

THE CIVIL WAR IN NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS: ITS IMPACT
ON FRONTIER FAMILIES, 1860-1874

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ABSTRACT

THE CIVIL WAR IN NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS: ITS IMPACT ON FRONTIER FAMILIES, 1860-1874

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The Civil War was experienced differently by north central Texas frontier families in Clay, Collin, Cooke, Denton, Fannin, Grayson, Jack, Montague, Palo Pinto, Parker, Wise and Young counties. In 1860, many viewed these remote frontier counties as a refuge from the impending violence and there was considerable sympathy for the Union cause. Later, however, Union sentiment was displaced by a growing support for the Confederate war effort and the imperative to provide local common defenses against hostile Indian attacks.

Frontier living was exacerbated by a general lack of governmental security, poor communications, manpower shortages, geographical isolation and an almost total privation of basic human necessities. Despite the development of the buffalo and cattle industries in the postwar years, indifference by federal officials resulted in violent frontier conditions until 1874, slowed economic recovery and created lasting social consequences well into the twentieth century.

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CHAPTER I

PLACES AND PEOPLE: GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF 1860 TEXAS AND THE NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS FRONTIER

The frontier of 1860 Texas was located along the ninety-eighth meridian, a line that divided Texas into essentially two areas, the untamed western Great Plains and the more settled eastern woodlands.¹ Anglo settlers arriving just prior to the Civil War found that most of the ninety-nine million acres remaining in the Texas public domain lay west of this line. By 1860, existing settlements bordered what is now Wichita and Clay Counties on the western edge of the Cross Timbers area, through the hill country west of San Antonio and from there, south to the Rio Grande River.² In keeping with usually dry conditions of southwestern Texas, the region was adversely affected by drought from 1856 to 1858. Many incoming settlers considered the western interior of Texas beyond the ninety-eighth meridian to be dangerous, unsettled, and very unhealthy. Further, a lack of rain and surface water combined with the existence of voracious locusts to make the possibility of profitable crop production in this region remote. This untamed plain was also populated by another significant hazard: roving bands of savage Indians. The primary tribes, Comanches, Kiowas, and

Apaches were superbly trained tactical warriors and extraordinarily proficient horsemen.

Plains Indian culture, totally alien to that of the encroaching Anglo settlers, did not allow for coexistence according to T. H. Fehrenbach. "The cultures of the two groups were utterly disparate and innately hostile; the freedoms of one were the abject tyrannies of the other."³ Most Texans considered Indians, at best, pests and, at worst, a curse to endure until they could be removed from the land.

The land had, for centuries, been the native American's prime hunting ground, rich in game animals necessary for their sustenance. An Anglo frontiersman and Texas Ranger, James B. Gillett, later described the Texas frontier region prior to 1860:

Those were the days when the streams were teeming with fish, the hills and valleys alive with deer and wild turkeys, and the plains covered with herds of buffalo and antelope. Bee caves and bee trees filled with choice honey abounded. In the springtime one could travel for hundreds of miles on a bed of flowers. Oh, how I wish I had the power to describe the wonderful country as I saw it then! How happy I am now, in my old age, that I am a native Texan and saw the old frontier before it was marred by the hand of man!⁴

As early as 1839, Albert Sidney Johnston, Republic of Texas Secretary of War and later Confederate General,

recognized the potential of the land and submitted a plan to the Texas Congress to protect the Anglo settler and civilize the western frontier along its entire length as far north as the Red River. His plan would establish a "line of posts" or defensive stations located in such a manner as to "embrace the settlements already established and to cover those districts which need only protection, [and to] induce immediate settlement."⁵

The line of fortified military posts proposed by Johnston was to begin on the Red River, near Coffee's trading house, and proceed to the east side of the Cross Timbers, extending southward with fortifications on the Trinity, Brazos, Colorado, San Marcos, Cibola, and Frio Rivers.

Small farmers by the thousands and a lesser number of affluent planters were attracted by the promise of the land. By 1860, there was sufficient population to settle the plantation-suited central area of Texas to encourage the United States government to begin construction of another twenty-one new federal military posts. These fortifications were to be placed roughly along the ninety-eighth parallel for settler and traveler protection and to encourage economic development of the region. The completed fortified stations offered a measure of

civilization to settlers and supported stage lines and freight wagons communicating with El Paso and other western destinations.

In 1861, these fortified federal posts posed a security problem for the newly established Confederate state of Texas. The secessionist government, in a state of rebellion with the federal government, initially ignored the twenty-seven hundred disciplined federal troops along its western frontier. Not only did these federal soldiers pose a threat to the secessionist Texas government but to Confederate expansionist plans to extend itself to the Pacific Coast. Negotiations conducted February 16, 1861, between an armed group lead by Ben McCulloch, a noted frontiersman and Indian fighter and federal General David E. Twiggs on the Grand Plaza at San Antonio encouraged Twiggs to surrendered his command without a shot fired.⁶ As the subsequent removal of federal troops was accomplished, a vacuum of frontier military protection was created. Indecisiveness and the lack of trained troops delayed the Confederates from immediately occupying the vacated posts. Confederate government neglect continued and existent law and order soon deteriorated. The greatest pressures were experienced from Indian attackers, deserters, Kansas raiders and quasi-military outlaw gangs.

As abuses mounted, the isolated frontier settlers made a great clamor for protection during the early war years of 1861 and 1862.

Continuous outcries for help caused the state legislature belatedly to organize the northern frontier into counties for settler protection. "An Act to Provide for the Protection of the Frontier" declared in 1863 that certain counties would be designated as the official frontier and would be divided into three military districts. The counties affected by this action in north central Texas were Cooke, Wise, Parker, and that part of Johnson west of the Belknap-Fort Graham road.⁷ Several minuteman Texas Ranger companies were organized to patrol this area to minimize border lawlessness. The lack of official protection along the Red River did not deter migration to area counties which continued to take place well into the war years.⁸

Some immigrants left records of their journey to Texas during the war years. Approximately twenty residents of Chatata Valley [Bradley County, Tennessee] decided to emigrate to Grayson County, Texas, in 1860. The group was composed of three white families and a family slave with her three children. They traveled across parts of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas to their destination in

north central Texas to avoid the "uncertainties of impending crisis" of the Civil War. The caravan reached Grayson County on November 25, 1860, after a journey of more than two months and approximately nine hundred miles. "The family had gone west to find peace and land. While the clouds of war soon engulfed them in their now distant dwelling place, some found peace sooner than others."⁹ The graves of loved ones were scattered along their long trek. As the Chatata Valley group emigrated, they met others enroute to Texas. One was the Widow Turner of Hamilton County, Tennessee, moving to Red River County, Texas, with her children. Another especially large party encountered was a train of "movers" from Cobb County, Georgia, enroute to Smith County, Texas, with seventeen wagons and about a hundred people, including both white and black.¹⁰ People came from the north, too. Illinois Bend, Montague County, was settled by a group of four or five Illinois families who arrived as late as 1862.¹¹ Apparently, these families regarded the north central Texas counties as a haven remote from war.

"Gone to Texas" was a comment often written in family Bibles to record those members who had left home to settle in Texas during the antebellum and postwar period. By 1860, federal census records identified approximately

604,000 inhabitants in civilized Texas.¹² While every European and many non-European countries contributed to the polyglot population of the state, the majority of foreign-born new Texans came from central and northern Europe. Most foreign born colonists had established themselves in the south central part of the state during the 1850's and had avoided north central Texas. Total foreign population was in excess of 43,000 in 1860 with Germany, Mexico and the British Isles as the primary sources of these people.¹³ Excluding settlers born in the United States, the largest single nationally identified contingent in Texas was the approximately 20,000 Germans.¹⁴

A second important ethnic block of free-born Texas settlers of the period was the approximately 12,000 Hispanics whose political interests were neutral regarding secession but who were greatly concerned about concurrent events in Mexico. Of this number, few had settled in north central Texas in antebellum years. The Spanish, later the Mexican, culture, had become mature long before the first Anglo came to Texas. Hispanics platted the first towns, identified the best land and laid out the first roads. Early arriving Anglo-Texan farmers and ranchers learned how to make their living on Texas soil from Hispanics and were introduced to lariats, chaps, and stock saddles, tools

which were vital to the dry southwest ranching industry. The Spanish language also lent descriptive phrases to the work-day language of the Anglo-Texan and the Hispanic culture dominated until the Texas Revolution overturned Mexican authority.¹⁵

By 1860, Texas had drawn Anglo settlers from every state in the Union. Tennessee had contributed the most settlers with ten percent. Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi had been the homes of another twenty percent and other southern states contributed an additional fifteen percent. Many of these immigrants joined relatives already settled in north central Texas and generally preferred the company of people from their home states. The 1860 U. S. Census report for Montague County, Texas, listed a Cornelius Box, formerly of Calhoun County, Alabama, (as seen in the 1850 U. S. Census report) and Franklin County, Tennessee, as a resident after he and his family migrated to north central Texas to join relatives already settled.

Not all of the new arrivals in north central Texas, however, were sympathetic to southern political views. There was a direct correlation between the Union sympathizers in Tennessee and northern Alabama and the unionist attitude in north central Texas. Indeed, the migration path of a substantial number of north central

Texas settlers flowed from Tennessee, generally with a stay in northern Alabama for several years before joining friends and relatives in north central Texas. A substantial majority of these immigrants in the 1860 Montague County census followed the same Tennessee-Alabama path to north central Texas as had Cornelius Box.¹⁶ The northern section of Alabama with its complex system of waterways had close economic ties to Tennessee and through Tennessee to the rest of the Unionist northeast. Disloyalty to the Confederacy became widespread in a number of the "hill counties" of Alabama by the spring of 1862.¹⁷ This region remained a cancer in the side of the Confederacy for the remainder of the war.¹⁸

North central Texas and the mutual border of Tennessee and Alabama were similar in several ways. The north central Texas frontier was isolated from the mainstream of Texas as were the hill counties of Alabama isolated from the rest of that state. The close proximity of Alabama to Tennessee, a buffer state, was replicated by the proximity of buffer Indian Territories across the Red River from Texas. The people themselves were of the same root-stock, Alabamans and Tennesseans were often land hungry, subsistence farmers who followed vanguard relatives to north central Texas to settle on low cost virgin soils.

As a contrast, only five percent of the immigrants to north central Texas came from New England and the other northern states.¹⁹ Many of those northern immigrants who did come chose north central Texas because of the easy acceptance they felt to their beliefs as Union sympathizers.

Another important ethnic group within Texas in 1860 was slaves and a small number of free African-Americans. Few, however, were found to be in the north central Texas area. The frontier was a dangerous place and a valuable slave could be killed or kidnapped as readily as anyone else. A prudent slaveholder often hesitated to bring to the frontier a servant who was not thoroughly trustworthy; the danger of his running away was too great to be risked. Discontented slaves usually tried to escape to Mexico where they were welcomed and well treated. Fear of Indians did slow the desertion of some frontier servants. Most avoided the Indian who frequently killed them before their peaceful intention could be communicated.²⁰

Despite comprising thirty percent of the entire state population, the black Texan had no civil rights or legal recourse. Their presence was taken for granted and generally ignored. As they were not a voting group, they were not politically significant to Texas society.²¹

Indians, the Native Americans who had preceded all others, were also ignored and uncouned in the census of 1860 because of their radically different cultures. The affairs of these people had little interest to Americans hungry for new cotton lands.

Stories of Texas's potentially rich cotton lands drew the attention of farmers and plantation owners from the entire South. Heavy cotton growing and extensive planting of other cash crops exhausted the soil and caused a decline of crop production in the older settled states. Several financial panics, especially that of 1859, further encouraged the capital-depleted agriculturalists to look towards the cheaper lands to the west. The prospect of renewed prosperity in the new state caused many to survey the promise of Texas soil.

One January 10, 1859, one farm prospector, E. S. Hull, wrote home to his wife in Marion, North Carolina, from his steamboat cabin on the Red River:

There is more good land here than I ever saw and the cotton fields are white; they raise more cotton here than they can pick out and are beating it down and leaving it on the ground to be plowed in. I will look at Texas and start towards home as soon as I can but [sic] I have not found [sic] any place that will suit me that I can get. But I am looking out all the time. It takes a great deal more time than I thought it would but I must decide now before I return home. This is a fast country, everything is very high, a man can make from 60 to 75 Dollars per month

but he has to make it fast or he will die before he can make a fortune.²²

Hull later described the intense cotton production and the raw cotton exportation from Texas with a postscript dated January 11, 1859, from Shrieves Port, [sic] Louisiana:

Here I am; there is more mud and rain than you ever saw. This is a very busy place. The streets are backed up with waggons loaded with cotton. There is at least 100 ox waggons here from Texas loaded with cotton. . . . This is a fast country.²³

According to some thoughtful people, there was a price to pay for settling in Texas. A cousin of Hull, Miss M. L. Lancer, a resident of Holmes Bluff, North Carolina, warned him with a letter written on September 19, 1858, about some problems he could expect to encounter in Texas:

Although you didn't ask my advice, I will take the liberty to express my opinion on Texas. I am not certain what kind of business you intend following, so cannot say as to your prospect of making a fortune out-there. But, believe me, you will never imagine the disadvantages to your children until you get there. I am well acquainted with a nice family that moved to Texas, but came back in a year perfectly satisfied [interpeted as distinctly unhappy] with their experiences. You know the state has very little river communication and being new, has not the advantage of railroads, and the expense and trouble of hauling every barrel and box, or bale of produce one hundred or even twenty miles certainly consumes the profit. So particularly, if you intend farming don't go to Texas. A merchant might do well by getting off in some out of the way place, but as I said before, it would be at the expense of raising the children in the

backwoods and comparative ignorance. . . .²⁴

By 1860, Texans in the older established geographical areas already had stratified into three groups: a small aristocratic class, a larger heterogeneous Anglo middle class and the great mass which consisted of "low-status" Anglos and various ethnic groups.²⁵ The apex of the social triangle was the group dominated by large plantation owners, generally located in fertile areas of the state east of the ninety-eighth meridian and in south central Texas. In 1860, some 263 of these well-to-do Texans each held over \$100,000 in total property. These wealthiest of Texans, fifteen of whom were women, were the great economic leaders of the state.²⁶ One woman, forty-seven-year-old S. H. [initials only] Black of Brazoria County, was a planter from Alabama owning fifty-three slaves. Another affluent Texan was Grimes County's Sarah Scott, who owned eighty-one slaves.²⁷

This aristocratic group, while small, also included most of the state's leadership: prosperous lawyers and judges, Episcopalian clergy, physicians and other business and professional people who had successfully exploited the abundant natural resources of the state. Their leadership and natural inclination to protect self-interests

influenced state affairs more than their small number would indicate.²⁸

The majority of wealthy Texans followed the lead of their peers across the South and interpreted most national events during the 1850's as being contrary to their well being. All but thirty of these 263 prominent Texans were listed in the federal census of 1860 as slave holders. Over half, 59.7 percent, held more than twenty slaves and thus were categorized as belonging to the "planter" class of southern society.²⁹ In the years prior to the Civil War, this group used its dominance of wealth and leadership to convince the other, lower status Texans that they had nothing to gain and much to lose by remaining in the Union.³⁰

Freed from the drudgery of manual labor by slavery, the planter had both the time and inclination to be influential in the state. Yet most planters had little true money power; their influence was based on deference given them by others and the fact that they filled a vacuum at the top of the social hierarchy.³¹

Below the planters on the Texas social pyramid was the much larger middle-class population of diverse origins dominated primarily by the "Anglo-Celts."³² Their force of character, regardless of the other elements within the

group, molded the outstanding characteristics of the class. These Texan Anglo-Celts were the heirs of the Scots and Scotch-Irish vanguards whose pioneering spirit led settlement first across the Appalachian Mountains and then across the South. Anglo-Celtic forefathers learned bitter lessons on the eastern frontiers at an early age in American history and their heirs carried these concepts on to the north central Texas frontier.³³

