CONGRESSIONAL RECONSTRUCTION IN
DALLAS COUNTY, TEXAS:
WAS IT RADICAL?

THESIS

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Looking at census reports, county commissioners court minutes, Freedmen's Bureau records, manuscript collections, and secondary material, this study investigates the effects of Military Reconstruction, 1867-1870, on Dallas County, Texas. There were few lasting or long-term changes for the area. The county was isolated from communities to the east and south that encountered different effects. There was a small black and Unionist population and virtually no carpetbaggers. Succumbing to apathy in the 1868 election that produced a Republican constitutional convention, county Conservatives successfully determined not to let it happen again and were "redeemed" in 1870. The white population of the county, increasing rapidly during this period, contributed to an attitude that pushed Radical Reconstruction aside and focused on prosperity and growth.
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INTRODUCTION

The years of Reconstruction following the Civil War (1865-1876) have been studied by many scholars over the past one hundred fifteen years. Their studies focus primarily on the nation as a whole, individual states, or the various agencies created at the time to facilitate the country's reorganization, and give little attention to local communities. However, by studying Reconstruction's effects upon the grass roots element of society, remarkable new information may be added to previous investigations. Studies of one or several communities within a single state may "throw new light upon not only the development of the state itself but upon general movements of a national character in which the state has had a part." With this idea in mind, I have sought to determine the impact of Reconstruction on one important North Texas community, Dallas County. Because they were in many respects the most critical during the era, the years of Congressional Reconstruction (1867-1870) are the focus of my study. This period is also known as Radical Reconstruction and Military Reconstruction. It began when the Radical Republicans who controlled Congress passed the Reconstruction Act on March 2, 1867, taking the management of Reconstruction out of President Andrew Johnson's hands. The Act pronounced the
state governments of the eleven Confederate states, excluding Tennessee, illegal and divided them into five Military Districts under the command of Army officers. General Philip H. Sheridan was sent to New Orleans to command the Fifth Military District which included Louisiana and Texas.³

Several early accounts of Reconstruction in Dallas County were written by men who either experienced the era first hand or grew up hearing the stories of how radical it was. John William Roberts wrote about "the unpleasant aftermath" of the war and the "taste of the bitter condition of the conquered" during this "unhappy period." Roberts reprinted a quotation from John Henry Brown, the premier chronicler of Dallas County, that discussed Reconstruction as "the gloom and demoralization which for more than a decade settled down on the whole South," including Dallas.⁴ George Santerre wrote briefly of the "days of the Carpet Baggers" in Dallas, and John H. Cochran examined how the "unsettled condition retarded progress in Dallas County," but "did not prevent the dissemination of information as to the wonderful opportunities in this new and richly endowed section."⁵

The purpose of my inquiry has been, through the use of county records, tax rolls, census returns, personal manuscripts, period newspapers, and other pertinent information, to come to an understanding of how "radical" Radical Reconstruction was in Dallas County. Many questions
need to be answered. Who constituted the county leadership in 1867; what was the public reaction to the Reconstruction Acts and to the removal of elected officials in November, 1867; who were the new leaders appointed by the military and how did they govern the county; what was the role of the Freedmen's Bureau in Dallas County; what effect did Radical Reconstruction have on the county's economy; how was the Election of 1869 (which brought approval of a new constitution and readmission to the Union for Texas) carried out in Dallas County; and, finally, were there any lasting changes in the make-up of the county government? With the answers to these and other questions it is possible to discern whether the county significantly changed in the years between 1867 and 1870 because of Radical Reconstruction and to forecast whether Radical Reconstruction affected the prospects for the immediate future of Dallas County.
1. Examples of these studies are Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988); Charles W. Ramsdell, *Reconstruction in Texas* (1910; reprint, Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1964); William L Richter, *Overreached on All Sides: The Freedmen’s Bureau Administrators in Texas, 1865-1868* (College Station, Texas: Texas A & M University Press, 1991); Christopher Laplant, "Reconstruction in Dallas County," Master’s Thesis, University of Texas at Arlington, 1974. Laplant’s study broadly focuses on the entire Reconstruction period and covers areas that this study does not, such as the development of religion and the railroads in Dallas County.

2. Correspondence from Charles W. Ramsdell to C. B. Gillespie, March 31, 1924, Mrs. M. A. Lankford Collection, Dallas Historical Society, Dallas, Texas, A6080.


5. George Henry Santerre, *Dallas’ First 100 Years, 1856-1956.* (Dallas: Book Craft, 1956), no page numbers (1st quotation); John H. Cochran, *Dallas County: a Record of Its Pioneers and Progress, Being a Supplement to John Henry Brown’s History of Dallas County (1887) with Correction of Some Errors Contained Therein, and Much Additional Information About Early settlers and Their Families,* (Dallas: Arthur S. Mathis Service Publishing Company, 1928), 133 (2nd & 3rd quotation).
CHAPTER 1

DALLAS COUNTY ENTERS RADICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Dallas County, established by the first Texas Legislature in 1846, was still a small community when the Civil War ended in 1865. Its population as recorded by the United States Census of 1860 stood at 8,665, the majority of whom were born in states that did not secede in 1861, and included only 1,074 slaves. Yet during the war the county overwhelmingly supported the Confederacy. Early local historian John Henry Brown stated that there were probably not twenty men in the county "who were not truly and sincerely Southern in feelings and principle." He estimated that close to one thousand of the area's male population joined the Confederate army. The county supported the cause in a number of other areas as well. A cantonment was established on the county fair grounds in 1861. In 1862, Dallas became the headquarters for grain procurement for the North Texas area, and a pistol factory to manufacture weapons for the Confederate army was built in Lancaster. A "Soldiers' Home" or hotel for "warriors on leave" was erected in Dallas in 1864.

John W. Swindells, the influential publisher of the weekly Dallas Herald, reflected in November 1866 that the
people of Texas and Dallas County "with but few exceptions ... escaped the ravages of war -- save the loss of a few negroes [sic] their condition has not materially changed." At the end of the war most of the area's young men returned home to their families, and the county began to see an increase in population from the arrival of other ex-Confederates, many from border states. John H. Cochran, a member of one of the county's founding families and a local civic and political leader, characterized this new influx of immigrants as "an intelligent, energetic and courageous people, full of vim and other qualifications to make them desirable citizens." They brought with them new blood and a new enthusiasm which invigorated the existing population.

Early county chroniclers speak of the "gloom and demoralization" which settled on all people of the South, including those in Dallas, but there was a strong and effective desire in Dallas County for growth. By 1867 the county was flourishing. The Dallas Herald suggested that people who held idle land were "drones in the pathway of the improvement of the county," and should set up small farms of seventy to eighty acres each to rent to the large numbers of newcomers wanting land. A McKinney Enquirer editorial reprinted in the Herald called Dallas a "flourishing and public spirited city." In May 1867, Dallas County farmer, John T. Coit also mentioned the immigration of people from the border states especially the "union sections of
Tennessee," and he expected there would be even more to follow soon." 

The majority of people in Dallas County were conservative Democrats who supported President Andrew Johnson's ideas for the reconstruction of the country and his "noble efforts to restore and perpetuate the blessings of free government . . . in the straight forward manly course" he had chosen. Johnson's plan for reorganization was to restore the rebellious states to the Union as quickly as possible. Amnesty and pardons, which included the restoration of all property except slaves, were to be given to each participant or supporter of the Confederate cause in exchange for an oath pledging loyalty to the United States. Owners of property in excess of $20,000 were required to apply individually to the President for pardons. Johnson also insisted that voting requirements be returned to pre-secession status. As to Negro suffrage, Johnson firmly believed the federal government did not possess the authority to impose such a weighty decision upon the states and that the issue should not get in the path of a speedy reorganization. 

Johnson established a provisional government in Texas on June 17, 1865, and appointed Andrew J. Hamilton provisional governor. Hamilton had served as attorney-general for the state of Texas and in the United States Congress before the war. Enlisting in the Federal army in 1862, Brigadier General Hamilton had been appointed military
governor of Texas in 1863, by President Abraham Lincoln. On July 25, 1865, Governor Hamilton informed the people of Texas by proclamation that he would soon appoint men in each county to register voters and to issue oaths of amnesty. He would also appoint state, district, and county officers to perform civil duties until an election could be held.

When Hamilton made his appointments for Dallas County on August 8, 1865, the majority of people in the community must have been pleased with his selections because the new county officials were long-time Dallas County residents. Chief Justice William H. Hord, arriving from North Carolina in 1845, had established the community of Hord's Ridge which was close competition for Dallas as county seat in 1850. Hord was reported to have performed the first marriage in Dallas County. A staunch supporter of Southern ideals, Hord had declared eleven slaves for ad valorem tax purposes in 1860 and had enlisted in Captain John J. Good's Dallas Light Artillery unit on February 22, 1861. Serving as chief justice for only six weeks, Hord was replaced on September 22, 1865, by A. Bledsoe, a well-respected and long-time resident who would become the county's leading Republican. Perhaps Hord's ownership of slaves and his Confederate army service, compounded by an altercation which resulted in his shooting and killing, albeit in self-defense, a Mr. Cunningham on September 16, was too much for Governor Hamilton to tolerate.
The County Commissioners were also familiar county residents. H. K. Brotherton, who had been in the county since 1851, was one of the wealthiest men in Dallas County in 1865, as well as a former slaveholder. James H. Holloway, arriving in Dallas County in 1850, was elected as county commissioner in 1862, serving until his appointment by Hamilton. George W. Barton and Isaac B. Webb served on the Commissioners Court throughout the war, were appointed by Hamilton, and would go on to be elected to remain on the court in 1866.\(^\text{11}\)

Provisional Sheriff N. O. McAdams was not a novice to law enforcement, having occupied that office since 1862 and having had the distinction of being the first sheriff in the county to hold that office for more than one term. Governor Hamilton also relied upon the incumbent Tax Assessor/Collector for Dallas County, John H. Cochran, to continue at his post. Twenty-six years of age, Cochran had tried his hand at a variety of occupations. Although an early settler of the area, he left to attend McKenzie Institute in Red River County where, after graduation, he remained to teach during the 1858-1859 school term. He briefly served as a commander in the Texas Rangers under Governor Sam Houston, resigning to enlist in Company C of the 6th Texas Cavalry (Fitzhugh's regiment). Back in Dallas in 1862, Cochran was appointed County Tax Assessor/Collector, serving until the war's end.\(^\text{12}\)
The duties performed by these provisional county officers were not different from those of their predecessors. Under the constitution of the state of Texas, each county established a Commissioners Court composed of one chief justice and four county commissioners, all elected for two-year terms. Acting as the legislative body for the county, they were to supervise and control the public roads, bridges, and ferries; to care for the indigent, lame, blind, and poor; and to erect and maintain a correction facility. The chief justice functioned as the county probate court. The entire commissioners court constituted the board of school commissioners, authorized to divide the county into school districts. The constitution also provided that each county have a sheriff and an assessor/collector of taxes. 

As provisional governor, Hamilton was to secure a republican form of government for Texas by convening a constitutional convention which would amend the state constitution to abolish slavery, nullify secession, and repudiate all state debts incurred under the Confederacy. After three months of voter registration, Hamilton announced the date of January 8, 1866, for the election of delegates to the convention. Representing Dallas County were James K. P. Record, a Moderate Republican, and Alexander Harwood, a Democrat. The delegates met in Austin on February 7, 1866, and were able to complete their prescribed work by April 2. Among matters not related to repudiation of Confederate ties were minor amendments which changed the
name of the County Commissioners Courts to Police Courts of
the County and lengthened the terms of all county officials
to four years, although their basic duties remained the
same.\textsuperscript{15} The convention also set aside June 25, 1866, as the
election date to ratify the proposed constitutional
amendments and to elect state, district, and local
officials.\textsuperscript{16}

With a hopeful spirit and faith in the future, Dallas
citizens went to the polls in June, 1866, to elect under the
new Constitution of 1866 the first slate of county officials
since the war. The men elected to these county positions
provided an indication that Dallas County had not changed
politically since the war. All had arrived in Dallas County
before 1860, and I. B. Webb had been one of the founding
fathers of the area. Three of the county officials had
served in the Confederate Army, and two were slaveholders.
Their average age was forty-two, and all were farmers except
Chief Justice Z. E. Coombes who was a lawyer. Three of the
officials had served the county during the war -- Webb and
George W. Barton as county commissioners and Jeremiah M.
Brown as deputy sheriff. All had been born in either
Kentucky or Tennessee.\textsuperscript{17}

Born in Nelson County, Kentucky, in 1833, Zachariah
Ellis Coombes came with his family to the Dallas area in
1843 by ox-drawn cart. At the age of twenty-one, Coombes
returned to Kentucky to study law. For nearly two years in
1858-1859, he operated an Indian school at the Brazos Indian
Reservation near Fort Belknap in Young county, Texas. He was elected Captain of Company G, 31st Texas Cavalry (Trezevant C. Hawpe's regiment), during the Civil War."

The oldest member of the Police Court was Commissioner Isaac B. Webb at sixty-four years old. Webb came to Dallas County in 1844 with his family and was responsible for establishing the first Methodist Church in the county in 1847, just two hundred yards from his cabin. As a farmer he was moderately successful, listing his personal property in his 1864-1866 Day Book as: "1 negro, 3 horses, 20 cattle, 3 oxen, 22 hogs." Although expressing his interest in state and local politics soon after his arrival in Texas, Webb did not become politically active himself until he served as county commissioner during the war from 1862-1865. He was appointed to remain as county commissioner by Provisional Governor A. J. Hamilton in August 1865, and then elected to that post in June 1866.

Coming to Dallas from Kentucky sometime before 1860, George W. Barton enlisted in the Confederate army on May 14, 1862, in Hawpe's Regiment of the 31st Texas Cavalry, serving as Captain until he was replaced in August, 1862, by Z. E. Coombes. Barton was elected to the County Commissioners Court in 1864, and like Webb, also was appointed to that position in August, 1865, by Governor Hamilton.

Less is known about commissioners J. P. Stratton and J. R. Clements. Stratton came into the county around 1857; Clements came later but before 1860. Both men were farmers
from Kentucky. Election as county commissioners in 1866 is the first record of political or civic activity for either man.  

Sheriff Jeremiah M. Brown, another native Kentuckian, came to Dallas County in 1859 with his family and one slave. When Hawpe formed his Dallas regiment, Brown enlisted but returned to Dallas in 1863 to take charge of the government shops there. He served as deputy sheriff under Sheriff N. O. McAdams from August 21, 1864, until his election in 1866 as Sheriff, except for a short term in 1865 as Constable of the Corporation of Dallas.

James Paris Goodnight had the most government experience of the officials elected on June 25, 1866. Arriving in Dallas County from Kentucky in 1854, he was elected county Tax Assessor and Collector in 1858. He was returned to that office in 1862, but resigned later that year to become Dallas' state representative. Goodnight joined his neighbors in Hawpe's regiment, enlisting in Brashear City (now Morgan City), Louisiana, on July 10, 1863, but he completed his Confederate service as a clerk in the Commissary Department. He returned to public service with his election in June, 1866, as Tax Assessor and Collector for Dallas county.

The make up of the 1866 Police Court and the attitude of the people of the county account for the fact that Dallas, during late 1866 and early 1867, existed very much as it had before and during the war. Police Court minutes
revealed only normal county business. Grand juries were named, a Board of School Examiners was appointed, precinct officers were announced, the indigent were cared for, and roads were maintained. The court's greatest concern centered on the crumbling county court house and jail which they tried to repair but later determined to replace. The county tax rate reflected the progressive nature of the county in that the ad valorem tax rate was relatively low at seven and one-half cents per one hundred dollars property valuation, but an added seven and one-half cents per one hundred dollars property valuation special tax was levied to build a new court house.  

As no Sheriff's records for the period exist, it is difficult to speak to the matter of crime in the county. The Dallas Herald matter-of-factly reported a break-in at Ross Brothers Store, but indignantly responded to charges by the Marshall Republican that Dallas was "infested with thieves" by saying there was less crime in Dallas than in any comparable community in the state "since the break-up." That crime did occur is evidenced by the notations in the County Commissioners Court minutes referring to handcuffs made for prisoners and county prisoners turned over to the Dallas mayor for use on public works, but no reference is found describing the crimes committed, length of the sentences, or race of the offenders. Two prisoners escaped from the Dallas County jail on March 1, 1867, a
third man failed because he was in chains, but again there was no mention of the character of their crimes."

It would appear that by March, 1867, Dallas County had recovered from the war and was not very bothered by Reconstruction. Although the Herald occasionally referred to the United States Congress and its "crazy conclave now assembled in Washington," Swindells expressed hope and optimism that "moral goodness" was all that was needed "to restore our government to its former glory and prosperity." He went on to say that the people of Dallas County still had "faith that reason and justice" would prevail, and they "would enter upon our duties . . . with undiminished hopes of great national happiness and prosperity." When the news first reached Dallas of the Reconstruction Act of March 2, 1867, entitled "An Act to Provide for the more Efficient Government of the Rebel States", Swindells did not know how to interpret its true meaning for his community. He quipped that he hoped the recent cold front which had hit North Texas was not an indication of the "intense Northern or radical action of Congress," and if it was, then "God help the poor South!" In his paper's next edition he expressed his confusion and that of his neighbors by writing: "We are at sea, without a rudder or compass, so far as our future is concerned and don't know where we shall land."

The act of March 2, more familiarly known as the Reconstruction Act or Military Bill, and the Supplementary Reconstruction Act of March 23, 1867, divided the "rebel"
states into five military districts, each under the command of a general officer of the army who was to protect the rights and property of all citizens. In maintaining the peace, these district commanders were given authorization to try offenders by military tribunal if civil authorities could not, or would not, provide justice. As the state governments were provisional, the district commanders could take necessary steps to insure that fair elections were held for the constitutional conventions, including the removal of incumbent elected officials and appointment of successors who would provide for a smoother reconstruction. General Philip H. Sheridan was appointed to command the 5th Military District which included Texas and Louisiana. Headquartered at Galveston, the Sub-District of Texas was commanded by General Charles Griffin."

