THE PERSISTENCE OF ANTEBELLUM PLANTER
FAMILIES IN POSTBELLUM EAST TEXAS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Linda Sue Newland, B.A., M.L.I.S.

Denton, Texas

May, 1998

The effect of the Civil War and Reconstruction on the southern planter elite remains a topic of interest to historians. Did the war ruin the planter class? Or, did they maintain economic, geographic, or social persistence? This study focuses on the persistence from 1850 to 1880 of five East Texas large planter families who owned one hundred or more slaves in 1860. An analysis of data primarily from county, state, and federal records form the basis of this study. Four families persisted as wealthy influential members of their postbellum communities. One family remained geographically persistent but not wealthy. The experiences of these families suggest that large East Texas planter families found it possible to persist in spite of the Civil War and Reconstruction.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1860 on the eve of the Civil War, sixty-four slaveholders in Texas owned one hundred or more slaves. They had moved to Texas from other southern states and prospered, making their families members of the economic and social elite.¹ The war, emancipation, and Reconstruction, however, brought change into their lives, just as these events inevitably affected all southerners. The nature and extent of the changes in the lives of planter families throughout the South is a topic of scholarly debate. Did the war ruin the planter class? Or, did they persist, remain in social and economic control, and return to positions of leadership? Whether or not planter families persisted in post-war East Texas is the focus of this study.

Historians often touch on the question of the persistence of the southern planter elite. Many focus on the planters’ post-war leadership in business and politics or their economic plight. William A. Dunning wrote in 1907 that the “Union forces almost destroyed the commercial system of the South, and thus reduced the life of even the well-to-do classes to a pitifully primitive—almost barbarous—level.”² Other historians such as

Claude Bowers writing in 1929 also supported the interpretation of a destroyed South. Bowers, however, described how the planter aristocracy came back to political power after Reconstruction.\footnote{3} W. J. Cash in his 1941 popular history, *The Mind of the South*, emphasized post-war continuity, and described planters and their sons moving into positions of leadership in industry and commerce.\footnote{4} But in 1951, C. Vann Woodward, in his influential book, *Origins of the New South*, wrote about the economic “downfall of the old planter class.” His argument that the leaders of the New South came from the middle class rather than the planter class was not seriously challenged until the late 1970s.\footnote{5}

Two decades after publication of *Origins of the New South* historians began to use local studies to question the validity of Woodward’s argument. In 1976 Jonathan Wiener challenged the prevailing view of a destroyed southern elite when his article, “Planter Persistence and Social Change: Alabama, 1850-1870,” appeared in the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. Wiener used United States manuscript census schedules to show that the planter elite in five Alabama counties were both geographically and socially persistent from 1850 to 1870. Also, when compared to other available studies, Wiener showed the Alabama planters to be “among the most stable and persistent social groups in nineteenth-century America.”\footnote{6} Dwight Billings in his 1979 study of North Carolina, found

\footnote{4}{W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1941), x, 194.}
\footnote{6}{Jonathan M. Wiener, “Planter Persistence and Social Change: Alabama, 1850-}
that leading planters and agrarians, not the middle class, built the industries of the New South. He gave five examples of planter families who were prominent before and after the war in politics, industry, and society. Billings also found that landed gentry led in many post-war industries such as textile manufacturing, banking, railroad building, and other large enterprises. For example, the majority of North Carolina mill owners from 1865 to 1884 were prominent planters and agrarians. Crandall Shifflett also studied the economic and political hegemony of the planter class in a 1982 book that focused on Louisa County, Virginia, from 1860 to 1900. Shifflett found that the planters, although less wealthy, retained their large estates. These planters did not continue to influence national politics, but they remained in leadership positions in local politics.

Michael Wayne concluded in his 1983 political study of the planter elite in the Natchez district from 1860 to 1880 that the planters remained economically and influentially persistent in the local society. Wayne did not deny that the Federal invasion of 1863 devastated the area or that planters had serious financial problems. Although they often persisted geographically because they could not sell their land, they still invested in business activities such as manufacturing and remained in positions of leadership in local

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affairs. Also writing in 1983 Randolph B. Campbell found geographic and social persistence of the planter elite in Harrison County, Texas, from 1850 to 1880. Campbell attributed planter persistence in part to the lack of physical destruction in Texas during the Civil War and continued land ownership. Lewis Wynne also studied the extent of postbellum power of planter families in his 1986 examination of politics in Georgia from 1865 to 1892. He found that except for a brief period in the late 1860s planters controlled state politics. "Georgia in 1892 was," he wrote, "with slight modifications, as much of a planter republic as it had been in 1861."

Gavin Wright in his book *Old South, New South*, written in 1986, argued that once the great planters lost their slaves, they were "different" people because their economic interests had changed. In economics slaveholding defined the planter class. Wright, therefore, argued that after emancipation, since that defining factor was gone, the planter class did not exist. Economic factors alone, however, do not fully describe a person or his interests. The loss of their slaves affected the planters because they had to develop new ways of obtaining labor and working with freedmen, but they were the same people. Their persistence as individuals and a class can be studied.

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10 Ibid., 92-93, 106-7, 99. Woodward cites Wayne's study as an example of the great change that occurred in the post-Civil War era not as an example of continuity in Woodward, *Thinking Back*, 78.
Edward L. Ayers in *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction*, seems to differ only with the degree of persistence found by some of the previous authors. He wrote that planters tried to retain their family’s pre-war power and “it took decades for the power to fade.” But Ayers also found it “striking how much of the planters’ power had eroded, how much prestige and initiative had been taken over by businessmen. . . .” By the 1880s, the emigration from the plantations by the pre-war planters’ sons had destroyed the planter class.  

Richard Kilbourne also suggested the ruin of the planter class in his 1995 book examining post-war economics in East Feliciana Parish, Louisiana. The author found that many planters were either bankrupt or heavily in debt. The ownership of land did not add to a planter’s wealth because it “had not been the basis of wealth before the war and it did not fill the vacuum left by emancipation.” Therefore, although many historians have found evidence to support the geographic, economic, and local political persistence of the planter class, it appears that the nature and extent of that persistence across the South still remains in question.

The purpose of the following study is to determine the effect of the Civil War and Reconstruction on the persistence of antebellum planter families in postbellum East Texas. First, were these families geographically persistent? In other words, did they find it necessary to move after the Civil War? Second, were they economically persistent? In

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spite of the loss of the monetary and labor value of their slaves, were they still among the wealthiest inhabitants of their counties? Did they have the same economic pursuits, such as agriculture or business? Third, were they socially persistent? Did they retain their status as leaders in their communities? Important components of each question are the family's length of persistence and the reasons for change or persistence. The answers to these questions describe the lives of particular large planter families. They also help explain the economic and social conditions in the planters' communities, and perhaps add to the understanding of the role planters played in the post-war south.

An analysis of data compiled about five East Texas planter families forms the basis of this study. East Texas is liberally defined as a thirty-six-county area extending from the eastern border of Texas west to a line from Red River County southwest to Robertson County and then southeast to Grimes County. The southern border continues from Grimes County east to Newton County. Twenty-three families living in this region in 1860 owned one hundred or more slaves and may therefore be considered members of the planter elite for purposes of testing their persistence. Only five families were chosen to allow an in-depth analysis of each family. The selection process eliminated those who were childless or lived in a county where the courthouse records have since been destroyed.

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Planters with several children who left accessible original documents and whose county had a newspaper from 1860 to 1880 received preference. Also, to distribute the analysis across the East Texas region, no two planter families were chosen who lived in the same county. Those chosen included the families of planters Thomas Blackshear of Grimes County, William Garrett of San Augustine County, Byrd M. Grace of Polk and San Jacinto Counties, B. F. Hammond of Robertson County, and William T. Scott of Harrison County. (See map on page eight.)

Federal census records from 1850 to 1880 provided names, ages, relationships, and professions of many of the family members. These records also included information on the value of equipment, livestock, land, and crops on the plantations. County records, including deed, probate, marriage, election returns, and tax records, also contained valuable information about each planter and his family. The tax records provided the value of property for each planter’s family from 1850 to 1880. Comparative data on other taxpayers in the county were also collected at five-year intervals or less, if it appeared that significant changes had occurred in the status of the families being studied. Comparative data include the total number of property owners in the county and the total value of their property. When available, manuscript collections, county histories, newspapers, genealogies, and other secondary sources were used to help trace the persistence and change of the five planter families.
CHAPTER 2

THE THOMAS EDWARD BLACKSHEAR FAMILY

Thomas Edward Blackshear was born on August 18, 1809, into a prominent, Georgia planter family whose lineage in America began during the 1600s.\(^1\) His parents, Edward and Emily Goodwin Mitchell Blackshear, migrated with the southwestern Georgia frontier. They moved with their children from Washington County to Pulaski County and, finally, to Thomas County where Edward Blackshear established a large plantation before his death on September 3, 1829.\(^2\) Thomas, age twenty and the second youngest of five children, inherited twelve slaves from his father's estate.\(^3\) With these slaves Thomas began to build his own plantation.

The year before his father's death, Thomas Blackshear graduated from the University of Georgia. On December 8, 1831, he married Emily Goodwyn Raines, a native of Thomas County. Blackshear became a prominent planter and civic leader. He served in the Georgia militia during the 1830s and early 1840s, rising in rank from lieutenant to

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\(^3\) Note, p. 4, Diary and Memorandum Book, 1830-1868, Thomas E. Blackshear Papers, Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.
major general. He was a member of the Georgia House of Representatives from 1836 to 1837 and a member of the Georgia Senate in 1840. Blackshear was also a stockholder and a member of the board of directors of the Brunswick and Florida Railway Company, serving as secretary of the board in 1839.4

The Blackshears prospered in Thomas County. By 1850, forty-year-old Thomas Blackshear owned $12,000 worth of real estate and eighty-one slaves. He and his wife had six children living at home, from ages two to twelve years.5 The Blackshears lived near his mother who owned fifty-five slaves and his sister-in-law, Harriet, who owned 113.6 By the mid-1850s, Thomas County was no longer a frontier region. Edward Blackshear had followed the frontier; now his son, Thomas, uprooted his well-established family and moved to another frontier region—Grimes County, Texas.7

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5 Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Schedule 1 (Free Inhabitants), Thomas County, Georgia, p. 27, RG 29, National Archives, Washington, D. C., (microfilm, Texas State Library, Austin); Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Schedule 2 (Slave Inhabitants), Thomas County, Georgia, pp. 136-37, RG 29, National Archives, Washington, D. C., (microfilm, Texas State Library, Austin). The Blackshear children included, in increasing age, Emily, Sarah (Sallie), Duncan, Angelina, Edward, and James. The census did not list the oldest child, Robert David, age seventeen, as a member of the Blackshear household in 1850. He may have been away at school. Blackshear, Blacksheariana, 392, 373-74.

6 Seventh Census, Schedule 1, Thomas County, Georgia, p. 27; Seventh Census, Schedule 2, Thomas County, Georgia, pp. 137-39.

7 Blackshear, Blacksheariana, 407. From the 1820s until 1860 the small percentage of improved farmland in Grimes County indicate that it was still a frontier region. Tyler, et. al., eds., “Grimes County,” The New Handbook of Texas, Vol. 3, 344.
During a four-year period from 1855 to 1860, Thomas E. Blackshear moved his family and slaves to Grimes County and established a large estate. Blackshear first traveled to Texas in 1855. In early 1856, Thomas and Everard H. Blackshear, both noted in the deed record as being Georgians, bought three parcels of land in Grimes County for $11,014. The acreage included 206 acres on the Navasota River and 811.5 acres east of the Brazos River.

Robert David, Blackshear's oldest son, came to Texas in 1856 bringing the first group of the family's slaves with him. Robert David, known as R. D. in many public records, seems to have remained in Texas to look after his father's property. R. D. paid Grimes County taxes for 1857 on $25,920 of property, including the 1,016.5 acres his father and Everard had purchased. Thomas Blackshear probably owned most of the

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8 "W. E. Blackshear," File, Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.
9 Deed Records, Grimes County, Book B-2, pp. 402, 410-16, County Clerk's Office, Grimes County Courthouse, Anderson, Texas. E. H. was probably Thomas Blackshear's first cousin, Everard Hamilton. Everard Hamilton was a son of David Blackshear who was the brother of Edward Blackshear, Thomas Blackshear's father. Blackshear, Blacksheariana, 63, 143, 407; Huxford, Pioneers of Wiregrass Georgia, Vol. 5, 35.
10 "W. E. Blackshear," Vertical File, Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.
11 Records of the Comptroller of Public Accounts, Ad Valorem Tax Divisions, County Real and Personal Property Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1857, p. 1, Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin (hereafter described as Tax Rolls); Deed Records, Grimes County, Book B-2, pp. 402, 410-16. The identification of the names of the original grantees in the tax rolls match Thomas and E. H. Blackshear's recorded deeds. The number of acres differs by one.
other property, which consisted of thirty slaves, eleven horses, and $320 worth of wagons
and hogs.\textsuperscript{12}

Of the 661 other property owners who paid county taxes in 1857, only ten
reported a greater property value. Also slaveholders, they each owned five to eighty more
slaves than Thomas Blackshear. Blackshear had bought his first land in the county just one
year before, and had moved only a portion of his property from Georgia, but his family
was already included in the 1.7 percent of property owners in Grimes County who owned
14 percent of all property there.\textsuperscript{13}

The property values his son reported grew as Blackshear moved his slaves and
family to Texas over the next few years. His wife, children, and a second group of slaves
arrived in September 1857. Everard sold his half-interest in the land to Thomas in 1858.\textsuperscript{14}
The taxes paid by R. D. for his father in 1858 listed $54,925 worth of property, including
104 slaves. The family’s last group of slaves arrived in Grimes County on January 8,
1859.\textsuperscript{15} Thomas Blackshear’s property value had grown to $92,960. He had bought an
additional 640 acres, and the family now owned 146 slaves valued at $73,000.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{12} Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1857, p. I.
\textsuperscript{13} Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1857. Each taxpayer’s entry was compared with R.
D. Blackshear’s entry. Totals for those taxpayers with the same amount or more in
property value as Blackshear were used to calculate the comparisons.
\textsuperscript{14} “W. E. Blackshear,” Vertical File, Center for American History; Deed Records,
Grimes County, Book C-2, pp. 509-11.
\textsuperscript{15} Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1858, p. 2; Note for January 8, 1859, Diary and
\textsuperscript{16} Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1859, p. 3; Deed Records, Grimes County, Book C-
2, pp. 731-32.
The Blackshear household was very busy settling down in 1859, building slave houses and a mill, and growing crops.\textsuperscript{17} Blackshear's diary entry at the end of the year read: "We have made good crops and I feel truly thankful. I have had so much fixing to do and it has given me some trouble. Next year I will try to do better and hope the seasons may be favorable. So fare well old 1859—thank you for all your favors."\textsuperscript{18}

By 1860 Thomas Blackshear had a well-established plantation. His household included his wife, Emily, eight of his nine children, two boarders, and 123 slaves.\textsuperscript{19} He owned 2,131.5 acres of land worth $42,176. Approximately 900 improved acres yielded 400 bales of ginned cotton.\textsuperscript{20} As the largest slaveowner in Grimes County, Blackshear had invested 67 percent of his property, $96,000, in slaves. Livestock and miscellaneous property brought the taxable value to $142,676. The 1860 average property value for all taxpayers in Grimes County was $8,121. Only two other men, Douglas McAlpin and George Stonum, Sr., reported a greater property value, although they owned fewer slaves than Blackshear. These two men and Blackshear represented only .3 percent of the

\textsuperscript{17} Notes, January 1, 1859, November-December, 1859, Diary and Memorandum Book, 1859-1863, Thomas E. Blackshear Papers.
\textsuperscript{18} Note, December 31, 1859, Diary and Memorandum Book, 1859-1863, Thomas E. Blackshear Papers.
\textsuperscript{20} Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1860, p. 2; Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Schedule 4 (Productions of Agriculture), Grimes County, Texas, p. 3, Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin.
property owners, but they owned 7.4 percent of the property. Blackshear's total wealth of $150,000 as recorded on the 1860 census was 2,200 percent or twenty-two times greater than the average wealthholding in the East Texas region. In 1860 Thomas Blackshear was among the economic elite of his county and region.

