In 2013 the legislature created a special account, the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT), to fund projects under State Water Plan. Lawmakers made a one-time appropriation of \$2 billion from the state's Rainy Day Fund to fund SWIFT. SWIFT primarily provides low-interest loans to cities, irrigation districts, and water utilities, but it is a drop in the proverbial ocean compared to the needs projected by the Water Plan; when the 2017 plan was issued, the overall cost had risen to \$63 billion.

One of the most encouraging water-related developments has been the effort to address the problems associated with the Edwards Aquifer, which furnishes much of the water used by Austin, San Antonio, and surrounding areas of Central Texas and which also provides the habitat for several endangered species. After years of rancor and litigation among the various stakeholders, including the federal government, municipalities, utilities, businesses, developers, farmers, and environmental groups, the state legislature, working under the mandate of a federal judge, passed a bill setting a deadline for the stakeholders—some forty in number—to agree to a conservation plan. Meeting regularly over several years, the group in 2011 hammered out the Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Plan. The US Fish

and Wildlife Service approved the plan in 2013, and it went into effect. The plan has been widely hailed as a model of collaborative effort, and it constitutes perhaps the most hopeful sign yet that solutions to seemingly intractable water problems may be possible.

No single solution will solve the water dilemma. Building more dams on the state's rivers reduces flows to farms and cities below the dams. Drawing too much water from rivers also reduces the flow into the Gulf of Mexico, which can damage the fishing and shrimping industries in coastal bays and lead to the intrusion of salt water into environmentally sensitive wetlands. Drawing water from aquifers lowers the water table, often reducing or ending the flow of springs that feed rivers. Limiting the amount of water that can be drawn from aquifers hurts farmers, which in turn injures the rural economy. Clearly, an intelligent, coordinated plan that combines new surface-water projects with innovative conservation measures in all areas holds the key to the future. Whether the state will succeed in implementing such a plan before matters reach crisis levels remains to be seen. In water, as in so many other areas, Texans are still struggling to reconcile their frontier values of limited government and private property rights with the needs of a modern, urban, industrial state.

### **Air quality**

Questions concerning water have mostly involved quantity, but air-related issues necessarily center on quality. In the 2000 presidential race, George W. Bush defended the state's environmental record, citing a bill that allowed more than 800 aging industrial plants built before 1971 to reduce emissions voluntarily. Critics pointed out that as governor, Bush had blocked stronger legislation that would have forced these plants to cut emissions. Six years later, only a small fraction of these plants had agreed to the voluntary reductions, many of them doing so only because other laws would have soon required it anyway. A proposal by Governor Rick Perry in 2006 to expedite the construction of nineteen new coal-burning power plants exempt from tougher emissions regulations brought further controversy, including the opposition of the mayors of both Houston and Dallas. When Barack Obama became president in 2009, the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) moved to tighten air-pollution regulations, spurring a series of lawsuits by state attorney general Greg Abbott and the energy industry against the EPA. The conflicts revolved around two issues. One was the state's so-called "flexible permitting" system, which allowed companies to group several power plants together under a single emissions-limiting "cap" rather than require a cap for each plant. This system essentially allowed older, dirtier, coal-fired plants to continue operating as long as they were grouped with newer, cleaner facilities. The second issue involved the EPA's Cross-State Air Pollution rule, which forced a state to reduce emissions if those emissions adversely affected a neighboring state (which Texas plants regularly did). At one point in 2010, the dispute between the EPA and state officials grew so heated that the federal agency threatened to take over the state licensing function. In 2012, however, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against the EPA on both cases, and conservatives hailed the victory as a triumph for states' rights and limited government. In the meantime, perhaps aided by widespread wildfires resulting from the worst drought in Texas history, air quality in the state's major metropolitan areas grew worse. A 2011 report ranked Texas worst among the states in the amount of carbon dioxide emissions, worst in the amount of volatile organic compounds released into the air, worst in the amount of recognized carcinogens released into the air, worst in industrial mercury released into the air by power plants, fifth worst in the amount of toxic chemicals released into the air, and tenth

worst in industrial air pollution. Dallas–Fort Worth violated federal ozone standards on thirty-two days in 2011, with Houston second at twenty-nine days. Between 2008 and 2017, the state of Texas sued the EPA sixteen times over air-quality regulations; of those cases that had been decided by 2017, the state had won four. When Donald Trump became president that year, he directed the EPA to repeal the Clean Power Plan, Barack Obama’s signature effort to reduce emissions, and the EPA also moved swiftly to undo as many of the Obama-era environmental regulations as possible. Republican state officials have been virtually unanimous in supporting Trump’s efforts at deregulation, although many of proposed changes at both the national and state levels remain tied up in litigation.

### **New environmental concerns**

The oil- and natural gas-drilling boom that began in 2009 has sparked a new set of environmental questions. Concerns that toxic chemicals like benzene in the vicinity of wellheads pose a health threat have thus far not been conclusively substantiated by investigators. Greater worries have centered on the aforementioned process known as hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” in which large slurries of water-borne chemicals are pumped at high pressures down well-bores to crack open the petroleum-bearing rock formations. Although when done properly the procedure does not affect groundwater supplies, isolated cases of polluted groundwater and even combustible gas coming from people’s kitchen faucets have been reported in Pennsylvania. Potentially even more troubling has been a sharp spike in small earthquakes in the vicinity of some of the most active natural-gas fields in North and East Texas, quakes that scientists believe might be connected to saltwater injection wells used to dispose of the wastewater from natural-gas operations, a small percentage of which is used in fracking. Damage from these quakes has been minor as of 2018, and scientists are in the early stages of investigating the phenomenon, but the cumulative effect of environmental questions raised by oil and gas drilling has been great enough to spark very public debates, especially as drilling has increasingly become an urban phenomenon in places like Fort Worth.