Swindells was firmly behind President Johnson’s immediate veto of the act for its "unconstitutionality and inexpediency," but by March 30th, he advised that citizens "must acquiesce" and avoid behavior that would "tend to justify the harsh measures which they have adopted toward us." In the same issue the Herald also printed General Sheridan’s first General Order dated March 19, 1867, from the 5th Military District Headquarters in New Orleans, Louisiana, in which Sheridan assumed command. In announcing that the state governments were still provisional, Sheridan said that general removals of the "present incumbent
officials" would be necessary only if they failed to carry out the law or were to "impede the reorganization." 32

A week later, with full knowledge and understanding of the impact the Military Bill would have on the South, Swindells bitterly followed his first inclination and suggested to Dallas' Conservative white citizens the course they should follow. In an editorial entitled "Our Duty" he explained to his neighbors that the time to ask why the law was imposed had passed. The fact was that it would be "fully executed and enforced in our midst whether we desire it or not." He admonished them that to "yield to obedience" to their conquerors was the "only sensible conclusion to which all reasonable men must come." They should assist the federal authorities in enforcing the bill and should not act in any manner which would incur the charges of "hostility or disloyalty." Speaking for the white Conservative majority in Dallas County, Swindells said that Negro suffrage unexpectedly occurred like "a clap of thunder in a clear blue sky," but that it was "a fait accompli and no longer an open question . . . whether right or wrong hereafter Sambo is to be regarded as the equal of the white man at the ballot box." Despite his resignation to military control and black suffrage he remained optimistic that the people of Texas would retain the right to reorganize the state government and to construct a constitution in convention. He urged all white men of voting age to register to vote in
order that a convention might disfranchise as few white citizens as possible."

As the weeks passed, Swindells was pleased "to see so much prudence and equanimity of temper" shown by the people of the community in the face of the new law, commenting that such a reaction would "work its own salvation." He continued, occasionally with editorial spice, to keep his readers abreast of the various circulars and military orders as they were issued. While noting his reactions to the various edicts, Swindells's primary focus editorially in May 1867, centered on the new spring goods arriving at town mercantile establishments. Even the arrival of Captain William H. Horton, Sub-Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands warranted only a small mention.

The business of the county proceeded along a quiet path throughout the summer of 1867 according to the Herald. Most attention centered around registration of voters and interpretation of the qualifications for registration. On May 16, General Charles Griffin, Commander for the District of Texas, issued Circular No. 16, which divided Texas into fifteen registration districts. These districts were further divided into sub-districts which usually encompassed a county each. Dallas County was in the 15th Registration District, Sub-District No. 4. Article II of the Circular provided for two supervisors and a clerk to be appointed for each district. Three registrars and a clerk in each sub-
district comprised a Board of Registrars. The Board was to travel around the county within a specified period of time to register voters, to approve or reject voters, and to report their findings to District Headquarters in Galveston.35

On June 29, Swindells again encouraged Dallas County citizens to register and not to be caught up in the "general feeling of apathy and indifference" that had been experienced throughout Texas and across the South.36 Apathy was the subject of a letter to the Herald from J. W. Murray, a resident of Breckenridge, Dallas County. He reported that the farmers in his area were "talking carelessly" about registration and that several were not going to register saying "there is no good to come of it." He thought the underlying reason for the talk was a lack of understanding of the privilege to vote in the face of military rule and asked the Herald to explain to the populace how important voting was during trying times. Swindells responded by saying "to refuse to register, is to give over the State to the tender mercies of men, who will labor to inaugurate system of proscription and disfranchisement." It was better to register, he surmised, than "to spend years of regret and fruitless struggle in attempt to get rid of the evils and disabilities that will certainly be imposed upon you."37

Colonel J. H. Leppard of Narvarro county, appointed Supervisor for the 15th Registration District, arrived in Dallas at the end of July. He announced Jesse H. Asbury,
Samuel S. Jones, and Melvin Wade as appointments to the Board of Registrars and Sam Seaton as their clerk. Registration began June 29, and continued throughout the month of August. Swindells at first expressed his pleasure with the work of the Board and explained that as people registered, they were administered the oath and given voting certificates. He made no reference to the fact that Melvin Wade was the first Negro to serve in an official capacity in Dallas County, other than to note "(freedman)" after his name. Wade had recently immigrated to Dallas County from Tennessee. Although apparently illiterate, he remained active in Republican politics in the area for years to come, serving as Vice President of the 1884 Dallas County Republican Party Convention.

Although he had strongly opposed black suffrage during the previous year, Swindells said nothing more on the subject during the summer of 1867. However, as registration continued throughout August, a number of questions arose concerning the eligibility of whites to register. The Herald endeavored to clarify the regulations and misconceptions. Two frequent misunderstandings were that one could register at the time he voted and that registration meant mandatory jury duty. The Herald replied that registration must be accomplished during the allotted period and that many people were able to vote who could not take the jury oath.
Because a large number of the projected electorate had not registered, perhaps because of uncertainty of the regulations, registration was re-opened September 23 through September 28. Making his final tally, Registration Board clerk Sam Seaton reported to the Herald that 255 voters had been rejected leaving 837 whites and 368 Negroes registered. In an editorial of October 12, 1867, an outraged Swindells indignantly recounted evidence of a "Secret Circular" sent by recently removed General Sheridan to his Boards of Registration. Sheridan, interpreting the law which disfranchised men for their Confederate activities differently than had the United States Attorney General, received General Ulysses S. Grant's permission to proceed as he deemed necessary. The result was to reject all men who, during the antebellum years, had held positions as high in rank as national and state office or as low as produce inspectors and cemetery sextons. Swindells revealed that he had known that some agreement had transpired between Sheridan and the registrars but that he was incredulous that a written circular to that effect existed. The editor was also appalled that, although the reconstruction acts did not disqualify these men, Sheridan had acted on his own "to secure negro supremacy in Louisiana and Texas." Although the restrictions in the "secret circular" were overturned and denounced by Sheridan's replacement General Winfield S. Hancock in January, 1868, few changes in registration were made.
Although the *Dallas Herald* reported little displeasure with the status quo in Dallas County through early 1867, there had been a small but strong underground movement of Loyal Unionists throughout the spring and summer of 1867. As early as April, Jesse Asbury wrote to General Sheridan that many of the Dallas officeholders were unqualified and were "rebels of the deepest dye." He reported that murderers were not arrested by the civil authorities and that the freedmen were not really free. Asberry suggested there were many competent loyal men in Dallas County ready to hold office, among them Sam Seaton and himself. In June, General Griffin received a request from the "Loyal Union Men of Dallas County" requesting that Federal troops be stationed in Dallas "in order to strengthen the week [sic] kneed and make us feel that we can meet our oppressors on their own ground." B. T. McFarland, in a letter to General Griffin on July 4, 1867, wrote that the people of Dallas County would have to be forced to obey the laws, saying, "They will do, say or swear anything to govern in their own way." He thought the Iron Clad oath should be administered as a requirement to voter registration. McFarland also asked for an appointment.

By August the Unionists in Dallas County were demanding that Governor E. M. Pease remove the county officers, specifically Chief Justice Z. E. Coombes and Sheriff J. M. Brown. Their suggested replacements were N. R. Winniford as sheriff and A. Bledsoe for county judge. These demands were
quickly followed by a petition from the Union Loyalists to Governor Pease which contended that although they were pleased with Congressional Reconstruction, "other impediments still remain to a proper reconstruction." They insisted their county officers were ex-rebels or their sympathizers and should be removed. Again the name of A. Bledsoe was placed in nomination for county judge and as county commissioners they suggested Samuel C. Phelps, Robert Grounds, W. H. Muncey, and A. Buchanan. As a follow up to the petition, Samuel S. Jones reminded the Governor in October of the problems in Dallas County. He had received no answer from Austin, and he wanted some action."

The heat of the Texas summer brought the realization to Dallas County Conservatives that military rule would affect them in ways other than registration. Although Sheridan had requested permission as early as April, 1867, to remove Governor J. W. Throckmorton as "an impediment to reconstruction," Grant's consent did not come until July."

By Special Orders no. 105, issued July 30, 1867, Sheridan removed Throckmorton and appointed E. M. Pease as governor of Texas. The Herald printed the order on August 10, with a comment supporting Throckmorton's efforts to carry out rather than offer "any obstruction to the execution of the laws of Congress." The next week the Dallas paper sarcastically reported that a planned inaugural ball for Pease would be held to "honor our humiliation"; but by early
September, Swindells wrote that if Throckmorton had to be removed, Pease was an able appointment to that office."

In the following weeks the Herald reported the removals of various state and county officials by printing the military orders, seldom commenting on them. When General J. J. Reynolds assumed command of the District of Texas after Griffin's death from Yellow Fever, one of his first acts was to issue Special Order no. 195 dated November 1, 1867, to remove civil officers from some fifty counties, including Dallas County, and to appoint their replacements."

Swindells reported the news of removals and appointments saying only that the outgoing officers had all "made most efficient and prompt public servants, and carry with them as they deserve, the good wishes of the people generally." The order appointed A. Bledsoe to succeed Z. E. Coombes as County Judge and N. R. Winniford to replace Sheriff J. M. Brown. The newly appointed County Commissioners were Samuel C. Phelps, Robert Grounds, W. H. Muncey, and A. Buchanan, just as the Union men had requested."}

Three of the appointees never took office. Alexander J. Buchanan died before the order was issued. Robert Grounds and W. H. Muncey refused to qualify for their posts, either out of loyalty to their neighbors who had been removed, or out of fear that they would come to harm at the hands of conservatives. Reynolds was unable to have a completely appointed court in Dallas County until the spring of 1870. All of the men who were appointed and qualified
for office in November, 1867, were white and had arrived in the county before 1860, most of them even long before. These men were well established and well respected members of their community.\footnote{51}

Perhaps one of the most interesting and influential citizens in early Dallas County was Chief Justice A. Bledsoe. Migrating to the prairies of the Three Forks area from his native Kentucky in 1847, he purchased part of the Roderick Rawlins survey and laid out the county's second town, naming it Lancaster for his hometown.\footnote{52} At six foot four inches, weighing over two hundred sixty pounds, and always carrying a staff-like cane, Bledsoe was an imposing figure of a man. Having no first name, just the initial A., he acquired a number of nicknames such as "Big A" and "Honest A." According to his grandson, A. B. Rawlins, Bledsoe was labeled an abolitionist not because of his anti-secessionist beliefs, but because he failed to offer his services to the Confederacy even though he was past the age of conscription. That the tax rolls show his owning three slaves in 1860 and two in 1864, and that two of his sons, F. G. and Willis, did volunteer for military duty to the Confederacy, tend to substantiate Rawlins' claim.\footnote{53} Appointed by A. J. Hamilton to replace W. H. Hord as chief justice September 22, 1865, but defeated in his attempt to be elected to that office in June, 1866, by Z. E. Coombes, Bledsoe was comfortable with his appointment by Reynolds and
would continue to be active in local and state government as long as Republicans were in control."

The only police commissioner to qualify from Reynolds's November appointments was Samuel C. Phelps. Settling in Dallas County in 1851, the Ohio native ran dairy cattle, made and sold cheese, and farmed in the Lancaster area. Having Union sympathies, and "under force of circumstances, he went into a company of home guards, marched to Bonham and was there, with other Union sympathizers, detailed to go home and thrash [sic] grain for the people" for the duration of the war. *The Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas County* also reported that Phelps "lived and died without enemies because he took pains not to interfere with other people's business," meaning that although Phelps was considered a "Union man" he stayed out of open controversy."

Norval Robertson Winniford's selection as Sheriff for Dallas County was promoted by the "Loyal Citizens of Dallas" because of his reputation as the "toughest man in the county." His descendant Judge Lester Newton Fitzhugh called him "one more tough piece of business." The Scotch-Irish Kentuckian settled near the Trinity River on land in Ellis and Dallas Counties in 1845, but Gold Fever took him to California in 1850, where he established a store in Calaveras County. Although a slave owner, Winniford was an outspoken Unionist and Republican. To avoid conscription by the Confederacy, he and his brother Bill Winniford hid out
on Bear and Ten Mile Creeks for several weeks. Bill was captured, and served a short time in the army until he deserted and fled to Mexico. Norval Winniford appeased authorities by hauling cotton to Mexico for the duration of the war. Strong and fearless in his beliefs, he insisted that there is no Supreme Being, his last request being that everyone know that he "died strong in the faith of infidelity." As Dallas County’s first Republican sheriff, Winniford’s influence was strong enough to have put aside the controversy over whether he actually resided in Dallas or Ellis County.  

Little information was available for Tax Assessor/Collector J. C. Seydell except that he came to Dallas County around 1853 from Pennsylvania. While not among the "Loyal Unionists" who petitioned General Griffin in June, 1867, he did associate with them to support Captain William H. Horton of the Freedmen’s Bureau in 1868. He managed to fulfill his obligations without attracting attention to himself.  

Until Reynolds could find suitable replacements for Buchanan, Grounds, and Muncey, three of the men elected in June 1866, George Barton, J. P. Stratton, and I. B. Webb, continued to serve on the Police Court. As the court met in regular session on the first Monday of January, April, July, and October, and occasionally in special session to expedite specific needs, there were only a few meetings and little county business presided over by the mixed court before
General Hancock from Fifth Military District Headquarters appointed John Jackson and John M. Rawlins commissioners in February, 1868, upon the recommendation of Governor Pease. Problems in Dallas County were far from over, however, as the English-born Jackson refused to qualify.\footnote{59}

Rawlins, among the first inhabitants of Dallas County, was an interesting choice for the job. Unable to serve the Confederacy because of a physical disability and never before having held office, yet conservative in his politics, he was able to qualify under the Supplementary Reconstruction Act of March 23, 1867. Family history claims that a group of Conservative county leaders rode out to Rawlins' home one day to ask him to take office because they needed someone "they could trust down there." Wanting to be of assistance to his neighbors, Rawlins accepted the appointment, qualified February 10, 1868, and met with the court in a Special Term on February 13, 1868.\footnote{60}

Later in the summer of 1868, Lewis Long was appointed by General Buchanan, but not until February, 1869, was the final commissioner, John M. Hatcher, appointed by General Reynolds. Long, a native of Illinois, had farmed and raised horses and cattle on close to one thousand acres in Dallas County with his father John Long since 1854. Hatcher, however, apparently did not immigrate to the area until after the war, possibly as late as 1868. A native of Missouri, he owned a small farm of less than one hundred acres where he kept a few horses and some cattle.\footnote{61}
Judging from the minutes of the Police Court sessions, it appears that the business of the county progressed adequately under the leadership of the military appointees. They met in regular session as required and called additional meetings as needs arose. Bledsoe's salary was set at two hundred fifty dollars per year, distributed quarterly. The other members of the court were paid six dollars per day during regular terms and three dollars a day for each special term. Of their county obligations one of the most frequently discharged was providing funds for the care of the indigent. Although amounts varied according to needs and color of those people requiring county assistance, persons providing care were reimbursed for reasonable expenses or paid between ten and twelve dollars each month.

In January, 1869, the court decided to levy a special ad valorem tax of five cents per one hundred dollar valuation for the "benefit of persons and paupers who may be a charge" upon the county.

Another issue continuing to press upon the county fathers was the dilapidated jail, declared "wholly unfit for occupancy" in 1867. A special ad valorem tax of seven and one half cents per $100 valuation to build a new court house that had first been imposed in January, 1867, was continued at the same rate to raise money for a new jail. In April 1869, by virtue of General E. R. Canby's General Order No. 41 issued in Austin on March 25, 1869, the county increased the Special Tax to ten cents per one hundred dollar
valuation. The order read that a special tax could be levied for the purpose of defraying the expenses necessarily incurred in arresting, guarding, subsisting and (where necessary) clothing and trying prisoners as such repairs to Jails and other places of imprisonment as may be indispensably necessary."

A description of the proposed new brick jail had been given to the Herald in January, 1869, to advertise for construction bids. After rejecting several bids, the contract was first let to C. R. Miller on August 19, 1869, retracted, and finally given to the local carpentry team of Louckx and Mann for $6200. The Herald reported on August 21 that the court had problems with the original contract (Miller’s) and that it had not been finalized. On September 18, the Herald printed a letter it had received from an angry A. M. Moore who thought that the Police Court had accepted his specifications, giving them out unfairly to the other bidders. He asserted that his bid had actually been lower than the Louckx-Mann bid. Moore had a definite opinion for the reasons Miller’s contract was unsuccessful and blamed Judge Bledsoe’s "obstinance" for mishandling the whole affair. Hoping to expose the "infamy and corruption existing in the minds of the public officials," Moore wanted the community to know that because he differed with Bledsoe politically, the county would have to pay between twelve hundred and two thousand dollars more for their jail."
Although the reasons behind the jail contract dispute probably never will be understood fully, Moore's letter to the editor was the first castigating county government procedures that the Herald printed, but was not its last criticism of the court's operations. In June, 1869, the newspaper took the Police Court to task for not building the necessary bridges across creeks, rivers, and low places which would connect Dallas County with other counties during rainy times. Bridges, the Herald thought, were vital to increase trade and to enable the Marshall Stage Line to shorten and ease its run from Kaufman to Tarrant County. The Herald editor implied that the court was "derelict" in its duties and so involved in another agenda that they were unaware of the existence of the stage line. In February, 1870, the paper questioned the court's ability to dispense properly the twelve thousand dollars appropriated by the special jail tax; but, after conferring with County Clerk Samuel S. Jones, reported that while the jail cost $7,500, remaining monies had been distributed reasonably to cover the large expenses of housing and guarding prisoners until the jail could be completed. The Herald was so completely satisfied with Jones' explanation that it offered to publish the Treasurer's Report to save money for the beleaguered county coffers.  