While some of the middle-class Texans were of a meeker spirit, the majority were the type of people on whom Texas legends were later built. They reflected the more rowdy, turbulent environment of the frontier where they lived. These people were the rough-hewn, swearing, semiliterate, tobacco-chewing "Texicans," who were not afraid of physical encounters and were prejudiced to foreigners and to blacks.³⁴ They were ruthless beyond established social boundaries and aggressively seized what they wanted. During the early days of Anglo migration to frontier Texas, Anglo women were scarce and their calming influence was greatly lacking. Co-habitation with Mexican, Indian or African-American women by Anglo men was common and considered by most as not worthy of comment or punishment.³⁵ The brevity of the war for Texas independence with its spectacular climax at the Battle of

San Jacinto, plus the reports by United States regular troops as to the prowess, attire, and uncouthness of the Texans who participated in the Mexican War of 1846-1848, tended to characterized Texans as intrepid fighters.³⁶

The pugnacious middle-class Texan's attitude toward non-Anglo minorities was a direct reflection of his culture and was amplified by the lack of similarities found in other lifestyles. Some of south Texas's Mexican ranchers almost qualified for middle-class membership because of their economic position and common interests in cattle and horses. However, many Anglos perversely determined that Mexicans and their contrasting cultural traits were not acceptable to them and refused to consider Mexican ranchers as social equals.³⁷

Each non-Anglo nationality or race was expected to occupy a special niche in society assigned to it by the Anglo majority. Just as blacks were given the task of working in the fields, German and Mexican Texans were expected to fill the other less dignified professions such as shepherding, swine farming, or freighting. Anglos appeared fully dedicated to the intimidation of Mexicans, the domination of African-Americans, and the extermination of Indians. German and other non-English speaking

Caucasian foreigners, though usually ignored or at best tolerated, were considered weak, inept, and stupid.³⁸

Anglos within the middle group had their own unique rules of conduct. Respectable middle-class members were expected to "hold their liquor" in public, refrain from swearing around preachers or priests, defend to the death the virtue of Anglo women, and always display unfaltering bravery in the face of danger to maintain their status.³⁹

Antebellum status within the middle group was also determined in no small degree by the abundance of one's possessions and the success of economic pursuits.⁴⁰ One's material wealth, especially in rural regions, often seemed pitifully small compared to the great wealth amassed by the aristocrats; but the numerous small farms and businesses operated by middle-class Texans formed the main stream of social and economic life in the state. Few middle-class Texans owned slaves, but as the majority had come from the older southern slave states, many accepted slavery as a desirable and even indispensable aspect of their world.⁴¹ Many of the middle class determined that one day they too would achieve the highest level of society. In the interim, however, they maintained the social distinctions that separated them from the third and lowest group.

Social distinctions in the middle-class group were also closely linked to membership in the Masonic Lodge and dependent on a measure of religious fervor, either real or pretended. The need to meet socially with one's own kind was keenly appreciated on the sparsely populated frontier. The Anglo majority were frequently Protestant, usually Baptist and Methodist; but some found solace in Catholicism. By 1860, the Masonic order in Texas enjoyed a membership of almost ten thousand persons in more than two hundred fifty lodges. Travelers displaying Masonic emblems on their watch chains or coat lapels sometimes found brother Masonic Texans inordinately hospitable and eager to serve wayfaring strangers, so long as they were of their own class or better.⁴²

At the bottom of Texas's social pyramid was the third group composed of the great mass of indigent Anglos, poor Mexicans, "bummers and drunks," friendly Indians, free African-Americans, and slaves. Loosely associated with these anchors of Texas society, although usually considered beyond the pale of social organization, were "bushwackers," horse and cattle thieves, military deserters, outlaws, runaway slaves, and hostile Indians.⁴³ The north central Texas frontier offered a haven to these renegade people.

These malcontents were the target of civilian vigilante groups and the Texas Rangers, the official arm of the Texas frontier law enforcement. The rough and quick justice of the Rangers was directed against those who were thought to be disrupting social order, whether justified or not. The lack of organized local law enforcement promoted peacekeeping by local leadership and the activity of mobs in a frontier environment was not unusual. It was not surprising that the lack of efficient protection by the legally constituted authorities in the sparsely populated areas had induced the people to act for themselves, nor should it be expected that they would yield easily their customary practices with the development of responsible legal authority.⁴⁴

"Bushwhacker" raids, organized pillage by outlaw bands, slave insurrections, and Indian depredations caused almost constant tension along the north central Texas frontier and the reaction of law enforcement officials was ruthless. The multiracial mixture of the lower class, the presence of slavery and the unbridled Indian savagery of the unsettled frontier combined to formulate the reality that abuse was common and life was expendable.⁴⁵

After the removal of the state reservation Indians in 1859, Comanches, Kiowas, Apaches, and less frequently,

Arapahoes and Cheyennes conducted repeated forays into the Lone Star State from their reservations north of the Red River, from their temporary encampments on the western plains or from across the Rio Grande in Mexico.

As of 1860, the north central Texas frontier had been explored and sparsely settled by a diverse population. Levels of status and society were firmly established by the dominate Anglo group and national politics were setting the stage for civil war. Partisan politics in north central Texas began forcing citizens into one of three groups-- Unionist, Secessionist or neutral. As the Civil War developed, many of the men on the north central Texas frontier were called to service, leaving their families to face privations and dangers alone. The effects of the war on those left at home would have great impact on the future growth and development of the state and its citizens.

CHAPTER II

DISINTEGRATION AND DECISIONS: POLITICAL OPINIONS AND REACTIONS WITHIN NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS, 1860-1861

During the winter and spring of 1860-1861, Texans were faced with bitter political choices. The national election of Lincoln on November 6, 1860, significantly enhanced the strength of the secessionist element of the Democratic party as it gave the Republican Party a triumph. Secessionist leaders in South Carolina and subsequently in Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia and Louisiana, gained control of their legislatures and successfully passed ordinances to remove their states from the Union. Linked to the slaveholding South by sentiment and belief, Texans also were united in opposition to Lincoln and his "black Republicans."⁴⁶ The former states now looked to Texas, the only southern coastal state that had not voted for secession in the wake of the presidential election. The state's secessionist leaders George M. Flourney, W. P. Rogers, John S. "Rip" Ford, C. R. Johns, John Henry Brown, Guy M. Bryan, Louis T. Wigfall, W. S. Oldham, T. N. Waul, and Judge O. M. Roberts, among others, supported a special convention to be held January 28, 1861.⁴⁷

Public meetings across the state offered individual citizens a forum to express their political stance, either

union, secessionist or neutral. Abraham Enloe wrote his brother, Joe Enloe, that there was to be a meeting at McKinney in Collin County on January 8, 1861, to test the will of the people for secession. Enloe confirmed that some of the people were for union and others for disunion.

Enloe was a union man who was satisfied to stay so if he could continue to enjoy his unusual rights and liberties. "If not, [I must] do as our forefathers have done before, fight for liberty. Liberty or Death I must have and will have."⁴⁸ Many of the secessionist-leaning rank and file Texans had lived in the state when it was a republic and determined that as the state had voluntarily entered the Union, so could it voluntarily leave it. Others rationalized that the thirteen colonies had set an example for secession when the colonists left the mother country because of oppression.⁴⁹

Probably no other southern people had as many obstacles to overcome as Texans in making the difficult decision regarding secession. Texas was large; her population was small and was spread over an enormous extent of territory; rail communications were limited to a few short railroads along the coast. Many citizens were new Texans recently immigrated from foreign countries that did not tolerate slavery. And, no other southern state had the

opposition of the governor.⁵⁰

Governor Sam Houston refused to authorize a convention because he believed that all loyal Americans who believed in the democratic process must acknowledge Lincoln's election and submit to his leadership, regardless of public sentiment.⁵¹ Houston was a staunch defender of the Union and refused to officially call for a secession convention. He delayed the decision in order to let the emotional heat of the political situation dissipate. The governor also reasoned that Texas could do better for itself as part of the Union than outside.⁵² When Houston finally refused to take an oath to support the Confederacy, he was deposed after thirty years of faithful service to Texas.

President Lincoln, aware of Houston's unswerving loyalty to the Union, offered to support the beleaguered governor's position as a pro-union governor with troops and war materials. Concurrently, it was rumored that the President would make Houston his Secretary of War. Lincoln repeatedly offered to sustain Houston as a military governor if deposed. Houston declined, requesting instead that all federal troops be removed from the state to diffuse a growing crisis.⁵³ Houston recognized that even with the imposition of federal forces in Texas, it would be difficult to stem the secession tide.⁵⁴ The forced

resignation of the Old Hero and his subsequent death in 1863 were poignant and dramatic events in the early wartime period.⁵⁵

Staunch Houston supporter James W. Throckmorton, of Collin County in north central Texas, encouraged by other pro-union leaders E. J. Davis, John Hancock, B. H. Epperson, A. J. Hamilton, John L. Haynes, and James P. Newcomb, fought a losing battle against recognition of the secession convention by the Texas House of Representatives and Senate. Throckmorton was one of Texas's most able leaders in the fight against disunion. He was a state representative from 1851 to 1857 and fought every issue which brought strength to the slavery and secession position. He was elected to the state senate in 1857 and, as a senator and later a private citizen, continued his opposition for four more years.⁵⁶

In the governor's election of 1859 Throckmorton faced the alternative of voting for Hardin Runnels, known to be an uncompromising, fire-eating secessionist candidate, or for Houston and the preservation of the Union. He chose to support Houston by going on a speaking tour across north central Texas area for the Houston ticket. The Runnels Democrats, considered to be weak and on the defensive regarding frontier protection and the African slave trade,

lost to Houston. The Independent or Conservative Union Party won what was thought at the time to be a decisive pro-union victory.⁵⁷

But for all the Unionists' effort, they were able only to carry the majority votes of a few scattered counties primarily in north central Texas.⁵⁸ Concurrently with the gathering of the secession convention, a document printed in Austin proposed that if Texas seceded, counties in the northern part of the state might unite in the formation of a new loyal, union supporting state. Word of this proposal circulated widely in north Texas. Although Throckmorton's name was linked with this proposed secession movement to install a unionist state from north central Texas, it was never proven. Fortunately, the movement died with no further occurrences when the approval of the resolution for secession became known.⁵⁹ This strategy of seceding from the seceding state was considered by more than one pro-union group. On April 18, 1861, Lemuel Dale Evans prepared a plan for United States Secretary of State William H. Seward to establish a pro-union government along the Texas-Mexico border in order to seal off the Confederacy from the rest of the world.⁶⁰ This and other abortive schemes to thwart the Confederacy lost their attractiveness when,

after the convention, Throckmorton and many other pro-union leaders took the Confederate oath.

The Dallas Herald, on March 27, 1861, noted the change by Throckmorton and some of his political supporters:

Among the members that have already taken the oath we see the names of J. W. Throckmorton and T. J. Nash. We are pleased to learn that Dr. Throckmorton is slowly learning "the steps," and bids fair to become a pretty good secessionist. But tell it not in Gath! Henry of Grayson, Lewellin of Collin, and Whitmore of Harrison, all of them intense Union-anti-secession men have take the bitter pill which they worried down rather than lose their per diem and mileage. Good boys--all of them, and will discharge their duty manfully.⁶¹

Throckmorton had his reasons for casting his lot with the Confederacy. He revolted at the thought of a civil war which might ensue within the borders of his own state if the Union forces should attempt to hold it; and, secondly, he doubted the constitutional right of the United States Government to coerce a state.⁶²

Throckmorton later recalled his antebellum attitude toward secession and states rights during his inaugural address as governor in 1866:

It is known to my fellow-citizens, that I was opposed to the secession of the Southern States from the Federal Union, and exerted what influence I had to prevent it, and, as a delegate in the Convention of 1861, voted against the Ordinance which declared the separation. But while I feared secession as impolitic and ruinous, I looked with . . . dread on that doctrine which asserted an undefined and

unlimited power in the general government to use its military force against the states of the Union. When the appeal to arms was made, however, I pursued what seemed to me the path of duty. I followed the fortunes of a majority of my fellow citizens, and shared with them the fate of the conflict. Others, who entertained sentiments similar to my own, took different views of their duty. I accord to them motives as pure and patriotic, for their action, as I claim for myself.⁶³

Historian Joe B. Frantz maintained in his Texas, A History that the Conservative Unionists, although they had achieved victory, apparently had little party organization in Texas. "Part of the trouble among the Union-oriented people in Texas was that they never got organized. Only the regular Democrats knew what they were doing; their opponents just sputtered in frustration."⁶⁴

Other scholars, such as Claude Elliott, maintained that Texas was not ripe for revolution in 1861.⁶⁵ There were few persons who felt they were going into war because of oppression, wrong, or outrage, or that the issues were of sufficient gravity to demand of them the supreme sacrifice. The public mind had not been made to realize that the war was a distinct possibility as a consequence of secession. It is extremely doubtful, therefore, whether more than one-third of the people of Texas actively supported the Confederacy. It is believed that one-third

remained neutral and that one-third, actively or passively, gave support to the federal cause.⁶⁶

The support of the people was also influenced by clandestine associations. The secretive Know-Nothing Party had earlier been the most visible pro-union activity in the state but had diminished with Millard B. Fillmore's defeat. The existence of other secret organizations such as the Knights of the Golden Circle may have played a more important role in the secessionist movement in Texas than had been previously believed.⁶⁷ Secret societies were an outgrowth of the 1850's decade of sectional conflicts, agitation over slavery expansion, and various schemes to find new lands for American settlement. The Knights of the Golden Circle, one of the most extensive schemes, was founded by a Cincinnati physician, George William Lamb Bickley. Though established some five years earlier, it was not until 1860 that the organization began active work by establishing cells or "castles" in Texas.⁶⁸

The generally held view of this organization's purpose was the creation of a huge dominion composed of the slave-holding states of the United States, Mexico, Central America, the West Indies, Cuba, and the northern part of South America. This empire would either be a part of the United States or a separate nation depending on the actions

of northern public sentiment. As sectional feeling increased, however, the organization emphasized more its duty to protect the institution of slavery in the southern states.⁶⁹

R. W. Williams, a British citizen-adventurer, described how he became a member of the Texas Knights of the Golden Circle in his memoirs published in 1907. He was a slave-owner settled in Kansas during the mid-1850's and actively supported the "state's rights" side of the "Kansas Wars." His participation in armed conflicts against the "Free Soilers" won him much enmity. He was strongly encouraged by powerful local pro-Unionists to leave Kansas or suffer the consequences. Williams eventually migrated to Texas where he maintained his reputation for being "sound on the .goose" [a period descriptive term for being a staunch state's righter] as he continued to support states rights efforts. According to Williams:

. . . an association called the Knights of the Golden Circle had by this time its ramifications all over the South, and was particularly strong in eastern Texas. Ostensibly formed to protect southern rights, its real object was to bring about Secession, and all its weight was thrown into that movement. It had lodges everywhere, with secret signs, and passwords, and all its members were under semi-military discipline. I joined the San Antonio lodge of the K. G. C. and in so doing committed myself as a strong partisan of the Southern cause.⁷⁰

While strong, secessionist sentiment may have dominated public opinion state-wide, a substantial number of citizens, particularly in north central Texas, determined that they were opposed to secession. The depth of pro-union support was registered in the state-wide vote of February, 1861, when sixty-one percent of the north central Texas voters of Lamar, Fannin, Grayson, Collin, Cooke, Denton, Montague, Wise, Jack and Young Counties declared against secession. Voters in bordering counties also showed substantial union tendencies though in lesser numbers.⁷¹ Individuals came to be identified by their secessionist or unionist views. Communities consciously separated into opposing, suspicious alignments that secession and war eventually translated into open armed strife between former friends and neighbors.⁷²

Montague County's communities were typically polarized. The area had gained enough population to separate from Cooke County and had established itself politically as a county in 1858. The census of 1860 indicated 322 adults and 477 children in the county and most of these families came from the southern states with Tennessee contributing the most immigrants. However, many came from the "border states" of Kentucky and Missouri, while others were from Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, and a

few came directly from Ireland. To many residing in counties south of Montague, the Red River area was termed a "Yankee Country." Other northern counties, particularly Denton, Cooke, Wise, and Collin, were settled in large part by migrants from the northern states who had few slaves, little interest in the state's rights theory, and who had, therefore, a lively contempt for the Confederate cause.⁷³

As the likelihood of war developed, some movement of families along the frontier occurred when those of unalterable minority views sought more congenial areas and abandoned everything to make their way to northern lines.⁷⁴ Even some neutral or pro-secessionist families chose to leave the frontier rather than face unrestrained Indian attacks after the war began. Montague County was far removed from any active theater of the Civil War, but the threat of Indian depredation was ever present. The protection of families was paramount in the minds of the men in service as well as the state authorities. A partial safety measure came from establishing armed patrols or by "forting up." Stockades were also frequently used as Ranger bases and became an assembling points for settlers during Indian attacks. Many pro-unionist men who had successfully avoided the draft to stay home, joined either the Confederate army or locally formed frontier regiments

to hold Indians and outlaws in check along the frontier.⁷⁵

There were individuals who, while avoiding all forms of alliances as well as the Confederate and Texas state militia draft, departed the state to make their way to the North or to Mexico where they might be safe. Their desertion was keenly resented by Confederate and state officialdom and those fleeing frequently found themselves hiding in woods and thickets to escape conscript officers, provost marshals, vigilance committees or mobs.