Issues of pollution and development have increasingly led to conflicts among state and federal regulators, lawmakers, and private citizens over efforts to protect endangered species. Since the 1970s, Texas has been the scene of some notable successes in rescuing some animals from the brink of extinction. Most famous has been the ongoing program at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge near Corpus Christi to save the whooping crane. Bald eagles and wild turkeys have returned to sections of the state from which they had virtually vanished. Efforts to save other, less glamorous species have run afoul of property-rights advocates who object to state or federal intrusion on their land or interference with agriculture or development. For example, the extremely rare Texas Blind Salamander, which is found only in underground water in the Edwards Aquifer near San Marcos, faces possible extinction as wells draw down the level of the aquifer to meet the water needs of the Austin–San Antonio area. In the Hill Country, the golden-cheeked warbler faces pressure as development in the hills west of Austin reduces its habitat.

Efforts to protect the environment, then, have shared much in common with attempts to improve education or the criminal justice system. Texans’ historic suspicions of government, combined with the desire for low taxes and economic growth, have limited the effectiveness of environmental-protection programs. Nevertheless, attitudes seem to be changing. A 1999 poll revealed that more than half of Texans considered urban sprawl a



**Figure 14.7** Looking toward the southeast over some of the older parts of industrial Houston and the Houston Ship Canal. Many of the nation's largest petroleum refineries and petrochemical plants are in the horizon, indicated by the plumes of smoke, including Texas City. Texas City is the site of two disasters: the explosions of 1947 and 2005 at the BP Texas City Refinery. Photograph by Carol Kazmer Liffman, January 2013.

significant problem. That same year in Houston, a city long noted for its progrowth attitudes, environmentalists defeated a proposal to build a new airport on the Katy Prairie west of town, an environmentally sensitive wetland. Support for clean energy sources such as wind power is growing, and Nolan County in west-central Texas now boasts more wind-power turbines than any county in the nation. Despite signs of change, a consensus has yet to emerge regarding the proper roles of the state and the private sector in keeping Texas both safe and beautiful for future generations.

## Poverty

The state's approach to dealing with poverty shifted dramatically with the passage of a major federal welfare reform bill in 1996. The law ended Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and replaced it with a program called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which takes the form of block grants to the states. It imposed a five-year lifetime limit on cash assistance and required that recipients work in order to receive benefits. The program has had mixed results. On the positive side, by 2006 TANF caseloads in the state had fallen 75 percent and the employment rate for single mothers had improved. But in giving states more local control over welfare, the federal reforms gave states like Texas—historically opposed to welfare programs and the taxes to pay for them—the means to

reduce even further their commitment to aiding the poor. From 1996 to 2004, the percentage of poor Texans receiving cash assistance dropped from 22 percent to 7 percent; the percentage of poor children receiving assistance dropped from 33 percent to 15 percent. In many cases, recipients remained jobless once benefits had ceased. The great majority of those who did find work remained well below the poverty level. These results were largely the product of the state's unwillingness to allocate matching funds in order to receive federal money. Texas received \$147 in federal TANF funds per resident in poverty in 2004, less than any other state except for Alabama and a fraction of the national average of \$459. By contrast, the number of Texans receiving food stamps—an aid program that does not require states to match federal funds—grew by 80 percent from 2000 to 2006.

The Great Recession of 2008–09 and its aftermath worsened the poverty outlook in Texas. The percentage of Texans living below the poverty line rose from 16 percent in 2008 to more than 18 percent in 2010, and it remained at that level two years later. By 2018, as the postrecession economic recovery reached its tenth year, the rate had declined back to the prerecession level of 16 percent. The percentage of Texas children living in poverty mirrored the overall rate, rising from 23 to 26 percent during the recession and then declining back to 22 percent. The number of households receiving food benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—formerly known as food stamps—grew from 1.2 million households to 1.5 million, where it remained in 2018. Since the Great Recession, the unemployment rate in Texas has remained about 2 percent lower than the nation rate, and wages have risen modestly. In 2010, 550,000 workers labored at jobs paying at or below the federal minimum wage of \$7.25; by 2017 that figure had dropped to 196,000. Among all hourly workers, 3.1 percent earned the minimum wage, making Texas the twelfth-worst state in the nation in that category.

Throughout all of this, the state maintained one of the nation's lowest rates of spending on social services. Federal TANF funds come to the state as a block grant, and the rules give the states broad latitude as to how they spend the money. Texas has elected to spend only 5.8 percent of its federal TANF funds on actual cash assistance to poor families with children. Sixty-nine percent of those funds are spent on the Department of Family and Protective Services; lesser amounts go programs such as the Texas Education Agency's "school improvement and support programs," to the state's mental health hospitals, to programs to reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and to an "Alternatives to Abortion" program. In short, Texas spends its federal welfare dollars to prop up programs that most other states pay for themselves and spends very little of its welfare dollars on actual welfare. As a result, only 4 percent of families living below the poverty line receive cash assistance, down from 47 percent in 1996. The state's maximum monthly benefit of \$289 is eleventh lowest in the nation, and to qualify for that payment, a family cannot earn more than \$188 a month—levels that have been frozen for twenty years. According to the US Census Bureau, in 2016 Texas ranked last in the nation in the percentage of households receiving payments. It ranked third-worst overall in the generosity of its assistance programs.