Because the Herald had been in the previous years complimentary of the county government, its criticism in 1869 indicated that public opinion was not entirely behind
the Police Court. Although the military-appointed county
officials were well respected members of the community, they
had been imposed upon the citizenry and were not the ones
who had been elected to those posts. The primary focus of
the Herald as spokesman for the community during the years
of Radical Reconstruction was to call for improved
conditions in the city and county of Dallas that would
attract industrious and prosperous immigrants.
Editorializing the need for more county services was not
merely an attempt to accelerate the process but a veiled
attempt to speak critically of the appointees without
attracting undue attention to the community as a whole.
Herald editorials were designed to condemn the acts of the
Radical United States Congress upon the rest of the South
while pretending that Dallas County had been relatively
untouched, appeasing white Conservatives in the community,
but not alarming people who wanted to emigrate to the area.
Congressional Reconstruction did affect the government of
Dallas County, but it did not have the harsh impact that
other areas have claimed. One of the results of ending
slavery was the enfranchisement of blacks which enabled them
to hold office. Although blacks and carpetbaggers played
minor roles in government throughout the state of Texas,
there is no evidence that they participated in any active
way in Dallas County except for Melvin Wade's tenure on the
Registration Board. Nevertheless, the Conservative
community of Dallas was fearful of the political changes and watchful of the immediate future.
END NOTES


7. Dallas Herald, December 8, 1866.


11. Records of the Comptroller of Public Accounts, Ad Valorem Tax Division, County Real and Personal Property Tax Rolls, 1860-1870, (Texas/Dallas History Division, Dallas Public Library) (hereafter cited as Dallas County Tax Rolls 1860-1870); United States Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census (1860), Schedule One-Inhabitants, (hereafter cited as Census for 1860); Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas County, Texas, 186.


17. Information compiled from Eighth Census, (1860); Dallas County Tax Rolls 1860-1864; "Index to the Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Texas, United States Department of War," Records Group 109 (hereafter cited as CSA, Texas Records).


19. I. B. Webb Collection, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

20. Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas County, Texas, 186-187; Records of the Secretary of State, Election Registers, 1865-1870 (Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin (cited hereafter as Election Registers 1865-1870).
21. CSA, Texas Records; *Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas County*, 187; Election Registers 1865-1870.

22. Eighth Census, (1860); Election Registers 1865-1870.

23. Eighth Census, (1860); Dallas County Tax Rolls, 1860-1864; O’Byrne Cox, Jr., *Sheriffs: Dallas County, Texas, Texas, Dallas History Division, Dallas Public Library; Election Registers, 1865-1870.*


25. CSA, Texas Records, Election Registers, 1865-1870.

26. Dallas County Police Court Minutes, October 1, 1866, January 9, 10, 12, 1867.


28. Dallas County Police Court Minutes, January 12, 14, 1867; *Dallas Herald*, March 2, 1867.

29. *Dallas Herald* December 1, 8 (1st quotation), 29, 1866 (2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th quotation).


33. *Dallas Herald*, April 6, 1867.


41. Dallas Herald, October 5, 1867.

42. Ibid., October 12, 1867 (quotation); Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, 163, 195. The Reconstruction Acts disqualified from registering only those men who had held an office before the war and then aided the rebellion. Griffin's "Secret Circular" exempted anyone elected or appointed office before or during the war, and under the letter of the law, was not out of line. The Iron Clad Oath, on the other hand, forbade anyone from holding office who had participated in the war, but was not applied to voting. Moneyhon, Republicanism in Reconstruction Texas, 70-71.

43. Jesse A. Asberry to General Sheridan, April 10, 1867, Records of the Office of Civil Affairs for the Department of Texas and the Fifth Military District, 1865-1870, U. S. Department of War, Records of the United States Army Continental Commands, RG393 (National Archives). (Hereafter cited as OCA).

44. Loyal Union Men of Dallas to General Charles Griffin, June 9, 1867, United States Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1869, Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Texas. These records, available on microfilm from the National Archives, will hereafter be cited as BRFAL, with appropriate correspondents and dates.

45. B. T. McFarland to General Griffin, July 4, 1867, OCA.

46. Loyal Citizens of Dallas to Governor E. M. Pease, August 17, 1867; Petition for Union Loyalists in Dallas to Pease, August 22, 1867; Samuel S. Jones to Pease, October 4, 1867, Governors Letters: Elisha M. Pease, Texas State Library.

48. *Dallas Herald*, August 10 (1st quotation), 17 (2nd quotation), September 7, 1867.


50. *Dallas Herald*, November 16, 1867 (quotation); Election Registers, 1865-1870.


52. Cochran, *Dallas County*, 69; *Proud Heritage*, 200.


55. Eighth Census (1860); *Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas County*, 652-653 (quotations).


58. Eighth Census (1860); Loyal Union Men of Dallas to General Griffin, June 9, 1867; S. S. Jones to General J. J. Reynolds, April 28, 1868 BRFAL.

59. Dallas County Commissioners Court Minutes, November 16, 1867-July 6, 1869; Election Registers, 1865-1870; *Dallas Herald*, February 8, 1868.

60. Telephone Interviews with Judge Fitzhugh, March 15, 1990, June 5, 1991; Election Registers, 1865-1870; Dallas County Commissioners Court Minutes, February 13, 1868.

61. Election Registers, 1865-1870; Eighth Census (1860); Dallas County Tax Rolls, 1860-1870.

62. Dallas County Commissioners Court Minutes, January 12, 1867-July 4, 1870, January 8, 1869 (quotation).
63. Dallas County Commissioners Court Minutes, July 15, 1867 (1st quotation); April 8, 1869 (2nd quotation).

64. Dallas County Commissioners Court Minutes, January 8, 1869; Dallas Herald, August 21, September 18, 1869.

65. Dallas Herald, June 5, 1869 (quotation); February 19, 1869; March 5, 12, 1869.
CHAPTER 2

THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU IN DALLAS COUNTY

When slaves were "officially" emancipated in Texas on June 19, 1865, upon General Gordon Granger's arrival at Galveston, no clear plan or system was in place to facilitate the transition that blacks had to make from their old lives as bondsmen to their new lives as freedmen. Although a federal agency did exist for this purpose, Congress deliberately had left the details of its mission vague because the problem of freedmen's role in society was so controversial. The people of Texas awaited instructions, hoping that blacks would continue in their lowly positions as laborers, but fearing the worst -- that black men would be placed in positions as the minions of the Radical conquerors. For the people of Dallas County, the anticipation and speculation lasted until May, 1867.

The United States Congress began deliberations in 1863 on ways to deal humanely with the enormous numbers of slaves emancipated by the advancing Union armies. During the war the freedmen were cared for by benevolent societies or provided for by conquering Union officers, but a national agency was needed to unify and coordinate efforts to feed and clothe the former slaves and find a way to ease them
into their new lives as free men. On March 3, 1865, after two years of debate, both houses passed a bill creating within the War Department the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. The President was to appoint and the Senate to confirm a commissioner and as many as ten assistant commissioners to oversee "all subjects relating to refugees and freedmen" and lands abandoned or confiscated during the conflict.¹

General Oliver Otis Howard stepped into his office as Bureau commissioner with no guidelines and few restrictions upon his task. He also had no experience with black people. Born in Leeds, Maine, in 1830, and educated at West Point, Howard had spent his adult life in the army. After losing his right arm at Fair Oaks, he continued his service at Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Chattanooga, and as head of the Army of the Tennessee, he followed Sherman's March to the Sea. Although he had a reputation as a fine soldier, he was more renowned for his strict adherence to Christian principles. Believing that he had come to the office of commissioner through Divine providence, but understanding his commitment to those who had appointed him, he initiated his duties with instructions to his assistant commissioners, telling them to administer relief where needed, and to "do all that behooves the Government in answering the question — 'What shall we do with the Negro?'"²
Trying to strike a balance between doing what was necessary for the freedmen and appeasing the predominately conservative white population resulted in a succession of five officers in the post of Bureau assistant commissioner for Texas. General E. M. Gregory, the original appointee, served from September 21, 1865, until replaced by General Joseph B. Kiddoo on April 2, 1866. Prior to the passage of the Reconstruction Acts in 1867, the Bureau assistant commissioner’s office was combined with that of the Army’s district commander. Not in favor of the new system of command, Kiddoo resigned in January, 1867. His successor, General Charles Griffin, maintained the office until his death from Yellow Fever. General Joseph J. Reynolds took over on September 21, 1867. Although the only authority the Bureau retained after December 31, 1868, pertained to the freedmen’s education, Reynolds remained in command until April 16, 1870, except for two months in early 1869.3

The assistant commissioners in turn appointed sub-assistant commissioners, or agents, to carry out Bureau responsibilities in assigned territories. These men, usually with little or no experience, were faced with performing their duties without precedent or example. Because Congress made no appropriations for salaries in the Freedmen’s Bureau bill, most of the sub-assistant commissioners were selected or borrowed from the Army. Without clerical or military assistance they often presided
over very expansive areas, usually two or more counties. In Texas sixty-nine agents, including thirty-eight military officers, supervised fifty-seven sub-assistant commissioner districts. The agents were often the only tangible evidence for average citizens in a community of the power of the United States Congress and the changes in the status of the freedmen. In the light of these odds, it was not uncommon for agents to be criticized for inefficiency and misconduct. Such was the case in the 40th District, Dallas County, although there is evidence that some of the charges were true.4

Because Dallas County was so far inland, had relatively small black and Unionist populations, and had had no problems that required immediate military involvement, the Bureau did not send an agent to the area until spring 1867. Captain W. H. Horton was the first sub-assistant commissioner, and by far the most controversial, appointed to the 40th District of Texas. Born in Pennsylvania, Horton entered the United States Army in April, 1861. During the Civil War he served in the Army of the Potomac, losing an arm at the battle of Chancellorsville. After recovering from his wounds, he participated in the battle of Gettysburg. In September, 1863, he was transferred to the Veterans Reserve Corps with his full rank of 1st Lieutenant, but was promoted to Captain "for faithful and efficient discharge of duty" in June, 1864. He had applied for a
position in the Freedmen’s Bureau at the end of the war, but was mustered out of the service and moved to Chicago before his appointment. I. M. Beebee, sub-assistant commissioner at Marshall, Texas, recommended that the Bureau place Horton because he was a man of "indomitable [sic] resolution, unquestioned patriotism, temperate habits, and well qualified for any agency in the Bureau." After his appointment as a Bureau agent in August, 1866, Horton was assigned for a short while at Wharton, Texas, then transferred in early May, 1867, to establish a Bureau office representing Dallas, Tarrant, Ellis, and Johnson counties.

The Dallas Herald first noted Horton’s May 10th arrival with little fanfare, but a week later, devoted considerable space to an interview conducted with him. Horton told the Herald that he had brought no troops with him believing there would be no need for them. He was under orders "not to interfere in any manner with the administration of justice," that civil authorities would continue in their control unless "any manifest injustice be done," at which time he would intervene. He hoped "to have the utmost harmony in his intercourse with all," and it would not be his fault if this were not the case.

Horton spent his first month in Dallas assessing the situation. He reported to Headquarters in Galveston that there were no abandoned lands in his district and that no rations for freedmen were disbursed in May. He rented an
office in Dallas for seventeen dollars per month, for which he requested approval; and he asked that his back pay be forwarded.  

By early June, Horton began to express concern about the conditions which existed in Dallas County. He first complained that District Judge John J. Good was not complying with General Griffin's Circular 13, otherwise known as the "Jury Order," issued April 27, 1867, which required jurors to take the "iron clad oath." Horton said that Union men were "very indignant and loth [sic]" to sit on Good's juries because he was "one of the most disloyal men in the state." Good's comments in court in Tarrant County the previous month on the subject of the Circular were "decidedly censurable" and aimed at pleasing a rebel crowd. Horton continued that because the Union men were too few to band together in open protest, they "quietly grit their teeth." They were as "thoroughly intimidated as the freedmen." When Horton confronted Judge Good with the fact that many Union men of "character and wealth and residents of the state" for many years were not on the jury list, Good replied that even though they were prominent men in the county, they had been "overlooked."  

Although Horton told the Herald that he had not asked for troops to be stationed in Dallas, Headquarters requested an officer and six men be sent from Sherman, Texas, "to facilitate" the agent's discharge of his duties. On June 9,
twenty-five Loyal Unionists of Dallas County petitioned General Griffin to send troops to protect their civil and political rights. Ten days later, Horton reported that it was "impossible" for him to visit, without troops, many portions of his district, "and sad complaints come in from some of these."

In his monthly report, dated June 29, Horton said that although most of the people in Dallas County wanted to "reconstruct, have the laws enforced and crime punished," they drew the line where the freedmen and Union men were concerned. The civil authorities were so slow in prosecuting offenses against freedpeople that perpetrators had plenty of time to make their escape or, in many instances, gain complete protection from prosecution. He was uncovering a number of cases that remained unprocessed. Freedmen were not permitted to give testimony in open court against white defendants when blacks were involved, but as he now was insisting upon it, their testimony reluctantly had been admitted. Horton seemed incredulous that many of the Union men were as prejudiced against blacks and held them in as low esteem as did the rebels. He again asked for troops. Although there were some "bad men" in Ellis County, he thought he could get along without soldiers in Dallas County. He had met the "brain and thinking portion of the county," obviously the stronger Union men, and was enlisting their aid when needed."
To understand better the temperament of Dallas County, Horton requested Samuel S. Jones, one of the county’s leading Union men, to characterize the moral condition of the people of the county, to explain how the county officers had enforced the laws, and to analyze the "political status" of the people -- "their loyalty and disloyalty: the freedom of speech and the expression of opinion on political or other subjects." Jones responded in a letter to Horton on July 22, saying that, as he knew such a statement could have far reaching consequences, it had been his purpose to give as "fair, just, and impartial account" as was in his power. Jones believed himself unusually qualified for the task as he had presided as foreman of the grand jury for the last session of the District Court.

As to the amount and "catalogue" of crime, Jones surmised that while Dallas County was not worse than surrounding counties, it did have a larger population. Thirteen homicides had been committed in the county during the previous two and one-half years, none of which had been brought to trial. Five involved freedmen, "some of whom were doubtless killed without any justification or legal excuse." One white man had been "assignated [sic] for his money," and three white union men were killed in "drunken broils" [sic] because of their political beliefs. Some of the other homicide cases were "of course, excusable," a statement denoting Texans' propensity for settling arguments
with weapons. "Not less than fifty" cases of assault with intent to kill had occurred during the same period of time, demonstrating what Jones described as "a recklessness of human life, and of spilling human blood [that was] quite deplorable" and which he attributed to a "deplorably low standard of morals." None of these perpetrators had gone to prison and few of the cases had been tried."

Methods of escape from prosecution were numerous for whites, ranging from poorly drawn indictments to outright failure to arrest on the part of civil officials, which created a situation in which "the wicked and abandoned" became "more reckless and daring." Although the last Grand Jury had presented thirteen indictments for murder to the District Judge and were sworn to secrecy until arrest could be made, only one arrest had been made and most of the other men had fled the county. Jones did not know who had leaked information concerning the indictments, but he firmly believed "the officers of the court were not blameless, many of these persons were indicted for the murder of Union men during and directly after the war;" and, in as much as the juries were composed of "wholy [sic] loyal men," he knew that "the court clerk, the numerous deputies, the bailiff of the court and all the bailiffs of the Grand Jury . . . belonged to the class that could not take the oath required by Circular Order No. 13." Lack of efficiency was not due, in Jones's opinion, to a shortage of bailiffs or deputies.
but to a shortage of desire to make these arrests. As evidence, he cited arrests made as far away as twelve miles from the county seat for such petty crimes as "Disturbing Religious Worship" or Disturbing the Public Peace by loud hallowing."

In characterizing the political status of the county, Jones spoke of the transition the conservatives had experienced since the war. They first were horrified at being defeated, but grew more "haughty and supercilious" as their fears subsided due to little political change in Texas. By the election of 1866, they were, Jones related, as "arrogant and domineering as they were in 1861." In the months of Congressional Reconstruction, Jones had begun to see a "very perceptible and salutory change" [sic] in the former rebels. Jones insisted that even though loyal men were unable as yet to express their opinions, they were more concerned at that time for fear of insult than of bodily harm. Summarizing, Jones described an attitude of resignation toward Reconstruction developing in the county. However, he thought that a small element of the populace remained "bitter and unconquered," and expressed regret that good citizens were to be punished in order to bring that component under control."

Samuel Jones was not completely unbiased in his analysis of the county. He not only had a vested interest in the community, but he also had a desire for office, one
that would soon be rewarded. Whether Jones’s depiction of
the character of Dallas County was accurate or not, it was
enough to worry Horton. On July 24, Horton forwarded Jones’
letter to Galveston with the comment that he thought Jones’s
assessment had been too mild. Horton also registered the
first of many requests for transfer. He stated that he was
"enjoying excellent health," but he offered to "handsomely
reward" Lieutenant J. T. Kirkman, Acting Assistant Adjutant
General for the District of Texas, if he would "do a poor
devil a good turn" and send him to Brownsville, Texas. Two
days later he repeated his desire for transfer, even asking
if the Brownsville agent and he could exchange places.\textsuperscript{15}

In his monthly report for July, 1867, written on the
30th, Horton echoed Jones’s sentiment that many of the
people in Dallas County were "well reconstructed," but that
around two-thirds of the county residents "would tomorrow
fight for the same principles they failed to establish if
given half a chance." He also agreed that the July District
Court session had been "the hugest Farce." He continued
saying that "civil law is dead except in instances when it
can be enforced against Union men and Freedmen," calling the
county officers "the most perfect nullity" he had ever
seen.\textsuperscript{16}

Horton began his Bureau duties soon after his arrival.
As there were no refugees or abandoned lands in Dallas
County, his primary focus was upon initiating a system of
labor for the freedmen. He found that most of the blacks remained with their former owners working either for board, small wages, or portions of the crops. The white people, Horton noted, took the attitude that they did not need the former slaves' labor but regretted seeing them reduced to charity; therefore, the freed people lived very much as they had before emancipation. Very few written contracts existed. The usual case was a verbal work agreement, most often without witnesses.¹⁷

The majority of the blacks were ignorant of their rights and privileges as free men. Horton tried to explain their options to them but was often met with a laugh, as though they thought "it a good joke." When he pressed further, they admitted their fear and apprehension at coming forward with tales of abuses. Horton requested that Headquarters send a more "competent" public speaker to his district to help the freedmen understand their new roles.¹⁸

With the intention of developing a labor system, Horton issued a Circular Order on July 12, 1867, in which he "suggested" that employers enter into written labor contracts with freedmen, that wages should be paid in the form of portions of the crop, and that the employers provide "shelter and subsistence." To protect both parties, the contracts were to specify all tasks to be performed by the employee and a full explanation of compensation to be given. The original contract was to have affixed upon it a five
cent Internal Revenue stamp "for every person contracted with," and two copies of every contract were to be filed with the Bureau office. The Herald printed the Circular in full with no comment and a few weeks later mentioned that blank forms were available in the law offices of Colonel John W. Payne, a local lawyer assisting Horton.¹⁰

Probably because of Horton's lack of insistence and enforcement, few official labor contracts were made in Dallas County, but evidence does exist that written agreements were made between freedmen and employers, albeit in less formal manners. I. B. Webb recorded two such contracts in his Day Book, one for 1865, and another for 1866-1867. Webb noted the "Freedman Charles" worked for him from October 15, 1866, until June 8, 1867, except for twelve days. His wages were six dollars per month, totaling forty-three dollars and twenty-five cents. From this amount, Webb deducted the following:

THE FREEDMAN CHARLES OWES TO
I. B. WEBB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>one saddle</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one pr. pants</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one shirt</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one pr shoes</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one tobacco</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one coat</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to fine &amp; costs of suit brought against him</td>
<td>9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to surgical operation of cutting ball out of his leg</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Subtracting the charges from Charles' earnings left a balance due him of fourteen dollars. Further charges of ten dollars eighty cents follow those above, but without certain reference that they applied to Charles. If the additional charges were brought against his account, Charles would have worked seven months and five days for subsistence and three dollars and twenty cents.\textsuperscript{20}

Another of Horton's primary duties was to initiate a freedmen's school. Because there was no federal money available, the school had to be supported from subscriptions by the freedmen and donations from the community. Horton reported in July, 1867, that there was a "general thirst for knowledge and a desire that schools should be established," but that he was having difficulty finding either an appropriate building or the funds to hire a teacher because the black people were "very poor" and could not contribute much at all. In his August report Horton wrote that not only were most of the whites not "disposed" to help educate the freedmen, but that an element of the Lancaster population had promised to "break up" any freed school started in their portion of the county. He attempted to uncover the sources of the threats but witnesses refused to make affidavits. Nevertheless, he continued.\textsuperscript{21}

A. Bledsoe donated land for a school, and Mrs. M. L. Capell, a widow with children of her own to support, was hired as teacher. Although Mrs. Capell reported an average
daily attendance of fifty students, the school only managed to support itself for two months. A second, and last, Bureau school operated from February until June, 1868, under the tutelage of Mattie Davlin. She reported to Governor E. M. Pease that the freedpeople were barely able to feed and clothe their children, much less pay for school tuition. She urged government aid, but it was not given. 