The experiences of one of such group was described by the following letter. M. H. Wallis from Montague County, who arrived in Fort Worth in April, 1860, wrote home describing how he and his friends planned to sit out the war:

You will (I suppose) be somewhat surprised to hear that I am [back] in Fort Worth. When we arrived at Waco, we abandoned the idea of going to Mexico and concluded that we would go to Fort Worth and join the rangers and give the Indians a twist by way of a variety. . . . We enlisted [in the 21st and will be stationed in Fort Belknap] for six months but Col. Johnson says that he does not think that the war will last for more than three months, which you know will be much more agreeable. . . . Should we be so fortunate as to have any fights with the redskins, I will not fail to give you a description of every battle.⁷⁶

Others who desired to escape the oppressive climate within Texas chose a more elaborate but potentially

satisfying plan. William Box Hancock, a north central Texas cowpuncher and traildriver during the 1870's, related an interesting anecdote about such a plan shortly before his death. His story referred to his Uncle Jim Box who had lived under somewhat retiring circumstances in Mexico. Michael James Box, a sometimes Texas Ranger and Unionist, propagated a myth that a man could make twenty-five to a thousand dollars a day from a secret gold mine on "Red Mountain" located near Durango, Mexico. Box reasoned that if one could avoid war and make a fortune at the same time, what could possibly be better? Gold hunting was apparently a change from his previous occupation of scalping Indians and look-alike Mexicans for bounty. Reports disputing the lack of gold did not prevent him from persuading more than three hundred gullible settlers to follow him, including men, women, children, and his aged parents.⁷⁷

The colonists departed from Laredo in March, 1861, on their march to Durango and the "Red Mountain." Box advised his followers to burden themselves as little as possible with money, as they only needed enough to bear their expenses to their destination; and also they were to use oxen instead of horses or mules to draw their carts and wagons. He advised those who proposed riding on horseback to procure white horses, giving as the reason

"that it would be a sign to the Mexicans that they came on a peaceful errand." The gold seekers experienced thirst, extreme fatigue, and the "tyranny" of Box's leadership during the next five months according to James P. Newcomb, the pro-union editor who chose to leave Texas rather than fighting members of the Knights of the Golden Circle. As they neared their destination of the little mining town of Corneta, some travelers contracted smallpox and Box had to obtain medical assistance from the governor of Durango.⁷⁸

None of the colonists except Box could speak Spanish, a factor which contributed greatly to their distress. Unfortunately, gold fever struck and Box, with ten men, departed on a fruitless two-week search for "Red Mountain." Upon the return of the party, the angry colonists threatened to kill Box who immediately fell ill and pretended to be dying. His "death bed" declaration of his good intentions and the nearby possibility of hidden gold won him a stay from the hangman's noose. He quickly became convalescent and left the colonists for the comfort of Durango. Later, some irate colonists attempted to have the governor of Durango prosecute Box for the frauds he supposedly committed, but the Mexican official refused for lack of evidence. Shortly thereafter, the colonists splintered into several elements: a dozen men went to work

in the nearby mines, one man was killed at a fandango, one group found work on ranches in the area, and most returned home as best they could. Some returnees were murdered enroute route to Texas by Indians and Mexican outlaws. Box was thought to have remained in Mexico as a miner, at least until matters cooled a bit, although other members of his family returned to Texas. The returnees found that the war had progressed in their absence.⁷⁹

Many small isolated settlements in north central Texas were affected only gradually by the conflict. When news of the war's beginning came to the Caney Creek community in Grayson County, the inhabitants, busy with their daily pursuits, were stunned. They had largely ignored the rumblings that signaled the national rift. Most had hoped to avoid becoming involved. But as news of battles in the East began to reach them, and as names of friends and relatives began appearing on casualty lists, they realized the time had come to choose sides.⁸⁰

Not all of the men from the Caney Creek area rushed into the Confederate service at the first call. Most of them belonged to local militia companies, were peaceful farming folk and reluctant to leave their land and families. Many saw no sense in secession and certainly not in rebellion. Yet many of them who had grown up on the

north central Texas frontier far removed from federal authority felt closer ties to the state than to the nation. There was no simple choice. Some men avoided the issue by choosing to face hostile Indians farther out on the frontier beyond the reach of meddlers and dictators to their conscience rather than spill their brothers' blood. Such a choice was not made without courage or without honor.⁸¹

Service in the Army of the Confederacy and state militia was voluntary during the first months of war and persons of neutral or unionist convictions went unmolested in their avoidance of duty. It had been customary for the Texas government to rely upon the ordinary citizen to volunteer for border defense as circumstances required. When a large portion of the country was menaced, volunteers were raised for short-term enlistments, usually three months. On other occasions, when the scene of hostilities was localized and the state not generally involved, "a recognized leader of the community issued a call that none of his friends and neighbors could refuse."⁸²

As time passed and the army began to need greater numbers of soldiers, the Confederate government began conscription. The prospect of being drafted by the Confederate government and being sent to fight against

Union troops in the East was intolerable to many Unionists who had avoided military service. Some objectors escaped active Confederate service by securing appointments to special details near home, others by election or appointment to political office. These positions, however, required an oath of allegiance to the Confederacy and many individuals refused to take an oath against the Union.

Many of those who were neutral as well as those forthrightly Unionist in belief disliked the conscript act because of its provisions regarding exemptions. To some individuals, the conscriptive measure seemed to further the spirit of planter domination. By the terms of the conscript law, one white man was exempt from military service for each six slaves whom he owned; thus the wealthy slave owner and his sons were given an opportunity to remain out of uniform. The original intention was directed at keeping the crops growing without interruption. Another term of the Conscriptive Act which was galling was that which stated that all men had the privilege of hiring a substitute. In practice only the wealthy could afford the cost. Once again, the planter class seemed to have gained the advantage and to many frontiersmen, the conflict had become "the rich man's war but the poor man's fight."⁸³

One especially adverse reaction to Confederate conscription was the creation in 1862 of the pro-union Peace Party in the north central Texas counties. The organization had as its primary goals to re-establish the Union, to resist the Confederate draft and to maintain a spy system for the Union army. An innocuous organization on the surface, the party disguised its pro-union intent to the rank and file members so that only a few of the inner circle members were fully aware of the true purposes of the Party.⁸⁴

The Peace Party had as its goal a complete Unionist conquest of the north Texas area as a preliminary to Federal invasion. The plan was to rise up in the night on a prearranged date, seize the military stores at Gainesville and Sherman, and complete the conquest of most of north central Texas using the element of surprise. No person's life or property was to be respected unless he had the sign, password, and grip; families of southern sympathizers were to be slain; property would be taken and retained; and the region was to be held by force until the arrival of Federal troops.⁸⁵

The security which covered the plot was broken when a drunken party member, Ephraim Childs, attempted to enlist a loyal Confederate sympathizer, J. B. McCurley. McCurley in

turn notified the local Confederate officials: General William Hudson, Commanding Officer of the district and Colonel James Bourland, in charge of the Frontier Regiment protecting the region from Indian incursions, located at Gainesville. General Hudson enlisted McCurley and Colonel Newton Chance to join the league as informers. Colonel Bourland, himself one of the major slave owners in Cooke County and a devoted Confederate partisan, planned a course of counter action. On the night of September 30, 1862, Confederate soldiers were secretly stationed at all suspects' homes and in a dawn raid, arrested a large number of men.

Within days, approximately one hundred and fifty men were jailed. On October 1, a Gainesville mob took control and hanged twenty-five conspirators without trial. Eyewitness accounts written a number of years later by John R. Diamond and Reverend Thomas Barrett estimated that at least one hundred and fifty other conspirators were arrested under Confederate martial law and tried in Cooke County in October, 1862. Forty more unfortunates were found guilty in highly biased trials and hanged over a two week period. In Grayson County, another forty had been arrested and James W. Throckmorton, the Confederate officer in charged of the northern Frontier District, expedited the

release of all but one. In Denton County there were several arrests, but all suspects were freed except one man who was shot to death in the jail. In Wise County five men were convicted and hanged while other suspects were forced to serve in the Confederate army. The exact numbers of those who died in the entire episode is not ascertainable. As Reverend Barrett speculated, several men may have been hanged or shot right after their arrest, before they ever came to the attention of the committee. The trials ended the conspiracy, but it did not stamp out the strong undercurrents of Union sympathy remaining in north central Texas.⁸⁶

Those men remaining in the state and differing with the concepts of the Confederacy either generally kept their peace, or quietly supported the war effort in some capacity, if not in actual combat. Throckmorton issued a statement which urged all southern sympathizers to unite in resisting the encroachments of the Federal Government, should be forgotten and emphasized that all political meetings should be suspended for the period of the war.⁸⁷ The state began to contribute a larger share of men, materials and capital to sustain the Confederate cause.

CHAPTER III

THE HOMEFRONT: FAMILY EXPERIENCES DURING THE WAR YEARS, 1861-1865

Compared to our modern standards, the family of the north central Texas frontier during the war years of 1861 to 1865 lived under primitive conditions. Joe Chapman, a retired cattleman and trail driver, described his experiences as a child during this period:

During the four years of the Civil War the people of the Red River Country, Montague, Cooke, Wise and Denton Counties, had a severe struggle to get along. Everything was of primitive style, and we had to get along the best we could. Most of our houses were built of logs, some of them roughly hewn and with the bark on, and the cracks "chinked" with sticks and mud, with dirt floors and a big, wide chimney. Sometimes a family would get "tony" and hew logs on one side and make a puncheon floor for their home and thus get into the "upper class." In the summer we would move out and live in these log houses, but in the fall and winter the Indians kept us in the forts. We had plenty to eat, although we had to take our grain fifty miles to a mill to have it ground. We had no money, but did not need much, for we could not buy such things as coffee, sugar, soap, matches, pins or anything to wear and we were compelled to spin and weave all of the cloth that made our clothing. Rye, corn, wheat, okra seed and roasted acorns were used as a substitute for coffee.⁸⁸

Crops were good for the most part during the war years, and since the vast majority of the population was

rural and accustomed to a simple lifestyle, very few people suffered from want of food in north central Texas.⁸⁹

Wholesome food was rarely a problem; vegetables from the garden and greens gathered in season were favorites. W. R. Strong of Cooke County, remembering his farming experiences, stated that he was successful in raising corn, wheat, oats and cotton. He also grew sweet and Irish potatoes, barley, Kaffir corn, watermelons, cantaloupes, tomatoes, and okra for the market and had good success with all of them.⁹⁰ In some communities, "beef clubs" were continued during the war and supported by men who took turns supplying meat for social gatherings. The cost was affordable for even the most strained budget as the hunter merely went into the brush and selected a fine maverick beef or a fat deer for the feast.⁹¹ W. R. Strong also recalled that the range and timber areas produced many well-fed cattle and hogs.⁹²

Nature in north central Texas provided wild game in abundance; a quick hunt found a meal and plenty of extras for the war era family. Creeks were remembered as being black with wild turkeys, the countryside alive with prairie chickens, pigeons, quail and many varieties of edible plants waiting to be gathered. Outside the community, an easy ride often found elk and antelope for the taking.

Buffalo and bear offered sport and excitement as well as filling the family larder. Fish was an enjoyable change of diet from game or fowl to some and many varieties of fish abounded in the streams and rivers. Fishing itself provided families a good excuse to enjoy a few stolen hours from cares of daily living and concern over absent soldiers.⁹³

Social activities were eagerly sought during the war years on the frontier and most amusements were simple. "Young men and young ladies of the frontier would ride horseback to church and go visiting twenty-five miles," as James D. Newberry, an early day Parker County pioneer, recalled in his memoirs.⁹⁴ When the young people could persuade someone in the community to give a dance, word of the occasion would be spread and everybody came, whether invited or not.⁹⁵ Given an excuse such as a hog killing, log rolling or barn raising, settlers would congregate to "feast" and follow it with a spirited barn dance.⁹⁶ Other highly regarded activities such as horse racing found favor with some of the settlers, and gambling was almost invariably linked with it. Goose pullings, turkey shoots, and marksmanship contests were always popular at gatherings as were extended visits with friends and relatives. Ida Lasater Huckabay of Jack County did not recall all

childhood memories as fond ones. "Southern hospitality was often abused; 'hangers-on' occupied the fat feather beds, while [we] children sought comfort on pallets, covering with the last quilt available, and feasted on chicken feet and necks."⁹⁷ Ermine Redwine, herself an early settler in Parker County, recalled a going away party for the young men going into the army:

The night before my oldest brother started to the army, the neighbor boys and girls met at father's and had a farewell sing. Most of the young people were raised in the same neighborhood and several belonged to the same company brother did, and were going to start the next morning. It was the saddest gathering of young people I ever saw; they tried to make the evening as pleasant as possible yet they thought of the camp life, the battle field that was in front of them and the probability of never seeing loved ones any more was enough to make strong men weep.⁹⁸

War-time marriages were social events of the first order. Friends came for miles on horseback, in ox-wagons, a few in buggies, and a rowdy "charivari" wedding celebration for the young married couple would follow the ceremony.⁹⁹ However, the event most cherished by many was the arrival of the itinerant preacher when all could gather for a good extended gospel meeting. "The preaching would be under an arbor built of brush and all did enjoy each other's company, all were social and glad to see each other," remembered Ermine Redwine.¹⁰⁰ Pastor Peter Gravis

looked back on his first service, "The second Sunday in January, 1860, I preached my first sermon [and] the little school house was filled to its utmost capacity, all eyes were fixed on the boy preacher and opinions of the preacher were as diversified as were their complexions. However, all agreed that he could preach."¹⁰¹

Ermine Redwine fondly remembered some of the frontier preachers in her community:

If there is any that deserves a monument to their memory, it is the old . . . preachers that stood by their post on the frontier of Texas. After all the privations of the early settlers, in building homes, churches and schools, preparing to live in peace and quiet, the war cry [for the civil war] was heard again.¹⁰²

For many people on the frontier, it was a long way between churches and a longer time between sermons. Still, the influence of the churches was deep and far reaching at the beginning of the war, even upon those who rarely ever passed through a church door. Members, primarily, were the community leaders who determined the policy and course of welfare for the area. Parker County's John A. Hart recalled that when the Indians killed and scalped a settler named Gorman, a widower with four children, church members cared for his children.¹⁰³ More than all other agencies combined, the church set the moral standards of the day and the most irreverent and dissolute individual soon found

himself in serious difficulty when he tried to ignore church leaders.¹⁰⁴

The high moral character of some Texans declined as the war settled into its long, painful course. Young men from isolated farms and ranches on the frontier were exposed to new sights and experiences. The composition of the antebellum north central Texas population changed dramatically with the influx of refugees, soldiers and deserters. Increasingly, some citizens became involved with the paranoia of war. According to James D. Newberry, J. M. Luckey was hung to a post oak limb in 1864 because the people thought he was trying to betray them into the hands of the Yankees. Four Negroes were also hanged at the Weatherford town square for sedition.¹⁰⁵ Citizens, living in daily contact with violence on the frontier, generally considered these events as commonplace.