As of late 2017, the total number of Texans receiving TANF stood at less than 60,000, which means that only .21 percent of the state's residents were collecting the principal form of cash welfare benefits. By contrast, nearly 13 percent of Texans—3.7 million—were receiving food stamps, which were much easier to qualify for than TANF and whose benefits were paid for entirely by the federal government. Still, budget cuts at the state's Health and Human Services Commission slowed down the processing of applications, spurring an ultimatum from the federal government and an unsuccessful class-action lawsuit in 2009.



These actions temporarily improved the state's compliance with federal guidelines, but even then only about two-thirds of those eligible actually were receiving benefits.

## **Health care**

Discussions of poverty in the twenty-first century quickly lead to discussions of access to health care. On one hand, the state boasts some of the finest doctors and hospitals anywhere in the nation or world. For example, the Texas Medical Center in Houston, which includes the world-renowned The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center (Figure 14.7) and world-renowned Baylor College of Medicine, is the largest medical center in the world, and all of the state's major cities can claim world-class facilities. Moreover, the healthcare services sector has remained strong and has even grown through the turmoil of the Great Recession, now accounting for about 12 percent of the jobs in Texas.

On the other hand, the state badly lags behind most other states in a number of key health care indicators. In one recent study, Texas ranked twenty-seventh in hospital beds per capita, thirty-ninth in the number of emergency medical technicians and paramedics, fortieth in the number of physicians, forty-fourth in the number of registered nurses, forty-fifth in the number of dentists, and forty-sixth in the number of dental hygienists. As of 2012, 27.6 percent of Texans had no health insurance, the highest rate in the nation and a full four percentage points above the second-worst state, Mississippi. Not surprisingly, the state ranked worse than the national average in infant mortality rates, premature births, obesity, heart disease, cervical cancer, and diabetes.

Working-age Texans (aged nineteen to sixty-four) are the most likely to be uninsured; 34 percent have no coverage, and only 52 percent are covered by employment-based insurance. Retirement-age adults are the group most likely to be insured; 91 percent of adults sixty-five and over are covered by Medicare. Among children, 45 percent are covered by their parents' workplace insurance, 37 percent by Medicaid (the state/federal health insurance program for the poor) or CHIP (the state/federal insurance program for the children of the working poor), leaving 17 percent of Texas children uninsured—the worst percentage in the nation. How to close these gaps in coverage is one of the most costly and politically difficult problems facing the state.

As in the case of welfare, the state's dedication to low taxes and limited government has kept public health-care programs funded at much lower levels relative to most other states. The two major sources of government health care assistance for the poor are Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program. Like TANF, both Medicaid and CHIP require certain levels of state funding in order to qualify for federal funds. Between 2000 and 2005, the state lost some \$832 million in federal funding for CHIP because it refused to appropriate the required matching funds. The biggest blow came in the 2003 legislative session, when 225,000 Texas children lost their medical care as a result of budget cuts. Consequently, CHIP enrollment, which peaked at 529,000 in 2003, declined to 301,000 in 2006. Beginning in 2007, however, enrollment in the program grew steadily, returning to its 2003 level by 2010, an increase due in part to improvements in the state's eligibility and enrollment system and the expansion of federally mandated eligibility driven by the recession. CHIP escaped the budget-slashing 2011 legislative session with only minor cuts, and by 2018 enrollment stood at about 400,000 children.

Medicaid, the largest government health insurance program for the poor, faced deep cuts when the 2011 legislature convened. Medicaid is the single largest source of federal



**Figure 14.8** The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. Photograph courtesy MD Anderson.

funds in the state budget, and in 2010 the federal government paid 70 percent, or about \$19 billion, of the state's total Medicaid bill. Despite this, some Republican legislators proposed abolishing the program in Texas altogether and forfeiting the billions in matching federal funds that come with it. In the end, the 2011 legislature kept the Medicaid budget largely intact by means of an accounting trick: lawmakers lowered their estimate of what the program would cost over the next two years by \$4.8 billion, agreeing that if this rosy estimate did not prove correct, the deficit would be covered by 2013 legislature, either by permanent cuts or by dipping into the state's Rainy Day Fund. But even with its budget preserved for the time being, the Texas Medicaid program, like virtually all its health and human services programs, was still among the least-generous in the nation. One nonpartisan consumer advocacy group ranked the program forty-fifth in terms of eligibility, forty-first in scope of services, thirty-fifth in quality of care, thirty-ninth in reimbursement, and forty-eighth overall.

Much of the discussion of healthcare in Texas and the nation in recent years has revolved around the ramifications of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, popularly known as Obamacare. One of the key provisions of the act was a major expansion in the Medicaid program. The plan called for the federal government to pay 100 percent of the cost of the plan for the first three years, followed by 95 percent for two years, and 90 percent thereafter. In 2012, however, the US Supreme Court allowed states to opt out of the Medicaid expansion feature, meaning that a state choosing to do so would forfeit the added

insurance coverage along with the billions of dollars of federal funding. Texas Governor Rick Perry was one of several conservative Republican governors opting not to participate, declaring that the state's share of the funding would cost Texas \$27 billion in new taxes over its first ten years and that the plan would mean higher overall health care costs and less patient choice.