A squad of seven men from the United States 7th Cavalry arrived in Dallas on July 28, 1867. Assigned to Horton's command, they gave him confidence to be more assertive in Bureau business. With an escort of a few of the soldiers Horton visited Fort Worth in early August for the first time since he assumed his office in May. The Herald reported that Horton was "rather favorably impressed with the situation" in Tarrant County; however, Bureau Headquarters received a different understanding. Tarrant County, Horton wrote, was in such a "fearful condition" that troops would be needed to maintain even a school for the freedmen.

Referring to Dallas County in the same correspondence, Horton reported that, although he discerned a "healthier and better state of affairs" since his arrival, the freedmen were still badly abused physically, mentally, and occupationally. Horton characterized the general white disposition toward blacks as an effort to "oppress them, defraud them of the little they earn." He emphasized that it would be "an utter impossibility" to do business without
the troops assigned to him. Their presence not only enabled him to discharge his duties without "embarrassment except such as the Civil Authorities throw in my way," but they also, he believed, were keeping him and the freedmen alive.  

Horton was correct in evaluating the effect the cavalrymen had on the general public. In an August 17 editorial, the Herald, as watchdog for the community, chastised its readers for what it termed "a disposition manifested by some persons in some parts of this county" to speak harshly to or threaten the freedmen. Reminding people that "the result of the war is a fixed fact," the editor encouraged all citizens to protect the freedmen's rights that had been "decreed to them under the new order of things" and noted that it would be impossible to deny or refute the changes in the freedmen's political status. He continued by saying that the good people of the community "should be circumspect and just" in their dealings with the freedmen and should "turn their faces against" anyone who demonstrated a contrary behavior.

The following week, another Herald editorial entitled "A Word of Caution" defended Horton by insisting that charges made against his conduct in pursuit of his duties had been "misrepresented and misunderstood." As a "benefit" to his friends, the weekly's editor warned that people who persisted in spreading rumors might "get into trouble."
hoped that the citizens would avoid causing "offense to any officer of the general government." The editorial was the last that Swindells would write in support of Horton, preferring in the following months a silence on the subject of Bureau operations that lasted until after the sub-assistant commissioner had been transferred. The only reference to the agency in the Herald was publication of Horton’s Special Order No. 6 of October 9, 1867, which prohibited the carrying of fire arms in Dallas and Ellis Counties. The order was printed without comment.

With renewed confidence brought about by the presence of troops and the support of the Herald, Horton attempted to bring to trial men who committed offenses against the freedmen. To begin prosecuting the offenders Horton first required evidence of the crimes, but he experienced difficulty in gaining the freedmen’s trust. At one point, he related, he even resorted to "ordering" them to tell if they or any one they knew had been abused. He was impressed that all of the stories of mistreatment that followed could be substantiated; however, he failed to say upon what documentation.

By December, 1867, Horton’s confidence was waning. He sent Bureau Headquarters a sizable list of criminal offenses he had uncovered that had not been prosecuted, including a page-long list of criminals who had not been captured. Describing, and often simply naming, the criminals was
difficult, Horton added, because they had left the county so quickly after the crime. In the list of twelve known criminal offenses for 1867 were four crimes committed by whites against blacks and one committed by whites against a Union man. Among these victims was an unknown freedman murdered for not removing his hat, and "Ira FMC" (Free Man of Color) who had been killed for refusing to trade horses with his assailant. Both murderers had fled the county.\textsuperscript{29}

Horton continued to blame the county officials for the violence against blacks and Union men. Although he had called for the suspension and removal of District Judge John J. Good and the Dallas County officers, calling them collectively the "best friend and protector the Rebel criminal possesses," he was not much better satisfied with General Reynolds' appointees to those offices. So great was his concern that he proclaimed that "the law is as dead a thing as it well can be." He thought Union men to be in even greater danger than freedmen, but advised his supervisors that both groups had only themselves to rely upon for protection. He reported mobs of men riding around on Saturday nights shooting and yelling. The civil authorities were not only powerless to make arrests, they did not even try. They were, Horton lamented, "under a perfect state of terrorism and in important cases dare not carry out the law for fear of provoking the ire of the Rebels and bringing down their veangence [sic] upon them."
The cavalrymen Horton had so well appreciated during August and September had been removed and replaced by seven infantrymen who, while still effective in town, could do nothing to help him pursue perpetrators."

Answering Horton's earlier requests for help and guidance to stem the tide of lawlessness, Lieutenant A. P. Richardson responded on December 30 from Bureau Headquarters that "every endeavor should be made to induce the civil authorities to take the proper action." If they refused, Horton was to report noncompliance to District Commander Reynolds. Horton's reply to Richardson dated the same day was fraught with frustration. Growing more concerned for his own life, he asked authorization to arrest and punish men who were "publically [sic] doing everything they can to incite people to attack me and kill me and resist me in the discharge of my duties."

Horton's insecurity and fear, expressed from December, 1867 until he was granted a transfer in April, 1868, resulted directly from his own actions from August through October, 1867, when he had overstepped his authority and incurred the wrath of many Dallas County citizens. This became clear in March, 1868, when a movement was organized by Dallas City Attorney T. G. T. Kendall to collect affidavits from people who believed themselves misused by Horton during the previous year. The Herald printed a notice from Kendall for all persons who had been "fined or
imprisoned" by Horton to make official statements to that effect. The Austin law firm of Moore and Green received the affidavits and delivered them to Bureau Headquarters; but through some mistake or, according to Kendall, "foul play," General Reynolds did not receive them. Although Horton was transferred to Bastrop, Texas, in late March, 1868, Kendall repeated his efforts to collect evidence against him throughout the summer.32

Dallas County Union men remained faithful to Horton and the methods he had used to conduct his duties. Samuel Jones told him in April that if General Reynolds needed the signatures of men behind Horton, he could have "as many as he desires." Jones reminded Horton that the affidavits being sent to Headquarters were being made before Notaries Public "who are rebels of the deepest cast, men who are endeavoring to destroy the peace of the country." He called Kendall and R. S. Guy, another attorney assisting in the investigation, "men who, were it in their power, would rob General Reynolds of his position in the twinkling of an eye." In a petition to Reynolds accompanied by his and four other signatures, Jones wrote that Horton's administration of Dallas "was characterized by an earnest effort to protect Union men, freedmen, and all lawabiding citizens and to suppress crime of any kind."33

Reynolds received a much different story, however, from the people in Dallas County who believed they had been
wronged by Horton. Though other complaints were registered at Bureau Headquarters, the most extensive and damaging to Horton was an August, 1868, letter from Judge Good accompanied by sworn affidavits alleging corruption in Horton’s administration. Good had been requested in July, 1868 by Lt. Charles A. Vernon, the Acting Assistant Adjutant General at Bureau headquarters, to send evidence and information to substantiate the charges against Horton. Good began his response by reporting that the July, 1867 session of the Dallas County Grand Jury returned indictments against George Bledsoe, freedman, and John M. Wilson for murder, but on August 15 Horton demanded their release from the jail to his personal quarters. Bledsoe was soon missing. Wilson was allowed around town for several days dressed in the uniform of a United States soldier, carrying a six-shooter, before he, too, disappeared. J. Pharington Taylor had also been indicted for murder by the same Grand Jury. Affidavits supported Taylor’s allegation that his mother paid $1000 to John W. Payne, Horton’s agent, for a certificate exempting Pharington from arrest for the murder."

Another complaint involved the murder on White Rock Creek of a black girl named Ann Bell. On September 5, 1867, Horton had Daniel Murry "arrested, ironed and confined" in the Dallas County jail. Horton agreed to release Daniel if he would transfer his interest in his mother’s estate to his
brother Ambrose R. Murry. The transfer was to be made within a few days, and Daniel was to leave the state or Horton would have "his damned neck broke." John Payne brought Daniel a deed which he signed. Daniel also testified that he believed Ambrose gave Horton "a fine gold watch and other sums amounting to two or three hundred dollars" for the favor. Before Daniel left the jail, Horton instructed Ambrose to give Daniel twenty-five dollars traveling money, which he did. Former District Attorney J. M. Hawkins swore that although a "diligent inquiry" was made into Bell's murder, it failed to produce evidence to justify an indictment against Daniel Murry.35

Affidavits also supported Good's allegation that Horton had wrongly sold permits for retail sale of liquor. Although a Texas law had existed since 1863 prohibiting the sale of "spiritous [sic] liquors" in or near the town of Dallas, Horton had knowingly granted licenses to F. L. Willemett, Ben Long, and Henry Boll in August, 1867, for that purpose. Assuring the men that he had the authority to override this state law, Horton had received one hundred dollars for each permit.36

The most unusual of Horton's alleged offenses emanated from his "Hog Order." On September 5, 1867, Horton issued Special Order No. 5 which gave residents in the corporate limits of Dallas three days to round up their hogs which were running freely through the town "causing a great deal
of distraction and annoyance." According to Judge Good, on September 9 Horton with the help of around one hundred fifty freedmen caught a large number of hogs and sold them "at public burden," collecting "not less than $250" in proceeds. Because there had never been an ordinance prohibiting hogs "from running at large" within the town limits, citizens were angry that their property had been confiscated and sold."

Although Horton clearly had exceeded his authority in this particular instance, Samuel Jones defended his actions. The order had arisen, Jones assured Bureau officials, from the "earnest and continual solicitations of many of the most worthy citizens." Jones insisted that the only people unhappy with the order were those "who desired to raise their meat on the gardens of all their neighbors."38

Judge Good followed his extensive examination of the charges in a second communication to Reynolds. He emphasized that the investigation of Horton was "not yet exhausted," that Horton had shrewdly covered up "most of his fraud and rascallity" [sic]. Good believed, however, that enough evidence had been discovered to prove that "money was his [Horton’s] God and he would stoop to anything to accumulate it."39

Horton answered the charges by vehemently maintaining his innocence. To the accusation of having received a bribe for Pharington Taylor’s release, he emphatically declared
that the charge was "as false as the heart [that] conceives it." When Horton heard in December that the accusation of bribery had been brought against his character, he had "attacked this J. W. Payne about it." Payne had denied "in the presence of witnesses" ever giving Horton any money; and the sum Payne had received from Mrs. Taylor, seven hundred dollars with promise of another three hundred, was payment for services rendered as her son’s attorney. Horton suggested that Payne may have taken advantage of Mrs. Taylor and pocketed the money himself.40

The liquor licenses, Horton explained, were granted because "a majority of the better citizens of Dallas were desirous that a good saloon be opened." They had promised to petition the next legislature to repeal a law "they never endorsed and which only tended to increase drunkenness and crime." He said he also had given permission to A. J. Gouffe who was in partnership with Willemett. Although the two men were indicted by the Grand Jury for selling liquor not for medicinal proposes, Judge Good "quoshed" the case, and the Judge, members of the court, bar, and Grand Jury were seen later the same day drinking in the saloon. Interestingly, the only men to whom the liquor permits were granted were Union men, all having signed a petition to General Griffin from the Loyal Union Men of Dallas County in June, 1867, asking that troops be sent to Dallas. Long and
Gouffe also supported Horton's September, 1867, hog round up in a petition to General Reynolds.41

Defending his actions in the hog round up, Horton said that when the terms of the Dallas municipal officers expired August 1, 1867, the community looked to him "to preserve order through [sic] the city." Because the hogs were such a problem, J. K. P. Record and other "prominent citizens . . . beseeched" him to issue the order. Horton had heard no complaints after the round-up and sale, adding that "even my enemies said it was the best order I had ever issued." He insisted that as people recognized their own hogs at the auction they were allowed to claim them at no cost. The money he collected, only fifty-two dollars and fifty cents in gold, was in his possession until it could be turned over to the proper authorities. He did not discuss the money in his Bureau reports because he understood it belonged to the city and not to the Bureau. Insisting on his innocence, Horton said that he had only the "purest and kindest of motives," and that his efforts were so successful that shortly after the hog sale, he had received another petition to follow the same procedure on the stray dogs in town. He wisely chose to disregard this request.42

Daniel Murry's accusation that he had been forced to relinquish his inheritance in exchange for his release from jail Horton called "an infamous lie;" and maintained that Murry, a "notorious horse thief and murder," had been
arrested under orders from General Griffin in connection with the murder of the freedwoman. When he was "unable to sustain the charge," Horton had been urged by the local citizenry not "to turn him loose upon the county." With this in mind, Horton had extracted a promise from Murry that he would leave the county and liberated him. "At the instigation" of Judge Good, Horton reported, Murry had filed a $10,000 law suit against him. Horton did not respond to any of the other charges."

In August, 1868 the Dallas Herald editors were chastised in a letter from T. G. T. Kendall who thought the newspaper's silence on Horton's transgressions was lending credence to his actions. The Herald finally lifted its self-imposed gag order on September 5 in an open letter to General Reynolds. Swindells's weekly appealed to Reynolds to put aside party sympathies and to hear testimony from the former rebels as well as that of the Radicals who perpetually sent lies to his office and considered "the state their oyster" which they would open with Reynolds's sword. Speaking of problems in the Freedmen's Bureau, the Herald asked Reynolds to "make the Hortons tremble and make them feel that affiliation with the Radical party is no shield against the punishment due to villany [sic] and crime."

After reviewing all of the evidence, Reynolds issued Special Order No. 55 on September 19, 1868, which
dishonorably discharged W. H. Horton from Bureau service based upon "reliable information" that proved he had received money in the summer of 1867 "as a bribe for the abuse of his official position." The Herald proudly printed the order, adding, "We take the liberty of saying that for this act of justice and righteous retribution General Reynolds will receive the heartfelt thanks of the people of Dallas County." In the same issue appeared the editorial "National Courage" which proclaimed Reynolds a king in his one man government.\(^5\) Horton responded that the discharge was "unnecessarily harsh . . . but the Rebs have sworn that they would ruin me and I think they will succeed." Threatening to "blow my brains out," he said the humiliation was "too great to bear, to a proud, brave man death is preferable." Sometime after October, 1868, Horton accompanied his new wife back to her family in Kentucky.\(^6\)

Reynolds appointed George F. Eber to take over the Bureau position in Dallas following Horton’s transfer to Bastrop. Orders from Austin effecting the assignment were sent to Eber in Canton on March 24, 1868. Lt. Richardson told him to take the Iron Clad Oath and to begin his duties April 1st at a salary of $100 per month. Horton would remain a few days to give him "an insight of the business." Eber acknowledged receipt of his orders on March 31, and promised to proceed without delay to Dallas. But he would never assume command. Leaving Canton, Van Zandt County in a
cheerful mood, he was unable to cross the flooded East Fork of the Trinity River. He went north to the crossing at Rockwall where he visited his sister and stayed overnight. The next morning after traveling only two miles he was accosted by a man on foot near Barnes Bridge. A Mr. Andrews discovered his body that morning. Eber had been shot with a shotgun and his pockets robbed of his gold watch and around one hundred dollars. Boot tracks in the muddy ground were followed by "sundry citizens" to the home of a Mr. Howell who claimed he had been hunting that morning. The boot tracks leading to Howell’s house matched the ones he was wearing, down to the two nails in the heel and the burned spot on the sole. A piece of cloth wadding found at the crime and the shot taken from Eber’s body matched the unfired load in Howell’s double barrel shotgun. Howell was arrested by the citizens and taken to a justice of the peace in Kaufman. Although the case was investigated, it was assumed the crime had been committed as part of random robbery as there were still "bad men" in the area. Eventually five men were arrested for Eber’s murder, but it was never publicly connected to his appointment as Freedmen’s Bureau Sub-Assistant Commissioner.

Reynolds requested County Judge A. Bledsoe to suggest a local citizen who would be "capable and willing" to assume Bureau duties in Dallas County "without fear or favor." He preferred to appoint an agent who was already a civil
officer, but left Bledsoe open to suggest a private citizen. Reynolds quoted the salary as fifty dollars per month for a civil officer and one hundred dollars per month "if devoting duties solely [sic] to the Bureau." As an afterthought Reynolds reminded Bledsoe that the agent appointed must be able to take the Iron Clad Oath.