R. D. Blackshear now lived in Washington County across from his father's land just north of where the Navasota River flows into the Brazos River. His household included his wife, Emily Susan Wyche of Thomas County, Georgia, their daughter, Mary, and twenty-one slaves. It is possible that a small portion of the slaves and livestock listed on the 1859 tax rolls by R. D. for his father, were actually owned by R. D. or given to him by his father.

The Civil War brought change to the Blackshear household. On February 23, 1861, Blackshear wrote in his diary, "The people vote today to ratify the action of the

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21 Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1860, pp. 2, 20, 26. The complete Tax Rolls for Grimes County, 1860, including the Recapitulation at the end of the roll, were used to gather data to compare county taxpayers. The same technique was applied to other years and other counties; Eighth Census, Schedule 1, Grimes County, p. 31; Campbell and Lowe, Wealth and Power, 116.

22 Tax Rolls, Washington County, 1860, p. 5; County Survey Index Map, Grimes County, October 1922, Archives and Records Division, Texas General Land Office, Austin; County Survey Index Map, Washington County, January 6, 1976.

23 Eighth Census, Schedule 1, Washington County, p. 216; Blackshear, Blacksheariana, 374; Tax Rolls, Washington County, 1860, p. 5.

24 Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1859, p. 3; Tax Rolls, Washington County, 1860, p. 5; Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1860, p. 2. The decrease in Thomas Blackshear's slave count on the Tax Rolls by twenty-three slaves from 1859 to 1860, could be partially accounted for by twenty-one of the slaves belonging to or being given to R. D. after he paid Grimes County taxes in 1859.
Convention in passing an 'ordinance of secession' from the United States. God grant it may
be best for the people, but I am fearful of trouble.”

At age fifty-one, Thomas Blackshear did not serve in the Confederate army,
although four of his sons, R. D., James, Edward, and Duncan, did serve. James enlisted in
the 4th Texas Regiment, Company G, Hood’s Brigade, on July 19, 1861, and served until
the end of the war. He received wounds at the battle of Antietam in Maryland. R. D. also
enlisted in the 4th Texas Regiment, Company G, but not until March 19, 1862. He
suffered wounds at Antietam and at the battle of Spotsylvania in Virginia. Edward enrolled
on October 12, 1861, in the 10th Texas Regiment, Company A. Union forces captured
Edward on January 11, 1863, at Arkansas Post. They released him three months later on
April 7. He then transferred to the same company as his brothers. Edward died, however,
the following June, while on furlough in Thomas County, Georgia. Duncan, the youngest
of the four brothers, enlisted in the 4th Texas Regiment, Company G, on March 12, 1863.
He also experienced wounds, but he continued to serve until the end of the war.

In a letter dated January 16, 1864, R. H. Bassett, the captain of the Fourth Texas
Regiment, requested of Captain E. P. Turner of Major General John B. Magruder’s staff
that he transfer R. D. Blackshear to Texas due to chronic illness. He described R. D. as a

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25 Note, February 23, 1861, Diary and Memorandum Book, 1860-1862, Thomas
E. Blackshear Papers.
26 Index to the Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in
Organizations from the State of Texas, RG 109, microfilm M227, National Archives,
Washington, D. C.; Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in
Organizations from the State of Texas, RG 109, film M323, rolls 283, 337, National
Archives, Washington, D. C.
“gentleman of great energy, integrity, and industry, also fine education and business capacity.” He further described all four brothers as “exemplary soldiers,” stating that "there is not one of them, at anytime, but which would have disdained the idea of putting a substitute into service, notwithstanding their ample means to do so." R. D. retired to the Invalid Corps in Washington County, Texas, on July 11, 1864.\textsuperscript{27}

During the war Thomas Blackshear continued to operate his plantation, support the war effort, and look after his family. He invested in 416 additional acres of land and $10,370 worth of Confederate treasury notes.\textsuperscript{28} His younger children continued their education throughout the war. Sallie and Emma attended the Washington Female Collegiate Institute and the Chappell Hill Female College. Blackshear enrolled Duncan in a boarding school in November 1862, and paid board and tuition for William to attend a school near Plantersville in 1864.\textsuperscript{29}

That same year Blackshear had $142,090 in taxable property, almost the same amount of property he owned in 1860, but he now had 75 percent invested in 120 slaves and more than $10,000 of Confederate treasury notes.\textsuperscript{30} The events of the next year brought a great change to the value of Blackshear's taxable property. Thomas Blackshear

\begin{footnotes}
\item[27] Letter from R. H. Bassett to E. P. Turner, January 16, 1864, Compiled Service Records, M323, roll 283; Compiled Service Records M323, roll 283.
\item[29] Bill from Washington Female Collegiate Institute, August 1, 1860, Thomas E. Blackshear Papers; Receipts, 1860-1863, Thomas E. Blackshear Papers; Receipt from J. K. Markey, November 28, 1862, Thomas E. Blackshear Papers; Receipt, April 25, 1864, Thomas E. Blackshear Papers; Grimes County Historical Commission, \textit{History of Grimes County: Land of Heritage and Progress} (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1982), 224.
\end{footnotes}
noted one event in his diary. After a list of the names and dates of birth of the 218 slaves he had owned during his lifetime, he wrote, "Emancipated June 19/65."³¹

With the emancipation of his slaves and the loss of the value of the Confederate treasury notes, Thomas Blackshear's taxable property value decreased 76 percent from its 1860 value of $142,676 to a low of $34,690 in 1865. Land accounted for 89 percent of his remaining property. The average taxable property value of all 859 county taxpayers was only $2,498 in 1865, a decrease of 69 percent from the 1860 average. Blackshear's greater than average decrease in property, however, did not eliminate him from the economic elite of Grimes County. Only Leander Cannon, I. M. Camp, and Douglas McAlpin owned more taxable property than Blackshear in 1865. Respectively, these men reported $42,300, $64,800, and $110,600 worth of property. Ninety-two percent of their property was invested in land. Blackshear was still in an elite .5 percent of the property owners who owned 12 percent of the county's property.³²

R. D. Blackshear experienced a slightly greater decrease in wealth than his father. His 1864 property value of $27,827 had decreased 81 percent to $5,308 in 1865. Similar to his father's experience, however, he maintained his position in the local economic hierarchy.³³

³⁰ Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1864, p. 1.
³¹ Note, June 19, 1865, Diary and Memorandum Book, 1830-1868, Thomas E. Blackshear Papers.
³² Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1860, p. 2; Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1865, pp. 2, 7, 6, 20. Blackshear owned twelve times more property in 1865 than the average county value.
³³ Tax Rolls, Washington County, 1864, p. 4; Tax Rolls, Washington County,
The Blackshears, like other slaveholding planter families, faced a different labor situation after the Civil War. Before emancipation Blackshear seems to have placed some slaves in positions of trust. On July 13, 1861, Blackshear wrote in his diary, “My good negro man Edmund died. He was an honest, truthful, and industrious man and a faithful servant and I shall miss his services and influence a great deal.” Blackshear buried Edmund the next day with “a sad heart.” After the war, however, he had little faith in a system of black laborers. He described the freed slaves he contracted with in 1866 as “idle, lazy, and thriftless.” In 1867 he divided his land near Navasota into small farms and rented them to white men only. His plan was to have white tenants on all his land, and he expected owners of all other large plantations in Texas to do the same. In February 1867, Blackshear wrote a letter to the editor of the Thomasville, Georgia, *Southern Enterprise* that not only described his plans, but praised Navasota and suggested that he would go to Georgia and bring back white renters if necessary. Thomas Blackshear, however, did not carry out his plan. He died of yellow fever on October 20, 1867.

Blackshear retained his post-war property and his economic status until his death. With taxable property valued at $39,866 in 1867, he continued to own more property than

1865, p. 3.

34 Notes, July 13-14, 1861, Diary and Memorandum Book, 1830-1868, Thomas E. Blackshear Papers.


36 Blackshear, *Blacksheariana*, 407, 409. For more information about the yellow fever epidemic in Navasota, Texas, and the surrounding area see, *Epidemic Record: Navasota, Texas, Monday, October 28, 1867* (Dan C. Fink, 1867); and Blackshear,
all but two of the 1,024 other taxpayers in Grimes County.\textsuperscript{37} He also continued to support the development of a railroad system as he had in Georgia. On May 2, 1867, he sold a right-of-way through his land to the BB Railway Company, probably the Buffalo Bayou, Brazos and Colorado Railway Company, for $1.00 and "the advantages of said road."\textsuperscript{38}

Thomas Blackshear did not leave a will. An estate appraisal inventory filed on January 27, 1868, showed a total property value of $75,273.56. The large difference from the taxable property value for 1867 resulted from notes owed to Blackshear with a total value of $29,845.41. No debts were charged against the estate.\textsuperscript{39} Emily Blackshear had died on June 19, 1866, more than one year before her husband.\textsuperscript{40} Their eight surviving children each received what appears to be an equitable portion of the estate. The five oldest children, R. D., James, Annie, Duncan, and Sarah, received property valued at $8,422. The three youngest children, Emma, William, and Francks, each received property valued slightly higher at $8,572. R. D. was named their guardian and administered their

\textit{Blacksheariana}, 409-10.

\textsuperscript{37} Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1867, pp. 2, 29, 6. Only H. Ranger and L. Cannon owned more taxable property than Blackshear.

\textsuperscript{38} Deed Records, Grimes County, Book D-3, pp. 669-70; Charles P. Zlatkovich, \textit{Texas Railroads: A Record of Construction and Abandonment} (Austin: Bureau of Business Research, The University of Texas at Austin and Texas State Historical Association, 1981), 27, 63.

\textsuperscript{39} Probate Minutes, Grimes County, Book 4, pp. 640-42, County Clerk’s Office, Grimes County Courthouse, Anderson, Texas; Estate Appraisal Inventory, January 27, 1868, Account Book of R. D. Blackshear and Administration of Estate of Thomas E. Blackshear, Thomas E. Blackshear Papers.

\textsuperscript{40} Blackshear, \textit{Blacksheariana}, 407.
inheritance. Thomas Blackshear’s large estate was no longer intact, but several of his children remained in Grimes County.

In 1866 R. D. married Sarah Foster, the daughter of Dr. R. B. S. Foster. Emily, his first wife, had died in 1861. Sarah’s father appears to have been a moderately wealthy practicing physician in the area. In 1860 Foster had owned seventeen slaves and had $16,040 in taxable property. One year after their marriage, R. D. had $7,533 worth of taxable property. He and his second wife lived in Washington County until the mid-1870s. They then moved to Grimes County after R. D. bought 640 acres there from his youngest brother Francks.

In 1880 R. D. Blackshear was still living in Grimes County with Sarah and their five children. He cultivated three acres of cotton and raised livestock. The tax records for the same year show a total taxable property value of $4,985, including 655 acres of land and two lots in Navasota. Although R. D.’s economic status was not as high as his father’s status had been, he still held property well above the county average of $890. He was in the top 2.4 percent of taxpayers, a group that owned 28 percent of the property. In a tax roll that included 2,609 property owners, R. D.’s property value ranked sixty-third from

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41 Petition for Partition, February 12, 1868, Account Book of R. D. Blackshear and Administration of Estate of Thomas E. Blackshear, Thomas E. Blackshear Papers; Bond posting, January 29, 1868, Probate minutes, Grimes County, Book 4, p. 640.
42 Blackshear, Blacksheariana, 374.
43 Tax Rolls, Washington County, 1860, p. 11.
44 Tax Rolls, Washington County, 1867, p. 3; Deed Records, Grimes County, Book L, pp. 92-93; Grimes County Historical Commission, History of Grimes County, 224.
the greatest property value. He continued as a farmer and was especially interested in cultivating pear trees. In the late 1880s, *Texas Farm and Ranch* published three articles by him on LeConte pears and one article on Peento peaches.

James Joseph, second in age to R. D., appears to have remained in Georgia after the Civil War. In 1870 he lived in Thomasville, Georgia, with his wife, Harriett, and daughter, Emily. He had married Harriett Eliza Winn on February 4, 1864, in Thomas County, Georgia. By 1870 he was a dry goods and grain merchant with $15,000 worth of property. James died in Thomasville in 1874.

Duncan Ray Blackshear was the next son in age to James. In 1868 he had, due to his inheritance, 275 acres of land, 3 town lots, five horses, and six cattle for a total property value of $4,300. By 1870 Duncan, who lived with his wife and son in Navasota, was still farming, but he had slightly less property. He had sold two of the town lots and reduced his total taxable property to $3,110. Duncan Blackshear’s fortunes continued to...

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48 Blackshear, *Blacksheariana*, 221; Ninth Census, Schedule 1, Thomas County, Georgia, p. 70.

49 Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1868, p. 2.

50 Ninth Census, Schedule 1, Grimes County, p. 199; Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1870, p. 1.
decline. In 1875 his property value was $2,235, and in 1880 the value decreased further to $1,032.\textsuperscript{51} He was no longer a farmer, but supported his son as a watchman in an oil mill and remained in Grimes County.\textsuperscript{52}

In 1875 William owned $2,580 of property, including 350 acres. By 1880 he apparently had property valued at less than $200.\textsuperscript{53} Evidence suggests that William was a member of the Texas Rangers in 1880, serving with the Special State Troops under the command of Thomas L. Oglesby in Duval County. He was discharged on October 1, 1880, because of ill health. He then became a farmer and lived in both Ennis and Waco, Texas. While in Waco in 1921, William, age sixty-nine, married Beulah Backloupe, age forty-one. He died in 1931 and was buried in Navasota.\textsuperscript{54}

Francks, the youngest child of Thomas Blackshear, had just come into his inheritance in 1875 when he sold to R. D. his land in Grimes County. Francks appears to have then moved to R. D.'s land in Washington County. Francks' death in 1877 prevented any investigation of his persistence.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{51} Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1875, Precinct 3, p. 4; Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1880, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{52} Tenth Census, Schedule 1, Grimes County, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{53} Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1875, Precinct 3, p. 4; Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1880, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{54} William E. Blackshear does not appear on the Tenth Census, 1880, Grimes County. A Wm. E. Blackshear does appear on the Tenth Census, Schedule 1, 1880, Duval County, p. 241, as a Ranger in Thomas E. Oglesby's Company. The age and the places of birth of William and his parents match this record. Records of other William Blackshears found in the census index did not match. Adjutant General, Ranger Papers, Monthly Returns, 1880, RG 401, Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin, Blackshear, Blacksheariana, 432-33.
\textsuperscript{55} Deed Records, Grimes County, Book L, pp. 92-93; Tax Rolls, Washington
Thomas Blackshear's three daughters, Angelina (Annie), Sarah (Sallie), and Emily (Emma), each married soon after the Civil War. Angelina married Dr. Thomas E. Foster a year or less before her brother, R. D., married Foster's sister. Foster practiced as a medical doctor with his father, R. B. S. Foster, for two years in Grimes County after serving the Confederacy. Thomas Foster became a farmer in 1868, probably because of his wife's inheritance. In 1867 Foster reported $180 in taxable property. In 1870 his property value had increased to $4,500. The Fosters owned 300 acres of land that produced $1,800 of farm goods, including seventeen bales of cotton. They did not have any children. The Foster's economic and geographic status could be traced only a few years after their marriage, not long enough to prove persistence.