By 2018, the state's decision not to expand Medicaid had cost approximately 2.5 million Texans coverage, and estimates were that the state would forego \$66 billion in federal money over the next decade. Eight years after its enactment, Obamacare remained a highly divisive issue. Although critics cite the state's share of the costs of expanding Medicaid as an unacceptable burden on taxpayers, proponents argue that the cost of those 2.5 million people not having insurance—a cost measured in workdays lost and the expense of emergency-room visits, among other things—outweighs the savings to the state. Texas also refused to set up one of the state health-insurance exchanges encouraged by Obamacare, a decision that likewise divided citizens along partisan lines. When the Trump administration sought to repeal Obamacare altogether in 2017, the effort failed by a 51–49 vote in the US Senate. Among the strongest proponents of the repeal effort were Texas's two senators.

As Obamacare was being implemented in 2012, a similar controversy, albeit on a smaller scale, erupted when Governor Perry announced that Texas would implement a recent state law banning Planned Parenthood from providing health services under the Women's Health Program, a Medicaid program that provided contraceptives, cancer screening, HIV tests, and other basic health services to low-income women. The state's action violated federal Medicaid rules, but Perry and the Republican-controlled legislature announced that they were willing to forfeit some \$30 million in annual federal funding (85 percent of the program's budget) rather than allow some of that funding to go to Planned Parenthood, which also provides abortion services. Even though none of the money was to be actually used for abortion—Planned Parenthood claimed it had long rigidly separated its abortion services from its other health care functions—the result was a potential loss of health-care services for 130,000 low-income women. The episode divided liberals and conservatives, fueled charges that Texas Republicans were fighting a “war against women,” bolstered the social-conservative wing of the GOP, and perhaps most important of all, placed even greater strains on the state's health care system.

The move against Planned Parenthood was but one of many battles in conservatives' ongoing war against abortion. In almost every session of the legislature in the twenty-first century, Republicans have proposed ever-stricter abortion laws. In 2013 the legislature passed a bill requiring abortion clinics to meet the standards designated for ambulatory surgical centers and requiring doctors who perform abortions to have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital. Another bill banned most abortions after twenty weeks. The US Supreme Court, however, ruled the restrictions unconstitutional in 2016. Meanwhile, the 2015 legislature debated no fewer than twenty-four abortion-related bills, although only one passed. Fewer such bills were introduced in 2017, but three passed, including a controversial measure that required the burial or cremation of all fetal tissue and banned one of the safest and most common abortion procedures. Abortion-rights groups quickly filed suit in hopes of overturning the bill.

Moral and religious stances on the abortion issue, political and ideological disagreements about the role of government in providing health care, and the ever-rising cost of healthcare guarantee that health care will remain one of the state's most challenging problems. Whatever one's political beliefs, there is widespread agreement that something must be done to contain escalating costs and provide a level of care sufficient to create a healthy

and productive workforce. If ethnic, class, generational, and ideological divisions continue to leave millions of the state's residents without healthcare, all Texans will eventually pay the price.

### **Taxes**

As governor in the late 1990s, George W. Bush had championed tax reform, but most of his proposals died in the legislature. Finally, in 2006, a tax reform plan embodying several of the ideas of Bush's plan passed the legislature. Cigarette taxes were increased, property taxes were reduced by 30 percent over a three-year period, and a broad-based business tax replaced the loophole-ridden franchise tax. But even with the 2006 reforms, the unreliable sales tax still accounted for 58 percent of state revenues, leaving the state budget highly vulnerable to unpredictable swings in the business cycle, which in turn cause severe fluctuations in tax collections.

All proposals to reduce the state's heavy reliance on the sales tax have run into insurmountable obstacles. One solution, replacing the sales tax with a state income tax, has long been considered a "third rail" in Texas politics: to propose it is to commit political suicide. Another suggestion, substituting a higher, broader-based property tax for the current sales tax, likewise runs headlong into powerful special interest groups as well as a governor and many Republican state legislators having signed a "no new taxes" pledge.

Indeed, the principal thrust of tax policy in Austin in the past several legislative sessions has been the quest for ways to hold the line on, or actually reduce, all state taxes. And one of the main focuses of this quest has been to reduce property taxes through the use of either revenue caps (further limiting the total amount of property tax revenue cities and counties can generate in a year) or appraisal caps (placing stricter limits on how much appraisal values can rise in a year). Governors Perry and Abbott and conservative lawmakers have proposed revenue and/or appraisal caps in every legislature since 2003, but these efforts have all failed in the face of staunch opposition from local government organizations such as the Texas Association of Counties and the Texas Municipal League, who believe that such caps would force ruinous cutbacks to local services such as police, firefighting, sanitation, and transportation infrastructure. Eager to find another way to reduce taxes, the 2015 legislature passed an amendment, subsequently approved by the voters, to raise the homestead exemption from \$15,000 to \$25,000. The measure saved the average homeowner about \$125 a year in taxes, but it was expected to cost public schools about 3.2 billion over the next five years.