Judge Bledsoe wrote a lengthy letter in response to Reynolds' request. He began by saying that he was "somewhat at a loss" to think of anyone suitable for the position as "most of us Union men are Old Fogies and have not had the advantage of education or legal knowledge." He was hesitant to make suggestions because of the inherent danger involved as agent in their area, saying that had Horton remained "he would not have been living now." Bledsoe was certain that Eber had been threatened not to assume the duty station, then murdered on his way to Dallas; and that without a "few Blue Coat Boys" the next agent would suffer the same fate. He also spoke of the freedmen's fears of the local Ku Klux Klan. Nevertheless, Bledsoe proposed his son Willis A. Bledsoe for the position saying he knew of no one who would "more faithfully perform the duties." Bledsoe thought if his son was unable to fulfil his role it would be "for want of capacity" and would willingly relinquish the office "at any time to one better qualified."

The judge recommended that the Bureau office be kept at Lancaster as the "Friends of the Union can render more
efficient art in case of emergency." The town of Dallas, he argued, was "so corruptet [sic] with secession that there is scarcely a corporal's Guard of true white Union men" in that community but those few men were "true as steel." Reynolds appointed Willis Bledsoe sub-assistant commissioner as of June 1, 1868, by Special Order No.33. The Herald announced his assumption of the office, adding that he seemed "to be a very clever gentleman and we doubt not will be as well thought of as any man could be in that position." Having spent most of his life in Lancaster Willis Bledsoe was well established in the community. It is questionable that he ever took the iron clad oath, however, because of his service during the Civil War, and there are no records of his having been pardoned by 1868. Enlisting in N. H. Darnell's regiment of the 18th Texas Cavalry on March 15, 1862, Willis Bledsoe was elected Captain of Company I on July 20, 1862. By January of the next year, however, he was listed on the roster of captured Confederate troops at Fort Hindman, Arkansas. After having been moved to several military prisons, he was sent from Fort Delaware, Delaware, in April, 1863, to be exchanged at City Point. He was recaptured in July the following year near Atlanta, Georgia, by General William T. Sherman's army. This time he was imprisoned at Louisville, Kentucky, and soon transferred to Johnson's Island, Ohio, where he was held until his release by oath of amnesty on May 12, 1865. Bledsoe stated
in his oath that he had always been opposed to secession and did not enter the Confederate Army until faced with conscription. He added that his entire family, except two of his brothers in the Confederate army, were strong Union men. He also confessed to owning one slave and some property. He was taking the amnesty oath because he thought it his duty to do so.  

Willis Bledsoe acknowledged receipt of his Bureau orders on June 3, 1868, adding that he had taken possession of Horton’s records from Samuel Jones. He understood he was to act only on cases in which both parties were freedmen; otherwise, his duties were to be similar to those of a Justice of the Peace "except not restricted by amount involved." He asked for guidance in how to adjust amounts for "disputes or contracts." Vernon advised him to encourage the freed people "to settle their differences without appealing to the law." They would need to learn how to deal with the civil officials "while they have a Agent of the Bureau to advise them."

In his first monthly dispatch Bledsoe reported seven complaints -- six were by freedmen against whites and one was black against black -- all were listed as "plea of Debt due." Only one had been disposed of "satisfactorily." He had not yet visited the district because he did not know he was supposed to. The freedmen were, in his assessment, able to receive justice in the civil courts with the "present
civil officers," but he had heard differently from other parts of the district. His greatest difficulty was not knowing how to handle the various situations with which he was presented. Conservative whites, in his opinion, were seeking to keep the freedmen down through threats and to prevent them from attending meetings of the Union League. He was getting along "tolerable well" after one month on the job.\textsuperscript{53}

On July 7, 1868, forty-three men of Company G., 17th United States Infantry under the command of Lieutenant Henry Norton arrived in Dallas and made camp at Dallas Spring on the north edge of the town. Within the week Willis Bledsoe was relieved of his post as Bureau agent. In writing the order, Bureau officer Lt. Charles Vernon, the new Acting Assistant Adjutant General at Bureau Headquarters told Bledsoe that there was no need for an agent at Lancaster because Lt. Norton was in place at Dallas. Vernon also expressed General Reynolds' "entire satisfaction" with Bledsoe's performance while on duty. Norton was more centrally located, and he was already on the Army payroll. The Bureau tried to use military officers to fulfill agents' duties whenever they could to save money.\textsuperscript{64}

By the end of July, 1868, Lt. Norton and his men had ingratiated themselves to the citizens of Dallas. The \textit{Herald} wrote that the "manly manners and orderly conduct of the men of Company G . . . have won the admiration of the
people." The editor was certain that if the "quiet and gentlemanly bearing" was continued there would be "no cause . . . to regret the presence of troops at this place." Lt. Vernon made an inspection of the Dallas post in August and also won praise from the weekly, which expressed the hope that such fine military officers as Vernon and Norton would help bring about an "era of tranquility and mutual confidence." However, the lieutenant reported that, although Norton had not had any trouble at his post, the officials at the courthouse had asked that their criminals be tried by military courts. The civil authorities said they were unable to enforce the law because the local citizenry would not "sustain" them. In conversing with local residents, Vernon agreed with the county officers, but the court system remained under civilian control.57

Major L. H. Sanger, also of the 17th U. S. Infantry, assumed what would be a short command in Dallas in early October, 1868. Later in the month the troops were ordered to Jefferson, Texas, to help achieve an end to racial tensions in that area. The Herald in lamenting their departure, spoke of the respect shared between soldiers and citizens, and said that although the community regretted the troops' transfer, they "heartily wished them well." Two weeks later an editorial entitled "The Roll of the Drum" discussed how the citizens missed roll call and reveille since the soldier had left, and remarked that while their
"quiet country" did not require any soldiers, Lt. Norton and his men would be welcomed back if the government thought differently because the company did "not step beyond its line to disgust, annoy or oppress the people." Dallas County would have no further occupation by soldiers or agents of the Freedmen's Bureau."

The public reaction of the community to the agents and soldiers in charge of the 40th District of the Freedmen's Bureau can be observed in the Herald's comments. The Herald appeared willing to work with and even to support Horton when he first arrived. He began his job in Dallas County with a positive but stern attitude and set about right away to do what he could to establish a labor system and schools for the freedmen. However, faced with an insurmountable task, insufficient federal funds (including a shortfall in his own salary), and not nearly enough cavalrymen to assist him, Horton was unable to be effective in his prescribed duties and chose a path that led him away from not only his Bureau orders but also honor as an officer of the United States government. Having had his own life threatened and his efforts thwarted on many occasions, he changed his initial objective to assist the freedmen and Unionists and overstepped his authority, pocketing the proceeds. The evidence is clear. The Bureau came under fire from Conservatives across Texas and the South, yet, generally, it stood behind its agents' actions. General Reynolds would
not have given much credence to Judge Good's complaints, a man he had only months before removed from office as an impediment to Reconstruction, had there not been strong evidence to support the allegations. Under no pressure to appease the Conservative population, Reynolds, nevertheless, ordered Horton dishonorably discharged, not merely relieved of his duties, despite his protestations of innocence. Regardless of personality or political affiliation, the Herald, as watchdog for the community whether Conservative or Unionist, could not continue to defend such behavior and chose to maintain a self-imposed silence rather than fuel the fires of unrest in the community by criticizing Horton's actions. The newspaper might also have feared retribution from the Bureau agent had it taken an open stance against him. Herald editors, however, were not shy in their comments about Horton once he had been transferred.

As for the other agents, Willis Bledsoe held the position for too short a period of time to have had any impact upon the county, and little information is available about Norton's administration in Dallas. Perhaps the Herald simply extended to the lieutenant the same confidence and support it originally had offered to Horton. A more realistic evaluation is that the Conservative citizens were allowed to conduct their lives and their businesses, including their relationships with the freedmen, largely as they wished. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that
freedmen made any gains during the Freedmen's Bureau tenure in Dallas County other than being allowed to testify in open court in cases which involved blacks and achieving suffrage. A feeble attempt was made to establish a freedmen's school, but like many such schools throughout the South, it was doomed to failure through lack of funding. In general, Dallas County white Conservatives tolerated the regime of the Freedmen's Bureau, welcomed its demise, and remained little changed because of it.
END NOTES


5. Captain William H. Horton to Lt. A. P. Richardson, April 20, 1868, BRFAL; I. M. Beebee to Colonel William H. Sinclair, Assistant Adjutant General, August 8, 1866, Ibid.


8. Horton to Kirkman, June 8, 1867, BRFAL. For a better understanding of Griffin's Circular 13, see Ramsdell, *Reconstruction in Texas*, 154-160.

9. Lt. J. T. Kirkman to Griffin, May 2, 1867, BRFAL (1st quotation); Unionists of Dallas County to General Charles Griffin, June 9, 1867 Ibid.; Horton to Kirkman, June 19, 1867, Ibid.
10. Horton to Kirkman, June 29, 1867, Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Horton to Kirkman, July 24 (quotations), 26, 1867, Ibid.
16. Horton to Kirkman, July 30, 1867, Ibid.
17. Horton to Kirkman, July 30, 1867, Ibid.
18. Ibid.
20. I. B. Webb Collection, Degoyler Library, SMU.
21. Horton to Kirkman, July 30, (1st and 2nd quotations), August 26, 1867, BRFAL (3rd and 4th quotations).
23. *Dallas Herald*, August 3, 1867 (1st quotation); Horton to Kirkman, August 26, 1867, BRFAL (2nd quotation).
24. Horton to Kirkman, August 26, 1867, BRFAL.
27. Ibid., August 24, October 12, 1867-August 22, 1868.
28. Horton to Kirkman, August 26, 1867, BRFAL.
29. Horton to Kirkman, December 31, 1867, Ibid.
30. Horton to Kirkman, August 26 (1st quotation), December 30 (2nd quotation); Horton to Richardson, February 12, 1868 (3rd quotation); Horton to Lt. Charles Garreston, September 28, 1867, BRFAL.
31. Lt. A. P. Richardson to Horton, December 30, 1867; Horton to Richardson, December 30, 1867, BRFAL.
32. **Dallas Herald**, March 14, August 1, 1868.

33. Samuel S. Jones to Horton, April 23, 1868; Jones to General Reynolds, April 23, 1868, forwarded by Horton to Richardson, May 6, 1868, BRFAL.

34. E. A. Daniel to General Buchanan, May 19, 1868; James S. Rains to Lt. Kaufman, July 10, 1868; Lt. Vernon to Judge John J. Good, July 30, 1868; Judge Good to General Reynolds, August 29, 1868, BRFAL.

35. Judge Good to General Reynolds, August 29, 1868, Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Samuel Jones to Lt. Richardson, May 6, 1867, BRFAL.

39. Good to Reynolds, August 30, 1868, BRFAL.

40. Horton to Acting Assistant Adjutant General, April 13, 1868 (quotations); Good to Reynolds, August 29, 1868, BRFAL.

41. Good to Reynolds, August 29, 1868 (quotations); Loyal Union Men of Dallas County to General Griffin, June 9, 1867; Samuel S. Jones to General Reynolds, April 23, 1868, forwarded by Horton to Richardson, May 6, 1868, BRFAL.

42. Horton to Richardson, April 21, 1868, BRFAL.

43. Horton to Lt. Vernon, October 28, 1868, BRFAL.

44. **Dallas Herald**, September 5, 1868.

45. Ibid., September 26, 1868.


47. Lt. A. P. Richardson to George F. Eber, March 24, 1868; Eber to Richardson, March 31, 1868; Thomas Griffin to Richardson, April 11, 1868 (quotation), BRFAL; **Dallas Herald**, April 18, 1868.

48. General J. J. Reynolds to Judge A. Bledsoe, April 21, 1868, BRFAL.

49. A. Bledsoe to Reynolds, May 8, 1868, BRFAL.

50. Ibid.

51. **Dallas Herald**, June 6, 1868; CSA, Texas Records.
52. Willis Bledsoe to Vernon June 3, 1868 (1st and 2nd quotations); Vernon to W. A. Bledsoe, June 11, 1868 (3rd and 4th quotations), BRFAL.

53. W. A. Bledsoe to Vernon, June 30, 1868, BRFAL.

54. Dallas Herald, July 11, 1868; Vernon to Willis Bledsoe, July 13, 1868 (quotation), BRFAL; Richter, Overreached on All Sides, 248.

55. Dallas Herald, July 25, 1868.

56. Ibid., August 29, 1868.

57. Ibid., January 23, 1869.

58. Ibid., October 3, 24 (1st quotation), November 14 (2nd & 3rd quotations), 1868.
CHAPTER 3

THE ECONOMY OF DALLAS COUNTY
DURING RADICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Unlike many other areas of the South, Dallas County suffered no physical damage as a result of the Civil War, and experienced, according to farmer John T. Coit, a "comparatively slight shock" to its economy because of the small number of slaves lost after emancipation. In 1867, at the beginning of Radical Reconstruction, Coit reported that while markets for livestock were easily found and prices only "somewhat depressed," the greatest area of economic concern was in depreciated local real estate prices which he blamed on "taxation and a feeling of insecurity from radicalism." He, nevertheless, considered his community "much favored." While land prices had decreased from an average of $4.50 per acre in 1861 to $3.05 in 1866, the area was experiencing an influx of immigrants and was extremely optimistic about its future.¹ An early Dallas historian wrote that the "very hopelessness" of Military Reconstruction in economically depressed areas throughout the conquered states was "paradoxically . . . one of the direct causes of Dallas' marked development," as people left their homes in war-torn areas and immigrated to North Texas. The desire for economic growth was prevalent in Dallas
County and dominated public attention more than any other issue of the time, so much so that it approached a kind of religious fervor which Eric Foner has called the "Gospel of Prosperity."²

Carrying the banner for the Dallas County prosperity brigade was John W. Swindells. Although proud of the community and the progress it had already achieved in opening a new grocery store and steam powered grist mill in summer 1867, he believed that positive economic growth required new people, new ideas, and new money. As residents of other parts of the country wrote the paper inquiring about the "economic atmosphere in Dallas," he used his position as owner and editor of the Dallas Herald to evangelize Dallas's assets. In one such communication Swindells advised that Dallas County

may be the most desirable country in the world for the emigrant with small means. Let a man come here and labor only half as hard as he is compelled to do so in Harrison County in order to live, and his fortune is made.

He also commended the people in his region as "kind and hospitable."³

Travelers passing through Dallas often wrote the Herald's editor to compliment his town and to make suggestions for improvement. A letter signed "Canada" received in August, 1867, described the author's trip from New Orleans to Dallas and his impressions of his visit. While saying the land and climate were advantageous, he recommended a railroad and "a reliable government" as the
best ways to induce emigration which "with the plastic hand of industry and enterprise," would place Dallas as one of the "first and finest" areas of the country."

In February, 1868, Swindells again extolled the benefits of his community. Hoping to neither "rouge the rose, nor perfume the violet," he described the climate, landscape, and resources for prospective investors and residents. Speaking of its "pecuniary condition," the editor assured his readers that Dallas was "infinitely superior to that of most sections of the South." He reported no "bankrupt or pauper section" in the county and "specie... in sufficient quantity to meet all commercial necessities."5

Through the optimism and encouragement of Swindells and others, Dallas did begin to grow, slowly at first; but by spring 1868, new buildings were under construction and new businesses were being started. The Herald announced each grand opening with the pride of a new father. In March, 1868, Swindells reported that work was nearly completed on ten to twelve buildings including an exchange office, a church, and a public bath house. The Dallas Manufacturing Company which operated a grist mill among other enterprises and Henry Bohny's bakery opened in May. Despite the summer heat "the music of the trowel, saw, forge, foundry and mill" produced a store that sold family and fancy groceries, three churches, and twelve to fifteen homes. Reminiscent of a
twentieth-century cheerleader, Swindells proclaimed the community's motto -- "ONWARD!"

In addition to the construction boom, Dallas County's economic prosperity was evident in other respects. In the fall of that year the streets of Dallas were often full of wagons bringing the county's farmers and their families into town to sell the fruits of their labor and, in turn, to patronize local merchants. The 1868 cotton crop, one resident wrote the Herald, yielded close to five hundred bales from the four thousand acres he had planted. The Herald reported that over $14,000 had been raised throughout the county during the year to erect new church buildings. A group of leading citizens, most of whom were not only wealthy but also politically conservative, reactivated the Dallas County Agricultural and Mechanical Association in early 1868. To encourage competition and to promote community pride, this society organized the Dallas County Fair in October, 1868, which became a well attended annual event.

In an effort to make Dallas County more attractive to prospective farmers and businessmen, community leadership supported through subscriptions a telegraph line to be strung between Tyler and Dallas, and many residents persisted in working for a line that would connect Dallas with Bryan. The Herald began to challenge the "solid men of Dallas" to make possible an iron bridge across the Trinity River. Because of the "boundless ocean of mud between the
West bank of the Trinity and the high ground," the newspaper promised the area would continue to lose economically until such a bridge was erected."

Of all the proposed projects to enhance the region, the navigation of the Trinity River garnered more space in the *Herald* and, most likely, more community money and energy. It also would be the most disappointing. In 1867 Dallas and Kaufman Counties joined together to offer a $15,000 bonus to the sixty-foot stern-wheeler *Job Boat No. 1* to make its way up the Trinity as far as Dallas, thus proving the feasibility of the Trinity as a commercial waterway. Although the trip from the mouth of the river to Dallas took seven months to complete, the citizens were thrilled and encouraged with the accomplishment. A committee of Dallas County residents met frequently in 1868 to promote Trinity navigation. They raised an additional $678.25 from their neighbors to pay Captain James H. McGarvey of the *Job Boat No. 1* for his services and advised the Dallas County Police Court to remove "obstacles that now embarrass navigation of said river." The committee commissioned the *Sallie Haynes*, an eighty-seven foot steamboat which was launched in December, 1868, but sank on its maiden cruise. They also sent former County Judge Nat M. Burford to Galveston to solicit from the businessmen of that city contributions to their river project. While Burford's mission failed to produce the desired cooperation, the dream of commercial use
of the Trinity, which began with Dallas's founder John Neely Bryan, was not forgotten but deferred for twenty years."