Sarah Blackshear married Frank R. Jones on April 27, 1869. In 1870 they were living in Grimes County with their daughter, Virginia. Jones was farming, and Sarah was keeping house. Jones reported property worth $3,760, including 344 acres, part of Sarah's inheritance. Further evidence of their persistence in Grimes County was not found. Sarah died in Bastrop County in 1898.

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56 Blackshear, Blacksheariana, 31.
58 Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1867, p. 11; Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1870, p. 8; Bureau of the Census, Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Schedule 3 (Productions of Agriculture), Grimes County, pp. 23-24, Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin; Blackshear, Blacksheariana, 31.
60 Bureau of the Census, Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Schedule 1
As had her brother, R. D., and sister, Angelina, Emily Blackshear also married a Foster sibling. William J. Foster and Emily were married in October 1868. In 1870 Foster paid taxes on $6,060 of property, including 344 acres, probably Emily's inheritance. In 1880 the Foster household included William, a farmer, Emily, a housekeeper, Anna, their daughter, and James Terrell, a twenty-year-old boarder who worked on the farm. Their total taxable property had decreased to $4,170, but still more than the average value of $890.61

Neither Thomas Blackshear nor his sons appear to have held an elective office in Grimes County.62 Evidence was not found of any effect they may have had as possible leaders in the local society.63 After 1880, however, there is evidence that several of Blackshear's descendants did play a leading role in the community.

Duncan Ray Blackshear's son, Edward F., established the Grimes County Review in 1894. He remained a newspaper editor and publisher in Navasota until 1922. He also served as mayor of Navasota. R. D.'s son, Edward Duncan (E. D. or Duncan), served on the school board. He and his wife, May, were also active in several civic clubs and church (Inhabitants), Grimes County, p. 325, Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin; Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1870, p. 12; Blackshear, Blacksheariana, 392.

61 Blackshear, Blacksheariana, 133; Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1870, p. 8; Tenth Census, Schedule 1, Grimes County, p. 18; Tax Rolls, Grimes County, p. 28.

62 Records of the Secretary of State, Election Registers, Grimes County, 1856-1880, Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin.

63 Few extant newspapers for Grimes County were found that might have documented evidence of local leadership from 1857 to 1880. Single issues and incomplete runs of the following newspapers were searched. Navasota Lone Star Ranger, January 19, 1870, February 2, 1870, November 25, 1870, and September 23, 1871; Navasota Weekly Tablet, June 14, 1877 through January 31, 1879; Navasota Texas Ranger, July 27, 1867;
related organizations. Their daughter, Kathleen, Thomas Blackshear's great-granddaughter, became an artist and teacher at the Art Institute of Chicago. She may have had some influence in her hometown as she was known as the "first woman to wear pants in ... Navasota." Her artistic style was greatly influenced by her early life in Navasota. For many years blacks were her primary subjects, and she was well-known for the encouragement she gave her black students.

Thomas Blackshear had been a resident of Texas for less than ten years before his death, yet he was well established in Grimes County. He persisted geographically and economically from 1857 until his death in 1867. Blackshear remained one of the wealthiest taxpayers in the county both before and after the Civil War despite the loss of his slaves and Confederate treasury notes. His plantation was not affected by battle, but emancipation did affect how he would manage his land. Blackshear may have been a leading social figure in the community because of his wealth, but he probably did not hold a political office. Blackshear's writings just before his death suggest that he still supported his community and would have attempted to continue his life as a farmer with white renters providing the needed labor.

Navasota Texas Ranger and Lone Star, September 9, 1865.

64 The Navasota Bluebonnet...Commemorating 100 Years of City Growth and Development: 1854-1954 (Navasota: Grimes County Chamber of Commerce, [1954]), 24-25, 8, 42, 58. Ed Blackshear is eleventh in a list of mayors of Navasota.


The economic and geographic persistence of the Blackshear family in Texas from 1867 to 1880 continued mainly through R. D., Emily, and Duncan Blackshear. R. D. was persistent both geographically and economically. He continued farming in the area and maintained his status in the economic hierarchy. R. D. may have had a greater chance for persistence in Grimes County than his siblings, not only because he was the oldest, but also because he was the only one that was well established in the area before his father's death. His sister Emily also retained her economic and geographic status by continuing to farm in Grimes County. Duncan depleted his inheritance, but he remained geographically persistent. After 1880, two of Thomas Blackshear's grandchildren, Duncan's son, Edward F., and R. D.'s son, Edward Duncan, remained in Grimes County and, with their families, were prominent members of the community.
Unlike Thomas Blackshear who arrived in Texas well after statehood, William Garrett settled in early Texas, during Mexican rule. A native of Tennessee, Garrett was born in 1808 to Jacob and Charity Taylor Garrett. Garrett's family moved to Arkansas before he and other family members settled west of present-day San Augustine in San Augustine County. There William Garrett became a wealthy planter and slaveholder, and he and his family served as community leaders.¹

Jacob Garrett, William's father, arrived in Texas in 1824. He may have lived for a while in Nacogdoches where he became a citizen of the Republic of Mexico in 1827. Garrett established a large plantation after acquiring a league of land west of present-day San Augustine on the Attoyac Bayou. By 1830 Jacob Garrett was the alcalde of the San Augustine Municipality. In this capacity he acted as both the chief executive and a judge in minor disputes. Voters also elected Garrett as a delegate to the conventions of 1832 and 1833 that were called to address the Texans' grievances against the Mexican government.

In 1835 the Permanent Council, formed as a governing body during the early part of the Texas Revolution, appointed Garrett as one of three representatives to visit the northeast Texas Indians. Their duty was to obtain military cooperation or neutrality from the Indians with whom Garrett had traded previously.²

William Garrett's older brother, Milton, also moved to Texas in 1824. By 1826 he had established himself west of the Ayish Bayou and built a home. Like his father, Milton Garrett participated in the Texas Revolution, but as a soldier rather than a political leader. Besides participating in the storming and capture of Bexar in December, 1835, he served with his brother, William, in a company of militia under the command of Captain William Kimbro. Claiborne Garrett, a third brother, arrived in 1827. By 1838 Claiborne had died and his father, Jacob, was administering his estate of 555 acres and six slaves.³

Several sources suggest that William Garrett arrived in Texas during the 1820s. He may have first lived in Nacogdoches before moving to San Augustine. Land grant records, however, established his arrival date as 1830, when he was about twenty-one years old.

Because he arrived and was married before March 2, 1836, Garrett was issued a first class headright certificate in 1838 for a league and a labor of land (4,605 acres).4

William Garrett married nineteen-year-old Mary (Polly) Cartwright on October 20, 1833. Mary was the daughter of John and Mary Crutchfield Cartwright. Cartwright and his son Matthew were entrepreneurs and leading figures in San Augustine. Their family became one of the wealthiest in Texas in the mid-1800s. The Cartwrights seemed to have no objections to twenty-five-year-old William as he was "a Respectable citizen." The Garretts had two daughters, Clementine (Mintie) born in 1836, and Mary born in 1837.5

In the same year as the birth of Mary, San Augustine County was organized.

William Garrett, however, first appeared on the tax rolls in 1839. He paid taxes on 1,476 acres in Red River County, 22 slaves, 8 horses, 155 cattle, a gold watch, and several town lots located in San Augustine, Pendleton (Bell County), and Sabine (Gregg County) for a total value of more than $14,000. He also paid $5.00 tax on his first-class certificate issued in 1838. Of the 153 slaveholders in the county, only six, in addition to Garrett, owned twenty-two or more slaves. Furthermore, only fifteen other taxpayers in San

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4 The following cite arrival dates of no later than 1825, 1826, 1828, and 1830 respectively. Clark, Anne, comp. *Historic Homes of San Augustine*, edited by Carolyn Allen (San Augustine: San Augustine Historical Association; Austin: Encino Press, 1972), 6; *Caucasian Cemeteries, Vol. 1*, 286; Johnson, *History of Texas and Texans*, 2441; First Class Headright Certificate of William Garrett, No. 293, February 3, 1838, File 33, Archives and Records Division, Texas General Land Office, Austin.

Augustine County owned more taxable property than William Garrett. At age thirty-one, Garrett was prosperous.

Declining cotton prices in 1839 and 1840 prompted Garrett and the Cartwrights to diversify their investments. William Garrett became a partner with his father-in-law, John Cartwright, and brother-in-law, Matthew Cartwright, in a cotton warehouse in Sabinetown at the mouth of the Palo Gaucho Bayou four miles northeast of San Augustine. Although the need for a warehouse failed to develop, both families continued to prosper.

William Garrett’s father-in-law, John Cartwright, died in 1841. The court appointed Garrett as joint administrator of the estate with Cartwright’s wife, Mary. They gave a bond of $120,000. Five years later on September 30, 1846, at age thirty-two, Mary, Garrett’s wife and the Cartwrights’ daughter, died. Garrett and his daughters continued their close association with the Cartwright family.

With two young daughters to raise, Garrett married Lucetta Teal (Lucette Teel) on November 15, 1847. She was the twenty-year-old daughter of George Teal (Teel), a wealthy San Augustine slaveowner who owned $28,650 of property in 1839. In 1850 he owned the second largest amount of in-county property next to his son-in-law. Soon after

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6 Tyler, et. al., eds., “San Augustine County,” The New Handbook of Texas, Vol. 5, 266. Garrett was not listed on the 1837 tax rolls for San Augustine County or Nacogdoches County. The 1838 tax rolls for San Augustine are missing. Tax Rolls, San Augustine County, 1839, p. 72.

7 Henson and Parmelee, The Cartwrights of San Augustine, 107.

8 Ibid., 116, 149; Probate document posting bond for the administration of the John Cartwright estate, October 25, 1841, W. G. Sharp Papers.
their marriage, William and Lucetta had four children for which to care. Besides William’s two daughters, they were also the guardians of Anna and William Holman, the orphaned children of Clementine Cartwright Holman, Garrett’s first wife’s sister, who had died in March 1847.\(^9\)

William Garrett, his former brother-in-law, Matthew Cartwright, and his father-in-law, George Teal, supported local education by serving as trustees of the University of Eastern Texas. Incorporated on March 8, 1848, the University lasted no later than November 1850. Several of their children attended, including Garrett’s two daughters and his niece and nephew. After the school failed due to monetary problems, the Masonic Institute was begun in 1851. The children in Garrett’s care continued, therefore, to have a local school to attend. Garrett again lent his support, perhaps in part because he was a member of the Masonic Order.\(^10\)

In 1850 William Garrett’s family included his wife, Lucetta; their son, two-year-old William; Garrett’s daughters, fourteen-year-old Mintie and twelve-year-old Mary; and Anna and William Holman, his orphaned niece and nephew, ten and eight years old.

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respectively. Garrett's real property holding of $14,700 as recorded on the 1850 census was approximately 1,200 percent or twelve times greater than the average reported in the East Texas region. Also, no taxpayer in San Augustine County owned more in-county personal and real property than Garrett. He owned 3,732 acres, 52 slaves, 40 horses, and 300 head of cattle for a total value of $24,984. The average property value for all 366 holders of in-county property was only $2,540. William Holman with $16,032 and George Teal with $17,664 held the largest amount of in-county property after Garrett. These three men represented .8 percent of the taxpayers but owned 6.3 percent of the in-county property. Although Garrett also owned $3,836 in out-of-county property, Matthew Cartwright had vast landholdings in other counties and was, therefore, the wealthiest man in the county when out-of-county land was included in total taxable property.11

Garrett continued to seek quality education for his children. Mary Garrett, with her cousins, Anna Cartwright and Victoria Thomas, journeyed to Burlington, New Jersey, in November 1854 to attend classes at the prestigious St. Mary's Hall, an Episcopalian finishing school. They did not, however, stay long. In January 1855, seventeen-year-old Mary wrote a letter to her father begging to come home. Not only were they physically cold, but also the other girls at the school would have little to do with them. They probably returned home the next summer.12

Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

11 Seventh Census, Schedule 1, San Augustine County, p. 336; Campbell and Lowe, Wealth and Power, 116; Tax Rolls, San Augustine County, 1850, pp. 5, 7, 13, 12; Henson and Parmelee, The Cartwrights of San Augustine, 163.

12 Henson and Parmelee, The Cartwrights of San Augustine, 174.
Throughout the 1850s the Garrett family’s fortunes continued to improve. By 1860, William and Lucetta had three more children of their own, Ella, George, and Eva. Mary, William’s second oldest daughter still lived at home. In 1853, Mintie, his oldest daughter, married Benjamin F. Price, an editor and planter’s son. They had three children. The number of slaves Garrett owned had increased five-fold since 1850 to 132. The Garretts’ $30,150 farm included 1,150 improved acres that yielded 350 bales of cotton, as well as other produce.\(^{13}\)

In 1860, as in 1850, Garrett held more in-county property than anyone else in San Augustine County. While his taxable property was worth $62,397, the average value for all taxpayers was only $4,185. Garrett alone owned 4.6 percent of the in-county property and represented only .3 percent of the 321 property owners. He paid taxes on 120 slaves, 75 horses, and 100 cattle, as well as 4,889 acres of land. He also paid taxes on 10,960 acres of land in six other counties. As in 1850, when considering total wealth, Matthew Cartwright not only remained the wealthiest person in San Augustine County, he was also the sixth wealthiest person in the state with $575,000 in total property value. Garrett, nonetheless, remained in an elite class with total wealth valued at $171,661, approximately 2,500 percent or twenty-five times greater than the average wealthholding in the East Texas Region.\(^{14}\)

\(^{13}\) Eighth Census, Schedule 1, San Augustine County, p. 369; Marriage Records, San Augustine County, Vol. 1, p. 136; Eighth Census, Schedule 2, San Augustine County, pp. 381-82; Eighth Census, Schedule 4, San Augustine County, p. 11.