Continued heavy reliance on the sales tax, combined with a refusal to raise property taxes or consider an income tax, means that Texas, while enjoying the sixth-lowest overall state and local tax burden in the nation (as of 2016), also has one of the most regressive tax systems. Although necessities such as groceries and medicine are exempt from the sales tax, low-income people spend virtually all of their income, so a much larger percentage of their income ends up being subject to the sales tax, compared to the wealthy who save or invest a significant proportion of their income, much of it effectively sheltered from taxation. A 2015 nonpartisan study found that the richest 1 percent of Texans pay, on average, 2.9 percent of their income in state and local taxes, whereas the poorest 20 percent pay 12.5 percent. This system was judged the third-most-regressive system in the nation. The Trump tax cuts of 2018, which gave massive tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans, will serve only to exacerbate this inequality.

To avoid raising taxes, the legislature has increasingly turned to raising fees to close budget gaps. When faced with a large shortfall in 2003, for example, the legislature charged teachers \$1000 more in health insurance premiums (raising \$711 million), tacked on a state fee of \$30 for traffic tickets (bringing in \$271 million), and increased the vehicle registration fee by \$20 (netting \$200 million). A basic fishing license that cost \$8 in 1988 cost \$30 in 2012, a 100 percent increase after allowing for inflation. To avoid raising taxes to fund highway construction, the state has turned to toll roads. In 2014, \$1.4 billion was collected in tolls in the state, adding to the fee burden that is borne by rich and poor alike. Similarly, statistics reveal that the state lottery also effectively operates like a regressive tax, since the poor are more likely to play than are other groups. Defenders of these quasi-taxes argue that things like registering a car, buying a fishing license, driving on a toll road, or playing the lottery are voluntary actions, and that it is only fair to charge individuals who choose to engage in them. But the practical effect is to increase the burden on those least able to pay—a large and growing group that heretofore has not voted in proportion to its numbers. One of the greatest unanswered questions in Texas politics is whether—or how long—such policies can continue without a backlash against the political leaders who, in the name of low taxes, have championed them.

### **Hurricane Harvey**

On August 26, 2017, a tropical hurricane named Harvey made landfall just east of Rockport. A Category 4 storm with sustained winds of 130 miles per hour, it was the strongest hurricane to hit the mainland US since Katrina in 2005. After devastating Rockport and the surrounding area, the storm weakened significantly and slowed to a crawl, dumping very heavy rains across the region. It then moved back off shore, making its way up the Texas coast to the Houston area. After striking Houston on September 1, two feet of rain fell in the first twenty-four hours, forcing 39,000 people from their homes. Severe flooding occurred as far east as western Louisiana. All told, 336,000 people were left without electricity, some for weeks. At its worst point, flood waters covered an astonishing 70 percent of the area of Harris County. Before it was finished, Harvey had damaged or destroyed 204,000 homes, three-quarters of which were outside the 100-year flood plain and thus had no flood insurance. Sixty-eight deaths were directly blamed on the storm. The flood spread toxic chemicals from the coast's many petrochemical plants and inundated sewage systems. An estimated quarter-million vehicles were ruined beyond repair and would have to be disposed of. The hurricane left some 200 million cubic yards of debris. Storm scientists calculated that flooding of this magnitude would happen once in a thousand years.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration estimated total damage at \$125 billion, a cost (when adjusted for inflation) that was second only to that of Katrina. Congress designated \$15 billion for disaster relief, most of which went to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The federal government's Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or DSNAP, eventually made \$549 million in food stamps available to 1.7 million people in the thirty-nine affected counties. By November, federal, state, and local government and private insurers had spent over \$30 billion on relief and reconstruction. The state comptroller's office estimated that the loss to Gross State Product (GSP) in the first year after the storm would be \$3.8 billion (the total state GSP was \$1.6 trillion in 2017), but analysis also suggested that the recovery effort would stimulate the economy to the tune of \$800 million over three years, as people in the affected areas repaired homes and