While 1868 had seen an increase in construction and growth, 1869 was the year in which Dallas business began to experience a real boom. All of Dallas County profited from the expansion of commercial and professional growth in its county seat. Four new stores were opened within the year, and an existing one was considerably enlarged. When T. C. Jordan who owned the building which housed Prather and Company, a dry goods store, completed the renovation, the Herald commented that Jordan knew "how to improve and don't [sic] spare expense to make his property comfortable and convenient." Some of the recently settled area residents opened shops in town to offer their various trades. The community welcomed the competence found in the carpentry shop, the two-story blacksmith shop, and the barber shop, not to mention Willimett's new saloon and those of his competitors -- Theodore Von Belmont's "Pigeon Hole Table" and "The Office," which, opening in December, 1869, was "beautifully and tastefully fitted up" by owner J. J. Fendley. To counteract the effects of the saloons the neighborhood raised a new school building and an Episcopal Church. William H. Gaston who arrived from Anderson County and entered into partnership with Aaron Camp in 1868, built "one of the most substantial as well as handsome buildings on the [town] square" to serve as the community's first bank. Gaston's intention was "to do business and trade in
real estate, personal property, merchandise, and general speculation in the town of Dallas."

The county's professional community considerably expanded as well in 1869 with the addition of four new attorneys, an "operative and mechanical" dentist, and three physicians. The strengthened medical expertise allowed long time area doctors Samuel W. Field and Roy B. Scott to form a partnership specializing in obstetrics and gynecology. The Field and Scott practice was probably a valued asset in 1869 as the Herald reported three sets of twins born to families in the county that year, adding, "This is one way to fill up the country."

Swindells's Herald continued to beat its drum to sustain development and to generate additional community spirit. "Prosperity's the very bond of love," the editor reported as the reason that seventy-five marriage licenses had been issued in Dallas County between January and February, 1869. In March the weekly complimented its own circulation to area residents' family and friends who lived in the middle and northwestern areas of the country who had written of their intentions to visit and to move to Dallas County. Swindells advised his neighbors that real estate "was bound to appreciate greatly" as the population grew and for them to hold on to even small pieces of land for the next year or two. To accommodate the anticipated newcomers and to make a "fortune" he proposed that the county's "capitalists" build homes in the vicinity. When a joint-
stock company was organized in June to build a multipurpose community hall, Swindells proudly described the proposed three-story building as "worthy of our rising and prosperous town."\textsuperscript{14}

Signs of prosperity were noted in the \textit{Herald} throughout autumn, 1869. Swindells was interested that the fall goods at the local mercantile establishments were of a higher grade and finer quality than previously supplied. Commenting on the available selection, the editor said it "betokens not only a growth or refinement of taste, but thrift and prosperity." When a large number of emigrants arrived with wagons and families from Illinois, the ecstatic Swindells prophesied that the "great exodus" had begun and that Dallas could handle it.\textsuperscript{15}

While pleased with the civic industry and business growth, the \textit{Herald} maintained its efforts to get physical improvements to the county, saying that travelers were avoiding Dallas County "except when they are compelled to come, and all for the want of facilities reaching here." Laying the responsibility for public roads and bridges on "every person interested in the welfare of our city and county," the paper admonished that "county authorities must not be derelict in this sacred duty." Reiterating the cause for better roads and bridges across the Trinity and the area's streams, the \textit{Herald} volunteered that some people were even willing for the county to go into debt for that purpose as they had been to build the jail. When a bridge over the
creek which crossed a main street leading out of town was at last completed, the newspaper reported a small success and deemed the structure "substantial and serviceable."16

The largest community effort made in 1869 toward the advancement of Dallas from a small town to a regional commercial center focused on attracting railroad companies to build through Dallas. Although some progress had been made before the war, the community mobilized in 1869 to accomplish the goal. A public meeting was held on August 7 to discuss how the community should proceed. Nat M. Burford was elected chairman, and a committee produced a resolution saying that the people would "use all our influence and ability" to help bring about legislation that would enable railroads to be built to and across their county. As a token of their commitment they pledged to buy stock in the amount of $300,000 in the first railroad company that built as far as the county seat and erected a depot. Two hundred thousand dollars of stock would be purchased in each company that did likewise. A county tax would be levied "for the discharge of said bonds." A committee of five men was seated to correspond with the directors of the various companies. The Railroad Committee sponsored a county barbecue on October 16 which the Herald touted as having awakened "the public spirit, so long lacking from our area." Their endeavors were rewarded three years later when the Houston, Texas and Central Railroad extended its route through Dallas."
Radical Reconstruction certainly did not hurt the Dallas County economy. In a January, 1870 editorial, the Herald said that the population had almost doubled from 1868-1870 and that the number of houses and buildings had not only doubled but were more substantial than before and of a better style. Houses were in such short supply that out-buildings were being painted and fixed up for make-shift residences. The demand had caused rents to be high, and the editor suggested that area "merchants and moneyed citizens were standing in their own light and lacking in public spirit, in their failure to invest their capital in putting up good buildings for rent or sale." He was afraid that the county would lose possible residents because of improper housing.¹⁸

Along with the growth in population and business came some of the advances that help turn provencial communities into progressive cosmopolitan centers. A society of twenty German citizens in Dallas County was working to aid and assist their countrymen to emigrate to the area. A Hook and Ladder company was proposed in April, and a grass roots movement began to build a regional public library. Two bills were proposed in the state legislature in May, 1870, to charter the Dallas Bridge Company which would eventually build the much needed iron bridge across the Trinity River. There was even evidence that the community was beginning to accept the new social status of the freedmen when the Herald announced the opening of a "very neat" new barber shop in
the City Hotel owned by W. H. Smith, "an educated colored man."¹⁹

Dallas County officials kept ad valorem and special tax rates under control during the Radical Reconstruction period. Under Texas law counties could require one-half the state tax rate which meant that Dallas County residents in 1867 were assessed seven and one half cents per one hundred dollar real and personal property valuation. A special tax at the same rate was levied to build a new court house for a total assessment of fifteen cents per one hundred dollar valuation. Also every male between the ages of twenty-one and fifty paid a county capitation or poll tax of fifty cents.²⁰

The rate remained steady until 1869 when the county fathers levied two additional special taxes. In January the Police Court decided to add a special tax of five cents per one hundred dollar valuation "for the benefit of indigent persons and paupers who may be a charge" upon the county. The county had seen an increase in the amount expended in care and burial of the indigent from $293.77 in 1867 to $367.50 in 1868 and, therefore, was justified in assessing the special tax.²¹

In April, 1869, the county levied another special tax of ten cents per $100 dollar valuation by direction of Special Order No. 41 issued March 25, 1869 by District of Texas Commander General Edward R. S. Canby. Responding to complaints from various sectors of the state pertaining to
rampant crime and reports of suspects' forfeiture of bail bonds and refusals to appear in court, the general issued the order to allow counties to collect moneys "for the purpose of defraying the expenses necessarily incurred in arresting, guarding, subsisting and (where necessary) clothing and trying prisoners." As the Dallas County jail had been declared "rotten and unstable for repair . . . wholly unfit for occupancy" in July, 1867, the increased revenue enabled construction to proceed without delay.\(^2\)

Although the new tax increased the ad valorem rate to a total of thirty cents per one hundred dollar valuation, there is no evidence of a taxpayers revolt in the county. The Herald editor suspected in February, 1870, that money collected from the jail tax had been misappropriated, but his fears were allayed by County Clerk Samuel S. Jones' report in March, 1870, detailing expenditures. As soon as the jail was completed, the tax was discontinued.\(^3\)

Another method of assessing the Dallas County economic situation during Congressional Reconstruction is to investigate the wealthiest people in the population to determine what happened to their financial status during military control of the government. For this study the wealthiest twenty-five persons were identified from the ad valorem tax rolls for the years 1860-1870. They were then ranked downward from the largest amount of taxable income reported. Although the top twenty-five property valuations were identified, the study focuses on the wealthiest ten.
The ten-year span was chosen to compare wealth in the years 1867-1870 with that in the years preceding and at the close of Radical Reconstruction. Table 1 is a record of the reported property valuations by year followed by their rank within that year. Also noted were the number of people assessed for ad valorem purposes in amounts greater than $10,000. Table 2 indicates the sources of their wealth.

Of the thirty-one people who on at least one occasion were among the ten wealthiest in reported property valuation in Dallas County, four names remain in that top group for each year. Seventeen people are found on at least two or more lists, indicating that the county's upper class was a stable community. While methods for attaining wealth began to change with an increase toward mercantilism and commercial real estate in the last three years of the decade, owning land and horses was always the predominant means. Every person among the top ten in 1860 owned at least two slaves with Samuel M. Scott reporting the most slaves owned at twenty valued at $12,000. Also, while everyone in 1860 earned their living from agriculture, some, like Sarah H. Cockrell who also owned a hotel, had diversified their interests somewhat. As expected a definite decline in property valuation occurred due to the loss of slaves from emancipation, but perhaps a more significant contributing factor to the decline in 1865 was land devaluation brought about by the uncertainty following General Robert E. Lee's surrender. The average evaluation
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witt, W. H.</td>
<td>land/horses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of an acre of Dallas County land in 1860 was $4.50. Although falling gradually throughout the war, land evaluation hit the lowest level of the ten-year period at $2.96 per acre in 1865.²⁵

Although wealth declined from 1860 to 1866, significant increases began in 1867. Except in cases where people left the county, died, retired, or divided property among children, and allowing for some fluctuation, valuations continued to increase until 1875. The primary reason for this increase was the rise in the value of land and real estate. In 1866, 394,074 acres of land in Dallas County valued at $1,202,514 were reported for an average of $3.05 per acre; 702 town lots were appraised at $94,355, for an average of $134.41 per lot. The real estate boom began the next year with 410,891 acres reported for a total valuation of $1,137,165 (3.50 per acre). Although only ten more town lots were reported, the average had risen to $174.93 per lot. The demand for land and property in town had begun to increase values, just as Swindells had predicted, and this trend continued throughout Reconstruction. However, for most individuals, wealth did not return to 1860 levels by 1870.²⁶

Table 3, drawn from Census Reports, Confederate Service Records and Dallas County Tax Rolls, provides an overall picture of the county’s wealthiest citizens. In keeping with the rest of the population, ten of the wealthiest Dallas County residents were born in Kentucky, and nine of
### TABLE 3

**WEALTHIEST PEOPLE IN DALLAS COUNTY 1867-1870**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Came to Texas*</th>
<th># of Slaves 1865</th>
<th>Age 1865</th>
<th>Occ./ CSA? 1860</th>
<th>Occ./ 1870</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beauchamp, C.H</td>
<td>Ga.</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Mdse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branson, Thom.</td>
<td>S. C.</td>
<td>1853</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Farmer/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caruth, W. &amp;</td>
<td>Ky</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Mdse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bros.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockrell, Sarah</td>
<td>Va.</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Hotel Keeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cole, John H.</td>
<td>Ark.</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel, E. A.</td>
<td>Ky.</td>
<td>1853</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellett, J. W.</td>
<td>Va.</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeman, Clark</td>
<td>Tenn.</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffries, J.</td>
<td>Ky.</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan, T. C.</td>
<td>Ky.</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Banker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masten, T. W.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May E. J.</td>
<td>Ky.</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer Dec’d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCommas, A.</td>
<td>Tenn.</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller, W. B.</td>
<td>Ky.</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller, John W.</td>
<td>Ala.</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moffett, Wm. R.</td>
<td>Ky.</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hotel Keeper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motley, Zach &amp;</td>
<td>N. C.</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Farmer Dec’d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary (wife)</td>
<td>Ky.</td>
<td>1856</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murphy, R. B.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nance, O. B.</td>
<td>Va.</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kannady, C. D.</td>
<td>N.Y.</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Tin Smith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reed, J. C.</td>
<td>Ky.</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott, S. M.</td>
<td>Va.</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott, S. E.</td>
<td>Tenn.</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td>R. R. Cont’r.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith, J. A.</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith, J. W.</td>
<td>Ky.</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West, R. J.</td>
<td>Tenn.</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witt, W. H.</td>
<td>Ill.</td>
<td>1848</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Farmer/Merchant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Dates are approximate
the others came primarily from the upper south. Of the wealthiest ten in 1860, only W. H. Witt, a native of Illinois, had been born outside the South. By 1870, two non-southerners, men from Pennsylvania and New York, were among the wealthiest in the county, but southern-born men remained the majority. Twenty-three of the people who were among the upper class during this time had settled in the county before the war, including Pennsylvania native Samuel A. Haught who was one of the very earliest county pioneers. Only eight of the men had arrived since 1860. Six had served in the Confederate army during the war while two others had sons who fought. John W. Miller, brother of William Brown Miller, was unable to serve because he was blind. Eleven of the men were over fifty years of age, and Sarah Cockrell’s gender kept her home during the war.27

Another sign of the improving economy was the number of people reporting property valued at $10,000 or more. In 1860 as many as fifty-six residents of Dallas County paid taxes on property valued at more that $10,000. In 1865, that number had fallen to only eight people. By 1867 thirteen residents had increased their holdings to that amount, and their ranks increased by three by the end of Military Reconstruction. The reported property valuations of the Walter and William Caruth, J. C. Reed, and Sarah Cockrell did not fall under $10,000 for the entire period.28

Some of the wealthiest people in Dallas County came into the community with money made in other parts of Texas
or in other states. William Brown Miller, Sarah Cockrell, and William H. Gaston are examples of residents who not only through their cash but also their expertise and influence helped create businesses or services which contributed to the growth of the county. Others came, stayed a short time, and left without making an impact upon the area or leaving information on the nature of their lives or their businesses. Very little data is available today on the lives of C. H. Beauchamp, J. H. Bullington, Clark Freeman, T. W. Masm, or J. A. Smith except from the tax rolls of the period and an occasional newspaper reference. Samuel A. Haught, E. J. May, and Zachary and Mary Motley are typical of those who came into the county with little more than a pioneer spirit and built large holdings. Haught and May started successful mercantile establishments during the 1860's, while the Motleys farmed on an expansive tract in eastern Dallas county. Understanding a little about the lives of some of these wealthy residents helps build a more complete picture of the community of which they were a part.

William Brown Miller, born in Madison County, Kentucky, in 1807, was uncharacteristic of the very earliest of Dallas County settlers in that he was well educated and had successfully established himself in Tennessee and Missouri. Diagnosed in 1846 with "galloping consumption" (tuberculosis), he sought a healthier climate in Texas. In 1847 he visited and was pleased with the fertile terrain and temperate weather in North Texas and satisfied that the
little settlement of Dallas on the eastern banks of the Trinity River would thrive. He purchased 1,280 acres for $1,280 and moved his family and his four slaves to their new home. A firm advocate of education for his daughters as well as his sons, Miller brought a teacher from Kentucky to live with the family to teach his and his neighbors' young ladies. Although he was too old to fight in the Civil War, he was a strong supporter of the Confederacy. Several of his twelve slaves took the name Miller after emancipation and stayed on to work for him for shares of the crop.

After having been the second or third wealthiest member of the county for many years, his holdings were broken up in 1868 as the result of a law suit brought against him by the children of his second wife. The plaintiffs received one half of Miller's property plus $750 as their share of their deceased mother's estate. Although he retained the large home he built for his growing family in 1862, he must have divested some of his other interests because of the vast differences in his reported real and personal property valuation for 1868 ($26,585) and 1869 ($3,970). W. B. Miller was not involved directly in local politics, but remained an influential member of the community until his death in 1899.

The Caruth family moved into Dallas County in 1858 after living and farming in other counties in the state for a number of years. Because William and Walter Caruth filed their taxes together, it is impossible to separate their
holdings for the purpose of this study. Brothers William and Walter, born in Allen County, Kentucky, began to purchase large tracts of land mostly north of the town of Dallas immediately after settling in the county. Although they were also merchants, they obtained their wealth primarily from their extensive land holdings in Dallas and Collin Counties. While the Dallas County tax rolls reveal that the Caruths owned six slaves in 1860, they were never assessed for any slaves in Collin County, which probably meant that land they owned in that county either was not under cultivation or was leased. Walter enlisted in Colonel N. H. Darnell’s Regiment of the 18th Texas Cavalry and served as Quartermaster in Tyler the last year of the war, but William did not enlist. Conservative in their politics, neither brother served the county government in either elected or appointed capacity. They were very well respected members of the community during the 1860s and 1870s; and, because of the advantageous location of their lands, they established a hold on the community which is still felt in the 1990s.  

Although not arriving in Dallas until April, 1868, William H. Gaston was a significant force in the revitalization of the Dallas County economy during Reconstruction. The Alabama native had established himself in the Mound Prairie community of Anderson County by 1849 and had served in the "Anderson County Invincibles" for the Confederacy during the war. Discharged and paroled in June,
1865, he returned to Anderson County. While visiting the town of Dallas in early 1868, he noticed there was no permanent bank. He and his partner Aaron Camp bought a town lot on the corner of Main and Jefferson (now Record Street) for $2500 from John Tennison. Gaston also bought the northwest corner of Ross and Pearl Streets for $100 per acre where he built a fine home.\(^3\)

The bank Gaston and Camp built was a very substantial building with an iron safe. To allay the fears and distrust people held for institutional banking, Gaston and Camp did not lend money deposited in the bank in the earliest days of operation. Gaston explained the procedure in the following way:

> We put the money each depositor gave us in an envelope, and placed it in the safe. When a depositor asked for money, he got the identical money he had deposited with us in the first place.

The bank had no cages and operated on no specific hours -- they opened early and closed around seven-thirty in the evening for their customers' convenience. The bankers made money by buying and selling exchange drafts on New York banks. But the bank did grow. Organized under the laws of the state of Texas in 1875 as Exchange Bank of Dallas, it converted to a national bank in 1887. Gaston invested his income heavily in Dallas County real estate, livestock, and agriculture.\(^3\)

Active in civic affairs such as the Dallas County Agricultural and Mechanical Association, Gaston was one of
the few of Dallas's upper class who was politically active during this period. He served as a city alderman under Mayor Benjamin Long in 1872 and as city treasurer from 1890 to 1892. Gaston came to Dallas County at the height of Radical Reconstruction because he saw a need. He was immediately accepted as a substantial member of the community where he contributed his wealth, energy, and influence for many years.  