Communications, none too efficient even in peacetime, faltered as the existing infrastructure began to collapse. North central Texas became even more isolated as the war progressed. News from Austin trickled in by horseback travelers in the absence of telegraph or railroads. Travel was both strenuous and hazardous. Without river transportation, one was limited to a horse, an ox or horse-drawn wagon or walking. If one lived near the home of

Tarrant County's most influential citizen, Colonel Middleton Tate Johnson of Johnson's Station, one could hail the only scheduled transportation as it passed through the Dallas-Fort Worth area. A feeder coach made connection at Decatur with the Butterfield Stage for rugged long distance traveling.¹⁰⁶

Travelers were well aware of the dangers of traveling by frontier stage. The likelihood of Indian or bandit attack was so great that nearly every passenger went well armed and came prepared to fight. All men were armed as a matter of course on the frontier. James Newberry stated that even though he could not recall specific instances, Indian raids were common in Parker County and most citizens remained well armed.¹⁰⁷ Even some preachers carried weapons during their travels off the beaten path.¹⁰⁸ Pastor Gravis recalled that while passing through Austin on one of his trips, he purchased a Colt's revolver for protection against outlaws and Indians.¹⁰⁹

Despite the need for defensive weapons, north central Texans and their possessions suffered less physical damage during the war than did others in the Confederacy. Ermine Redwine recalled her memories of the war:

My experience during the civil war was very limited, as we Texas girls never did hear the roar of cannon, at least I never did. The people of Texas had many troubles and privations to

endure and most of us had to work hard, make all we ate and wear [wore] at home, and had to say good bye to fathers, brothers and sweethearts, yet Texas never suffered from the effect of the war like many other states.¹¹⁰

Although many items such as medicines, cooking utensils and implements were difficult or impossible to obtain, lively trade with Mexico made many supplies, for some, more plentiful than elsewhere in the South. According to George Ely, a stockman-farmer who frequently worked in Parker County during the war, settlers became adept at reworking worn out firearms and creating the guns that were critical to their survival:

We had poor arms, the muzzle loading rifle and a few old style "cap and ball" Colt's pistols and the home-made single barrel pistol; usually made from an old rifle barrel, and by local gunsmiths, converted into a very fair pistol and reliable for one shot. Then the powder we used was all home made, as we were cut off by the war blockades from commerce and much needed supplies. This powder would kill but was not reliable, and our boys called it "slow push" powder. Our gun caps were also home made, were of lead and very hard to explode.¹¹¹

For some, the war was little different from ordinary times. Tilatha Wilson English, a frontier woman of Gainesville, Texas, stated that:

My husband was not in it but was freighting for the government hauling cotton down in southern Texas. The longest time he was gone was fifteen months. My neighbors were all good to me and they chopped and hauled me wood, and my two oldest little boys [were large enough to help]. I heard of so many who had worse times it made me

feel sorry for them, and I felt like the Lord had blessed me and I was doing well.¹¹²

As the war continued, workers became scarce as laborers, farmers, cowboys, and other individuals were drawn either into the military forces, left the country or hid as deserters. George Ely remembered the scarcity of men fit for military duties:

The Confederate Government required all the able bodied men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years to be enlisted for local defence of the frontier settlements against the Comanches and other hostile tribes. In April, 1863, a company was organized . . . composed of all the able bodied men from Eastland, Shackleford and Calahan Counties with four men from Comanche County. After enlisting all these we had only forty men, [and] this will serve to show how thinly the country was settled [during the war].¹¹³

Because of the shortage of workers, many fields, ranches, and farms were abandoned. Even some pulpits were left without ministers. Money was more scarce than it had been before the war and such business as was carried on was done by barter. Tallow, wheat, beeswax, and food became the common medium of exchange.¹¹⁴

George W. Saunders, a prominent cattleman and founder-president of the Old Time Trail Drivers Association, recalled:

Our family and all of our neighbors were compelled to make almost everything they used or wore; all ropes were made from hides or horse hair, all of our clothing was spun and woven at

home, and I have carded and spun many nights until late bedtime. Leather was tanned by the settlers with bark from oak trees and used to rig saddles and for other purposes. Our shoes were made at home; we used water from creeks and rivers. Before the country was stocked all the streams contained pure, clear water. We carried corn in sacks on horseback fifteen to twenty-five miles to mills to be ground into meal, or ground the corn at home with small hand grist mills; wagons, ox yokes, looms and spinning wheels were made at home; hats were plaited. . . . The rich and poor in our days were on equal footing, because these necessities could not be bought.¹¹⁵

Many north central Texans did not consider themselves as much deprived as inconvenienced. As in today's age, people desired to better themselves and worked hard to do it. They considered themselves fairly well off, but had greater hopes for their children. W. R. Strong remembered:

[I]. . . raised 7 children and have been able to give them all better schooling and advantages than I ever had. I helped to build the 1st school house in Gainesville, a log hut. . . .¹¹⁶

Logs for school buildings might have been available during the war but one necessity that could not be bought was lamp oil. Tallow candles were used but many preferred the cheaper grease lamps.¹¹⁷ Even on the wartime prairie, some students "burned the midnight oil" with their studies.

These studies were aided by a common practice in north central Texas of the fraternal organization, the Free and Accepted Masons [Freemasons], providing students with a schoolroom and a community meeting place in their lodge halls as a public service.¹¹⁸ The first floor was ordinarily used as a school, church and public meeting hall, while the second was the home of the lodge. The Masons felt a responsibility for the education of children of deceased and destitute members of their order and usually contracted with an instructor for a school, with tuition for such children provided in advance. Until the close of the Civil War, these schools usually were open only in the summertime and faculty consisted of one male "professor."¹¹⁹ During the war years not many young people had the opportunity of school attendance. The census of 1860 indicated that Montague County had 214 persons of school age but only twenty-eight had attended school during the last twelve months.¹²⁰

Though many areas lacked educational opportunities, there were compensations. The isolated war-time frontier of north central Texas was a relatively healthy environment. Isolation gave some protection against the spread of disease and on the prairie people generally escaped malaria, perhaps the greatest health hazard of the

time. Still there was considerable illness and many accidents. There were some doctors, but often it took them days to reach their patients; medical service was primitive but caring. Professional medications quickly became scarce because of war-time demand but substitutions could be found. Especially popular were "pain killers" whose formulation included ammonia, camphor, alcohol, pepper, and other individually preferred ingredients combined into a throat-searing tincture form.¹²¹

For a serious illness, many used calomel while others accepted the stench of asafetida to ward off diseases.¹²² "Clean clay" mud packs from a nearby creek bed were often used by cowboys when nothing else was available to sooth bruises or stop the bleeding of open wounds. Another home remedy was comprised of honey diluted with sulphuric acid and a trace of opium which was used as a "sure-cure" relief of coughs. The chief respiratory ailments were the common cold, bronchitis, pleurisy, pneumonia, and tuberculosis. Of these, pneumonia and tuberculosis posed the major threat to life. Overindulgence, especially in "lightning whiskey," a deadly concoction of alcohol, tobacco and opium, was also a serious health hazard.¹²³

Frontier mothers not only contended with the usual childhood diseases and accidents, but also with

rattlesnakes, wild and domestic animals, centipedes, scorpions, and other poisonous insects. Some worried that their small children might wander off on the prairies and become lost.¹²⁴ W. R. Strong had extensive experience as a child finder:

I did some finding lost people. Out there in the timber people used to think I could not be beat for finding lost children . . . one I found was lost sure enough all right. I found her [alive] down on Salt Creek [in waist high grass]. I commenced to holler and . . . pretty soon her father [came] and cried nearly as much as if she had been found dead. I never saw people take on so. But then, she had been lost four days and nights.¹²⁵

As the war continued, many sick and wounded soldiers were sent home on sick leave whenever practical to their families after receiving medical care. Families with sick or maimed soldiers frequently faced the long term prospects of nursing their men back to health. William Physick Zuber, a veteran of the War for Texas Independence as well as a Confederate soldier, wrote that his wife and mother-in-law did not recognize him when he came home on sickman's furlough because of his emaciated condition.¹²⁶ It was several weeks before he could join his family at work on their farm.

All family members, including women, worked hard on the farm; but the greatest burden of physical labor in

planting and harvesting ordinarily fell on the men who often were called off to war. However, as one woman recalled, "the thing you learn on a farm is that the cultivation of crops and the butchering is man's work while everything, including cultivating the crops, is women's work, except the butchering."¹²⁷ Absence for a short time by men of a family became a hardship; and absence for a long duration such as extended military service became an unwelcome heavy burden. Perhaps the greatest burden of all experienced by some women was being alone with small children for protracted periods of time in unprotected cabins miles from their nearest neighbors.

During the war, as husbands and fathers were often absent long periods performing military duties, hunting or traveling, the women were called upon to do men's work and soon found that the frontier tended to blur traditional sexual roles and forced them to develop proficiency in such manual skills as carpentry and farming.¹²⁸ After a day of working the crops and stock, women frequently labored into their evenings to spin and weave cloth for family needs and to clothe their absent soldier husbands and sons as well. Marilynne Howsley reported in 1864 during the Elm Creek, Young County raid that Indians stole everything in her cabin including a suit which she had just completed to send

to her son at the battle front. Because the soldier by whom she hoped to send the suit had ten more days on his furlough, she immediately started to work, spun the cloth and made another in that brief period.¹²⁹

Ermine Redwine recalled her own clothes making experiences during the war:

It was hard on us poor southern girls to have to spin and weave our own dresses; they looked awfully coarse and ugly, as many of us had never woven any cloth, much less wear such shoddy looking goods. We rebel girls wasn't the kind to give up; as fast as we would get one web of our common looking cloth out of the loom we would get another ready. The women of the south were like the soldiers in the field; they thought they were fighting for their rights, and we as true southern women were fighting the home battles in adverse circumstances. We would spin, weave and sing hurrah for the home spun dress that southern ladies [had to] wear.¹³⁰

Sewing bees, or "needle brigades" as they became known during the war years, made it possible for women to gain companionship by combining work with others who were lonely.

Solitary women worried constantly about their absent fighting men and rejoiced with each arriving letter. Because families usually knew the regiments in which their men served, all war news was monitored closely for information about these units. General news came from shared letters, infrequent newspapers and passing

travelers. Travelers with first-hand information about kin and the battles in which they had fought found themselves particularly welcomed to stay in family homes. Other strangers did not fare as well. Near the end of his life, James Newberry wrote about an incident that happened during the war:

In Weatherford, a strange man came to town and Captain Munroe Upton [local Confederate militia leader] went to him to find out his business. The man would not give his mission and he and Captain Upton got into a row and the Captain killed him. They never did find out who he was nor where he came from.¹³¹

Historian Ella Lonn described the concerns of soldiers homesick and unavailable to their frontier families:

The men felt that their services in the army were useless and that their families required their attention. It is small wonder when soldiers from the western frontier heard of Indians scalping families living on the border, that they left camp at once, with or without leave to turn their arms to the defense of their homes. Appeals and laments from these same families did not fail to reveal their sufferings.¹³²

Events tended to bear witness to such family concerns. "In 1864," according to Newberry, "Indians killed a Mrs. Brown and daughter and wounded another of her daughters on Patrick's Creek in Parker County. I don't know Mr. Brown's given name . . . we always called him Black Jack Brown; he was in the army at the time his family was murdered."¹³³

The distress and physical suffering of the family at home encouraged many Texas soldiers to desert. Others became tired of the war and its dangers; still other soldiers left military duties because of the loss of a popular officer or disciplinary measures received. As the war progressed, desertion and draft evading became more and more prevalent. These wanted men in north central Texas bound together against military retribution and headed for areas that offered the most natural protection.¹³⁴ Ida Lasater Huckabay commented about draft evaders:

As might have been expected, these people had to remain almost constantly in hiding in order to escape conscription officers, mobs, and vigilantes. Some remained in hiding throughout the war. Others were captured and forced into the Confederate army. Some were hanged by vigilantes, and some by mobs. Certainly those who remained alive had few pleasant memories of the war years.¹³⁵

Others turned to the protection of their nearby homes and families.¹³⁶ The north central Texas frontier with its heavy brush and proximity to Indian territory became a refuge for such defiant groups. News of raiding deserter bands, rumors of invasion, and Indian alarms constantly plagued the nerves of frontier Texans during the Civil War. According to George Ely, ". . . Indians became very bold and defiant and a man never knew when leaving his home whether he would ever return alive, or supposing he did,

whether he would find his family, his loved ones, at home or in captivity."¹³⁷ One particularly violent event was recalled by John A. Lafferty of Parker County:

The Indians on Rock Creek, in the west part of Parker County, took a man's wife away from him and seventeen of them used her as they pleased, then shot an arrow in her heart and broke it off, then scalped her alive. She lived in this condition two days and nights, long enough to tell the horrible treatment she received while in their hands.¹³⁸

Texans on the frontier developed a callousness dealing with those who would threaten the security of their families. After a bloody battle with Indians in Parker County during the war, James Newberry recalled:

They [the local white militia] went back to scalp the Indians as was the custom, [but] the [wounded Indians] . . . made good their escape, so they only scalped two. I saw them myself, they got a lot of bows and arrows, shields and spears, Indian saddle blankets, lariets [sic], bridles, one bridle had \$15.00 worth of silver plates on it. They sold all the things at Weatherford to pay . . . for doctor bills [of the wounded].¹³⁹

One Wise County daughter remembered that, "Many a night I've seen Ma sit at the window and watch for Indians all night, when Pa was gone. Every time I would wake up, I would see her silhouetted against the window panes, still watching."¹⁴⁰ George W. Cox, a child in Montague County during the war, also recalled that, "I used to sit crouched at my mother's knee when the Indians were around the house.

I have heard them many a night after there were several houses on the old Montague Hill. One would whistle here and another answer out at another place."¹⁴¹

John A. Hart had an opinion that appears to be in opposition of general thought:

It was a noted fact that when Indians passed a house if they [white women] were at the gate, door or in the yard and kept quiet, showing no signs of fear, she was rarely molested but the least sign of fear or alarm and they would go after her scalp. Indians never killed an old person, a cripple or a deformed person if they knew it. They [the white women] learned that the whoop of the horn owl and that of the Indian were different.¹⁴²

Neighbors would come to the aid of one another during tragedy. James Newberry told about Bill Youngblood who was scalped and killed in 1862 by Comanche Indians near Weatherford. The neighbors gathered and followed the Indians to the Keechi Valley where they killed two of the Indians, retrieved Youngblood's scalp, and returned in time to bury it with him.¹⁴³

Unprotected women who feared for the safety of their families made preparations to stay with neighbors during times of particular danger. Certain full-moon nights in the fall were especially dreaded by settlers. "Comanche Moons" gave enough light for the wily Indians to travel, raid and escape under the protection of darkness. Settlers

in the western areas more subject to attack frequently "forted up" in block houses with friends and neighbors until immediate danger had passed.