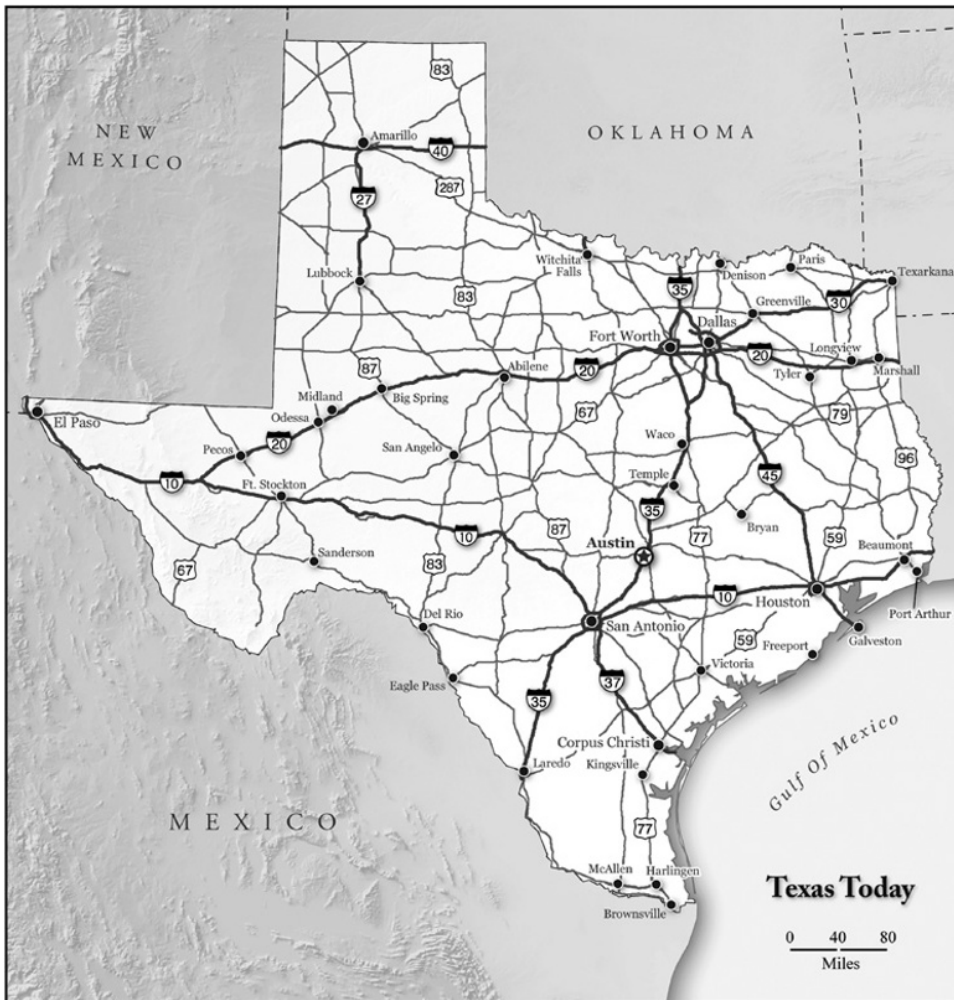
**Figure 14.9** Flooded homes are shown near Lake Houston following Hurricane Harvey, August 30, 2017 in Houston, Texas. Photo by Win McNamee/Getty Images.

businesses, bought new vehicles, and resumed their normal lives. The state's economy as a whole had returned to prestorm levels by the end of 2017.

Harvey raised many questions about Texas's future. Much of the flooding in the Houston area was caused by two 1940s-era earthen-dammed reservoirs, Addicks and Barker, which could not handle the volume of water flowing into them. The US Army Corps of Engineers had declared the dams unsafe in 2009, but budgets had never included funds for the repairs. A complex system of coastal barriers, levees, and gates, modeled after those pioneered in the Netherlands, that would protect the coast from future storm surges carries an estimated price tag of \$11.6 billion. Widening Houston's bayous so that they would carry more water to the Gulf would cost \$25 billion. Houston's existing drainage infrastructure needs repairs that would cost \$650 million annually. The National Flood Insurance Program, which subsidizes flood insurance in particular flood-prone areas, was \$24 billion in debt as of 2018. Many climate scientists believe that human-made climate change makes the likelihood of more storms like Harvey more likely, although it is difficult to assign with precision the underlying cause of any one natural event. In any case, Hurricane Harvey came as a wakeup call to many Texans, especially those along the Gulf Coast, telling them that they may need to reexamine some of their assumptions about natural disasters and how to deal with them.

## Conclusion

Clearly, the state's overall approach to the challenges of the twenty-first century has been consistent with the individualistic, limited-government philosophy that so many Texans continue to hold dear. Whether that philosophy will prove adequate in the coming years remains an open question. The demographic trends of the past three decades—trends that have seen both a huge growth in the Hispanic population (including large numbers of



**Figure 14.10** Texas today.

children) and the graying of the Anglo baby boomers—strongly suggests that the status quo cannot hold. Cutting the education budget by \$4 billion, as the 2011 legislature did, at the same time that children under the age of five have become the largest age group in the state (two million of them, largely Hispanic), seems counterintuitive to many observers.

Texas, though, is not alone in facing these challenges, and the historical developments of recent decades have made Texas more like the rest of the nation. Personal incomes have moved closer to the national average, and the state's economy more closely mirrors that of the nation than ever before, oil notwithstanding. Texas is by no means alone among the states in seeing a dramatic increase in its Hispanic population, and although Texas remains among the “reddest” of the red states, the Democratic Party has made significant inroads in urban areas, much as it has in other states. The state clearly has departed from its traditional economic reliance on a boom-or-bust, raw-material economy. Although Texans and other North Americans may still think of the Lone Star State as the domain of cowboys and oil tycoons, its inhabitants more closely resemble those of other urban states in transition to a service economy. Future prosperity is likely to depend on electronics, telecommunications, biomedical industries, high-tech manufacturing, and business services.

The challenges outlined here, then, tend to be national as well as local and may force Texans to think less in terms of frontier-style self-reliance and more in terms of intra- and interstate cooperation. Many of the concerns faced by Texans today are not particularly new ones. Texas has wrestled with the dilemmas of taxation, education, a shifting heterogeneous population, and cyclical economic prosperity and recession since the founding of the Republic. These issues simply seem more critical in the twenty-first century, as a dynamic global economy bombards the state and the nation with problems and opportunities that cannot not be addressed from a local or even a national perspective. Despite the shrinking world in which we live, however, it is still important for Texans to look back to the past to try to understand who they are and how and why they behave as they do, as well as to determine what changes they must make in order to survive in and contribute positively to the modern world.