One of the more interesting and influential members of Dallas County's upper class was Sarah Horton Cockrell. Her husband, Alexander Cockrell, arrived in Dallas after serving with the United States Army during the Mexican War. He purchased his headright along Mountain Creek and started a freighting business hauling goods in ox-drawn wagons to and from Jefferson, Texas. In 1853, Cockrell bought out all of the Dallas holdings of his friend John N. Bryan for $7,000 and moved into the town of Dallas with his Virginia-born wife Sarah. In 1854 Cockrell formed the Dallas Bridge and Causeway Company to construct the first bridge across the Trinity River at Dallas where he had previously operated a ferry. With the completion of the red cedar toll bridge in February, 1855, he publicly opened the saw mill he had built to prepare materials for the bridge. Early Dallas historian John H. Cochran credited Cockrell with employing "all the young men who came to the country" in one of his businesses or another. 
In early 1858 the bridge was destroyed when torrential rains swelled the Trinity, and Cockrell began to organize an effort to construct a new, sturdier structure. But before he was able to put his plan into action, and under questionable circumstances, Alexander Cockrell was shot in April, 1858, by Dallas city Marshal Andrew M. Moore, who had attempted to arrest Cockrell for violating a city ordinance. Cockrell died from eight gunshots in the abdomen fired by the Marshal who had been on the job only three days. Moore was tried for the murder, but after four days of deliberation, the jury found him not guilty.36

Sarah stepped in immediately to take over the management of her husband's estate and was very successful in her enterprise. The year after becoming a widow, Sarah Cockrell opened one of Dallas' finest inns, the St. Nicholas Hotel, which she named for the establishment's manager Nicholas H. Darnell. To replace the Trinity bridge, she formed the Dallas Bridge Company which was chartered by the state legislature in February, 1860; but manpower, money, and materials were required elsewhere once war broke out. During the interim Mrs. Cockrell reactivated the ferry operation her husband had begun.37

Ironically, though Swindells called for the "solid men" of Dallas County to unite to build the bridge, it was a "solid" woman who was the impetus behind the project. In 1870 the Dallas Iron Bridge Company was chartered. The new bridge, completed in 1872 at a cost of $55,000, was made
from iron forged in St. Louis and transported to Dallas via the Mississippi River, the Gulf of Mexico, and overland freighting. A commentary on how completely unified Dallas citizens could become over an issue of civic necessity, putting aside animosities for the interest of the community, is the document forming this company. A handwritten document lists the original stockholders among whom were area union men Ben Long, A. J. Gouffe, and Samuel S. Jones as well as conservatives W. H. Prather and Thomas C. Jordan.\(^3\)

In summary, the economic condition of Dallas County was not adversely affected by Radical Reconstruction. It recovered quickly from the set-backs created by the Civil War; and, after a short period of uncertainty, began to grow. Residents were being told weekly by the Herald that their area of the country was the best for emigrants to start new lives, that the county already was populated by intelligent and industrious people, and that only "stinginess and false notions of economy" could keep them from becoming a noteworthy city. While other issues crept in and out of the newspaper's columns, the words 'growth' and 'prosperity' were repeated over and over -- first as possibilities, later as realities. As isolated as Dallas citizens had been from the harshest aspects of the war, they also were isolated from the economic problems that some communities blamed on Radicalism. The McKinney Enquirer suggested in an article reprinted in the Herald that the
"people of that [Dallas] county seem to have forgotten Congress, confiscation, territorial government, equal suffrage and the devil, remembering only their individual interests" and building for the future. While the military appointed county government may not have moved as quickly to make improvements as some people may have wished, they were responsible for keeping the tax rate down, and bridges, roads and a new jail were built. Although some of the county officials differed politically from the majority of the population, they held the same interests in the potential they saw in Dallas County and did what they could to help it materialize. Economically, the years 1867-1870 were good ones for the county, neither because of nor in spite of Radical Reconstruction.
END NOTES

1. Correspondence from John T. Coit to Brother, May 29, 1867, Coit Papers, Dallas Historical Society, A36111 (quotations); Dallas Herald, March 23, 1867.

2. Rogers, The Lusty Texans of Dallas, 101 (1st & 2nd quotations); Foner, Reconstruction, 379-92, 394-95.

3. Dallas Herald, August 3, 1867.

4. Ibid., August 31, 1867.

5. Ibid. February 22, 1868.

6. Ibid., March 7, May 2, 16, June 6 (1st quotation), July 18(2nd quotation), 1868.

7. Ibid., October 10, 31, 24, 1868.

8. Ibid., May 16, 23, 30, 1867.


10. Information about the new businesses in Dallas was compiled from the Dallas Herald unless otherwise noted. Quotations will be noted by the specific issue date. Dallas Herald, January 30, 1867.

11. Ibid., December 18, 1869 (quotation).


13. Dallas Herald, July 24 (1st quotation), August 7 (2nd quotation), 1869.


15. Ibid., October 30 (1st quotation), November 27 (2nd quotation), 1869.

17. Ibid., August 14 (1st & 2nd quotations), October 23 (3rd & 4th quotations), 1869; Cochran, Dallas County: A Record of Its Pioneers and Progress, 137.

18. Dallas Herald, January 27, 1870.

19. Ibid., March 12, April 23, May 14, 21, 28 (quotations), 1869.

20. Dallas County Commissioners' Court Minutes, January 10, 1867; Texas Almanac for 1869 and Emigrants' Guide, 221.

21. Dallas County Commissioners' Court Minutes, 1867-1869, January 8, 1869 (quotation).

22. Ibid., April 8, 1869 (1st quotation); William L. Richter, The Army in Texas During Reconstruction (College Station, Texas: Texas A. & M. University Press, 1987), 162; Dallas County Commissioners' Court Minutes, July 15, 1867 (2nd quotation).

23. Dallas Herald, February 15, March 5, 12, 1870; Dallas County Commissioners' Court Minutes, January 6, 1870.


25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.; Dallas Herald, March 6, 1869.

27. Eighth Census (1860); Nineth Census (1870); CSA, Texas Records.


29. William Brown Miller -- Family History, Texas/Dallas History Division, Dallas Public Library.

30. Ibid.; Tax rolls for Dallas County 1860-1875.

31. Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas County, Texas, 529; Cochran, Dallas County: A Record of Its Pioneers and Progress, 147; Phillip Lindsley, The History of Greater Dallas and Vicinity, (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1909), 84, Ferguson Collection, DeGolyer Library, SMU; Dallas County Tax Rolls, 1860-1870; Collin County Tax Rolls, 1860-1865.

32. Widner, Gaston, 5, 12, 15; CSA, Texas Records.

33. Widner, Gaston, 15, 17 (quotation), 18; Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas County, Texas, 296.

34. Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas County, Texas, 280-283.


37. Ibid., Cochran, *Dallas County: A Record of Its Pioneers and Progress*, 68.

38. *Proud Heritage*, 34; *Dallas Herald*, June 6, 1868 (quotation); Cochran, *Dallas, Texas*, 68; Minutaglio and Williams, *The Hidden City: Oak Cliff, Texas*, 42; Petition to Texas House of Representatives by Citizens of Dallas County, Sarah H. Cockrell Collection, Dallas Historical Society, A4340/A43125, A4340/A43155.

CHAPTER 4

DALLAS COUNTY'S REACTION TO BLACK SUFFRAGE

During Reconstruction the greatest concern of most Dallas County white residents, like the majority of their Southern brethren, was that black political and social equality would directly follow emancipation of the slaves. By putting their faith in President Andrew Johnson's plan for Reconstruction, they allowed their fears of a harsh reorganization, including even limited black suffrage, to be lulled into a temporary slumber. They saw Johnson as a "protector" against Northern "ultra-fanatics." While most Republicans in the United States Congress were in favor of a free labor economy in the South and protection of the basic rights for freedmen, the Moderate Republicans who controlled that body were not completely behind black suffrage in the North or the South. Like Johnson these Moderates thought the Southern states could be induced to "granting" suffrage rather than having it "imposed" upon them by Federal authorities. But Johnson began to falter politically in 1866. Leniency in matters related to suffrage was redefined when Radical Republicans won a majority in the mid-term elections in late 1866.¹

Dallas County Conservatives were alarmed at the possible changes the Radical Congress could make. The
Dallas Herald sent out its first signal of distress in December, 1866. Among the possible catastrophes which could befall the Southern people under "the supremacy of the Radical Party" were disfranchisement of the rebel whites, troops sent into more towns, confiscation of property, execution of certain "principal rebels," annulment of Presidential pardons, and dismissal of civil authorities who would be replaced by military governors. Key among the concerns was that blacks would hold the reins of governmental power.  

The 1866 Texas Constitutional Convention had granted blacks more rights than most conservative Texans thought were necessary, and any additional rights would be unthinkable. "Civil rights," according to historians Barry Crouch and L. J. Schultz, "was another word for black bed fellow, and Texans were in no mood for such sacrilege."

Editor Swindells saw the Radicals in Congress as the "Jacobins of the country." They were arrogant in their successful assumption of power and would execute "any policy towards the South that their blackened hearts may dictate, no matter how extreme or ruineous [sic]." These "fell destroyers of a nation's peace and prosperity" were assisted by some Southern men who would help in "forging the chains for further degradation and enslavement of their own people." His call for a renewed effort to support the President to save the country from ruin, however, was futile. As the southern people were unable to participate
in national politics, they could champion the titular head of the country only through their hopes and prayers.⁴

Many of Swindells' fears were realized with the passage of the Reconstruction Acts in 1867. Some former rebels were disfranchised, Dallas County saw troops stationed in their community, and in November, 1867, most of the county officials were removed and replaced by military appointees. Blacks were granted suffrage in the election for a state convention that would write a new Texas Constitution as a condition for readmission to the Union. However, there were no executions, and freedmen did not gain control of government in Texas or in Dallas County. Still, the conservative element of the county remained uneasy. Registration of voters for electing the Constitutional Convention took place from June 29 through August, 1867. Swindells often admonished his readers "to register . . . and then spare no pains to induce his neighbor to do so." However, many of Dallas County's Conservatives were slow to register at first because they believed, as did many of their fellow Texans, that participating in registration and subsequent elections would not only endorse the Radical's policies but would perhaps encourage further demands upon them. Some men thought that a low registration count might defer decisions until the situation had cooled, giving leaders more time to devise a better plan of reorganization. There was even an attitude that military rule was better than Radical or black domination.⁵
Anticipating the writing of a new state constitution that included black suffrage, Swindells articulated his community's greatest nightmare in October, 1867, in an editorial entitled "Is Texas to Become Africanized?" He had come to the conclusion that the Radicals' ultimate goal was to "Africanize," or to elevate the freedmen to a level of domination over whites, "by slow, but almost certain degrees." Saying that white Texans were "about to go off a cliff -- into an abyss," he deemed the evil process well under way and said that little would stop the "damnable work." He thought, however, that if the white race was not to become the "hewers of wood and drawers of water for the black, there must be no apathy and indifference." They must participate in every element of the political process in which they were allowed, so that if Texas did become "Africanized" then "every honest heart that has self-respect and patriotic emotions" would be able to say, "Thou can’st [sic] not say I did it; shake not thy gory locks at me."

Throughout October, the Herald carried editorials from other publications which supported its own ideas of white supremacy. An article from a northern publication reprinted in the weekly, insisted that "prejudice against color" was a "natural instinct of the superior against contamination." Later in the month, Swindells once again delivered a strong statement against apathy and in support of white supremacy. He asked the men of Dallas County if they had been "paralyzed with fear" or were they "cowering before power?"
He said that theirs was a "white man's government" and was designed to be administered by them. Although he was certain that enough white registrants would be rejected to assure the Radicals of victory, Swindells exhorted his fellow conservatives to "shake off the dewdrops" that had collected in their apathetic sleep and "to show the world that you are worthy of being freemen." Like many other Conservative Texas newspapers, the Herald briefly endorsed a state-wide plan to defeat a new constitution that included black suffrage by encouraging massive registration but very low voter turnout. For the election to be valid, the vote had to equal at least one half of the total registration.

On December 18, 1867, General Winfield S. Hancock issued an order for an election to be held in Texas on February 10-14, 1868, to decide whether or not a constitutional convention would convene and to elect delegates to that convention if the decision was favorable. He also ordered registration to re-open and the lists to be revised during the last five days of January. In an editorial anticipating a revised registration, Swindells speculated on the numbers of black voters already "officially" registered. He estimated that there were only 35,000 qualified black men in Texas in 1867, yet the Secretary of State's office had reported 47,430 blacks registered. Swindells's reasoning for the discrepancy was that many of those registered were under twenty-one years of age or had not met the state's residency requirements of
twelve months or had registered more than once. He believed these alleged abuses of the law were "a sad, but truthful commentary upon the iron rule of despotism which has been wielded over the white people of this state by her Radical rulers." The Herald's editor also estimated that 28,000 white males were kept away from registration by Sheridan's interpretation of the acts of Congress that resulted in the "secret circular" to Boards of Registration. There were, Swindells thought, a large number of names rejected unfairly. He correctly assumed the truth would "never be attained," but he blamed the lack of guidance and too few inspections of the county registration boards which made them "absolute" in their decisions.

Uncertain of their strength, Texas Conservatives began to doubt their plan not to vote. In January, 1868, a call went out across the state for a Conservative Convention in Houston. The Herald agreed that all people "of whatever previous political association" who opposed the present state of affairs should "be up and doing and organize themselves." Although he acknowledged the importance of the Houston meeting, he was concerned with the lack of time allowed to appoint delegates, thinking that much of northern and north eastern Texas would not be represented. Even without complete representation, Swindells was confident that some of the "wisest and most prudent" statesmen would attend and he trusted them to make the right decisions. Fewer than twenty counties were represented at the
convention that convened on January 20 in Houston. On the main issue of "African equality," a resolution from those assembled recommended that everyone registered vote against a constitutional convention and for delegates who would frame a constitution without black suffrage.

There was a flurry of activity in Dallas County as well as throughout the state when registration reopened in late January, 1868. Just over one hundred Dallas County residents registered including twenty-two blacks, but Swindells was unhappy that twenty-seven whites had been rejected. He accused the Board of Registrars of rejecting names under the "secret instructions" and those who answered no to the questions, "Are you in favor of negro suffrage?" and "Will you vote for the convention?" The Herald reported that applicants who were in favor of black suffrage and the convention were registered even if they had never taken the amnesty oath; those opposed to the two questions were rejected because they had not taken the amnesty oath.

Swindells blamed the Board’s president, Jesse Asbury, who had "his own way" and overruled other Board members. "Being in a bad humor with the white men in general," Asbury’s sarcastic remarks could be supported, Swindells said, "by a cloud of witnesses."

By order of General Hancock, issued on January 31, 1868, the Board of Registrars of each county was to prepare an accurate list of the names of all people "registered before and during the revision and whose names have not been
stricken from the rolls during said revision, or
certificates of registration cancelled." The lists were to
be published as soon as the order was received whether
before or after the election. Ben Long submitted his list,
certified February 17, for the Herald to publish in the
February 22 issue. The list contains 1,239 names.
Swindells' rumors of the number rejected would seem to have
been confirmed as the list was seventy-seven shy of the
total registration count reported the week before. There
were on the list the names of many who might have been
rejected had the instructions in the "secret circular" been
closely followed. For instance, former County Judge Z. E.
Coombes and J. R. Clements, members of the militarily
removed 1867 Police Court, were on the list. The name J. S.
Goodnight could be the former County Tax Assessor and
Collector J. P. Goodnight because the list contained a
mixture of upper and lower case print type and a number of
typographical errors. Missing from the registration list
are the other members of that Court and former District
Judge John J. Good who either failed to register or were
rejected.\footnote{11}

Statewide the vote was in favor of the convention. The
total vote for the convention was 44,689 (7,757 whites;
36,932 blacks), while 11,440 (10,622 whites; 818 blacks)
voted against it. As 52,964 (41,234 whites; 11,730 blacks)
registered voters were not polled, the convention was
carried by the large numbers of blacks voting.\footnote{12} The day
after the polls closed the Herald reported that the election passed off quietly in this place, and but for the presence of rather unusual numbers of freedmen about the Court House, no one would have supposed that an election was going on at all. There appeared to be but little interest manifested in the result.\textsuperscript{13}

To help assure a peaceful election, the Dallas County Police Court paid nineteen men two dollars per day for up to five days "for patrolling the Town of Dallas" during the election. Sheriff Winniford was paid ten dollars per day for five days for "summoning the guards."\textsuperscript{14}

The Herald reported the election results for Dallas County as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>Colored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Convention</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>521</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against Convention</td>
<td>243</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>243</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Delegate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Bledsoe</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>518</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. O. McAdams</td>
<td>245</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>245</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 381 whites voted, within two the number of blacks polled. Because whites split their votes between Bledsoe, the Radical candidate, and Conservative McAdams, the blacks had been able to direct the results of the Dallas County election. Taking into consideration the seventy-seven names missing from Long's official report and assumed
rejected, the certified number of white voters stood at 837. Almost 450 whites chose, either out of apathy or anger, not to go to the polls. Black voters, on the other hand, had turned out all but sixteen of their registration. Swindells was confident that many of the whites who had voted for the convention and the Radical candidate A. Bledsoe would vote against the adoption of a constitution which "disfranchised a single white man, or bestowed suffrage on the black." He also presumed that all of those whites not voting were conservative, and that the county contained a Conservative majority of at least 200 registered voters. There was, nonetheless, the reality that the recently enfranchised freedmen had helped produce a victory for the Republicans in Dallas County, and a sense of foreboding settled upon the Conservative whites of the county.\(^\text{15}\)

After pondering the ramifications of the recent election, Swindells came to the conclusion that white men were to be disfranchised and black men enfranchised whether or not a constitutional convention was held. Eternally optimistic, however, he did not think it would be too long before Conservatives were able to regain control of their governments. Claiming that a "loud roar of Democracy" was beginning to be heard across the country from "the lovers of their race, the natural men of America," he predicted that a revolution was brewing which would re-establish "security of life, limb and property, liberty of the press and speech, impartial trial by jury, the happiness, welfare and
prosperity of the people." This editorial was prelude to articles and columns that would follow throughout the next two years and grow increasingly more hostile against black suffrage and the Radical administration of Reconstruction and more insistent upon the organization of Conservatives. The editorials took on a harsher tone and the language grew more colorful partly because of the pressure Conservatives felt as black suffrage became a reality. However, the change in the temper of the editorial offerings was largely due to the fact that because of his unstable health, Swindells relinquished that facet of his business at the end of February, 1868 to A. W. Roysdon who was not as genteel in his writing as his employer.¹⁶

In early March, 1868, the Herald called upon county Conservatives to organize "to beat back and crush the invasion of Radicalism and Negro Barbarism." Invoking the spirits of Sam Houston, William B. Travis, and James Bowie, Roysdon called upon these new organizations to use "every lawful means" to defeat a state constitution which called for black suffrage.¹⁷ A petition appeared in the Herald on March 14, signed by seventy-seven Conservative residents of the county who requested co-operation in meeting on Saturday, March 21 at the County Court House to form a group to "consider the various momenteous [sic] questions of the day" and to devise a plan of action. Notable among the petitioners were Swindells and former District Judges John J. Good and Nat M. Burford.¹⁸
The meeting attracted a large number of citizens who chose Judge Burford as chairman. A committee was appointed to draft resolutions that were "expressive of the sense of the Conservative citizens of this county," and to report back on the following Saturday evening. After the second organizational gathering, Roysdon related that the "intelligence and worth of Dallas County" there assembled were addressed "ably and eloquently" by Judge Good and Colonel John M. Crockett. Many of the county's "oldest" citizens who had previously refrained from active political participation, attended and took leadership roles. The Herald endorsed the formation of affiliate clubs in each of the county's precincts and printed the six resolutions agreed upon by the Conservative Party of Dallas County, the association's official title. Resolution No. 1 identified the group's membership as people of the county who "favored the maintenance [sic] of the principles of the Constitution in their purity, the restoration of civil liberty and the rights of the States, and who oppose negro equality and supremacy." Other resolutions designated officer positions and authorized precinct clubs. They requested sister counties to organize and to "co-operate with us in the great struggle before us." One resolution supported President Johnson and offered him their "sympathy in his present trial." The final resolution stated their acceptance "in good faith" of the results of the war, including emancipation, and offered their "quiet submission
to military rule" as proof. The resolutions were signed by the association's officers, President W. H. Hord, Vice-President A. McCommas, and Secretary John W. Lane.