Fort Davis, in northwest Stephens County on the Clear Fork of the Brazos, about fifteen miles below Camp Cooper, was established by settlers in that region. Even though it lacked features usually included in military built fortifications, it was the best protection the settlers could prepare in the absence of fully armed soldiers. Some twenty-five families moved into the stronghold consisting of several nearby houses and a stone building redoubt.¹⁴⁴

These forts were scattered along the frontier and were strategically located around Montague County at Head of Elm, Montague, Red River Station and Fort Stedham. Linnie Walker Teague recalled childhood stories told by her mother describing the times:

My mother [Louise "Pink" Box, daughter of Cornelius Box], though young at the time, went through a lot of the life endured at the fort of Bingham where people rushed to escape the Indian raids. She often told us of these happenings. One was the case of a Rev. Joe Weaver who was holding a revival when the Indians were reported coming. All rushed to get back to the fort. He held up the Bible and said: "I have nothing but the sword of God to protect us with but through it we'll get through safely". All did.¹⁴⁵

All devices, including deception, were used to confuse the Indians. Levi Perryman, another of the early Montague

County war-time residents, related how one of his aunts donned a suit of her husband's clothes and, gun in hand, helped to stand off the natives attacking their home.¹⁴⁶ In another incident, women again wore men's clothes to deceive the Indians:

Down on Elm creek in Cooke County there lived a man by the name of Jones. He had a large family of girls--only nine. At one time there was a bunch of Indians coming toward his house, he thought to run a bluff, he thought it was his only salvation; so he got up all the men's clothing he could and put them on the girls, got all the guns, and some got sticks and put them on their shoulders, marched around the house and yard so the Indians could see them; they thought it was men with guns, and daring them to come. They did not come near the house, they turned and rode off in another direction. So his bluff worked all right.¹⁴⁷

Cooke County settler W. R. Strong and many others often belittled their Indian enemy. "The Indians were a dirty lazy and disgusting lot and would eat anything on earth, skunks, grasshoppers, dryland tarrapins [sic], horseflesh, snakes and insects of all kinds. I remember once going into a Indian camp and finding a squaw boiling a skunk, hair, hide and all in a brass kettle."¹⁴⁸

Violent Indian attacks were relatively common during the war years and the tragedy of those raids extended to the few African-Americans on the frontier as well as to the whites. One of the worst Indian massacres suffered by

Texans during the war was that of Elm Creek in Young County in 1864.

On October 13, 1864, the sudden appearance of a mixed Kiowa and Comanche war party, including a red-haired Caucasian, surprised the women of several small ranching communities as their men were away tending stock. In the aftermath of the attack, survivors found twelve people, white and black, killed and eight others kidnapped. Captured were the wife and children of Britton Johnson, a free Negro ranchhand, a Mrs. Clifton and her two granddaughters, Millie and Lottie Durgan.¹⁴⁹

Britt Johnson had been an orderly to officers at Fort Belknap before the Civil War and was reputed to be an excellent marksman. Johnson buried his slain son and resolved to rescue his remaining family from the raiders. He located his family and the other captives with help of a Kiowa Indian, Asa-Havey [Milky Way], at the Penateka camp on the Washita River. Johnson encouraged the Indians to think he was a runaway slave. When he had gained their confidence, he began to trade horses for all the captives he could locate. He safely brought home all but one child of eighteen months, Millie Durgan, whom the Indians claimed was dead.¹⁵⁰

The missing child was not dead but had been adopted into the tribe. She was raised as a Kiowa Indian, married a chief named Goombi, had children and discovered late in life her identity. She later returned to visit her family and community during an old settler's reunion but was not fully accepted by many.¹⁵¹

The Plains Indians communicated with white renegades on the frontier during the wartime period. Whites, who frequently were deserters from either the Union or Confederate armies, often advised the Indians of lucrative opportunities, troop positions, and the risk involved in an attack.¹⁵² Ida Lasater Huckabay maintained, "When Indians made a raid they stole the choice horses on the frontier." Quanah Parker, in conversation with Ida Huckabay, once boasted of stealing "heap Lasater horses--good horses. Run heap fast" and inquired, "Lasater [her father], him no dead yet?"¹⁵³ Many Texans believed that either outlaw whites or Union spies were inciting the Indians to raid the frontier. By provoking excitement about Indian hostilities, white outlaws robbed and plundered and shifted the blame onto the Indians while keeping the militia otherwise engaged.¹⁵⁴

At various times during the war, the northern part of Texas was overrun by rough characters such as William Clarke Quantrill's irregulars and other quasi-military

pillagers from Kansas and Missouri.¹⁵⁵ After major engagements at Independence, Missouri, in 1862; Lawrence, Kansas, in 1863; and Centralia, Missouri, in 1864, William Quantrill found that the north central Texas brush country offered a comparatively peaceful refuge from the harsh activities in the hills back home.¹⁵⁶

Quantrill and his followers spent the winters of 1862, 1863 and 1864 in Grayson County. The guerrillas made camp at Mineral Springs, Texas, near Sherman and found themselves accepted so long as their behavior was peaceful. Division among the leaders caused discipline to break down during the last winter in Grayson County and William Quantrill's soldiers terrorized people by firing their revolvers at random on the streets of Sherman. They even rode their horses into stores and other public buildings, destroying merchandise and other property.¹⁵⁷

Several members of Quantrill's group returned to Texas after the war's end to become respected and prosperous citizens. One former raider, Allen Palmer, married Susan James, a Sherman school teacher and sister of the James brothers. Jesse James later had an extended visit in Sherman with his relatives, and brother Frank worked for the Sanger Brothers' store in Dallas.¹⁵⁸

News of the termination of the Civil War finally reached north central Texas in the late spring of 1865. With Lee's army having surrendered, the other Confederate forces, ragged and half-starved, knew it was useless for them to continue. In all arenas of war, from Virginia to the borders of Texas, Texans started for home. Ida Huckabay believed that the attitude of many Texans was reflected by the Jack County veterans. "One by one the Jack County men drifted in. They had been outnumbered, starved out, but not whipped. With hope and courage these weary ex-soldiers began at once to reclaim devastated homes and set their firesides in order."¹⁵⁹

CHAPTER IV

TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS: FAMILIES IN THE IMMEDIATE POSTWAR PERIOD, 1865-1867

The cessation of war in April, 1865, began an important two-year period of political and economic transition for most north central Texans. The period saw much civil unrest marked by greatly increased Indian strife, harassment by outlaws and the beginning of radical political reconstruction. The previously dominant planter society of the Brazos Valley emerged largely bankrupt. Yet along the frontier, the cattle industry began to assert a decisive economic influence. At the conclusion of hostilities in the eastern theater of war, Texas Confederate veterans formed informal groups for companionship and protection as they began their long journeys homeward to their loved ones on north central Texas farms.

During the Battle of Lookout Mountain in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Ben Steadham and Dory Booher, Confederate soldiers from Forestburg in Montague County, Texas, were captured and held prisoner for fourteen months at Camp Douglas, Illinois. Freed after General Lee's surrender, they were forced to walk from the camp near Chicago to Forestburg. To avoid trouble, they traveled at night and

slept during the day in haystacks or barns, begging for their food. By the time they reached home, their condition and appearance was such that their families did not recognize them. As no word had been received in over a year, it was presumed they were dead.¹⁶⁰

Many soldiers who had gone to war were never seen by loved ones again. Casualties occurred in the most tragic manner and numbers of widows and orphans never knew what happened to their soldier husband and father. Ermine Redwine, a young Palo Pinto settler during the war, recalled the tragedy of her brother:

The year the war was closed, some time in February, [my brother W. L. Treadwell] left the hospital in Harrisburg, Louisiana, on a sick furlough for home. He wasn't strong, just out of a spell of sickness and had to travel on foot, but he was so anxious to get home that he started, against the advice of friends. He has never been heard of since the day he left the hospital. Oh, how we waited and watched for him, thinking perhaps he was taken a prisoner, or perhaps was taken sick and couldn't write home. After a lapse of forty-three years, we never had word as to how or where he died.¹⁶¹

Confederate Texans thought the end of war would also bring the end of political strife. According to historian Joe Frantz, Texans fully believed they would revert to their prewar status because they had released their slaves after experiencing defeat. However, in Washington, radical congressional leaders Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner

determined that President Johnson's liberal policies, patterned after Lincoln's healing reconstruction design, would not let the South off so easily.¹⁶²

Word of radical intentions received wide circulation in north central Texas and unconfirmed rumors persisted that defeated Confederate soldiers would be punished in some manner and high-ranking rebel officials would be court-martialed for treason. If found guilty, one could expect either confiscation of property, long prison terms or death. Faced with this prospect, some prominent Texans, including Generals Kirby Smith and John Magruder and some elected officials of Texas, including Governors Edward Clark and Pendleton Murrah, fled to Mexico along with some Confederate officials.¹⁶³

Many north central Texas Confederate veterans found their families destitute, vicious outlaw gangs roaming at will in the countryside and Indian terrorist attacks almost a daily event. The constant, cold bloodied assault on the family by Indians was the greatest single threat to household security in north central Texas in the immediate postwar years.

Native Americans of the plains always had been resentful about the advancement of the white man and his settlement of valuable hunting grounds. As early as 1863,

raiding Indians had exploited the absence of defenders in north central Texas to steal thousands of cattle and horses and sell them into distribution channels leading to the Union army.¹⁶⁴ They, in turn, received modern arms, liquor and trade goods. Quaker or Federal Indian agents tacitly allowed reservation Indians to go on hunting trips into Texas and condoned the disappearance of young warriors from the reservation to join nomadic Indian groups.¹⁶⁵ The Indian practice of taking captives continued after the end of war and continued to offer opportunities for ransom, long term abuse, using white people as slaves or, as in the case of some children, potential additions to the tribe.¹⁶⁶ Indian hostilities contributed enormously to the general collapse of the frontier economy.¹⁶⁷

Farms deteriorated or were abandoned and finances became exhausted. Gold and silver specie was practically nonexistent and paper money was useless as Confederate bonds and paper money were declared null and void by the Fourteenth Amendment. The financial crisis that had developed during the closing months of the war became even more desperate. Governor Throckmorton described Texas's insolvency in 1866 as ". . . a heavy debt, an empty treasury and. . . embarrassments in every part of our internal affairs."¹⁶⁸ With no specie, no cash flow and

little credit, except in the cattle industry, local business activity declined markedly. There was little incentive for anyone to try to improve matters in the period 1865 to 1867. Day to day business movement in north central Texas was weak and feeble, deflated by a continuous series of wartime emergencies. One correspondent, Simpson Thompson, traveling to Austin wrote, "I am compelled to keep on the wing it seems. There is no money here [in Camp Wilson, later called Fort Griffin] and no prospects of any."¹⁶⁹ Reverend Peter W. Gravis, Methodist circuit rider, recalled:

The finances of the country were below anything that I had ever known. The war between the North and South had just closed. There was no merchandise in the country, and if there had been, there was no money but Confederate money, which was worth nothing. During this year I did not see ten dollars in good money. Cattle was our exchange. When men began to bring dry goods in the country, we exchanged cattle for them. I received for my services on the mission, corn, wheat and cattle, using the yearlings for small change.¹⁷⁰

Churches, schools, lodges and other service activities were also directly affected, often to the point of nearly closing their doors when their patrons were unable to support them. The postwar depression was evident especially in Palo Pinto County. Jonathan Hamilton Baker was one of the first teachers in Palo Pinto County, and

later in life was a merchant, rancher and an elected public official. From 1858 until his death in 1918, Baker kept a series of diaries which recorded many of the events in Palo Pinto County during the civil war, postwar and reconstruction periods. Besides teaching school in Palo Pinto, Baker organized and trained a military company for frontier defense; made four early cattle drives to Kansas and St. Louis, and helped to organize the Masonic Lodge in Palo Pinto. Later on as the county became more civilized, he was also a tax assessor-collector, deputy sheriff, justice of the peace, county and district clerk, charter member of the Methodist Church in Palo Pinto and a member of J. J. Cureton's frontier defense military company. He was with Captain Cureton when Texas's most famous Indian captive, Cynthia Ann Parker, was captured from the Comanches.¹⁷¹

Baker's diary entry for January 20, 1865, recorded first news of the Dove Creek Indian battle fought January 8, 1865, about 30 miles southwest of the present town of San Angelo, Texas. This was considered to be one of the hardest fought battles on Texas soil against Indians. "[Capt. J. J. Cureton] is just home from an Indian fight in which 500 whites attacked 700 Indians and were repulsed. [sic] 22 men were killed, 31 wounded and

100 missing. [sic] 90 Indians were killed and 200 horses were taken."¹⁷²

Baker had the responsibility of two families, his own and that of Aunt Rosy, his adopted family. The wartime economy did not support farming, and he lamented that, "I find I cannot make a living for the two families on the farm. So will take up teaching again. I had hoped I would never have to teach school again."¹⁷³

On Monday, May 22, 1865, Baker simply wrote, "Word has come that peace has been declared." The next entry was dated Friday, June 2, stated, ". . . Indians stealing in the settlement again. The soldiers came home today. How thankful I am that Wesley [his brother] is safe home again, and the horrid war is over."¹⁷⁴ Baker later recorded on Saturday, February 10, 1866, that he "took 'Amnesty Oath' today."¹⁷⁵ Political conditions deteriorated after radicals seized control of the Texas government and by August, 1866, Baker noted that "I applied [for reinstatement of my civil rights] to the Board of Registration this morning, and was rejected because I was deputy sheriff before the war and participated in the rebellion. So I stand a disenfranchised Rebel!"¹⁷⁶

By 1866, responsibility for all police activities and the frontier defense of Texas was assumed by federal

military authorities. Baker's diary during this period included entries for February and March of 1866 which recorded a drastic increase in the intensity of Indian raids: "February 25, a number of horses were stolen; March 3, two men killed in Parker County and three children kidnapped; March 30 and April 1, more horses stolen both in town and from a neighbor."¹⁷⁷

Settlers along the frontier claimed that the federal soldiers were more concerned with catching or spying on ex-Confederates than they were in resolving the most important issue to them, stopping Indian raids and eliminating outlaw gangs.¹⁷⁸ Strong law enforcement was particularly needed in the wake of the war as there were many former deserters, vicious outlaws, bushwackers, ex-"Northern Scouts" and Jay Hawkers riding unchecked across the state. These criminals characteristically claimed they had been Unionists during the war but their true purpose in the eyes of most citizens was pilfering, stealing, and looking for some economic or political exploitable advantage. Settlers claimed federal troops rarely detained these heavily armed individuals who often defied arrest for theft, drunkenness or rowdy behavior.¹⁷⁹

Federal authorities defended their law enforcement efforts and claimed they were providing sufficient

protection for the frontier settlers. Yet United States troops were ineffective in most emergencies and were barracked in large towns, far from the frontier where they were most needed, according to some vocal settlers.¹⁸⁰

Additional hardships arose regarding securing adequate guns for defense. Many returning Confederate soldiers had been compelled to surrender their small arms when they disbanded. Frequently, the Confederate Texan had furnished his own weapon while in service. Federally appointed officials aggravated this defenseless situation when they refused to issue arms and further banned the formation of local militia units for self-defense against raiding Indians.¹⁸¹ Radical reconstruction leaders feared that ex-Confederates would use such self-defense militias to continue fighting a guerrilla war against the government rather than the Indians.¹⁸²

As former Confederate soldiers of Jack County returned after the war, they set to work making order of what was left of their farms and ranches. As one humorously remarked, "If the damned Yankees' fooled with [us again, we] would lick them again."¹⁸³ Cattle and horse raising on the open range was the chief industry in Jack County since most of the land was considered too poor for farming. With no feed for stock, cowmen had to wait until new growth of

grass strengthened cattle and horses before they could begin rounding up stock in the spring. Like the rest of north central Texas in 1866, there was no money in Jack County. Prior to cattle buyers coming to the range, cattle would be gathered in herds and some trusted individual acting as agent would drive them to whatever market was thought to have buyers. Payment according to the tally sheet was always considered a matter of honor.¹⁸⁴ T. Z. Butler and Tom Atkinson were among the earliest buyers of range cattle to arrive in Jack County. They bought enough cattle to conduct one of the first postwar drives to New Orleans. New Orleans was a busy seaport city with a ready market in Cuba for Texas cattle.¹⁸⁵

William Baxter Slaughter, son of respected cattleman Reverend George Webb Slaughter, recalled that:

Upon return of my oldest brother, Colonel C. C. Slaughter, we found the Confederate money received in payment for the cattle furnished to the government . . . had no value. It was turned over to children attending a school to use as thumb paper for the old Blue Back Spellers of those days. Hence, we had no money, but plenty of cattle and Colonel Slaughter suggested to my father that we gather a herd of steers and drive to Shreveport, Louisiana, and ship to New Orleans in order to get ready cash.¹⁸⁶

In 1867, they left Palo Pinto with 900 steers and fortunately were able to sell them to a meat packing contractor for \$24,300 in gold.