## Readings

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# Appendix

## Spanish Governors of Texas\*

\* *Compiled by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission*

Domingo Terán de los Ríos, 1691–92  
Gregorio de Salinas Varona, 1692–97  
Francisco Cuerdo y Valdez, 1698–1702  
Mathias de Aguirre, 1703–05  
Martín de Alarcón, 1705–08  
Simón Padilla y Córdova, 1708–12  
Pedro Fermín de Echevers y Subisa, 1712–14  
Juan Valdez, 1714–16  
Martín de Alarcón, 1716–19  
Joseph de Azlor, 1719–22  
Fernando Pérez de Almazán, 1722–27  
Melchor de Media Villa y Azcona, 1727–30  
Juan Antonio Bustillos y Ceballos, 1730–34  
Manuel de Sandoval, 1734–36  
Carlos Benites Franquis de Lugo, 1736–37  
Prudencio de Orobio y Basterra, 1737–41  
Tomás Felipe Wintuisen, 1741–43  
Justo Boneo y Morales, 1743–44  
Francisco García Larios, 1744–48  
Pedro del Barrio Junco y Espriella, 1748–51  
Jacinto de Barrios y Jáuregui, 1751–59  
Angel Martos y Navarrete, 1759–66  
Hugo O’Conor, 1767–70  
Barón de Ripperdá, 1770–78

Domingo Cabello, 1778–86

Bernardo Bonavía, 1786

Rafael Martínez Pacheco, 1786–90

Manuel Muñoz, 1790–98

José Irigoyen, 1798–1800 (According to “Irigoyen, José,” from *The Handbook of Texas Online*, José Irigoyen was appointed governor, but he never took office.)

Juan Bautista de Elguezábal, 1800–05 (According to “Muñoz, Manuel,” from *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Elguezábal became interim governor in 1797 because Muñoz was ill, and continued in this post following Muñoz’s death in July 1799.)

Antonio Cordero y Bustamante, 1805–08

Manuel María de Salcedo, 1808–13

Juan Bautista de las Casas, 1811 (According to “Casas Revolt,” from *The Handbook of Texas Online*, on Jan. 22, 1811, Juan Bautista de las Casas and his supporters arrested Governor Manuel Salcedo. The revolutionary government later appointed Casas ad interim governor of Texas. Casas’s government was overthrown in March of 1811, and Salcedo returned to power.)

Cristóbal Domínguez, 1814–17

Ignacio Pérez, 1817

Manuel Pardo, 1817

Antonio Martínez, 1817–22

### **Provincial Governors of Texas**

José Félix Trespalacios, 1822–23

Luciano García, 1823

### **Governors of Coahuila y Texas**

Rafael González, 1824–26

José Ignacio de Arizpe, 1826

Victor Blanco, 1826–27

José Ignacio de Arizpe, 1827

José María Viesca (provisional)

Victor Blanco, 1827

José María Viesca, 1827–30

Rafael Eca y Músquiz, 1830–31

José María Viesca, 1831

José María de Letona, 1831–32

Rafael Eca y Músquiz, 1832–33

Juan Martín de Veramendi, 1833

Francisco Vidaurri y Villaseñor, 1833–34

Juan José Elguezábal, 1834–35

José María Cantú, 1835

Marcial Borrego, 1835

Agustín Viesca, 1835

Miguel Falcón, 1835

Bartolomé de Cárdenas, 1835

Rafael Eca y Músquiz, 1835

Henry Smith, Nov. 14, 1835–March 1, 1836 (Provisional during Texas War for Independence)

### Presidents of Texas

|                   |                              |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| David G. Burnet   | March 17, 1836–Oct. 22, 1836 |
| Sam Houston       | Oct. 22, 1836–Dec. 10, 1838  |
| Mirabeau B. Lamar | Dec. 10, 1838–Dec. 13, 1841  |
| Sam Houston       | Dec. 13, 1841–Dec. 9, 1844   |
| Anson Jones       | Dec. 9, 1844–Feb. 19, 1846   |

### Governors of Texas

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| J. Pinckney Henderson  | Feb. 19, 1846–Dec. 21, 1847             |
| George T. Wood         | Dec. 21, 1847–Dec. 21, 1849             |
| P. Hansborough Bell    | Dec. 21, 1849–Nov. 23, 1853             |
| J. W. Henderson        | Nov. 23, 1853–Dec. 21, 1853             |
| Elisha M. Pease        | Dec. 21, 1853–Dec. 21, 1857             |
| Hardin R. Runnels      | Dec. 21, 1857–Dec. 21, 1859             |
| Sam Houston            | Dec. 21, 1859–March 16, 1861            |
| Edward Clark           | March 16, 1861–Nov. 7, 1861             |
| Francis R. Lubbock     | Nov. 7, 1861–Nov. 5, 1863               |
| Pendleton Murrah       | Nov. 5, 1863–June 17, 1865              |
| Andrew J. Hamilton     | June 17, 1865–Aug. 9, 1866 Provisional  |
| James W. Throckmorton  | Aug. 9, 1866–Aug. 8, 1867               |
| Elisha M. Pease        | Aug. 8, 1867–Sept. 30, 1869 Provisional |
| Edmund J. Davis        | Jan. 8, 1870–April 28, 1870 Provisional |
| Edmund J. Davis        | April 28, 1870–Jan. 15, 1874            |
| Richard Coke           | Jan. 15, 1874–Dec. 1, 1876              |
| Richard B. Hubbard     | Dec. 1, 1876–Jan. 21, 1879              |
| Oran M. Roberts        | Jan. 21, 1879–Jan. 16, 1883             |
| John Ireland           | Jan. 16, 1883–Jan. 18, 1887             |
| Lawrence Sullivan Ross | Jan. 18, 1887–Jan. 20, 1891             |
| James Stephen Hogg     | Jan. 20, 1891–Jan. 15, 1895             |
| Charles A. Culberson   | Jan. 15, 1895–Jan. 17, 1899             |
| Joseph D. Sayers       | Jan. 17, 1899–Jan. 20, 1903             |
| S. W. T. Lanham        | Jan. 20, 1903–Jan. 15, 1907             |
| Thomas M. Campbell     | Jan. 15, 1907–Jan. 17, 1911             |
| Oscar Branch Colquitt  | Jan. 17, 1911–Jan. 19, 1915             |
| James E. Ferguson      | Jan. 19, 1915–Sept. 25, 1917            |
| William Pettus Hobby   | Sept. 25, 1917–Jan. 18, 1921            |
| Pat Morris Neff        | Jan. 18, 1921–Jan. 20, 1925             |
| Miriam A. Ferguson     | Jan. 20, 1925–Jan. 18, 1927             |
| Dan Moody              | Jan. 18, 1927–Jan. 20, 1931             |
| Ross S. Sterling       | Jan. 20, 1931–Jan. 17, 1933             |
| Miriam A. Ferguson     | Jan. 17, 1933–Jan. 15, 1935             |
| James V. Allred        | Jan. 15, 1935–Jan. 15, 1939             |
| W. Lee O'Daniel        | Jan. 15, 1939–Aug. 4, 1941              |
| Coke R. Stevenson      | Aug. 4, 1941–Jan. 21, 1947              |