\(^{14}\) Tax Rolls, San Augustine County, 1860, pp. 6, 9; Henson and Parmelee, *The Cartwrights of San Augustine*, 191; Ralph A. Wooster, “Wealthy Texans, 1860,”
The Civil War years brought physical changes to the Garrets' surroundings. Unlike other areas of the South, the change was construction rather than destruction. In late 1859 William Garrett bought the parts for a sawmill. One use of this sawmill was the construction of a new Garrett home. Construction of this well-proportioned, two-story home began in 1861 and was completed in 1864. It had six fireplaces with carved mantels, a gallery across the front with six columns, and dormer windows on the second story.\(^{15}\)

At age fifty-two Garrett did not serve in the Civil War. Neither did his sons who were too young to serve. Benjamin F. Price, Garrett's son-in-law, did serve. While Price was away in 1862, Mintie, his wife, died of typhoid fever, and the Garretts took in her three children.\(^{16}\)

Little evidence is available to describe the extent of Garrett's support of the Confederacy. A few extant receipts and letters, however, showed that he at least supplied some corn in 1863 and probably gave a horse to an individual for "service of the state" in 1861. Also, by 1864 he had invested $4,000 in Confederate treasury notes. Garrett may have also helped those families of soldiers in need. Although the outcome is not known, William J. Williams, a soldier from San Augustine who was camped in Arkansas, wrote to Garrett on November 8, 1864. He asked Garrett to provide his family with some "potaters

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\(^{16}\) Eighth Census, Schedule 1, San Augustine County, p. 369; Henson and Parmeleec, *The Cartwrights of San Augustine*, 220.
and Beef' to keep his family from starving until he was able to return home. In 1860
Williams was a small farmer in San Augustine County with 200 acres of land, including
twenty improved acres. His family included his wife, five daughters, ages one to eleven,
and one son, age five. He did not own any slaves to help work the farm. Evidence does
not suggest whether Williams wrote to Garrett as a last resort, or if he was sure Garrett
would help his family.

In 1864 Matthew Cartwright owned more in-county taxable property than William
Garrett. The increase in this type of property is due to Cartwright's investment in $80,000
in Confederate treasury notes. Garrett held the second largest amount of in-county taxable
property worth $96,445, the greater portion being $70,000 invested in 144 slaves.
Cartwright and Garrett represented only .6 percent of the 340 property owners, yet they
owned 12 percent of the county's taxable property. In addition, Garrett was the only
slaveholder with more than 100 slaves in the county.17

In 1865, due to emancipation, Garrett's in-county taxable property value
decreased 85 percent, more than the average loss of 72 percent for all taxpayers in the
county. Even with this significant decrease to only $14,201, William Garrett was again the
wealthiest taxpayer in the county, based on in-county taxable property value. The average

17 Receipt from Chauncey Johnson to William Garrett, Quartermaster Office,
Sabinetown, Texas, December 4, 1863, W. G. Sharp Papers; Receipt from J. W. Sheppard
to William Garrett, November 3, 1863, for twenty-six bushels of corn, W. G. Sharp
Papers; Letter from P. B. Ward to Mr. Garrett, May 14, 1861, W. G. Sharp Papers; Tax
Rolls, San Augustine County, 1864, p. 6; Letter from W. J. Williams to William Garrett,
November 8, 1864, W. G. Sharp Papers; Eighth Census, Schedule 1, San Augustine
County, p. 366; Eighth Census, Schedule 4, San Augustine County, p. 9.
in-county taxable property value for all county taxpayers was merely $1,415. Garrett owned nine times more property. Only two other taxholders reported more than $10,000 in property. They were J. D. Thomas with $10,533 in land and the W. G. Roberts estate with $10,866 in property. Matthew Cartwright continued to hold a large amount of out-of-county land.¹⁹

San Augustine County residents did not adjust easily to emancipation. Freedman's Bureau reports about the county in late 1865 and 1866 told of former slaves who did not know they were free, and beatings and other brutal acts committed against the former slaves. In July 1867, Kit Myrick, a former slave who had belonged to Garrett, filed a complaint against Garrett. Myrick reported that in the spring of 1865 Garrett castrated him for leaving the plantation without permission. Albert A. Metzner, Sub Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, in San Augustine, reported to J. P. Kirkman, his superior in Galveston that Garrett was "too rich a man to turn him over to the Civil Authorities. . . . I should have arrested him at once but my force of nine men is too small to arrest a rich man in this part of Texas." Kirkman told Metzner to "thoroughly investigate this case and if the facts are substantially as stated, arrest and hold Mr. Garrett in the county jail subject to orders from this Headquarters." Metzner reported in August "that the facts as stated are true," but he had not made an arrest. Garrett had "left for parts unknown." Two similar cases were pending

¹⁸ Tax Rolls, San Augustine County, 1864, pp. 2, 16.
¹⁹ Tax Rolls, San Augustine County, 1865, pp. 5, 13, 10.
against Garrett. Garrett may have left his home briefly but further evidence that the charges disrupted his life in any way was not found.

Despite the loss of property value and the turmoil in the community, not all of the affluent members of the community had to give up their lifestyle. The Garretts retained their close association with the Cartwrights. Matthew and his wife, Amanda, took their niece, Mary Garrett, and her half-brother, William, to New Orleans with their daughter, Anna, in March 1867. The cousins shopped and bought sewing machines and clothing. In 1870 Garrett’s in-county taxable property continued to decrease in value to $10,137, but he still held 7,920 acres in out-of-county lands. Garrett was, however, no longer the wealthiest taxpayer based on in-county property. S. W. Blount and the Matthew Cartwright estate each paid tax on slightly more in-county property, $11,042 and $10,510 respectively. But Garrett was still very wealthy in comparison to the majority of taxpayers. The number of taxpayers in San Augustine had increased to 589, but the average property value had decreased to $706. The top three property owners, Blount, the Cartwrights, and Garrett, represented only .5 percent of the property holders in the county, but they held 7.6 percent of the property.

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20 Henson and Parmelee, The Cartwrights of San Augustine, 253; Letter from Albert A. Metzner to J. P. Kirkman, July 16, 1867, Letter from J. S. Goodrich, County Judge Sabine County, to Albert A. Metzner, July 18, 1867, Report and reply from J. P. Kirkman to Albert A. Metzner, July 27, 1867, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1869, Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Texas, RG 105, microfilm M821, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

21 Henson and Parmelee, The Cartwrights of San Augustine, 273.

22 Tax Rolls, San Augustine County, 1870, pp. 6, 2, 4. Matthew Cartwright died on April 1, 1870. Henson and Parmelee, The Cartwrights of San Augustine, 275.
Garrett continued to farm although he had only 100 improved acres instead of the more than 1,000 acres his slaves had worked in 1860. He had increased his livestock to 300 cattle and 70 milk cows. He also raised 880 bushels of corn and ginned 17 bales of cotton. No evidence was found to suggest who actually did the work on the farm. A steam saw and gristmill provided additional income of forty bushels of corn per month when he rented it to P. J. Sleet in 1868.23

In 1870, sixty-two-year-old William and forty-three-year-old Lucetta still had ten children living at home. These included, seven of their children, ages three to twenty-one, and three grandchildren, John, age fifteen, Mary C., age thirteen, and William, age ten, the children of their deceased daughter Mintie.24

Despite a decrease in income, the Garretts continued to educate their children. In 1873 George Garrett attended Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee, with Matthew Cartwright, Jr., his cousin. At first George did not seem to enjoy the opportunity. Matthew wrote to his mother Amanda that George complained “a good deal but I think he is only home sick or lazy. . . .” In a couple of weeks, however, George seemed to make the adjustment and seemed “well pleased.”25

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23 Ninth Census, Schedule 3, San Augustine County, p. 3. The column on Schedule 3 where the census taker listed amount of wages paid was blank. Eighth Census, Schedule 4, San Augustine County, p. 11. Contract between William Garrett and P. J. Sleet, April 29, 1868, W. G. Sharp Papers.

24 Ninth Census, Schedule 1, San Augustine County, p. 56. B. F. Price was not found on the 1870 census.

25 Henson and Parmelee, The Cartwrights of San Augustine, 285; Letters from Matthew Cartwright to Amanda Cartwright, April 1 and April 19, 1873, Cartwright Family Papers, Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.
The Garrett family's fortunes continued to decline slightly after 1870. In 1880 Garrett still retained all but 1,339 acres of the 4,913 acres he reported in 1870. But his in-county taxable property value was reduced to $6,070. Eight property owners now owned more in-county taxable property than Garrett. He was still among the wealthiest of the county's 864 property owners whose average property value was only $547.26

In 1880 seventy-two-year-old William Garrett still considered himself a farmer. Family continued to surround him. Four children, ages twelve to eighteen, and one twenty-year-old grandson lived with him and Lucetta. All except twelve-year-old Kate attended school. His eighteen-year-old son, Jack, and Jack's twenty-year-old step-cousin, W. F. Price, lived together and farmed. George, Garrett's twenty-six-year-old son, lived with his wife, Martha, and his brother-in-law, B. F. Ray, a twenty-one-year-old blacksmith. George was also a farmer.27

Garrett reported only five acres of tilled land even though he still owned 1,400 acres of unimproved and forest land. The estimated value of his 1879 farm productivity was only $150. The Garretts did make extra money from selling the fruit from their apple and peach orchards and cords of wood from their forests.28

William Garrett died on January 12, 1884, without leaving a will. The resulting settlement of Garrett's property broke up the large estate into the hands of fourteen heirs.

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26 Tax Rolls, San Augustine County, 1870, p. 6; Tax Rolls, San Augustine County, 1880, p. 11.
27 Tenth Census of the United States, Schedule 1, San Augustine County, pp. 256, 291, 281.
28 In 1879 the Garretts sold $50 worth of fruit and $144 worth of cords of wood.
Each surviving son or daughter or the children of a deceased son or daughter received a share. The shares appear to have been 1/9 of the separate property of Garrett and 1/18 of the common property of Garrett and his second wife. The common property of Garrett and his first wife was divided between their grandchildren, as both their daughters had died. The family agreed to divide the 1,077 acre home tract west of San Augustine into six sections. The six grandchildren of Garrett and his first wife, shared two sections of 504 acres valued at $1,120. The seven heirs of Garrett and his second wife, including five surviving children and two grandchildren, shared the remaining four shares of 573 acres valued at $666. The largest was 124 1/3 acres valued at $111. The smallest portion was 62 1/6 acres worth $55.50. The rest of Garrett’s real estate was divided into eight shares each worth nearly $2,000 and consisting of town lots as well as acreage. The heirs drew lots for their shares. In addition, Lucetta Garrett received $5,193 worth of property including more than 500 acres and 101 town lots. Personal property also appeared to have been divided. For example Kate, Garrett’s youngest daughter, inherited a 1/16 share in 300 cattle and 30 horses. Lucetta reported a value of $3,835 for Kate’s property, including her inheritance. Garrett had enough property to divide among his many heirs and add somewhat to their wealth. Since the average property value for all taxpayers in 1880 was $547, he left each of his heirs approximately four times the average property value.29

Tenth Census, Schedule 2, San Augustine County, p. 5.
The Garrett family continued to maintain a strong presence in San Augustine. In 1890 Lucetta Garrett still owned $2,839 of taxable property. Of 1,183 taxpayers in San Augustine County only thirty-four reported a larger taxable property value. She lived until April 28, 1902. In 1900 she lived on Main Street in San Augustine with her thirty-three-year-old, single daughter Kate.\(^{30}\)

Although William Garrett did not appear to hold elected office, Wyatt J. Garrett, his youngest son, was a leading member of the San Augustine community. He married Lula Harrison in 1884, nearly a year after his father's death. She was the daughter of Dr. E. F. Harrison, a prominent physician in the county. He continued an interest in farming, but Wyatt Garrett also practiced law and served as district and county clerk for several years. Like his father, he was a Mason and a member of the Episcopal Church. In the early 1900s he was also an organizer and vice-president of the Commercial Guaranty State Bank of San Augustine. In 1900 Garrett was the District Clerk. He lived on Columbia Street in San Augustine with his wife and nine children, ages two months to fourteen years old.\(^{31}\)

William Garrett arrived in Texas as a young man and lived on the same tract of land in San Augustine County for more than fifty years, the same tract on which he is

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\(^{30}\) Tax Rolls, San Augustine County, 1890, p. 28; *Caucasian Cemeteries, Vol. 1*, 287; Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Schedule 1 (Inhabitants), San Augustine County, Texas, p. 174, RG29, National Archives, Washington D. C., (microfilm, Texas State Library, Austin).

buried. Garrett built his wealth during the first thirty years of his life in Texas. Although he invested heavily in slaves, he acquired enough land to retain a position as one of the wealthiest men in San Augustine County after the Civil War. Garrett married twice, both times to the daughters of wealthy and influential citizens of the county. Although he did not hold public office, as his father had, he persisted socially as a community leader, especially in the area of education. Garrett's wealth began to decrease slowly after 1865, but he continued to provide good educations for his children, and he remained one of the wealthiest men in the community, persisting economically in the wealthiest 1 percent. After his death in 1884, he provided each of eight children or their heirs more than $2,000 in inheritance. His wife also received more than $5,000 in real estate.

Garrett's children also enjoyed a high social status. They retained close ties with the wealthy Cartwright family, had the opportunity to attend the best schools, and several married into the wealthier families in the area. After 1880, although the vast estate had been divided, Lucetta Garrett had enough wealth to live comfortably into the 1900s, as did her daughter Kate. Her son Wyatt also persisted economically, geographically and socially, serving as district and county clerk for several years. William Garrett and his family were indeed persistent in San Augustine County throughout most of the 1800s.
CHAPTER 4

THE BYRD M. GRACE FAMILY

Byrd Mobley Grace was born in Georgia about 1812. In 1840, at age twenty-eight, he was head of a household in Henry County, Alabama, consisting of three females, ages fifteen or less, one female between the ages of twenty and thirty, and three other males between the ages of twenty and forty.¹

In 1850 he and his family continued to live in Henry County. His household included his twenty-six-year-old wife, Achuca; five children, ages six months to nine years; and two farmers, ages twenty-eight and twenty-nine. Grace and one other farmer in the county each owned real estate valued at $10,000, the largest value of real estate ownership in the county. Grace also held the second largest number of slaves, owning sixty-seven slaves ranging in age from four months to eighty years.²


² Achuca may be a Choctaw name, because the word in Choctaw for wife is “achuka.” Cyrus Byington, A Dictionary of the Choctaw Language, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 46 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1915), 606. William Cunyus, a sixty-year-old farmer also owned $10,000 in real estate. Seventh Census, Schedule 1, Henry County, Alabama, pp. 412, 424; Mary Irwin owned eleven more slaves than Grace. Seventh Census, Schedule 2, Henry County,
Although Grace and his family seemed well established in Alabama, they moved to the bottomland of the Trinity River in southeast Texas during the late 1850s. Before moving his family, Grace bought three parcels of land, a total of 2,172 acres, west of the Trinity River in 1854 and 1856. The land was mostly located northeast of Cold Spring in what was then Polk County. In 1857 Grace paid Polk County taxes on $22,161 worth of property, including 2,169 acres of land, located west of the Trinity River. Thirty-two slaves, twelve horses, and other miscellaneous livestock and goods completed his property. He did not report any out-of-county lands. Twenty-one other taxpayers owned more property than Grace and ten owned more slaves. Nevertheless, his property holdings were well above the average county taxable property value of $5,309. Since he had owned sixty-seven slaves in 1850, he was probably in the process of moving from Alabama. A large planter's household sometimes took many months to relocate.