Mary A. Nunley, a child settler in the early days of Palo Pinto County, recalled that her father, Isaac W. Cox, bought cattle and moved to the frontier in Palo Pinto County where the family experienced all the privations, dangers and hardships of frontier life.¹⁸⁷

She explained that people in isolated areas on the frontier maintained extreme vigilance. They were always on the alert for Indians, ever watchful of children sent to the spring for water. They were constantly fearful of being killed; a barking dog immediately brought Indians to mind.¹⁸⁸

Parker County's John A. Hart also looked back at experiences with guard dogs on the frontier.

Every person in Indian times kept two or more dogs and in war times the women learned when the Indians were in, where the most danger was by the bark of the dogs; all the dogs in the neighborhood would bark. If the Indians were far off the dogs would go out in the yard to bark, if they were near the place the dogs would come inside near the door and probably bark very little, but act very restless. It seemed that an Indian was a mesmerizer or something for the dogs.¹⁸⁹

Nunley had some vivid recollections about Indian raids. While on a horse-stealing raid, Indians were less

likely to kill people lest they themselves be chased and killed before they could get the horses out of the country. However, after getting all the horses they wanted, they would kill or capture anyone who happened to be in their path, as well as carry off women and children whom they would exchange for blankets, horses, or anything else of value to them.¹⁹⁰

In a letter dated September 29, 1866, Cooke County farmer, rancher and frontier militiaman, W. H. Whaley, expressed the outrage and suffering of his own community from Indian and outlaw attacks. He protested, writing with rough frontier spelling, to Governor James W. Throckmorton about the unceasingly dangerous conditions on the frontier and the apparent lack of concern by recently elected state politicians.

. . . we are informed that senator Bumpuss from Collin County done his utmost against it [passage of the frontier protection bill], this would be somewhat excuseable in a senator from the deepest interior of the state, but for a man from a cister [sic] county to our own and now almost a frontier itself he is in no wise excuseable. I almost deem him an enemy to the white race. It is no time now to estimate indebtedness that might accrue, when the safety of our homes and our property are at stake, our livs [sic] dael [daily] in jeopardy our women and our childrin [sic] being carried off into captivity worse than death.¹⁹¹

Reservation Comanche and Kiowa Indians from the Wichita Mountains area north of the Red River, an area close in proximity to Montague, Clay, and Wichita Counties, quickly exploited the lack of protection caused by the abandonment of former Confederate military posts, the disarmament of ex-Confederate soldiers, and the general ineffectiveness of federal troops.¹⁹² Good quality, surplus rifles and ammunition had reached the Indians through renegade traders and reservation agents and mixed Indian and renegade raids increased with great intensity in 1866.

Continuing on in his rugged style, Whaley further reported in this letter that:

The raders are as well armed as we are, each [Indian] man bareing from one to two sixshoters besids guns and they fight equal to any whites troops. Of late our scouts have had several engagements with them, the raders invariably getting the best of it. They generally outnumber our men 2 or 3 to one, and they [our men] cannot handle them that way for it takes man to man. Amongue these last raders white men were seen distincly amonkst them as they pursued horses, and they were herd to speak plain English.¹⁹³

Governor Throckmorton, a man of the frontier himself, solicited the help and understanding of representatives and senators when he defined the frontier crisis before a joint session of the Texas Congress in 1866. He spoke of an expansive frontier populated by a dangerous enemy which

destroyed the property of frontier families as well as taking their lives; or, worse, captured and submitted them to torture beyond belief. He told of a government which refused to allow peaceful citizens to arm themselves for protection and further refused to send troops to the frontier where they were needed. Instead, the government chose to maintain the troops in the tranquil interior.¹⁹⁴

W. H. Whaley further complained to Throckmorton about the difficulties of organizing home defense forces without the support of a state or national authority. It seemed that both affluent citizens and impoverished young men had little interest or concern for the defense of themselves or their community. Whaley repeated his call for help before the area was entirely broken up.¹⁹⁵

The killing and capturing of frontier families by Indians and renegade whites in postwar north central Texas was the most emotional problem facing Governor James W. Throckmorton during his short postbellum tenure. Throckmorton had experienced the hardships of frontier life first hand as a native of Collin County. Before the war as a pro-union politician, he attended numerous political rallies across north central Texas and met many other Union sympathizers. One of those men was James Jackson Box, from Black Jack Grove, now Cumby, Hopkins County, Texas. His

wife, Mary Matthews Box, later related an account of the Indian attack suffered by her family during the postwar period:

About the breaking out of the late rebellion, we moved to Montague County on the extreme frontier, the cause of our moving was owing to my husband being a Union man and did not wish to fight in the rebellion. It was sometime in May, 1861, that we moved [to an area known as Head of the Elm, now Saint Jo, Montague County, Texas]. There was five families of us, all relations.¹⁹⁶

There is some indication that James Box may have reluctantly fought in the war on the side of the Confederacy.¹⁹⁷

The Boxes received word from Hopkins County during the summer of 1866 that two of James's brothers were seriously ill and wished to see him at once. James, his wife Mary, daughters Margaret, Marzee, Josephine, and Ida visited with their relatives for about five weeks and returned to their home in Montague County in August, 1866, with a wagonload of leather and a new baby, Laura, born a week earlier at a relative's home in Gainesville.

When they reached a point three miles east of their Montague County home, thirty-two Kiowa Indians, who had been waiting in ambush for several hunters and lead by the notorious chief, Satanta, murdered Box and made captives of his wife and children. As the Indians began to mutilate

Box's body, Mary and her daughters became hysterical with fright. The girls left the wagon and were running to and fro in terror, although Mary, still recovering from delivering her child, was hardly able leave her postpartum bed in the wagon.¹⁹⁸ Mary remembered that, "They pulled me out of the wagon by the hair of the head, robbed and took everything out of the wagon. Took Josephine and Ida and tied them on ponies. They put Margaret on one, but she jumped off and ran around to her father, and held him until they pulled her from him."¹⁹⁹ Mary Box was then tied on a wild horse with her infant baby and all started on a long journey toward northern Oklahoma and Kansas.²⁰⁰ "We traveled fourteen days [night and day] before we stopped, [and] about eleven days after we were taken, my month old baby Laura died."²⁰¹ When they had gone a considerable distance, Mary's horse became fatigued and slowed down. An Indian lanced the animal in the side, causing it to jump and Mary to drop her baby. She tried to pick up her baby, but was prevented by her captors. The Indians then murdered the infant child in a brutal manner before the eyes of its mother, who was already suffering inconceivable agony. Box remembered that "They took her from me and threw her in a ravine."²⁰²

Several men, the apparent intended victims of this attack, were hunting turkeys near Montague County's Wheeler's Mound and witnessed the incident. As soon as the Indians retreated, the hunters hurried to the scene of the murder and kidnapping and found Box's mutilated body under some leather scraps and feathers from a ruined mattress ticking. The men realized they were too greatly outnumbered to attempt rescue and returned to their respective homes to spread the alarm.²⁰³ Mary's physical abuse began almost immediately in the hot August sun with the Indians determined to deny her water. Margaret was severely beaten for scooping up a slipper full of water for her mother as they crossed a stream. When Margaret was recaptured that night after attempting an escape, the soles of her feet were burned to make it torturous to run away.²⁰⁴

Mary Box later reported that, "We traveled until we got to the Indian's camp and here they separated me from my children. I had to pack wood and water. When I delayed, they would whip and beat me and even the squaws would knock me down. I was very sick while with the Indians. It was a terrible life. They gave us nothing but boiled meat to eat, nothing what ever but that."²⁰⁵

About ten weeks after the capture, the Kiowas stopped to trade at Fort Dodge, Kansas. The Indians had a regular

business of kidnapping settlers and stealing their livestock for ransom or sale in exchange for whiskey and weapons.²⁰⁶ They attempted to sell the Box captives through a Kiowan woman married to a white man at the fort. Alerted by the woman's husband, a rescue party lead by Captain Daniel Brunson of Montague County met with military officials and helped purchase the family from captivity.²⁰⁷ Captain Andrew Sheridan, 3rd U. S. Infantry, U. S. A. Command Post, Fort Dodge, Kansas, took a deposition on October 20, 1866, from Mary Box and later arranged the family's traveling accommodations back to Texas. The federal government returned the destitute family home via steamboat from St. Louis to New Orleans and by sea to Port Lavaca, Texas. From Port Lavaca, the former captives traveled to Austin where they were received by Governor Throckmorton.²⁰⁸ On January 26, 1867, the Dallas Herald carried the account of their meeting with Governor James Throckmorton copied from the Austin Gazette:

We happened to be in the Governor's office the other morning when two ladies entered. One of whom proved to be the eldest daughter of the unfortunate Mrs. Box of Montague County, lately with her four children a captive of the Kiowa Indians. She is an interesting girl of 16 or 17 years of age and told the sad story of their captive and sufferings with frequent tears. The whole family including Mr. Box, the father, a very respectful man known to the Governor had been on a visit to a neighboring county and were within three or four miles [of home] when they

were attacked by the Indians. . . . They were kept about ten weeks enduring hardships and sufferings. . . . We observed many scars on the face and arms of Miss Box, the result of the beating with clubs. . . . The mother, from the barbarous treatment she received and the fatigues of her long journey is now lying prostrate on her sick bed, and fears are entertained for her recovery. All the family were in great need of clothing, etc. . . . the Governor has promptly provided for all their wants and that they will be sent to their kindred and friends. . . . We wish General Sheridan could have looked at the marks of the Indian clubs on the fair face of the interesting girl.²⁰⁹

Although home and safe from further harm, Mary Box never fully recovered, according to her cousin, Fern Suydam of Gainesville, Texas. "The health of the mother was destroyed," related Suydam. "Often when staying with [our family], she would awake in the night and scream, 'They are here, Aunt Martha! There are Indians! They are after me now!'"²¹⁰ Margaret later married Daniel Brunson, son of the Captain Daniel Brunson who bought the Box family out of captivity.

Governor Throckmorton was notified of the Box family tragedy almost immediately after it happened from correspondents in Cooke and Denton Counties. One illegibly signed letter dated September 2, 1866, simply reported the raid on the Boxes. W. H. Whaley also described the raid on the Boxes in his September 29, 1866 letter to Throckmorton and took the opportunity to tell of his community's

frustrations with Indians. The unlettered Whaley gave a very graphic description of events in north central Texas and complained that the Indians were stealing for profit.

Yo [you] have no idea Gen. of the offul state of excitement now exesting in our county, nearly every settlement west and N west of us is broken up, and the citizens who have not gone entirely off are now in-camp round our town, not knowing what to do our county is almost ruined It will not recover from this shock. . . . [Robert] Wolsey states the rade[rs] which carried off Boxs family had reached their camps [in Oklahoma near Fort Arbuckle,] and were proffering to return them to Texas or to a half way point some where, for their equivalent in Specie. Unless this trade is broken up . . . we will always be troubled on this frontier.²¹¹

On October 2, 1866, Governor Throckmorton addressed the Texas Senate and House of Representatives regarding the return of certain white captives from various Indian tribes.

There are quite a number of prisoners yet in the hands of the Indians, some of whom were captured before the making of the treaty [October, 1865] . . . and others taken since. It has been but a few weeks ago in Cooke County that a Mr. Box was murdered, and his wife and two grown daughters, and two younger daughters were carried off. . . . We see treaties with (these) perfidious people are of no avail. I trust the day of retribution is not far distant. . . . I will use every means in my power to impress upon the military authorities the necessity of active and vigorous operations against these marauding bands. . . . In the event of a failure to accomplish this it must be done by ourselves.²¹²

On October 6, 1866, Governor Throckmorton wrote General Philip Sheridan, Commander, Department of the Gulf, stating:

In truth, there is no part of the frontier from Red River to the Rio Grande that is not suffering more or less. Every day brings the most disturbing and heart rendering accounts of the murders and sufferings of the frontier people. The settlements are rapidly being broken up. . . . Only a few weeks since within fifteen miles of Gainesville the County Seat of Cooke County [one of the interior counties but bordering on the Chickasaw Nation] a man was killed, and his wife and two grown daughters and two younger daughters were carried into captivity.²¹³

In another letter sent the same day to General U. S. Grant, Commander of the U. S. Army, Washington, D. C., Governor Throckmorton pleaded for troops and fortifications to defend and pacify the north central Texas frontier.

I have been on the frontier of this state for twenty-five years, and I assure you General, that there has been more depredations within the last few months than in [all the] years before. Last October, [1865] these wild tribes (Cheyennes, Araphopes [sic], Comanches, Kiowas and Lipans) made a treaty with the government agents and delivered up ten captives, women and children, they had carried from our borders. Since that treaty, they have killed not less than one hundred of our people and quite a number of women and children carried off into captivity. The loss of property has been very heavy. The Indians have swept the frontiers of immense herds of cattle, and now they are penetrating into interior counties stealing large numbers of horses. The scenes of misery and desolation are truly appalling. As the Commanding Officer of the Army, I make this appeal to you with the hope

that you will direct at once a vigorous campaign to be made.²¹⁴

Although Throckmorton continued to flood military headquarters with accounts of Indian depredations, Sherman never received official army reports of the Comanche raids and continued to suspect that they were exaggerated or false.²¹⁵ The general believed that the freighting companies which held army contracts magnified and possibly invented such stories to justify bigger contracts to supply additional frontier garrisons. He also thought the settlers exaggerated reports of actual attacks to secure posts in their area to build up the economy. Sherman maintained that opinion for several years until he, himself, was nearly killed in an Indian ambush near Fort Richardson in Jack County in 1876.

Governor Throckmorton reported to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton in August, 1867, that he had surveyed the extent of the Indian hostilities and since the ending of the Civil War two years before, 162 people had been killed by Indians, forty-three captured, and twenty-four wounded. An estimated 31,000 cattle, 2,800 horses and 2,400 sheep and goats had been stolen during the same period.²¹⁶ Although Indian raids continued in north central Texas, their impact peaked and by 1876 had ended.

During the postwar period, millions of wild cattle born during the war and nearly worthless in Texas, were increasing in value in the eyes of meat-hungry Northerners. Such vast herds of cattle could be converted into desperately needed specie if the ex-soldiers and farm boys could deliver them to northern markets. In order to do that, cattlemen would have to overcome hostile Indians, wild animals, raging rivers and privation. Vast herds of buffalo had to give way to the cattle who needed their grasses and to hunters who wanted their flesh and hides. A new era of political and economic development in the state had begun.

CHAPTER V

CATTLE, FORTS AND INDIANS: ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND POLITICAL CHANGES, 1868-1874

By 1868 the shock of defeat was easing and families in north central Texas were beginning their individual economic recoveries. The major Reconstruction effort for some was the physical reclamation of abandoned farms and homes. Others faced problems of greater magnitude; nature, Indian warfare, finding capital or contending with political changes.

Texas as a state endured Reconstruction politics for nearly nine years. Reconstruction as a process consisted of three phases: the Andrew Johnson Reconstruction period which extended from June 19, 1865, to August 20, 1866; the military dominated constitutionally elected government era from August 20, 1866, to November 1869; and, finally, the phase dominated by the Edmund J. Davis administration from January 8, 1870, to January 17, 1874.²¹⁷ North central Texans were as affected as other Texans by Reconstruction policy but frontier families suffered additional burdens, primarily from government neglect in controlling raiding Indians and outlaws.