|                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Beauford H. Jester       | Jan. 21, 1947–July 11, 1949 |
| Allan Shivers            | July 11, 1949–Jan. 15, 1957 |
| Price Daniel             | Jan. 15, 1957–Jan. 15, 1963 |
| John Connally            | Jan. 15, 1963–Jan. 21, 1969 |
| Preston Smith            | Jan. 21, 1969–Jan. 16, 1973 |
| Dolph Briscoe            | Jan. 16, 1973–Jan. 16, 1979 |
| William P. Clements, Jr. | Jan. 16, 1979–Jan. 18, 1983 |
| Mark White               | Jan. 18, 1983–Jan. 20, 1987 |
| William P. Clements, Jr. | Jan. 20, 1987–Jan. 15, 1991 |
| Ann Richards             | Jan. 15, 1991–Jan. 17, 1995 |
| George W. Bush           | Jan. 17, 1995–Jan. 17, 2000 |
| Rick Perry               | Jan. 17, 2000–Jan. 20, 2015 |
| Greg Abbott              | Jan. 20, 2015–              |

## United States Senators

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Sam Houston            | Feb. 21, 1846–March 4, 1859            |
| Thomas J. Rusk         | Feb. 21, 1846–July 29, 1857            |
| J. Pinckney Henderson  | Nov. 9, 1857–June 4, 1858              |
| Matthias Ward          | Sept. 29, 1858–Dec. 5, 1859            |
| John Hemphill          | March 4, 1859–July 11, 1861            |
| Louis T. Wigfall       | 1859–1861 (Went to Confederate Senate) |
| Morgan C. Hamilton     | Feb. 22, 1870–March 3, 1877            |
| James W. Flanagan      | Feb. 22, 1870–March 3, 1875            |
| Samuel B. Maxey        | March 3, 1875–March 3, 1887            |
| Richard Coke           | March 3, 1877–March 3, 1895            |
| John H. Reagan         | March 3, 1887–June 10, 1891            |
| Horace Chilton         | Dec. 7, 1891–March 30, 1892            |
| Roger Q. Mills         | March 30, 1892–March 3, 1899           |
| Horace Chilton         | March 3, 1895–March 3, 1901            |
| Charles A. Culberson   | March 3, 1899–March 4, 1923            |
| Joseph W. Bailey       | March 3, 1901–Jan. 8, 1913             |
| R. M. Johnson          | Jan. 8, 1913–Feb. 3, 1913              |
| Morris Sheppard        | Feb. 13, 1913–April 9, 1941            |
| Earle B. Mayfield      | March 4, 1923–March 4, 1929            |
| Tom Connally           | March 4, 1929–Jan. 3, 1953             |
| Andrew Jackson Houston | April 21, 1941–June 26, 1941           |
| W. Lee O'Daniel        | Aug. 4, 1941–Jan. 3, 1949              |
| Lyndon B. Johnson      | Jan. 3, 1949–Jan. 20, 1961             |
| Price Daniel           | Jan. 3, 1953–Jan. 15, 1957             |
| William A. Blakley     | Jan. 15, 1957–April 28, 1957           |
| Ralph W. Yarborough    | April 19, 1957–Jan. 12, 1971           |
| William A. Blakley     | Jan. 3, 1961–June 14, 1961             |
| John G. Tower          | June 15, 1961–Jan. 21, 1985            |
| Lloyd Bentsen          | Jan. 12, 1971–Jan. 20, 1993            |
| Phil Gramm             | Jan. 3, 1985–Nov. 30, 2002             |
| Robert Krueger         | Jan. 20, 1993–June 14, 1993            |
| Kay Bailey Hutchison   | June 14, 1993–Jan. 2, 2013             |
| John Cornyn            | Dec. 2, 2002–                          |
| Ted Cruz               | Jan. 3, 2013–                          |

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