By 1860 Grace’s family was established in Polk County. Achuca was no longer with him. She may have died even before he left Alabama. Instead, he was married to India, age twenty-seven. They lived with five children, ages eight to sixteen, from Grace’s

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3 Tyler, et. al., eds., “Byrd Mobley Grace,” The New Handbook of Texas, Vol. 3, 269; Deed Records, Polk County, Vol. F, pp. 177-181, County Clerk’s Office, Polk County Courthouse, Livingston, Texas; Tax Rolls, Polk County, 1857, p. 6; County Survey Index Map, Polk County, October 18, 1843. Until 1870 Polk County included land west of the Trinity River. In 1870 this land became part of San Jacinto County. The derivation was found in Imogene Kinard Kennedy, Polk County, Texas, Marriage Records, 1846-1880 (St. Louis, Mo.: Mrs. Frances Terry Ingmire, 1984), ii. Seventh Census, Schedule 2, Henry County, Alabama, p. 801.
earlier marriage. All the children attended school. Grace paid taxes on $90,921 worth of property. He had invested the majority of his assets in 127 slaves valued at $63,600. He also owned 7,070 acres of land in the county, 50 horses, 150 cattle, and other miscellaneous property. Grace’s slaves worked 500 acres of improved land, producing 150 bales of ginned cotton, as well as, sweet potatoes, livestock, and corn. He was not, however, the wealthiest taxpayer in the county. J. A. S. Turner reported $2,392 more in taxable property. The difference was Turner’s fewer, but more valuable slaves. Together Grace and Turner represented only .35 percent of the taxpayers, but they owned 5.4 percent of the property. In addition, Grace’s total wealth of $180,000 recorded on the 1860 census was approximately 2,700 percent or twenty-seven times greater than the average wealthholding in the East Texas region.

Among the twelve counties along the Trinity River in 1859, Polk County plantations produced more than 9,313 bales of cotton, second only to the 11,970 bales produced in Walker County. Perhaps Grace, a steamboat operator on the Trinity River as well as a farmer, helped to transport these bales to market. Often plantation owners on navigable rivers were owners, or even captains, of steamboats, transporting their own and their neighbor’s cotton and other goods. Grace located his steamboat landing northeast of

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4 Eighth Census, Schedule 1, Polk County, p. 38.
5 Tax Rolls, Polk County, 1860, p. 6; Eighth Census, Schedule 4, Polk County, p. 19; Tax Rolls, Polk County, 1860, p. 16; Eighth Census, Schedule 1, Polk County, p. 38; Campbell and Lowe, Wealth and Power, 116.
Cold Spring. Grace’s Landing, as it was known, was where he would load his cotton on a riverboat and unload his supplies on return.\(^6\)

The *Indian Queen No. 2*, known as the *Indian No. 2*, was owned and operated by Grace. Although it is not clear when he purchased the boat, it did see action for the Confederacy during the Civil War. In 1862 the U. S. S. *Hatteras* captured the *Indian No. 2* when its captain attempted to run the blockade at Sabine Pass carrying bacon and flour. By 1863 it was back in the service of the Confederacy, transporting food and other goods on the Red River.\(^7\)

Grace’s activities during the Civil War are unclear. No evidence was found to suggest that Byrd Grace was the captain of the *Indian No. 2* from 1861 to 1865. The engraving on the footstone on Grace’s grave related that he served as a private in the 5th Texas Infantry Regiment, Company H, Hood’s Brigade. His records, however, were not found in the Confederate service records. The company mentioned on the footstone mustered in at Cold Spring, Polk County, on August 20, 1861, and fought in Virginia. Grace’s son, seventeen-year-old John W., enlisted in the 5th Texas Infantry, Company H,


on that date and served as a corporal until January 29, 1862. Records show that the army discharged him after he furnished a substitute, M. B. Grace. A Martin B. Grace did serve in the same company, but it appears that he also enlisted in 1861. Ruth Peebles, in her local history, *There Never Were Such Men Before*, stated that John W. Grace was “Discharged Feb. 2, 1862, at Camp Neabsco, near Dumfries, Va., by providing a substitute, his father, B. M. Grace, on Surgeon’s Certificate of Disability.” Whether the statement is correct, or someone transposed the initials, cannot be verified. John Grace reenlisted in 1863 as a volunteer Aide de Camp to General Robinson of the same brigade.\(^8\)

Grace continued to pay taxes throughout the war. In 1862 his total taxable property value had decreased 24 percent from his 1860 property value to $68,659. A decline in the average value of both his land and slaves accounts for the decrease. In 1864 his property value had increased to $83,431. Although he owned fewer than half the acres he had owned in 1862, and eight fewer slaves, the average value of his slaves was $593 compared to $350 in 1862. Three other Polk County taxpayers had a greater property value than Grace in 1864, holding property of $85,509, $87,600 and $114,060. Together

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8 Footstone, grave of Byrd M. Grace, Laurel Hill Cemetery, Coldspring, Texas. This footstone appears to be of fairly recent origin. Index to the Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Texas; Ruth Peebles, *There Never Were Such Men Before: The Civil War Soldiers and Veterans of Polk County, Texas, 1861-1865* (Livingston, Texas: Polk County Historical Commission, 1987), 173. The entry for Grace’s household in the 1870 census does not include any children born between 1860 and 1864 and three children born between 1865 and 1869. Unless there were children who died, perhaps it is an indication that Grace was away during the war. Ninth Census, Schedule 1, Polk County, p. 520.
the four wealthiest taxpayers in the county representing .6 percent of the taxpayers owned 7.6 percent of the taxable property.\(^9\)

The end of the war brought a significant decrease in Grace’s wealth. His property value in 1865 was only $10,408, an 88 percent loss. He still owned five times more than the average county taxpayer whose property value was $1,742. The wealthiest person in the county, O. M. Wheeler, had only $19,424 worth of taxable property. Six taxpayers owned more taxable property than Grace. Together with Grace they represented 1.5 percent of the taxpayers and owned 11.6 percent of the property. Although he still owned the second most valuable amount of taxable property in the county, Grace had not only lost his investment in slaves, he also owned less land. In 1864 he owned 4,829 acres. By 1865 he had reduced his acreage to only 2,192 acres.\(^{10}\)

Evidence suggests that Grace did not economically persist. A series of judgments issued by the county court after the war, concerning loans and notes, illustrate the problems Grace had meeting his commitments. In July 1866, in the case of \textit{F. D. Bishop v. Byrd M. Grace}, Grace failed to appear in court and was thereby ordered to pay $312 to the plaintiff. Four months later in another case, Grace waived a jury trial and agreed to pay J. L. Liles $1,082 and all costs of the suit. Also in November, Drury Kirksey, for whom Grace had apparently been the cosigner of a note, failed to appear in court. The county court ordered Kirksey’s land and then, if necessary, Grace’s land sold at auction to recover $623. The next month a jury found for the plaintiff in \textit{Wesley Ross v. Byrd M.}

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\(^9\) Tax Rolls, Polk County, 1862, p. 6; Tax Rolls, Polk County, 1864, pp. 20, 3, 13.
Grace. The court ordered Grace to pay $465 plus 10 percent interest and court costs. In an interesting series of transactions, W. J. Galloway, the county constable, auctioned 2,436 acres of Grace’s land to pay for a judgment against Grace and Drury Kirksey. James M. Crosson and A. T. Watts bought this land on September 22, 1868. They then sold the land to Grace’s son John on June 7, 1869, for $500 cash and a $500 note.\(^{11}\)

Byrd Grace had at least one success in court. E. H. Skaggs, C. C. Baker, and Richard Stout owed Grace money for some land they purchased in 1863. When, as defendants, they did not show up in court, the judge ordered them to pay the plaintiff, Grace, $1,275 and 10 percent interest.\(^{12}\)

Grace also sold some land during the late 1860s. Charles Gustave Fitze purchased a parcel of land west of the Trinity River near Cold Spring in October 1866. Two years later Grace sold to John L. Henry 2,534 acres for $1,700. This was the same land that he had conveyed to E. H. Skaggs in 1863 and that Grace had bought from the bankrupt estate of Skaggs in 1868. In 1869 Grace and his wife sold to his son, John, for $1,000, a parcel of land that they had purchased in the late 1850s.\(^{13}\)

Grace used some of his land to obtain loans. In November 1868, Grace received $800 in gold coin from Augustus Darby. Darby would then be able to sell the 1,550 acres

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\(^{10}\) Tax Rolls, Polk County, 1865, pp. 6, 18; Tax Rolls, Polk County, 1864, p. 8.


\(^{12}\) Deed Records, Polk County, Vol. I, 570-573; District Court Civil Minutes, Polk County, Vol. C, p. 592, District Clerk’s Office, Polk County Courthouse, Livingston, Texas.

\(^{13}\) Deed Records, Polk County, Vol. K, pp. 355-56; Deed Records, Polk County,
of land described in the deed if Grace did not repay the $800 in gold. It is, however, difficult to assess the outcome of some of the transactions and the amount of property actually owned by Grace. The tax records do not indicate that Byrd Grace paid taxes on any land after 1866. In 1867 John Grace may have begun paying the taxes on his father's land. Byrd Grace paid taxes only on miscellaneous property and livestock, or, as in 1869, he paid only poll tax.  

By 1870, at age fifty-four, Grace was no longer a farmer. He considered himself a steamboat captain. After the war the Indian Queen No. 2, with Grace as captain, carried cotton down the Trinity to Galveston and returned with freight. Grace also owned the St. Elmo. Although the year of purchase is unknown, in 1868 Grace sold the St. Elmo, which was under repair near Grace's home, to James Hogue for $10. Hogue was to use the proceeds in a way that would keep him from suffering any loss as the cosigner of a loan on which Grace defaulted. During the 1870s, however, the riverboat trade on the Trinity River largely ceased due to the railroads reaching the vicinity of the plantation owners who owned and operated the steamboats. The Houston East and West Texas Railway reached San Jacinto and Polk Counties in 1878.

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14 Deed Records, Polk County, Vol. L, pp. 192-93; Tax Rolls, Polk County, 1867, p. 4; Tax Rolls, Polk County, 1868, p. 8; Tax Rolls, Polk County, 1869, pp. 2, 9. Grace was not found on the 1870 in-county or out-of-county tax rolls for either San Jacinto or Polk Counties.  
After the war India Grace supplemented the family's income by teaching school. She held the first classes in the Cold Spring community in her home. She did not issue grades or take attendance. Students paid a small fee and left when old enough to work. By holding classes in her home, she was able to look after her children. In 1870 she had three young children, ages five, three, and one. Four children, ages eighteen to twenty-six, from her husband's previous marriage, also lived with them. John, the oldest, farmed 200 improved acres and with hired hands raised 1,000 bushels of corn, 20 bales of cotton, and 100 bushels of sweet potatoes. He paid $600 in yearly wages.¹⁶

The 1870s brought change but not greater fortune to Grace or his family. In 1870 any land the family retained west of the Trinity River became part of a new county when the Texas legislature carved San Jacinto County out of Polk County. Grace’s family lived near the county seat of Cold Spring. Past debts, however, continued to persist. In 1870 the sheriff of Polk County sold at auction all Polk County lands held by Grace to pay past debts. William Hogue purchased the 2,584 acres for $2,075.¹⁷

In 1871 Grace’s son, twenty-six-year-old John W., married Eliza N. Hogue, the daughter of William Hogue, who had successfully bid for Grace’s land the previous year. John and Eliza began their married life with 2,450 acres of land that John had purchased in

1869 and personal property worth $3,038. Byrd Grace, however, reported only $275 of personal property, including ten cattle, one horse, and other miscellaneous property.\textsuperscript{18}

Although land owned by Byrd Grace was not found on either the San Jacinto County or Polk County tax records in 1871, he apparently owned land that was seized for auction on July 21, 1871. The Polk County sheriff sold this land, 2,142 acres, at public auction. The proceeds went toward costs of the 1868 court case of \textit{B. M. Grace v. D. M. Templeton and J. J. Templeton}. Judgments to recover monies from Grace continued into the early 1870s.\textsuperscript{19}

By 1874 the value of land had dropped, and John Grace's property was worth only $1,487. Byrd and India Grace paid taxes on a house and lot in Cold Spring, four horses, twenty cattle, and miscellaneous property worth $560. Deed records show, however, that India paid $20,000 for 1,277 acres east of the Trinity River that year.\textsuperscript{20}

Perhaps this was the land referred to as the Moscogee Plantation for which India and Byrd Grace signed a contract in 1875 to borrow the funds and supplies needed to farm for one year. They borrowed $400 and wares, merchandise, and provisions from R. M. McClanahan. If they did not pay in full plus 10 percent interest by November 1, 1876, they would convey to McClanahan their entire crops of corn and cotton. They would also


transfer a bay horse, a young stallion, a mule, and a mare and her colt. Grace agreed to “cultivate said land in a farmer like manner.” This arrangement was perhaps a form of sharecropping. It is not clear whether they were farming their own or McClanahan’s land.\(^{21}\)

The outcome of this venture is not known, but the Graces continued to live in San Jacinto County. Five of their children, ages five to fifteen, lived with them in 1880. India continued to teach. John Grace also lived in San Jacinto County with his wife, Eliza, and their two young children. Although his father never held an elected office in Polk or San Jacinto County, John Grace had been elected constable in San Jacinto County, Precinct 1, two years earlier.\(^{22}\)

India’s tax records show that the Graces improved their standard of living between 1879 and 1889, increasing their taxable property value from $450 to $1,721. In 1879 she owned 6 7/8 acres in San Jacinto County, four horses, and twenty cattle. Ten years later, the year her husband died, she owned 100 acres, one town lot, one wagon, six horses or mules, thirty cattle, thirty hogs, and $141 of miscellaneous property.\(^{23}\)

Deed records do not show any transactions for Byrd Grace during the 1880s. He also does not appear in the tax rolls for the sample years of 1880, 1885, and 1889. Byrd M. Grace died on July 12, 1889, at age seventy-seven. He left a $500 estate and no will.

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\(^{22}\) Tenth Census, Schedule 1, San Jacinto County, pp. 308, 313; Election Registers, Polk County, 1857-1889, Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin; Hansbro, “The History of San Jacinto County,” 107.

\(^{23}\) Tax Rolls, San Jacinto County, 1879, p. 10; Tax Rolls, San Jacinto County,
The court granted J. A. Dupree administration. Several claims existed against the estate, including Dupree’s claims for burial and medical expenses.24

India Grace appears to have remained in Cold Spring after her husband’s death. When Coldspring held its 1938 homecoming celebration, India’s contributions to the life of the community were remembered. They also recognized the gift from her relatives of the land on which the high school stood.25

Family tradition describes Byrd Grace as a “person of keen business ability and acumen.”26 County records, however, do not appear to support this conclusion. Grace was unable to retain his economic position in the community after the Civil War. By the mid-1870s he no longer appeared in deed or tax records as an owner of property.

His wife, India, does appear in the tax records and, perhaps to protect their property from further court judgments, they put their relatively small amount of property in her name. The county records after the Civil War do not disclose enough information for a full understanding of the land transactions and court judgments involving Grace. They do show, however, that he did not continue at the same level of economic status as he did before the war.

The social position of the Grace family is also difficult to determine. Byrd Grace did not hold elective office and his son, John, held only a position as constable. There is no

1889, p. 12.