One astute person, Reverend Peter W. Gravis, a frontier Methodist circuit rider previously cited, recorded

his own observations of the state of affairs for 1868 in north central Texas:

The year 1868 brought to the citizens of Texas a train of events that will never be forgotten by them while an ex-Confederate remains. The war was over, the cause lost, and the work of reconstruction begun. In every town throughout the state federal soldiers were stationed, and men were required to take the amnesty oath, and all of the property formerly belonging to the Confederacy taken charge of. [In north central Texas,] the Indians in a ten-fold fury ranged over the country, day and night, stealing our property and killing our citizens, capturing our children and raping our women. The frontier was defenceless, all the arms having been arrested by the federals, and our frontier Torys disbanded. Added to this state of things, men began to handle horses and cattle without authority, and as the civil arm was paralyzed, mobs sprung up and men were hung to trees by night and no clue to the perpetrators.²¹⁸

The collapsed Texas economy at the end of the war forced all attempting recovery to utilize skills and resources that had lain dormant during the conflict. The cattlemen of the region were eager to recapture the gold and silver once provided them by former northern markets. The antecedents of the great postwar cattle drives came as early as 1850; and until the war started, Texans had supplied a few northern markets with small herds.²¹⁹ One famous cattleman from north central Texas, Parker County's Oliver Loving, had taken cattle through Indian Territory, part of eastern Kansas and across northern Missouri to

Quincy, Illinois, for sale.²²⁰ Other experimental drives had gone to the California gold fields and during the war itself, individual cattle drives were conducted east to feed the southern soldier.

During the war years, generally all cattle drives north from Texas ceased. There were exceptions, however. In one period alone, Indians and outlaws stole an estimated 35,000 cattle from Red River counties and drove them across Indian Territory for the use of the Union army.²²¹

Local northern cattle markets were exhausted by civilian and Union troop demands and the desire for meat inflated beef cattle prices in Iowa or Illinois to ten times the value of Texas cattle.²²² After the war, ranching Texans had little remaining except the millions of unclaimed wild cattle born during the war. Texans were elated to find that they had a natural monopoly on cattle sales because they possessed the only substantial quantities of beef in the country.

Transportation proved to be the key issue in filling the demand for Texas beef. There was no usable railroad transportation from Texas--in any direction--at the end of the war and extensive sea transportation of large quantities of live cattle was not economically feasible in 1866. If beef from Texas was to be delivered, it had to

provide its own transportation. Texas longhorn cattle showed that they could meet the need. These unique cattle were a hardy stock capable of thriving under adverse conditions and could actually fatten on the trail with proper care. By the spring of 1866, northern markets were identified and cattlemen began gathering, marking and branding their herds for the initial drives north. As this grand effort began, technological improvements and breakthroughs in several areas were occurring. The great demand for beef was also generating a market for a higher quality beef animal than was found in the Texas longhorn steer. Mechanical refrigeration and cold storage transportation were being developed concurrently with railroad expansion. These factors, along with the invention of cheaply produced practical barbed wire first sold in Texas in 1879, would eventually curtail the great cattle drives.²²³

When natural ice supplies from the north were cut off by the Civil War, several ingenious Texans began to design their own versions of mechanical ice-making and food preservation equipment. After the Civil War, Texas's expanding beef industry encouraged and financed the development of commercial mechanical cold processes. In 1867, Andrew Muhl and his associates built one of the first

Texas mechanical ice-making machines in San Antonio. From 1871 to 1881 the first mechanically refrigerated abattoir in the United states was planned, established, and successfully operated in Fulton, Texas, for the purpose of chilling and curing beef for sea shipment to Liverpool and other European destinations. And in 1873, a rail shipment of chilled beef successfully reached New York from Texas.²²⁴

Until this equipment could be commercially feasible, Texans fell back to the tried and true method of delivery by driving cattle to market. Charles Goodnight, one of the best known of all Texas cattlemen, and in 1866 a Parker County neighbor to rancher Oliver Loving, estimated that he had 5,000 cattle after the war. But because of white and Indian thieves, he could muster hardly a thousand head of "beeves" fit for driving. Goodnight knew that despite demand, there was no cash market in the southern states for his cattle. He decided to go west to Denver. Goodnight reasoned that the gold and silver mining region in the west was the nearest place with money and, as it was good grass country, he could graze any cattle that did not sell.²²⁵ His choice of a route west and north to Denver became the Goodnight Trail and later with Oliver Loving as a partner, they hammered out the Goodnight-Loving Trail north from

Denver. Goodnight's innovative chuck wagon design quickly became the standard for the entire cattle industry.²²⁶

Several prewar drives had gone to Sedalia, Missouri, but when Missouri farmers attempted to ban postwar herds of Texas cattle suspected of bearing cattle fever, Kansas promoters quickly reacted.²²⁷ They wanted the potential economic benefits coming from cattle and railroads to be diverted to their own communities. One of the key figures in attracting Texas cattle drives to Kansas was Joseph G. McCoy. He persuaded the Kansas Pacific Railroad engaged in laying track westward to erect a railhead, complete with cattle pens and sidings, at Abilene, Kansas. He went south in 1867 to persuade Texas cattlemen planning drives north toward Sedalia to take the more westerly route to Abilene. The cattle industry soon flooded Kansas bringing not only the desired specie but also Texas fever, cowboys, sodbusters, "soiled doves," "gambling hells" and a new culture.²²⁸

Of the several cattle trails emanating from central and south Texas, the Chisholm Trail was the most important route through north central Texas.²²⁹ The majority of cattle driven to market came from south and central Texas via this route. The Chisholm Trail extended from south Texas through Austin, Lampasas, ran between Fort Worth and

Weatherford through the western part of Denton County, swung to the west from Cooke County and crossed the Red River at Red River Station north of Ringgold in Montague County. Cattle from west of Wise County were usually put across the Red River at Rock Bluff Crossing near Preston, or at Colbert's Ferry and driven on through Indian Territory to Kansas and beyond.²³⁰

Many of the trail drivers who used the Chisholm Trail during the first few years were ex-Confederate soldiers. It was the first time for some at Red River Station in Montague County to see Confederate gray as some of the drivers still wore portions of the old uniforms. The militia stationed there during the war had had no uniforms.²³¹ For a twenty-year period from 1867 to 1887, millions of Texas longhorn cattle were funnelled along the Chisholm and other trails from south Texas.²³² Reverend Gravis recalled traveling along a cattle trail following enormous herds:

. . . [As] I resumed my journey [June 7, 1875], my route was the old beef trail, over which more than one hundred thousand head of cattle have been driven already this year. I traveled over this trail more than one hundred miles and do not remember a day that I did not pass from three to five herds driving North. One man had ten thousand head on the trail, bound for Little Platte River, in Nebraska.²³³

Drivers considered Fort Worth as the last major supply station on the way north but Red River area merchants in Elizabethtown and Bolivar supplied such last minute items as were available from their stock. Denton also was an important trading town but as it was in a heavy wood, the cowboys preferred to drive their cattle on the wide-open prairies a few miles west.²³⁴

As the value of cattle increased, what had been reasonable practices in handling cattle began to deteriorate. Soon after the war, according to Goodnight, the custom of swapping brands grew up, whereby a ranchman might gather, drive, and sell his neighbor's beeves, with the understanding that the neighbor was to take as payment the strays found upon his own range. Once a year they met and balanced tallies. This practice legalized a method which enabled thieves to take stray cattle, sell them and move on to the next county for another herd. Since they had no herd of their own, swapping was entirely one-sided. The custom spread throughout the cattle range, not only encouraging theft, but also dishonesty among those who owned cattle upon the range.²³⁵

Eliphalet Penn Earhart remembered that in December, 1867, the cattle theft problems in Texas had become overwhelming:

During the winter we decided that we should move our stock to Kansas to keep them from being stolen. The Texas state government was succeeded by military government as things grew worse. Stock was being stolen by the thousands, and Pa said that I was too young and he was too old to begin stealing, and that we would move out of it.²³⁶

One old Texas axiom was that "no rancher ever enjoyed the taste of his own beef" and the established custom of eating each other's beef became another source for major losses. Goodnight recollected:

It became a custom to kill everybody's beef but your own. Every fellow killed the other fellow's beef believing it did not cost him anything, when in fact that fellow was killing his. There was no attempt to save the meat, and the waste from this habit was appalling. Within a mile of my ranch lived a widow who got to be a cattle lady by virtue of her boys' picking up yearlings. When it happened that they got out of beef, she told the boys they must find some, but not to get one of hers, because, she said, she would as leave eat one of her little children as one of her own beeves.²³⁷

As Reverend Gravis had observed, Indian attacks and outlaw theft had greatly increased after the war and raiding had become a major problem for cattlemen and settlers.²³⁸ Surrendering Confederate soldiers had had to turn in their arms to authorities and, as General Philip Sheridan was reluctant to rearm a recent enemy, relief military forces using ex-Confederates as temporary state troopers were denied. Sheridan could visualize bands of

unrepentant and armed ex-soldiers resuming guerrilla war against sparse federal troops along the frontier. Sheridan also shared an opinion with General William T. Sherman and other government leaders that Texans had exaggerated the frequency and intensity of Indian and outlaw attacks to obtain more military posts as stimuli for greater growth and development.²³⁹

Most federal occupation troops in Texas were quartered in the populated areas watching over ex-rebels and enforcing the civil rights of the newly franchised African-American. While sections of the frontier were left either sparsely or totally unprotected, military authorities did combine Camp Cooper and Fort Belknap in 1867 to create Fort Griffin in Shackelford County. This frontier post was to provide troops to escort the mail, protect surveying parties and cattle drives, and punish Indian raiders. In the same year, the most northerly frontier post, Fort Richardson, was completed in Jack County, on a small tributary of the West Fork of the Trinity River.²⁴⁰

Several secondary fortifications were also established at different periods. The principal substations included Bothwick's Station, on Salt Creek about halfway between Fort Richardson and old Fort Belknap, and Camp Wichita near

Buffalo Springs located between Fort Richardson and Fort Griffin.²⁴¹

When the major posts were established, citizens initially felt relief that professional soldiers were there to protect them from Indian attack.²⁴² However, it did not take long for both citizens and Indians to discover that federal soldiers did not understand Plains Indian warfare. Indians riding on fleet horses with several hours' or even days' lead easily outdistanced pursuing soldiers. Troops were usually mounted on government horses or mules, types of stock not generally noted for excellence. The Plains Indian raiders were superb horsemen and could quickly change tired mounts when necessary by selecting fresh horses from their stolen herds. The soldiers usually had only one mount to use and when that animal was exhausted, they were forced to give up the chase.²⁴³

Sheridan was correct in his assumptions that frontier Texans appreciated the presence of military posts in their communities. Thomas F. Horton, an early local historian who gathered personal accounts about the formation of Jack County, reviewed the basic economic impact of these posts:

Fort Richardson expenditures of over half a million dollars a year found its way into the channels of trade and into the hands and pockets of Jack County residents. These times, if only temporary, were very prosperous. It looked like money floated around in the breeze. The soldiers

did not kill many Indians but who shall say Fort Richardson was not a potent factor in settling up the country. It at least formed a nucleus for the returning settlers who had been driven to the interior for safety at the outbreak of the rebellion. A few people profited in this maelstrom of extravagance and prepared for the rainy day, but with the great majority it was come day go day, God send Sunday.²⁴⁴

The economic growth and prosperity motivated the establishment of twenty-seven saloons in Jacksboro along with the various attendant vices. The nights were violent and daylight frequently found an inquest being performed.²⁴⁵ Soldiers' pay, army procurements, cattle money and later, buffalo hunters' profits, were plentiful. "From 1868 to 1873, there were scenes of red-hot activity. The sound of the fiddle and the crack of the six-shooter could be heard the livelong night," Horton remembered.²⁴⁶

While the establishment of frontier forts did not prevent Indian raids, they did indeed offer individual economic promise for some settlers willing to take a chance. When the United States Army established Fort Sill in western Indian Territory shortly after the war, the proximity of the fort and its promised safety attracted settlers to nearby vacant lands. Across the Red River, the state of Texas promoted settlement on her northern border by expanding the Homestead Act of 1854 with acts passed in 1866 and 1870.²⁴⁷

In Texas, beginning in 1870, it was possible for a married man to obtain a quarter-section of land by paying a small fee and living on the land for three years. The land sold for \$3.00 per acre, with one-tenth down and one-tenth per year plus interest. All of north central Texas, particularly Wise, Jack, and Parker Counties, became the goal of many potential immigrant farmers and ranchers.²⁴⁸

The first permanent, postwar white settler in Clay County on the Texas side of the Red River was Henry A. Whaley in 1869. A shrewd man, Whaley recognized that the military would need huge supplies of oats and other small grains to feed men and animals.²⁴⁹ He set up a large-scale farming and ranching operation in northern Clay County with his son; he also brought a newly acquired partner, John Kilmartin, Kilmartin's wife, Lena, and their son, to a ranch four miles southeast of the mouth of the Big Wichita River.²⁵⁰

Whaley was no stranger to rugged frontier life. A Mexican war veteran and long time Cooke County settler, Whaley had enlisted in a home defense regiment at Gainesville, Texas, during the war. His regiment, led by Colonel James Bourland, attempted to protect the Cooke and Montague area from raiding Indians, deserters, and renegades who were making life in the surrounding

settlements a difficult proposition.²⁵¹ It was Whaley's September 29, 1866, letter to Governor Throckmorton which reported the extent of Indian and outlaw raids and also gave information on the Box family massacre.²⁵² His letter gave Throckmorton needed insights into the immediate postwar political conditions along the Red River.²⁵³

As part of his Clay County venture, Whaley hired about a dozen men to farm, care for livestock and provide protection against numerous hostile Indians while he harvested from ten to fifteen thousand bushels of oats annually. Whaley sold his crops primarily to the army post at Fort Sill but lesser amounts of grain were also sold to Fort Richardson and to Fort Griffin.²⁵⁴

Whaley and his crew were almost completely isolated from white civilization and, until 1873, Lena Kilmartin was the only white woman living in Clay County. The small settlement would often go weeks without seeing any other white people except the infrequent cavalry patrols stopping by to rest. A good frontier host, Whaley installed an enthusiastically received novelty on the frontier, the first ice house which most natives of the area had ever seen. His garden produce was a source of pride and was greatly appreciated by travelers hungry for fresh vegetables.²⁵⁵

As a dry-land farmer and stockman, Whaley faced many obstacles in making his dangerous venture a success. Drought, flood, heat, cold, and hail assaulted the ranch in their turn. Tornadoes were a special hazard. A tornado at nearby Red River Station blew the second story of a hotel away and deposited one sleeper, still in his bed, out into the street. Another was less fortunate, for the same tornado rolled him through a bed of grass burrs before dropping him in a creek.²⁵⁶ In addition, nature tended to be quite generous with pests such as grasshoppers. John A. Hart, the north central Texas chronicler, wrote about his own battles with locusts:

Ever since I can remember until the year of 1869, every two or three years, we had in the fall of the year the traveling grasshopper. They came through Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. I have seen them when they first begun to light, only a few, and in thirty minutes they would be falling all over the face of the earth. They would be so thick between the sun and the earth that they would cause a shadow on the earth just like a cloud over the sun. While they did not damage the grass to a great extent they ate everything else. I have known them to ruin a nice garden, clean it all up in a half day's time, even the dry fodder on the corn.²⁵⁷

However, Whaley's worst problem was not nature but the unrelenting harassment of Indians. As he later observed, he had spent nearly forty years of his life fighting Indians in one place or another.²⁵⁸ It was rumored that

the Indians received assistance from the reservation in conducting their attacks on frontier homes. One disgruntled settler quoted in Joseph Carroll McConnell's 1936 edition of The West Texas Frontier asserted that:

[We] visited Fort Arbuckle and was informed by the beef contractor, who spoke the Indian language, that he heard the Kiowas boast of their recent raids in Texas and had secured some scalps and heep horses. It was well known that the Indian outrages of this period was the work of mostly reservation Indians, the scalping knife and bullets that decimated all northern Texas were furnished by our paternal government.²⁵⁹

Always on the defensive, Whaley maintained a well-stocked arsenal in a small strong-room redoubt. Together, the small settlement maintained a constant vigil for hostile Indians and kept arms nearby at all times. As men worked in the fields, it was often necessary for one to mount guard duty while the others went about their tasks. Even the cavalry found them to be vigilant. A Fort Richardson patrol arrived in the dead of night to find the settlers wide awake and ready for battle.²⁶⁰ Despite numerous precautions, there was rarely a month in which the ranch did not suffer attack from at least one raiding Indian party. These raids frequently resulted in a significant loss of property and occasionally in a loss of human life.²⁶¹

One of the last serious Indian raids in north central Texas occurred near Whaley's home in 1876. Indians attacked Whaley and three mining engineers hunting for copper deposits along the Red River, but all escaped to the security of Whaley's home fortifications.²⁶² After this encounter, Indian problems became fewer in number and in gravity. However, as communities reestablished themselves and the specter of raiding Indians as the common enemy began to fade, people began to reopen old wounds and revived enmity among themselves.