24 Probate Minutes, San Jacinto County, Vol. B, p. 58, County Clerk’s Office, San Jacinto County Courthouse, Coldspring, Texas.


evidence that they were leading figures in the community. India Grace, however, appears to have held a fairly prominent position, as the community honored her after her death for her contributions to life in Coldspring. The Graces did persist geographically. The family lived near or in Cold Spring from 1857 to sometime after the death of Byrd Grace in 1889.

Byrd M. Grace, however, remains an enigmatic figure. His service in the Confederacy is a mystery. He was buried in Cold Spring, but despite raising at least twelve children, it appears that no family members were buried near to him. He died without a will, leaving only a $500 estate. A court-appointed administrator with no mention of Grace's family claimed this for medical and burial expenses. Although it is difficult to understand the details of Grace's life, it may be that he arrived in Texas too close to the war with too much debt to maintain or recover his wealth during Reconstruction. Based on the available evidence, it appears that the Grace family was not economically persistent.

CHAPTER 5

THE BENJAMIN F. HAMMOND FAMILY

Benjamin F. Hammond was born in Alabama in 1818. In 1850 he lived in Madison County, Alabama, as a practicing physician. Hammond's family consisted of his eighteen-year-old wife, Elizabeth, and sons, William, age three, and Benjamin, age one. Three boarders lived with them, including Lewis Clackman, a twenty-two-year-old farmer, Olivia North, age fifteen, and John Smith, age nineteen. Forty-three slaves from one year to eighty years old completed the household. Hammond owned $8,550 in real estate.

Clackman may have managed Hammond's farm. B. F. Hammond seemed settled in Alabama, but like Thomas Blackshear, he too moved his family to a sparsely settled region of Texas. In 1853 Hammond established a new home in Robertson County.1

Information describing the life and business transactions of the Hammond family from 1853 to 1860 is limited, and existing information contained several discrepancies. Although he apparently moved to Robertson County in 1853, and bought a large number of acres soon after his arrival, Hammond's name did not appear on the tax rolls until 1860.

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1 Tyler, et. al., eds., "B. F. Hammond," The New Handbook of Texas, Vol. 3, 435. The 1818 birth date agrees with the headstone on Hammond's grave in the Calvert Cemetery. The census records for 1850 through 1880 report several ages for Hammond that allow the birth year to vary from 1815 to 1823. Seventh Census, Schedule 1, Madison County, Alabama, pp. 366-67; Seventh Census, Schedule 2, Madison County, Alabama, p. 19; Seventh Census, Schedule 1, Madison County, Alabama, p. 366.
when he paid taxes on $65,980 worth of property. The taxable property comprised one hundred and six slaves, twenty-one horses, and fourteen cattle, but the record did not list any in-county or out-of-county land. Yet, also in 1860, Hammond reported on the census the ownership of 500 improved acres, and 1,500 unimproved acres for a cash value of $20,000, and a total property value of $126,840. Deed records, however, record his first land purchase in the county in 1858 with this deed for 500 acres being filed in 1861.

The 1860 tax records, even without including any land, showed Hammond to be among the wealthiest citizens in the county with his $65,980 in reported property value. Only three other men paid taxes on more property than Hammond did. Two of these reported owning more slaves. J. H. Anderson paid taxes on 110 slaves, and William Davis reported 125 slaves. Anderson, Davis, and Robert Calvert each had a greater total property value than Hammond, reporting $89,099, $111,098, and $88,800 respectively. These three wealthy men and Hammond represented just .9 percent of the county’s property owners, but they owned 15 percent of the property. Hammond’s stated taxable property value was well above the average for the county of $5,532. Also, Hammond’s total wealth of $126,840 recorded on the 1860 census was approximately 1,800 percent or eighteen times greater than the average wealthholding in the East Texas region.

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3 Eighth Census, Schedule 4, Robertson County, Texas, pp. 13-14; Eighth Census, Schedule 1, p. 191; Deed Records, Robertson County, Book N, pp. 247-49, County Clerk’s Office, Robertson County Courthouse, Franklin, Texas.
4 Tax Rolls, Robertson County, 1860, pp. 6, 1, 4, 3; Eighth Census, Schedule 1, Robertson County, p. 191; Campbell and Lowe, *Wealth and Power*, 116.
Hammond’s family in 1860 consisted only of his two sons, Benjamin, age ten, and William, age fourteen, who both attended school. Hammond’s wife, Elizabeth, may have died before his move to Texas as he had no younger children. A twenty-five-year-old overseer, and a fifty-five-year-old engineer lived with them. Hammond’s 106 slaves ranged in age from four months to fifty-five years.\(^5\)

Hammond did not hold an elected office in Robertson County. He did, however, actively support secession when he attended a public meeting held in the county seat of Robertson County on September 15, 1860. Hammond spoke of the value of slavery to the South and urged the assembly with a “telling, stirring speech” to act decisively. Those attending the meeting then nominated him as a delegate to the Secession Convention in 1861, but he asked that his name be withdrawn.\(^6\)

Hammond and his sons apparently did not serve in the Confederate army. In 1863 Hammond gave his support to the building of a cotton and woolen factory and flour mill in Robertson County for the use of the Confederacy. Local planters and the Confederate government were to own the factory and mill as a joint stock company. Hammond gave 100 bales of cotton to its support. In return, the Confederate government allowed Hammond to export 100 bales of cotton to Europe to be transported under the protection of Confederate troops to a neutral port in Mexico. With cotton being purchased for one

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\(^5\) Eighth Census, Schedule 1, Robertson County, p. 191; Eighth Census, Schedule 2, Robertson County, pp. 319-20.

\(^6\) Election Registers, Robertson County, 1854-1894; Richard Denny Parker, *Historical Recollections of Robertson County, Texas, with Biographical and Genealogical Notes on the Pioneers and their Families* (Salado, Texas: Anson Jones
dollar in gold per pound in Europe, Hammond and nineteen other planters hoped to make
a large profit, as well as support the Confederacy. In contrast to many other planters,
Hammond did not invest in Confederate treasury notes.\(^7\)

The tax records in 1861 included 3,706 acres of land and 108 slaves in
Hammond’s total taxable property value of $81,221. Most of Hammond’s land was
located in an area of rich bottomland east of the Brazos River in the northeast corner of
the county, between present-day Calvert and Bremond. By 1864 Hammond had increased
his taxable property value by more than $4,000. He now owned 4,791 acres and 140
slaves. Only two other taxpayers owned more property in the county than Hammond.
Brandon Gerard reported property valued at $119,125, including 270 slaves, but no land.
These were probably refugeeed slaves moved to Robertson County to avoid the Union
army in other parts of the South. Robert Calvert reported a $104,637 property value,
including seventy-five slaves. Hammond, Gerard, and Calvert represented only .6 percent
of the county’s taxpayers, but owned 8.9 percent of the property. Hammond’s property
value of $85,485 was well above the average property value of $6,875 for all taxpayers in
the county.\(^8\)

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\(^7\) Index to the Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers. Records for
Hammond or his sons were not found in the index. B. F. Hammond’s grave marker, however,
has a CSA veteran designation attached to the stone. Laurence Ward St. Clair,
"History of Robertson County" (Master’s thesis, The University of Texas, 1931), 133-35.
The result of the venture was not found. Tax Rolls, Robertson County, 1861-1864.

\(^8\) Tax Rolls, Robertson County, 1861, p. 7; Tyler, et. al., eds., “B. F. Hammond,”
The New Handbook of Texas, Vol. 3, 435; County Survey Index Map, Robertson County;
Tax Rolls, Robertson County, 1864, pp. 7, 2, 3. For a discussion of the refugee masters
At the end of the war Hammond reported the largest amount of taxable property in the county. Tax records in 1865 show that he had retained 3,759 acres of land with a value of $25,039 and miscellaneous property worth $2,945. Although Hammond’s total property value had dropped 67 percent to $27,984 in one year, this value was seventeen times more than the $1,593 average property value of the 534 other taxpayers in the county.  

Sharecroppers worked much of Hammond’s farmland after emancipation. Many of the sharecroppers were probably his former slaves. Freedmen sharecroppers also subrented Hammond’s land. In 1869 Hammond rented approximately 1,000 acres to John C. Love, probably a member of the neighboring James Love family. Love agreed to pay Hammond 100 bales of cotton weighing 500 pounds each to be produced on the rented land. Love then rented most of the acreage to ex-slaves for 300 pounds of seed cotton per acre of cotton raised and ten bushels of corn per acre of corn raised.  

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9 Tax Rolls, Robertson County, 1865, p. 8.
10 Tyler, et. al., eds., “B. F. Hammond,” The New Handbook of Texas, Vol. 3, 435; Probate Minutes, Robertson County, Vol. T, p. 3, County Clerk’s Office, Robertson County Courthouse, Franklin, Texas; Texas Historical Commission, “Site of Extinct Town of Hammond,” historical marker, corner of old highway 409 and highway 6, Robertson County. Several sources either imply or state that Hammond gave 160 acres to many of his former slaves after emancipation. For examples see, Grave marker for Dr. B. F. Hammond, Calvert Cemetery, “After Civil War gave 160 acres to each household of his ex-slaves....” See also Barker, A History of Robertson County, p. 130, “The slaves remained loyal during the war and when it was over, Dr. Hammond divided much of his land among them. Many descendents of... trusted slaves, still live on the land....” It seems more likely that Hammond divided his land among his former slaves for them to develop as sharecroppers. There was no evidence found to prove that Hammond legally transferred title to portions of his land to his former slaves without payment.
With sharecroppers working the plantation lands, the community members established a small town about one mile east of Hammond’s plantation home. Hammond had a few stores and a Houston and Texas Central Railway depot. On September 2, 1868, the railway bought a 200-foot strip through Hammond’s land for five dollars to use as a railroad right-of-way. Although the Houston and Texas Central Railway reached Hammond’s land in 1869 and was later extended to Bremond, it failed to help the Hammond community grow.  

The Hammond household in 1870 included Hammond and his two sons, William, age twenty-three, and Ben, age twenty-one. Two white male laborers, twenty-six and forty-seven years old, lived with them. Hammond and his oldest son reported their professions as farmers. Their farm included 1,000 improved acres and 4,000 acres of woodland. It had produced 10,000 bushels of corn and 300 bales of cotton the previous year. Since they did not pay any wages or provide any board that year, sharecroppers probably worked the land. 

Tax records for Hammond in 1870 showed a reduction in his taxable property value since 1865 to $21,200. Ten taxpayers in the county now owned more property than Hammond, although in three cases only a few hundred dollars more. C. P. Salter had the largest property value of $38,070. Hammond was still very wealthy, and he continued to be a member of the county’s economic elite. Hammond and the ten taxpayers who owned

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12 Ninth Census, Schedule 1, Robertson County, p. 208; Ninth Census, Schedule 4,
more taxable property than Hammond represented. 7 percent of the 1,671 property owners in the county, yet they owned 14 percent of the property. Even with the increase in population and the decrease in his property value, Hammond still owned nearly seventeen times more property than the average property owner.13

Hammond seems to have invested modestly in land speculation, either on his own or with William H. Hamman, another wealthy member of the community.14 On January 2, 1874, Hammond filed a series of deed agreements that were somewhat different from his other land deals. In these thirteen agreements he sold comparatively small amounts of acreage, 70 to 137\(\frac{3}{4}\) acres, in the Robert Henry headright to individual black farmers. Some of the purchasers were probably his former slaves, but none had adopted his last name. The payment arrangements were all similar in form, with a purchase price of $2.75 per acre. The total amount of money varied as to the number of acres. Each grantee was to pay half of the value of land in gold to Hammond on January 1, 1874. The other half was due on January 1, 1875, with 10 percent interest. One of the deeds varied in that Priscilla Smith, the only woman in the group, paid $150 cash with the remainder of $46.50 due on February 2, 1874. Perhaps these farmers had been working as sharecroppers before being able to buy the land.15

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13 Tax Rolls, Robertson County, 1870, pp. 22, 38. The average property value for Robertson County in 1870 was $1,262.
14 For examples of investments, see Deed Records, Robertson County, Book Q, p. 432, and Book S, pp. 241, 445, 494, 680.
15 Deed Records, Robertson County, Book W, pp. 519-20, 523-25, 527-33, 533-34 (Priscilla Smith), 536-39. Each record had the initials F.M.C. or F.W.C. after the
Hammond continued to file agreements to sell land to other former slaves. One of the freedmen, Robert Hammond, appears to have adopted his former owner’s last name. William Batts was the only positively identified former slave of Hammond for which there was a land transaction recorded in the deed records. Hammond purchased him in 1864 for $2,000 in Confederate money. Batts bought 160 acres from Hammond for $1,200 payable in three yearly installments with 10 percent interest. The higher cost per acre of $7.50 when compared to Hammond’s earlier transactions with former slaves is perhaps because Batts bought better land. The four deed agreements Hammond filed on May 4, 1874, selling land to former slaves, including Batts, were all $7.50 an acre or more for land situated in the Chambers headright. This land was part of Hammond’s homeplace and was located on the Brazos River.16

In 1880 fifty-seven-year-old Hammond no longer considered himself a farmer. He was a ginner, miller, and landlord. His wife, thirty-four-year-old Helen G. (Murphy), whom he married in 1878, considered herself a landlord as well as a housekeeper. His thirty-three-year-old son, William E., also a landlord, lived with them. Other members of the household were Neelie Tipton, a twelve-year-old boarder who attended school; ten-
year-old Robert J. Murphy, Hammond's stepson; and Gregory Jefferson, a black domestic
servant, age nineteen.\textsuperscript{17}

Hammond had invested $6,000 in real and personal property in his steam gristmill. On average he employed eight males, who each worked ten hours per day. Skilled mechanics earned $1.50 a day. Ordinary workers earned fifty cents for a day's work. The mill was in operation six months each year, full-time for three months. Its forty-
horsepower engine was the most powerful of the four steam mills in the county. Hammond earned $16,085 the previous year from this enterprise.\textsuperscript{18}

Hammond paid taxes in 1880 on 3,000 acres of land valued at $14,000, and one wagon, two horses or mules, twelve cattle, twelve hogs, and other miscellaneous property for a total taxable value of $15,030. Although eighteen taxpayers claimed more taxable property than Hammond, the county had nearly doubled its population since 1870. With 3,149 taxpayers, the average county property value was only $744. Hammond was still one of the wealthiest taxpayers in the county. William, Hammond's oldest son, was also fairly wealthy, owning $8,330 worth of taxable property in 1880. Benjamin C., Hammond's youngest son, does not appear on Robertson County's census or tax rolls after 1870.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17} Tenth Census, Schedule 1, Robertson County, p. 508; Marriage Records, Robertson County, Book 6, p. 481, County Clerk's Office, Robertson County Courthouse, Franklin, Texas; Tenth Census, Schedule 1, Robertson County, p. 508.
\textsuperscript{18} Bureau of the Census, Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Schedule 3 (Products of Industry), Robertson County, p. 1, Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin.
\textsuperscript{19} Tax Rolls, Robertson County, 1880, p. 43.
It appears that sometime after 1880 Hammond may have again changed his occupation to storekeeper. The 1886 tax records list $5,560 in taxable property including $4,000 in goods, wares, and merchandise.\textsuperscript{20} In 1890, Hammond's son owned $9,350 worth of taxable property including 1,400 acres of land, continuing his father's earlier level of wealth that was built on land values.

Hammond died on January 25, 1890. His will, written on October 10, 1889, was filed on March 26, 1890. In it he expressed his wishes that his son, W. E. Hammond, be the executor without posting bond. He wanted his debts paid and debts owed to him collected. He mentioned the possible sale of a store, storehouse, and lots to E. H. Bates, if his son thought that to be a good idea. Helen Hammond was to have the balance of the estate as long as she lived, unless she remarried. If she remarried, Hammond's grandson, Willie, was to have the remainder. Perhaps Hammond did not trust the courts, for he stated, "courts shall have nothing to do with my estate." His estate was valued at $1,000 consisting of 200 acres and some personal property.\textsuperscript{21}

After living for thirty-five years in Alabama, B. F. Hammond moved to Texas to begin a new life. For thirty-seven years he lived in the northwest corner of Robertson

\textsuperscript{20} Tax Rolls, Robertson County, 1886, p. 57; Tax Rolls, Robertson County, 1890, p. 72.

\textsuperscript{21} Probate Minutes, Robertson County, Vol. I, pp. 414-15. Hammond was buried in Calvert Cemetery located in downtown Calvert. It is interesting to note that William E. Hammond's wife, Fannie Lee, who lived until 1948, purchased a home across from the cemetery in 1909. The house was an imposing, red brick building constructed in 1875 to serve as a courthouse for Robertson County. In 1879 Franklin became the county seat so the building was no longer needed for its original purpose. Although it was not large for a courthouse, it would certainly have been an impressive house in the small town.
County, and even had a town named after him after attempting to build the economy of the area by encouraging the building of a railroad. Hammond was geographically persistent. For the years 1850 to 1880, the focus of this study, he was also economically persistent. He retained enough land and personal property after emancipation to have more taxable property in 1865 than any other taxpayer in the county. Although his wealth continued to decline, in 1880 he remained nineteenth out of 3,149 taxpayers in total value of his taxable property. He did, therefore, remain economically persistent from 1850 to 1880.

Hammond's choice of occupation was not as persistent. A physician before moving to Texas, he no longer practiced this profession after arriving in Robertson County. He described himself as a farmer and continued to add to the slave population that worked his land. After the war he and his son were both farmers, with sharecroppers working part of his land. Hammond then invested in a steam gristmill and considered himself a miller and landlord, rather than a farmer. His son also described himself as a landlord. The Hammonds may have been attempting to retain their wealth by trying to diversify their investments. B. F. Hammond also made some profit by buying and selling land as well as selling small tracts of land to ex-slaves.

In contrast to the large families of Thomas Blackshear and William Garrett, the persistence of the Hammond family after the death of the father depended on only one son. William died only eleven years after his father and is buried with his stepmother, father, and wife in Calvert Cemetery.
CHAPTER 6

THE WILLIAM THOMAS SCOTT FAMILY

William Thomas Scott was born on December 14, 1811, to Thomas and Mary (Keller) Scott in Wilkinson County, Mississippi. After his father's death in 1823, Scott helped support his mother and siblings. He became first a clerk then a partner in a store owned by Judge Buckner Harris, after whom he would name his first son. In 1834 Scott married Mary Washington Rose, the daughter of William Pickney and Mary Vardaman Smith Rose. Three children were born to William and Mary Scott before 1840, including Mary E., Buckner Harris, and Preston Rose. The Scotts immigrated to Harrison County, Texas, in 1840, with Mary's parents and other members of both their families.1

The Scotts and Roses settled without delay into the life of the community. Soon after their arrival, members of their families participated in the Regulator-Moderator War. This vigilante outbreak in Shelby and Harrison Counties from 1839 to 1844 began when some citizens were dissatisfied with the state of justice in the area. Known as the Regulators, they captured and punished those whom they believed had broken the law. A

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leader of this faction in Harrison County was Scott's father-in-law, William Pickney Rose.

Robert Potter, a Texas state senator and former Secretary of the Texas Navy, was a leader of the Moderators, a group who opposed the Regulators' method of justice. A group of Regulators, including Rose and John W. Scott, W. T. Scott's brother, supposedly killed Potter. Their trial resulted in a dismissal for lack of evidence.²

The Scotts first listed their taxable property in Harrison County on the 1841 tax rolls under Mary's name. They paid taxes on thirty-two slaves and four workhorses. In the early 1840s they built a home about seven miles east of Marshall. It was a Louisiana style raised cottage with four bedrooms, a living area, and a dining room. The kitchen was in a separate building. Mary and William Scott lived in this house until they died, raising twelve children, while the town of Scottsville grew nearby.³

Only four years after his arrival in Texas, Scott was elected as a representative to the Republics' last congress in 1844. By 1845 the Scotts' taxable property included fifty-six slaves, twenty-five cattle, one saddle horse, sixteen workhorses, one metal clock, and one gold watch. All property, except fourteen slaves, was again listed on the tax rolls under Mary's name.⁴

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⁴ Texas House of Representatives, Biographical Directory of the Texan Conventions and Congresses, 168; Tax Rolls, Harrison County, 1845, pp. 5-21. Real
In 1846 Scott served in the senate of the First Texas Legislature, but declined reelection because of a health problem. Scott reported his first taxable real property in the county in 1846. These 820 acres had a value of $4,000. Scott also acted as an agent for Mary. He paid taxes for her on 35 slaves, 27 horses or mules, 70 cattle, 25 sheep, 125 hogs, 5 oxen, and 3 wagons, valued at $21,020.5

The Scott family grew during the 1840s. By June 1850, five children, ages two to thirteen, lived at home. A twenty-eight-year-old overseer also lived with the Scotts to help manage their large plantation and 104 slaves, ages one to fifty. Their oldest daughter, Mary, married B. W. Watson of Harrison County on May 16, 1850, and they established a home of their own. Another daughter, Elba, died in 1847 at age five. The Scotts also joined the Rock Springs Methodist Episcopal Church South near their home. In 1850 Scott served on the church’s Board of Trustees.6 The Scott family became an integral part of the community.

In 1850 Scott began to place all of his and Mary’s property listed on the tax records under his name. In four years, Scott more than doubled their taxable property value. They owned 1,240 acres, 104 slaves, 28 horses, 100 cattle, $1,000 in miscellaneous property and property values were not included in the rolls until 1846.

5 Texas House of Representatives, Biographical Directory of the Texan Conventions and Congresses, 168; Tax Rolls, Harrison County, 1846, p. 7.
property, and $4,000 at interest for a total value of $57,555. No one owned more slaves in the county than he did. The only greater taxable property value in the county was the $73,948 estate of Spire M. Hagerty, a planter who died in 1849. Scott's plantation produced a variety of products on 1,000 improved acres, including wheat, corn, oats, peas and beans, Irish and sweet potatoes, butter, 136 bales of cotton, and 200 pounds of wool. His real property holding of $11,680 reported on the 1850 census was approximately 980 percent or ten times greater than the average reported in the East Texas region.  

Scott continued to increase his county property. By 1855 he had $71,620 worth of in-county property. Eighty-one percent, or $58,000 worth, he had invested in 116 slaves. Agriculture, however, was not his only interest. Scott also served in the Texas Senate from 1851 until 1857, during the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Legislatures.  

Along with his political activities, Scott also had business interests. In the late 1850s he was a partner in a New Orleans cotton brokerage firm. The house he maintained there during the winter enabled his children to attend good schools. In 1856 Scott, along with several other Harrison county citizens, was an incorporator of the Harrison Manufacturing Company. The company would have manufactured cotton and woolen goods. The incorporators, however, did not follow through with their plans.  

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8 Tax Rolls, Harrison County, 1855, p. 35; Texas House of Representitives, *Biographical Directory of the Texan Conventions and Congresses*, 168.  
Although Scott did not pursue manufacturing, he did actively support the development of the railroad in Harrison County. Scott was an incorporator of the first attempt to establish a railroad in the county in 1851. He then managed to remain active throughout the 1850s in the successful attempts to build a railroad, even through company name changes, financial difficulties, and reorganizations. The Texas Western Railroad Company, chartered in 1852, would in 1856 become the Southern Pacific Railroad Company, not related to the modern company. The aim of the promoters of the railroad was not only to develop a line from Shreveport to Marshall and Longview but also to continue on toward California. Scott supported the railroad as a state senator and as a member of the railroad’s board of directors. In 1857 he was also the contractor for a stretch of track. His son Preston superintended the workers who were grading in preparation for laying the tracks.  

On the eve of the Civil War, Scott owned the third largest amount of taxable property in Harrison County. Scott’s $88,795 worth of property in 1860 was exceeded only by Henry Ware’s $94,638 and Jonathan Adams’ $93,310 worth of taxable property. The majority of all three estates' investments were in slaves. Scott had invested 80 percent of his property value in slaves, Adams 68 percent, and Ware 60 percent. Scott also owned 2,300 acres of in-county land, 40 horses, and 200 cattle. By 1860 he had acquired 9,179

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5, 939; Campbell, *A Southern Community in Crisis*, 77.

acres in four other counties, including Coleman, Upshur, Panola, and Jack. This out-of-county real property added $20,883 to his total wealth, reduced his total investment in slaves to 65 percent, and increased his chances of economic persistence during Reconstruction. The three taxpayers who owned the most taxable in-county property represented only .2 percent of the property owners yet owned 3 percent of the taxable in-county property. In addition, Scott's total wealth of $338,202 recorded on the 1860 census was approximately 5,000 percent or fifty times greater than the average wealthholding in the East Texas region.\textsuperscript{11}

Scott doubled his number of improved acres during the 1850s. On these 2,000 acres his slaves worked to produce 120 bushels of wheat, 5,000 bushels of corn, 800 bushels of oats, 600 bushels of sweet potatoes, 2,000 pounds of wool, and 356 bales of cotton. This 1860s cotton crop was the largest on record in antebellum Harrison County.\textsuperscript{12}

Although the slaves owned by the Scott family must have worked very hard, the Scotts seem to have tried to take care of their investment. William Scott provided each slave family with two rooms, both with fireplaces. Tesban Young, a former slave of Scott's son, Buckner, said that Scott had not separated her family and had fed them well. She also understood, however, that this was so they would work well.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11} Tax Rolls, Harrison County, 1860, pp. 35, 42, 1; Campbell and Lowe, \textit{Wealth and Power}, 116; Eighth Census, Schedule 1, Harrison County, p. 475.

\textsuperscript{12} Eighth Census, Schedule 4, Harrison County, pp. 25-26; Campbell, \textit{A Southern Community in Crisis}, 54.

\textsuperscript{13} Curlee, Abigail, "A Study of Texas Slave Plantations, 1822-1865" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 1932), 238; Campbell, \textit{A Southern Community in...
By 1860 the Scott’s oldest son Buckner Harris, age twenty-two, had established a home in Harrison County with his wife, Lucy, and two young daughters. An overseer lived with them. The second son, Preston Rose had also started his household. In 1859 he married Mary Ann Taylor, also of Harrison County. They moved to Atlanta in Cass County that year and started a mercantile business.\textsuperscript{14}

William and Mary Scott had eight children living at home in 1860, ranging in age from two months to sixteen years. Two daughters, Mary and Emma, had died during the 1850s. Mary had died about one year after her 1850 marriage, perhaps during childbirth. Emma had died in 1854 at age seven.\textsuperscript{15} None of Scott’s sons, however, were killed during the Civil War.

Scott supported the Confederate war effort in several ways. He represented Harrison County as a delegate to the Texas secession convention in 1861, signing the Ordinance of Secession in February. He also served in the local militia. His plantation produced supplies for the soldiers, including woven blankets made on his looms. When the Confederate currency continued to depreciate, Scott chaired a public meeting that condemned anyone who refused to use Confederate notes. Buckner, served as a private in

\textsuperscript{14} Eighth Census, Schedule 1, Harrison County, pp. 446-47; Cawthon, comp., \textit{Marriage and Death Notices}, 15; \textit{Biographical Souvenir of the State of Texas} (Chicago: F. A. Battey & Company, 1889), 944.

\textsuperscript{15} Eighth Census, Schedule 1, 1860, Harrison County, p. 475; “Some of the Scott Family,” 5-6. The two youngest children, J. W. and T. R., ages three months and two months respectively, could not be identified. The Scott’s youngest child, John Pickney, was also born in 1860, so they had perhaps taken in their grandchildren or other relatives.
the Third Texas Cavalry, Company A. Preston, does not appear in the Confederate service records, although local histories report that he did serve.\(^\text{16}\)

Scott continued his family and business activities throughout the war. On May 2, 1863, Scott's daughter, Erie (Era), married W. C. Austin of Mississippi. In 1861 Scott became the vice-president of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Three years later he was president.\(^\text{17}\)

By 1864 Scott had a total in-county taxable property value of $98,670. He had slightly increased his Harrison County land holdings to 2,520 acres. He had also increased his number of slaves to 111. In support of the Confederacy, he owned $22,000 worth of Confederate treasury notes. Only two other taxpayers held more in-county taxable property. Henry Ware, a planter and a manufacturer, held $147,222 worth of property and G. G. Gregg, a merchant, held $106,274 worth.\(^\text{18}\)

Buckner Scott first appeared on the tax rolls in 1864. He owned 2,094 acres, forty-four slaves, $400 in Confederate treasury notes.  


notes, livestock, and other miscellaneous property worth a total of $40,626. Just before the end of the war both father and son were wealthy.\textsuperscript{19}

Scott lost a sizable portion of his property value as a result of emancipation. Scott's in-county taxable property in 1865 was only 14 percent of his 1864 property value. Scott still owned 2,520 acres of in-county land, 38 horses, 175 cattle, and 185 sheep worth $13,849, much more than the average in-county taxable property of $1,651. Except for the sheep, this is about the same amount of the land and livestock he owned in 1860. Six other taxpayers in the county owned more in-county taxable property than Scott did. These seven property owners represented .7 percent of the taxpayers, but they owned 11 percent of the in-county property. The Scott family wealth, however, came not only from in-county property, but from out-of-county property as well. In 1865 Scott owned 47,693 acres in nine other counties worth $25,214. Buckner Scott also lost a sizable portion of his property. His total in-county taxable property value of $9,147 in 1865 represented only 23 percent of his 1864 property value. This amount, however, was still well above the average in-county taxable property value of $1,651.\textsuperscript{20}

Scott's interest in railroads continued into the late 1860s. He served on the board of directors of the Southern Pacific and as vice-president from 1866 to 1869, and continued as a member of the board of directors into the 1870s. Perhaps he felt it a great honor when, in 1871, the completely rebuilt locomotive, \textit{Jay Bird}, was renamed the \textit{W. T. Scott}. The Scotts remained active in the community after the war. They donated four acres

\textsuperscript{19} Tax Rolls, Harrison County, 1864, p. 27.
of land in 1867 to the Methodist Episcopal Church South for use as a church, school, and
cemetery. The Rock Springs Church, the Scott family cemetery, and the cemetery that the
Scott’s had begun for their slaves were already on the property. In 1869 Scottsville
became an "official" town when it opened its first post office.  21

William T. Scott’s household was smaller in 1870 than in 1860. He and Mary had
four children living at home, ages ten to seventeen, and all attending school. He continued
to produce corn, sweet potatoes, and cotton on his land. His livestock included 31 mules,
35 milk cows, 2 horses, 20 cattle, 180 sheep, and 20 swine. In 1871 Scott reported an in-
county taxable property value of $39,296. Only the Southern Pacific Railroad Company
and S. E. Waskom reported more in-county taxable property. Scott continued to own
several thousand acres of land outside the county, valued at nearly $30,000.  22

Although Scott owed various debts, he kept up the education of his children. In
1871 Scott apparently sent his two youngest sons, William and John, to school in
Toronto, Canada. In 1876 William entered Emory and Henry College in Virginia,
returning in 1878.  23 Yet in 1871, in what might have been an effort to circumvent a
possible court sale of his land in Harrison County, Scott deeded about 1,300 acres and a

20 Tax Rolls, Harrison County, 1865, pp. 32, 1, 4, 8, 29, 39, 44-45.
21 Muir, "The Thirty-Second Parallel Pacific Railroad," 178, 185; Little, Historic
Harrison County, 140; Nancy Blakely Ruff, "Harrison County Post Offices," Harrison
County, Texas, Caucasian Residents in 1880 (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1987), n. p.
22 Ninth Census, Schedule 1, Harrison County, pp. 86-87; Ninth Census, Schedule
3, Harrison County, p. 13; Tax Rolls, Harrison County, 1871, pp. 7, 11, 23, 41-44.
23 Historical and Biographical Record of the Cattle Industry and the Cattlemen of
Texas and Adjacent Territory, Vol. 2 (Woodward and Tiernan Printing Co., 1895; New
town lot in Marshall to his wife. Scott justified the sale by declaring that he wanted to separate from his property the approximately $11,000 in land and money his wife had received over the years from her father and uncle. The next year, the county court ordered a public auction to sell some of this land and an additional 2,500 acres or more because Scott owed more than $12,000 of debt. James Turner placed the winning bid of only $898, about twenty-one cents an acre. Turner then sold a large portion of the land to Ripley R. Scott, Scott's third oldest son, for $1,000. Two of Scott's sons-in-law, W. C. Austin and Wm. D. Powell, bought the remaining land from Turner.