In neighboring Montague County, a group calling itself the "Georgia Army" began their night rides as early as 1871. Those offensive to the "Army" were called out of their homes and taken to be hanged. Sheriff W. T. Wayborne identified and arrested the ringleaders but local juries acquitted them for lack of evidence.²⁶³ Northern interests formed their own gangs. J. P. Earle, a contemporary settler, surveyor, buffalo hunter and memoir writer recalled the activities of both factions:

In 1874, the Jesse Brown gang took the lives of several men and one woman. The outfit operated differently to what the Georgia Army did. The Georgia Army would scour the country in a body and take men from their families and hang them to the limb of a tree; while the Jesse Brown gang would lie in wait and shoot you from the brush. Jesse Brown, his father, and two brothers were arrested, tried and sentenced. Two of the boys were convicted of murder, the third was

sentenced to life imprisonment and the old man was freed. It was thought that the Browns were related to old John Brown, of Harper's Ferry notoriety.²⁶⁴

The postwar moral decay had spread across north central Texas. The Fort Worth Democrat published a report in its entirety on Saturday, March 23, 1873, from the Sherman [Texas] Courier:

The Sherman Courier says this about that city: According to our reporter, who is fully posted in the matter, Sherman now contains seven gambling hells, which are frequented by about one hundred professional gamblers. Seven houses of prostitution, with thirty-three inmates, and two dance houses; and men of family with virtuous wives and innocent babes, are not infrequently seen in these places. We withhold names for the sake of the respect we have for those wives and babes.

And young men claiming respectability are seen to go in and out and have been seen and spoken to in disreputable places. We now here abandon our contemplated expose of Sherman by lamplight. We already know too much--things we did not expect or wish to know. We didn't want to know that officers of the law, not only winked at but aided and encouraged such things, as we learn that a few of them do. So much for that.²⁶⁵

In May, 1874, the Texas legislature passed an act for enforcement of criminal laws and to provide an additional measure of state protection for frontier settlers.²⁶⁶ A special force of Texas Rangers, the Frontier Battalion, was organized by Major John B. Jones, under authorization by Governor Richard Coke, and detailed various companies to be

stationed around the state. Rangers had long been a part of both formal and informal peacekeeping in Texas and the 1874 Rangers were replacements for the state police of Davis's regime. According to one Wise County settler, "The nature of the [civilian] ranger's work was not very different from that of the federal soldier. The primary difference was that the ranger was an Indian exterminator while the federal soldiers were only guards."²⁶⁷ Some attribute to the Rangers the major part in saving the frontier Texans from extermination by Indians.²⁶⁸ J. P. Earle of Clay County had a different opinion of Rangers when he described the Ranger camp at Henrietta:

The state legislature authorized the organization of a ranger company of from thirty-five to forty men to be made up in Henrietta to guard the frontier against Indian raids, and in the spring of '74, a company was organized in Henrietta, known as the frontier rangers. E. F. Ikard was elected captain, and George Campbell of Montague County, first lieutenant. When they started out one would imagine that they were going to have an Indian every morning for breakfast. They patrolled the country from Red River to the north to Lost Valley in Young County, and if they ever saw an Indian I never heard of it. About the most they ever did was to answer to roll call and draw their rations and pay.²⁶⁹

Texas law enforcement officers and Rangers also interceded in several feuds. The best known and most murderous of the disturbances in north central Texas was

the notorious Lee-Peacock feud. It lasted for four years, from 1867 to 1871, and resulted in the death of at least twelve men and the wounding of many others. Most of the violence occurred in an area of dense thickets at the contiguous corners of Collin, Grayson, Fannin, and Hunt Counties known as "Five Corners." This heavily wooded section had previously served as a hiding place during the war for slackers, deserters, thieves, and renegades.²⁷⁰

Intolerances adopted during the war continued among some family members, according to J. Wesley Edwards, an early resident of Wise County:

My grandfather was a soldier in the Northern Army, stationed at a garrison at Columbus, Texas. Grandfather died before my father was born in November, 1866, and left my grandmother destitute, in Elizabethtown, Denton County, with no relative near. I don't know why she was there alone but I am pretty sure that she was abandoned by her relatives. She was married to a Yankee soldier. This seems incredible to us, but no doubt it seemed reasonable to the people of the day. Grandfather was a great admirer of General Sherman, and he wanted the baby named William Tecumseh Sherman Edwards. The relatives were evidently softened up after he was gone, but they were horror-stricken at this name grandmother gave Dad. They persuaded her to change it to William Columbus Edwards.²⁷¹

Where northern sentiment dominated in communities after the war, bitterness between factions often ran high. Many Unionists who had fled to Kansas during the war returned to their old communities, and in Jacksboro, the

town was strongly northern in sentiment. When Fort Richardson at Jacksboro was first established, six companies of the 6th U. S. Cavalry were stationed at the new fort. By 1873, units of the 10th U. S. Cavalry, "the Buffalo Soldiers," were also transferred to Fort Richardson. Sometimes violence erupted between civilians and the black troops. But as expressed by some Texans, anyone in the despised Yankee uniform was hated, particularly a black, Yankee soldier.²⁷² Thomas F. Horton described the political turmoil that surfaced in Jack County:

[In Jack County], what was called the "iron clad" oath was put in force to the effect that no one could vote who had in any way aided the confederacy. This in effect disqualified the great mass of southern citizens. The Freedman's Bureau was established at that time but did not affect Jack County to any extent as there were but few [civilian] Negroes here. At that time we were under military law, civil government being nominal and secondary to the military.²⁷³

Regardless of the political situation on the frontier, the Indians were an ever-present danger until 1876. A combination of events finally motivated action to remove the Plains Indian as a disruptive element in the settlement of north central Texas. General of the Army William T. Sherman's near ambush by Indian territory reservation Kiowas in 1871 expedited the end of Indian raids in north

central Texas. General Sherman had received repeated reports of maraudings and unrestricted warfare by Indians and to determine the validity of these reports, made an on-site inspection near Fort Richardson in Jack County. Sherman and his escort had just passed the place of ambush a short time before the attack was made. As Satanta and Big-Tree returned to the reservation near Fort Sill, the federal Indian agent at the post rounded up the stolen stock from the raid. He had Satanta and Big-Tree arrested on Sherman's order and released them to civil authorities for trial. Satanta was sent to the Texas penitentiary for ninety-nine years but Governor Edmund J. Davis pardoned both of them after a few years. Davis, however, promised Satanta that if he were caught raiding again, he would go back into the penitentiary.²⁷⁴

Until this attack embarrassed General Sherman, the official military viewpoint had persisted that Indian raids were being exaggerated. The affair brought swift changes in the Indian pursuit strategy of the army and was the beginning of the end of the Quaker or Peace policy. The Quaker peacemaking attempts had almost tied the hands of the military in dealing with the Indians north of the Red River.²⁷⁵ The defensive policy which, with few exceptions, had been followed by the army for a quarter of a century,

drew to an end. No longer would the troops chase marauding Indians. Instead, they would seek out the enemy and destroy him wherever he might be found. Also under the new policy, offending Indians found it more difficult to secure sanctuary on the reservation. It was to prove a hard and cruel program, but was extremely effective.²⁷⁶

Time and again Kiowa and Comanche Indians, slipping off the reservations to raid, brought tragedy to settlers. Attacking Indians apparently made little distinction between former rebel or yank, black or white. All were liable to the cruelest behavior by Indians. One of the most well known black frontiersman in north central Texas was Britton Johnson.²⁷⁷ Brit, as he was locally known, had received widespread attention when he rescued his family and several white captives kidnapped in the Elm Creek raid of October 13, 1864.²⁷⁸ However, even Brit's frontier expertise was of little lifesaving value when he and his freight crew were attacked by a large group of raiding Kiowas on the open road in January, 1871.²⁷⁹ While hauling supplies from Weatherford to their homes near Fort Griffin, Brit saw that the only chance of survival from the attack was to try to hold out until a larger force of rescuers might appear. The men cut their horses' throats to use the carcasses as shields. Behind these

fortifications, the freighters mounted a desperate defense. His companions were killed early in the fight, leaving Brit to use their guns for rapid fire effect whenever the Indians charged. He beat the Indians off again and again, killing and wounding many, but it was inevitable that a well aimed bullet would take his life.²⁸⁰ Enraged by his resistance, the Indians mutilated his body, scalping and disemboweling him. They finished their mutilation by inserting Brit's slain dog into his body cavity. When Brit's body was found, 173 empty cartridge cases were counted around him.²⁸¹

By 1876, buffalo hunters accomplished what the army could not do. The great herds of buffalo, the Plain Indian's primary food supply, were wiped out by hunters and Indian raids slowly ceased. One well known business enterprise was founded by Josiah Wright Mooar and John Wesley Mooar, brothers and commercial buffalo hunters on the Great Plains in Kansas. John Wesley Mooar had developed important marketing contacts with tanners in New York, while his brother procured the skins and meat products. Buffalo hides were plentiful and in 1871, a few hides collected by the Mooar brothers were shipped to both England and Pennsylvania where tanners developed less expensive ways to convert buffalo hides into marketable

products. The tanners' success assured an enormous new market for buffalo hides.

Buffalo robes were ideal in keeping cold winter winds out of open carriages, cured buffalo meat was popular and there was a great demand for leather belting. When the Mooar brothers received an initial order for 2,000 hides at \$3.50 each, the effort to supply great numbers of buffalo hides began in earnest. As the demand for buffalo products expanded, the herds in Kansas gradually were exterminated. Hearing of the great buffalo herds in Texas, the Mooar brothers moved their enterprise to the area near Jacksboro where they combined forces with J. P. Earle.²⁸²

Earle, a hunter and early chronicler of the region, described the sight of unlimited buffalo herds on the high prairies of Clay, Wichita and Archer Counties near Henrietta, the only village west of Montague. Grazing buffalo were as common as Texas cattle and it was not unusual to see several thousand of them near a stream or lake. Much like the wild geese, they emigrated south in the early fall; and during the winter, the animals grazed in the Brazos and Wichita valleys.²⁸³

Earle was a spectator to the process of commercial hunting in Clay and surrounding counties in the mid-1870's. In 1874, he told of a group of hunters, including D. W.

Spore, William Parish and M. C. Houze, who went out to the main herds, located some thirty-five or forty miles west, to kill buffalo for their hides. By 1876, buffalo hunting had become such a paying business that many hunting camps were started across northwest Texas. A hunting camp usually consisted of about fifteen men--hunters, skinners and other workers. Each man would usually kill, for skinning, several hundred buffalo a day.²⁸⁴

According to Earle, Henrietta was a supply headquarters as well as a hide depot for the hunters. The freighters who carried out supplies to the hunters' camps brought back green buffalo hides. They worked from eight to twelve yoke of cattle to the team, with two trail wagons. When several of the ox teams were strung out loaded with buffalo hides, Earle was reminded of a caravan crossing the desert, or the loaded wagons crossing the Staked Plains during the 1850's bound for California.²⁸⁵ The freighters carried the buffalo hides to Sherman, where they were sold for two fifty to three dollars a piece.²⁸⁶

Most of the buffalo herds in north central and northwest Texas had been killed by midsummer of 1879 and the commercial hunting of buffalos ended in Texas.²⁸⁷ Some hunters and their crews remained to collect bones for fertilizer and bone china use, while others were reduced to

cutting and selling hay for use by the government. With the extermination of the buffalos in the state, the Indian almost completely stopped his raids on the Texas frontier. J. P. Earle always maintained that if the buffalo herds in northwest Texas had been exterminated years earlier, raids by the Indians would have been less frequent and less costly.²⁸⁸

Between 1860 and 1874, north central Texas families had experienced tumultuous years of civil war, economic destruction, Indian and outlaw warfare and political and physical reconstruction. The year 1874 found the frontier fading in north central Texas as citizens entered into a new phase of state economic and political development. In that year, Governor Richard Coke and conservative Democrats ousted radical Republican Governor Edmund Davis and his associates to regain complete control of the state government. The newly elected officials quickly ended Davis's expensive programs because the state's treasury was nearly bankrupt. Although the Texas economy suffered from a manpower shortage caused by the deaths of approximately 65,000 soldiers during the Civil War, the manufacturing of farm and industrial equipment regained its previous production level and overall cotton production quickly recovered to antebellum levels. Texas's economy, unlike

that of other Confederate states, had been battered but not ruined by the war and Reconstruction.

One particular strength of the state's economy was the reserve of enormous tracts of land for bartering or sale. Texas greatly expanded railroad construction and by 1873 stimulated commerce along 1,500 miles of new track. Concurrently, the cattle industry was in full production, employing thousands to drive millions of cattle to out-of-state markets and return with hard specie.

Even though conservative Democrats cut state funds from education, judicial, immigrant and civil security programs the attraction of reasonably priced land sold by railroads drew newcomers in ever-increasing numbers to the north central Texas region. New settlers with ready cash contributed their labor and capital to specie starved communities. Since the main Texas cattle trails crossed north central Texas's pastures, money was to be made in supplies, hotel services, blacksmithing and other enterprises of the cattle industry. However, for some old timers, better times proved elusive. J. P. Earle recalled, "They told us that Mr. Prosperity would be around to see us. Well he never arrived. If he ever got started, he must have gotten water-bound in Arkansas."²⁸⁹

Newspaper editors of the region recognized the need to fill the prairies with new settlers and they took great pride in promoting their individual communities to the world. The Fort Worth Democrat in the January 25, 1873, edition boldly invited northerners to make Texas their new home. The editor contrasted the genial climate and rich north central Texas soil to the "frozen ground and . . . snow and ice" in which farmers labored in the North. The Texas land, continued the promoters, was said to produce greater yields with less labor and pastures in Texas afforded more abundant forage than those of the icy realms. Large profits were guaranteed to those who would come. Some editorials used extreme "boosterism" to assure interested parties that "we will assure them a hearty welcome, and a life of prosperity, contentment and happiness."²⁹⁰ Editors also emphasized that most bitterness from the war's experiences was no longer evident. "We say to those who wish to come, while other states are enduring the oppression of corrupt and incompetent officers, Texas has never felt but little the effects of the war, and today political strife and hatred is at an end."²⁹¹

The era of war and Reconstruction brought important changes to north central Texas. Innovations in

transportation and agriculture, the extermination of the buffalo, the expulsion of Native Americans and the establishment of the cattle industry brought a gradual end to the frontier and its attendant patterns of violence and lawlessness. The counties of the area underwent a steady population increase. The concept of limited, decentralized state government was established in the Constitution of 1876. As families of the region faced new challenges they remembered the words of Governor James W. Throckmorton: "We are today . . . entering upon a new era, contributing another chapter to the already checkered and remarkable history of the state. Let each of us perform our allotted parts . . . and promote its future . . . in good order."²⁹²

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