During the 1870s, Scott's sons were beginning to build their reputations. Preston Rose, Scott's second oldest son, who had moved to Atlanta, served as a representative in the Texas House during the Thirteenth Legislature.

Scott, however, was not ready to turn over responsibilities to the younger generation. In 1878 the conservatives in Harrison County organized the Citizens party and nominated Scott to run for the Texas House of Representatives. The party's aim was to "redeem" the local government from the radicals. Victory came as a result of a mislocated, and therefore contested, ballot box and the forced possession of the offices by the Citizen party's nominees. If the votes in the disputed box had been counted, Scott would have lost by seventy-two votes. Scott served in the Texas House from 1879 until 1882, during the

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27 Members of the Texas Legislature, 1846-1980 (Austin: Texas State Legislature,
Sixteenth and Seventeenth Legislatures. The 1880 election was held without conflict, Scott defeating his opponent 3,351 votes to 1,312.\textsuperscript{28} While in office he served on several committees, including Constitutional Amendments, Finance, Counties and County Boundaries, Roads, Bridges and Ferries, and the Public Department.\textsuperscript{29}

In 1880 William, age sixty-nine and Mary, age sixty-one, had only one child living at home, William, age twenty-two. He had just returned from attending college in Virginia and was earning his living as a merchant. Two white farmers, ages nineteen and twenty-three, and one white merchant, twenty-two-year-old Henry Youree, lived with them. Youree would marry Scott’s daughter, Mary Elizabeth (Bettie). The household also included two black, male farm laborers, ages twenty-five and twenty-three, and a thirty-year-old black cook and her two children, ages eight and two. Scott reported only $5,200 worth of in-county property in 1880.\textsuperscript{30}

Ripley Scott’s household included his wife Florence, their one-year-old daughter, Pearl, and his twenty-one-year-old nephew, Preston. Three blacks—a male laborer, a cook, and the cook’s three-year-old child—were also part of their household. He reported only $2,644 in taxable property.\textsuperscript{31} Buckner Scott’s family had also grown. It included his

\textsuperscript{28} Campbell, A Southern Community in Crisis, 347-55, 361.
\textsuperscript{29} Biographical Directory of the Texan Conventions and Congresses, 168; Scott was officially considered a Democrat. Legislative Manual for the State of Texas, 1879-1880 (Austin: E. W. Swindells, 1879), 232, 254, 198-200.
\textsuperscript{30} Tenth Census, Schedule 1, Harrison County, p. 460; Fran Key, “The Scotts Gather,” The Shreveport Times, Sunday, August 2, 1970, sec. F, p. 6; Tax Rolls, Harrison County, 1880, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{31} Tenth Census, Schedule 1, Harrison County, p. 460; Tax Rolls, Harrison
twenty-three-year-old daughter, Emma, and four young sons ages two through nine.

Twenty-year-old John Pickney, William and Mary's youngest son, was living in New York where he attended Bellevue Hospital Medical College. He graduated in 1881 and returned home to practice.  

The 1880s brought great change to the Scott household. Scott began to increase his Harrison County land holdings again. In 1882 he purchased 1,235 acres of land for $6,000 from Peter Youree. Then in May 1883, William, Jr., sold 1,719 acres to his father. Perhaps he sold the land to his father because he had turned from the mercantile business to railroad construction and needed operating capital. As a contractor William, Jr., furnished ties and lumber. Later, he built lines for Denison, Gainesville, and for the Marshall, Paris and Northwestern Railway.  

On March 25, 1883, Mary Scott died and was buried in the Scottsville Cemetery with other members of her family. On June 20, 1883, Scott, perhaps wanting to keep the property intact, paid each of his nine surviving children $5,000 for their share of their mother's property. The children had remained either in Harrison County, or in a nearby county. Three sons, Ripley, William, and John, remained in Harrison County, as did three

32 Ruff, Harrison County, Texas, Caucasian Residents, 198; "Hon. William Thomas Scott," The Encyclopedia of the New West (Hodge and Jennings Bros., 1881), 282-84.  
daughters, Erie Austin, Ella Powell, and Susie Kretz. Mary Youree had moved to Caddo Parish, Louisiana. Preston lived in Cass County; Buckner, in Kaufman County. 34

The year after Mary died, Scott reported $14,458 of taxable in-county property, including 4,078 acres of land. Ripley, who was living with his father, held only $355 worth of personal property. Three years later, in 1887, Scott reported only $3,698 of in-county property and Ripley reported $10,470. Scott had sold much of his land to Ripley. William Thomas Scott died on November 1, 1887. 35

The Scott children continued to prosper. Preston Scott became a leading citizen in Cass County. He was an organizer and later president of the first bank in Atlanta. He also served in the Thirteenth Legislature and the Constitutional Convention of 1875. Preston held an active interest in the sawmill business and in transportation. 36

In 1887 William, Jr., moved to Mitchell County and started a ranch southwest of Colorado City. Four years later he married Minna Chalk, daughter of a prominent Belton lawyer. He also was a cashier of the People’s National Bank in Colorado City and an investor in real estate in the area. 37

Ripley Scott continued to live in the Scott family home until his death in 1918. He left an estate valued at $55,540, including 3,535 acres of land. In 1939 descendents of

34 Headstone on Mary Rose Scott’s grave, Scottsville Cemetery, Scottsville, Texas; Deed Records, Harrison County, Vol. 16, pp. 128-30.
36 Biographical Souvenir, 944.
William T. Scott still lived in his home, including his grandson, Scott Kretz, and Kretz's wife and two sons.\(^{38}\)

William T. Scott and his family were geographically persistent. The Scotts moved to the Republic of Texas, established their home, and remained. Almost 100 descendants of Mary and William Scott attended the annual grave cleaning of the Scottsville cemetery in 1970. Many were from the local area.\(^{39}\)

Scott was also socially persistent. He remained an important figure in the community throughout his life. He was a leader in politics, transportation, agriculture, and business. He was called upon both before and after the Civil War to represent Harrison County in the Texas Legislature. In the town of Scottsville that bore his name, as well as the county, he was an active participant in many of the major events that affected his community. Evidence also suggests that several of his children also remained socially persistent. For example, Ripley became the wealthy landowner in his father's stead, John practiced medicine, and Preston served as a legislator.

The Scott family also persisted economically, although Scott's in-county taxable wealth fluctuated. In the early 1870s the courts auctioned much of his land in Harrison County to pay his debts. His family retained the land by buying it from the highest bidder. In the 1880s, Scott purchased the land from his children and rebuilt his holdings, only to

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\(^{39}\) Key, “The Scotts Gather.”
sell them before his death to his son Ripley. The Scott family thus persisted both geographically and economically in late nineteenth century Harrison County.
The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of the Civil War and Reconstruction on the persistence of antebellum planter families in postbellum East Texas. Five planter families from different counties who owned more than one hundred slaves in 1860 were studied with an emphasis on the years 1850 to 1880. The Civil War brought physical destruction to plantations in many areas of the South. The death of the father or sons of a planter family also prevented the reestablishment of some estates after the war. In addition, Reconstruction brought potential and real economic, political, and social changes to the planter class, including the loss of property, labor, political influence, and social position. Historians have debated the extent of these effects and whether the elite planter class was essentially ruined throughout the South.

East Texas planter families, however, did not suffer the destruction of their property by invading Union forces.\textsuperscript{1} Also, for the five planter families examined in this study, only one son died as a result of the war. So, East Texas planters were probably less likely to be ruined than those in such areas as Virginia or Georgia; nevertheless, there is good reason to think they would lose their position in society. The economic effects of

\textsuperscript{1} Campbell, \textit{A Southern Community in Crisis}, 389-92.
the end of the war were substantial. These five planters lost slaves valued at $347,500 in 1865, more than half their taxable wealth.\(^2\) Also, the planters had to adjust to changes in the local economic, social, and political structure. Yet, four of the five East Texas antebellum planter families included in this study persisted as wealthy influential members of their postbellum communities despite the effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

All five families persisted geographically. For each of these planters who chose to move their families to East Texas from older, more settled southern states, this journey was their final move. Whether they arrived during the days of the Republic as did William Garrett and William T. Scott, or after statehood during the 1850s, as did Thomas E. Blackshear, Benjamin F. Hammond, and Byrd M. Grace, all five planters lived and were buried near where they first settled. Four of the planters remained active into the 1880s. All five of the planters' families, however, were geographically persistent from their arrival to the death of the planter and at least one generation longer.

Each of the five planters lost from 67 to 88 percent of their in-county taxable property as a result of emancipation and the loss of the value of Confederate treasury notes and currency. Although these percentages represented more than half their property, in 1865 they remained in a class of wealthy elite. Post-war economic problems affected nearly everyone, leaving the planters in positions of wealth relative to others in their

\(^2\) Tax Rolls, Grimes County, 1864, p. 1; Tax Rolls, San Augustine County, 1864, p. 16; Tax Rolls, Polk County, 1864, p. 8; Tax Rolls, Robertson County, 1864, p. 17; Tax Rolls, Harrison County, 1864, p. 27. The number and value of slaves for each planter were as follows: Blackshear, 120 slaves at $96,000; Garrett, 144 slaves at $70,000; Grace, 118 slaves at $70,000; Hammond, 140 slaves at $56,000; and Scott, 111 slaves at $55,500.
communities. The in-county taxable property of the five planters averaged ten times more than the average property values of the counties where each lived. When in-county taxable property values were compared for 1865, Garrett and Hammond were still the wealthiest taxpayers in their counties. Grace, Blackshear, and Scott ranked, seventh, fourth, and seventh, respectively. Scott, however, also had more than $25,000 of land in other counties. Land ownership appears to be a main reason that they were able to remain relatively wealthy. Due to debt, both Scott and Grace faced public auctions of portions of their land. The Scott family, however, having lived in East Texas seventeen years longer than the Grace family, was more established. Scott also owned more land than was auctioned, and through his son, Ripley, he was able to regain the auctioned land. Grace, however, was unable to recover from the loss of his land. He was the only one of the five planters who was not economically persistent until 1880. In 1871 Grace reported only $275 of taxable property. Grace was an example of a planter, heavily in debt, whose ownership of land did not keep him from losing his position of wealth.

Historian Richard Kilbourne identified other examples of such planters in East Feliciana Parish, Louisiana. As in the case of Grace, land did not keep the planters in Kilbourne's study from bankruptcy. Grace was, however, an exception in this study. He appeared to have had relatively more debt and less land than the other planters had. The determination of this research that four of the five planters economically persisted follows the patterns observed by historians, Jonathan Wiener, Crandall Shiflett, and Michael
Wayne. They found planters in Alabama, Virginia, and Louisiana who remained economically persistent in the elite class in spite of losing large portions of their wealth.\(^3\)

Wiener's study of five Alabama counties, found that the planter elite persisted geographically and socially to 1870. Shifflett's local study of Louisa County, Virginia, also found that planters there retained enough of their estates to remain among the wealthy of the county. In Wayne's study of Natchez the planters remained economically persistent in spite of invasion. If planters were able to persist in such disrupted regions, planters in East Texas should exhibit an even greater tendency to persist.\(^4\)

The planters in this study continued to pursue many of the same business interests after 1865 that they had engaged in both before and during the war. Blackshear and Scott continued to support railroad building in their counties. They also continued to farm by pursuing other methods of obtaining workers for their land, such as contracting with sharecroppers. Hammond diversified his activities by owning and operating a steam gristmill and opening a store. Grace returned to his profession as a steamboat captain, later trying agriculture again, even if it might have been in the role of a sharecropper. The planters' sons had interests much the same as their fathers, such as agriculture, railroad construction, and store ownership. Gavin Wright's argument that the antebellum planter

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class did not continue to exist because planters were no longer slaveowners ignores all the varied economic interests of the planter families.\(^5\)

Scott was the only planter whose political influence was easily documented because he held public office both before and after the Civil War. The other planter families, however, also had members whose influence was felt in their communities. Garrett, for example, served on boards for the development of local schools. His youngest son became a lawyer and served as District Clerk. Garrett's influence is also demonstrated by the inability of the Freedmen's Bureau agent to arrest him after a former slave filed charges against him. Blackshear's grandson published a local newspaper and served as mayor. Besides holding state office, Scott was a church leader and was instrumental in the economic development of his county. As wealthy landowners, all were probably active in their communities, many times in a cause in their own interest. Some of their children were socially prominent to 1880 and, with other descendants, well into the twentieth century.

The Grace family did not persist as wealthy, influential members of their community. They did, however, remain in the community and appeared to live comfortably. Their descendants gave land for a new high school in honor of India Grace. The Grace family was not socially persistent, but neither were they "ruined."

The extent of the geographic and social persistence of the planter class in the postbellum South remains an area of interest to historians. Local studies are needed to clarify the extent of the elite planters' persistence and disclose details about the economic

\(^5\) Wright, *Old South, New South*, 48-49.
and social conditions in individual communities and regions. The inhabitants of all five East Texas communities in this study experienced great economic and social change, yet all five planter families remained geographically persistent. Only the less established Grace family did not persist in the upper economic class. The others continued as relatively wealthy members of their communities and remained leaders in the local society and economy. The experiences of these families thus suggest that large planter families in East Texas found it possible to persist in spite of the Civil War and Reconstruction.
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