Adding impetus to the importance of the path taken by county Conservatives, Roysdon wrote an editorial in the same April 4 issue of the paper that spoke to the problems the black and white races would have under enforced political equality. He said that thinking of being on an equal footing with the former slaves, "with their imbecility, ignorance and moral degradation . . . revolts the mind of the educated, and shocks the feelings of the virtuous." If such an impossible situation occurred, he envisioned not only a social revolution but also another war.

Conservative Clubs sprang up across the county during the spring and summer of 1868. Their real purpose was to inspire supporters out of their complacency with Radical rule and to secure their organization in anticipation of future political action. The Conservative Executive Committee, a state-level organization, called for a convention of Conservatives to be held in Bryan, Texas, on July 7, 1868, and appointed delegates from various counties to attend the National Democratic Convention in New York on July 4. To keep the public alert, Editor Roysdon reminded his readers that 1868 would be a politically "tough" year and advised them not to "give way to despondency and like Russian serfs submit in silence to the vassalage of our inferiors which would-be masters deem our irrevocable and
irreversible doom." Dallas County delegates appointed to the Bryan convention were Nat M. Burford, Dr. H. J. Moffett, Captain James Thomas, Captain Alex Harwood, and W. K. Masten.23

The July 18 issue of the Herald was almost completely devoted to Conservative interests. The platforms of both the state and national conventions were printed and endorsed. Roysdon said the National Democratic platform was "as just as it is national" and encouraged everyone to support the two candidates, Horatio Seymour for President and Francis P. Blair for Vice President. Other items included a biography of Seymour and news that a Democratic Club being formed in Dallas would hold its first meeting on July 20. Hoping "to herald forth the news in November next of its triumphant success," the newspaper proudly raised the national ticket to its masthead.24

Texans were unable to participate in the national election because of a Congressional joint resolution passed July 20, 1868, which excluded states that had not reorganized under Reconstruction and been re-admitted to the Union, but the national events were closely followed in Dallas County as well as other parts of the state. The main Democratic issue was opposition to Reconstruction, and Vice Presidential candidate Blair was a man most Dallas residents could support. Saying that Reconstruction was not a "fait accompli," he went on a speaking tour to convince his constituents that a Democratic President could use the army
to oust the new state governments and return white people to power in the South. Often using inflammatory language, he believed the country faced a second civil war if the blacks were not disfranchised.  

The Herald reported that a "respectable portion of the Caucasian [sic] race of Dallas," met on July 20 in the organizational meeting of the Dallas Democratic Association which replaced the Conservative Party. Officers were elected and a committee of fifteen selected to draft a constitution. Roysdon encouraged every "WHITE man in Precinct No. 1" to attend the next meeting and to join the group. On August 1, the weekly printed Frank Blair's platform and reminded readers that even if they could not vote, they were able to use their influence by talking to their friends and by firing workers who were Radicals, adding that "if such creatures starve, as the result of Radical meanness and folly, you are not responsible."  

Throughout the summer and fall of 1868 the Herald continued to follow the presidential campaigns and to applaud formations of Democratic clubs as the election neared. But, for some Conservatives, political organizations were not solving the problems they associated with Radical rule and the political and social advancement of the freedmen as rapidly as they wanted. Out of desperation they turned to fear and intimidation as alternative means to remedy the situation. Although never formally established in Texas, elements of the Ku Klux Klan
were present throughout the state including Dallas County. The Texas branch, which did not appear to be related to the organization east of the Mississippi River, was composed most likely of irresponsible individuals hiding behind not only masks but also the reputation of the Klan. Historian A. C. Green has written that while the KKK gained power in Dallas, it "never gained control." Dallas County Klan-like activity primarily took the form of threats and warnings to blacks in general and the white Union men in particular for their association with the freedmen, but it is possible that some of the violence in the county during 1868 and 1869 might have been perpetrated by the Klan."

The *Dallas Herald* reported on April 11, 1868, that Dallas residents had been greeted a few mornings earlier by the following handbill posted in the "most conspicuous places" in town:

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K K K
DEMON'S DEN, DARK DAY
CLOUDY MOON, TIME OUT
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*Dum Fervet Opus*

*XL-99*

*Shrouded Bros. Dallas Div. No. 21.*

The Great Past Grand Giant commands you. The hour to act has come. The knife and pistol to us are given. The foeman's chain must now be riven. On the 11th day of this mortal's month go forth to the harvest of DEATH. -- Come from the shadow of the GRAVE and dye your hands red with the BLOOD of your victims. STRIKE and SPARE NOT. D.C.U.L.A., BEWARE! The PIT yawns to receive you.

By order of the

**GREAT GRAND CYCLOPS**
An editorial in the same issue of the Herald said that while the editor could not "positively say" what the mysterious order meant, he believed it to be the "playful prank of some mischievous and ingenious college boys." He understood that most students at the larger universities in the United States engaged in similar activities, and only the "peculiar political condition" of the country gave the message "its horrible portent". He blamed the formation of secret political societies on "ignorant and superstitious" people who before the war would have been too busily engaged in commerce and agriculture to have such ideas. He likened the threats by the Ku Klux Klan directed at the Dallas County Loyal League (D.C.U.L.A.) to the nursery tales of "Jack the Giant Killer" or "Raw Head and Bloody-Bones" which "scares into silence, then repose the annoying and petulant child."29

A Dallas County resident of the Lancaster area sent a copy of the Herald's explanation of the Klan's handbill to the McKinney Messenger, a Radical Collin County newspaper. The unnamed gentleman also sent a private note to Roysdon saying that all loyal men should be on their guard against this "fearful organization." The Messenger's editor was concerned enough about the spread of the Klan into his area that he notified General Reynolds of the handbills, and informed the Herald that any editor who published the notices should be punished. Roysdon responded in a May 9 editorial entitled "Myth of the Ku Klux Klan," in which he
laid the responsibility for the growth of the Klan to "Radical tricksters and corrupt politicians." Saying that the "negroes smile at the ridiculousness of the myth," the editor was surprised that a supporter of the Radical government "should tremble in apprehensions vile." Roysdon equated the fear that the very name Ku Klux Klan seemed to create in Union men to the intimidation that British King Richard the Lionhearted had over the Moslems. He closed by saying that "even the rustling of leaves causes the Loyal to people the woods with the horrid spectral form of the Ku Klux Klan." 30

For at least one Dallas County resident, Klan-like activities were far from myth. Miss Willie M. Floyd grew up hearing her mother's stories of the night-riders. Although unsure of the exact date, she related a particular incident that occurred during the late 1860's in which men dressed in "white robes or sheets" entered the yard of her mother's home and demanded that the freedman named Jurden be turned over to them. Jurden, a blacksmith who worked for many of the area's families, did not live on that farm but came every weekend to visit his wife and children who did live there. The men accused Jurden of committing a crime, but Mrs. Floyd knew that they were "just out getting negroes whom they thought they could pick up . . . several negroes were hanged to terrorize others." Mrs. Floyd's brother John met the men with a pistol and told them that Jurden was not there, "but if he were there they could not get him." 31
Later in May, 1868, Roysdon learned enough of Klan activities in other parts of the country to dispel his notions that its existence was a myth. An incident that occurred near Columbia, Tennessee, in which the shrouded perpetrator of vile and mysterious escapades in the area was allegedly captured and discovered to be that county's Radical candidate for Sheriff, convinced Roysdon that all of the actions of the secret organization were committed by Radicals. His reasoning was that Radical Reconstruction had been so harsh that some of the Loyal men had begun to feel guilty and to dread retribution from the oppressed Conservatives. Badly misquoting Shakespeare's confused Hamlet, Roysdon lay the blame of Klan activities on the cowards' guilty consciences and the anticipation that "oppression might beget its legitimate offspring."

Continuing to express a conviction that Conservatives were not responsible for the Klan, the Herald made light of the whole situation with anecdotes such as "A. Head Exposed the Ku Klux Klan." One issue carried in bold type an item headline, "CYCLOPS HAS KILLED KU KLUX!" The reader went on to find that John M. F. McCarty would soon "kill off the merchants in Dallas, Lancaster and other small towns unless they will sell as low as he does." In August, 1868, the Herald announced that it had received several issues of the Ku Klux Vedette, a daily newspaper published at Houston by Jones, King and Company. Calling it "a real live, spicy and ably edited little daily, bidding fair to rise and become
one of the prominent institutions of the Bayou City," Roysdon encouraged his readers to stop by the Herald's office to inspect his copies, and wished its publishers "abundant success."  

The last instance in which the Klan was mentioned in the pages of the Herald during Radical Reconstruction came in response to the murder in Jefferson, Texas, of George W. Smith by a masked band of vigilantes. When the lynching was attributed to the Klan, Virginius Hutchen (who replaced Roysdon in July, 1868 as co-editor of Swindells' newspaper) disagreed. He also accused the Radicals of inventing the organization to cover up the problems of Reconstruction by saying "'Kuklux' is simply the name for the last stages of political delirium [sic] tremens. It represents the snakes, the scorpions, and lizards of a diseased radical imagination."  

Although no crimes were directly attributed to the Ku Klux Klan in Dallas County, some of the offenses that occurred in 1868 and 1869 were similar to those ascribed to that group in other parts of the South. As early as February, 1868, William H. Horton, Dallas Agent of the Freedmen's Bureau, wrote to his superiors that groups of rebels gathered at the Crutchfield House Hotel where they and proprietor James Barkley devised "devilish schemes that have been carried out here lately," including, he believed, the murders of three freedmen within a short period of time. Horton related an incident in which he had gone to Barkley's
establishment to arrest a man who had drawn a gun on a freedman for "refusing to halt when ordered," but the man was not there. Before Horton could find and arrest the suspect, Barkley had alerted the man who soon made his escape. Horton was convinced that only rebels would stay at the hotel, and that there were plans being devised in that place for his own murder because of the "bitter demonic hate felt for the freedpeople and particularly myself."35

In August, 1868, the Dallas County Police Court paid Milas Hopkins ten dollars to bury a white man found dead near the Trinity River bottom, not giving a cause of death. A few days later an old freedman was found dead on Dallas Branch Creek. The Herald reported that it was assumed by authorities that the old man had fallen from the top of the bluff bank and died. Within the next week, eight soldiers stationed at Dallas were fired upon by men hiding in the brush. Two soldiers and a freedman were killed. The soldiers had been acting on orders to arrest "some men for having beaten a freedwoman." The weekly added that comment on the incident was "unnecessary."36

There were two Klan-like episodes of lynching in August, 1869. On August 30, four men were found hanged in the woods on Hackberry Creek near the Elm Fork of the Trinity River, by "some unknown persons." The Herald later discovered that two more men were found hanged on the same day but three miles away from the first scene. The editor said that it was suspected that the men had been punished
for stealing horses and cattle, but deplored the acts of mob violence. John Wright, a freedman, was found dead in the Trinity River bottoms close to Coombes Creek near Lancaster in October, 1869. A Coroner's inquiry learned that he had died from a bullet to the left eye from an unknown person. While all of these events may well have been unrelated cases of violence, the methods chosen for the murders were very similar to those used by the Klan and its imitators to administer "justice" in other areas of the South during and after Reconstruction. There is, however, no hard evidence available to either confirm or deny that the Dallas area violence was committed by the Ku Klux Klan.\textsuperscript{37}

The Conservatives of Dallas County had been warned in June that 1868 would be a "tough" year politically, and the Herald's editor had been correct. They had seen that the black population and a small group of whites could mount a serious threat to Conservative control of the county. Some reacted with apathy. Others concentrated their efforts in unifying their constituents by organizing Democratic Clubs. A small element turned to intimidation and violence. They all turned their eyes northward and held to the hope of the Democratic Party's success in the Presidential election. But as Charles Ramsdell has written, they "seemed wholly unprepared for the avalanche" of the Radical victory in the November 3 presidential and congressional elections. A letter to the Herald signed by "H." strongly encouraged a continuation of the Conservative organizations in spite of
the Radical triumph and told his friends to adopt the motto "nil desperandum." The author drew ardently upon his neighbors' sense of duty, memories of the past, and their current "pain under the oppressions of the present hour" before blasting the Radical party as worse than any "Roman Caesar . . . bastard Norman tyrant . . . British Stuart . . . Prince of the House of Bourbon, . . . [or] despot of either Ancient or modern times."  

The "official" Conservative voice of the county spoke to the election in the next issue of the weekly. Virginius Hutchen replied that President-elect U. S. Grant was not disliked any more than any one else in his position would have been; but as President at this point in history, he would "assume the executive chair endowed with more power for good or evil than either of the long line of American Presidents." He continued by hoping that Grant would see the chaos in the South for himself and achieve greatness by reuniting the country. As for the present course in Dallas County, the editor suggested that just as parents tell children to "be quiet" when they've really been alarmed, so should they "be quiet" at Grant's election. And until the constitutional convention completed its work in February, 1869, that was the direction the county took.

2. *Dallas Herald*, December 1, 1866.


7. Ibid., October 12 (1st & 2nd quotations), 19 (subsequent quotations), 1867; January 11, 1868; Ramsdell, *Reconstruction in Texas*, 194; Moneyhon, *Republicanism in Reconstruction Texas*, 75-76.


11. Ibid., February 22, 1868.


14. Dallas County Commissioners Court Minutes, April 6, 1868.


16. Ibid., February 29, 1868.

17. Ibid., March 7, 1868.
18. Ibid., March 14, 1868.
19. Ibid., March 28, 1868.
20. Ibid., April 4, 1868.
21. Ibid.

22. Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, 233, 235; Campbell, A Southern Community in Crisis, 287, 288; Dallas Herald, April 18, May 16, 30, 1868.

23. Dallas Herald, June 6 (quotations), 28, 1868.
24. Ibid., July 18, 1868.


27. Ibid., August 1, 1868.


29. Dallas Herald, April 11, 1868.
30. Ibid., May 9, 1868.

31. Willie M. Floyd Papers, Dallas Historical Society, A4638. This account was written in a letter to Kenneth Foree on January 26, 1946. Miss Floyd's mother, who would become 100 years old in March, 1946, remembered being fourteen at the time of the incident which would have placed the year at 1860. Other details in the narrative fix the date much later in the decade.

32. Dallas Herald, May 23, 1868; William Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act iii, sc.I, l. 56.

33. Dallas Herald, May 23 (1st quotation), 30 (2nd, 3rd, 4th, & 5th quotations), 1868.

34. Ibid., November 7, 1868. For accounts of Smith's murder see Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, 230-231; and Richter, The Army in Texas During Reconstruction, 177-178.

35. William H. Horton to Lt. A. P. Richardson, AAAG, not dated, but stamped "Received" February 10, 1868, BRFAL. (Barkley, a successful merchant in Butler County, Missouri, before the war, arrived in Dallas County in 1867 after losing his Missouri property because of his Confederate Army service. He was
immediately associated with the county’s Conservatives and was elected Sheriff in December, 1873.) Cox, Sheriffs, 29-30.

36. Dallas County Commissioners Court Minutes, August 10, 1868; Dallas Herald, August 22, 29 (quotations), 1868.

37. Dallas Herald, September 4, (quotation), 18; October 16, 1869.

38. Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, 238 (2nd quotation); Dallas Herald, June 6 (1st quotation), November 14 (3rd, 4th, 5th quotations), 1868.

CHAPTER 5

DALLAS COUNTY APPROVES THE CONSTITUTION AND ELECTS CONSERVATIVES

Dallas County citizens were very interested in the Texas Constitutional Convention of 1868 and the Dallas Herald, as usual, kept them well informed. Convinced that no good could possibly come from a convention chosen in part by a black electorate which had been "thoroughly drilled and instructed" on how to vote against "the white man's party," Virginius Hutchins encouraged county Democrats to continue their efforts to organize to attain the strength needed to defeat the new constitution which surely would be "an instrument of debase insult and crying usurpation, framed by electoral helots."\(^1\)

The proceedings of the convention, which opened in Austin on June 1, 1868, were occasionally reported, sometimes anonymously, by Dallas County residents who attended the sessions and published in the Herald under various bylines. On June 13, "C" wrote that of the problems he saw with the "Black and Tan" convention, the worst was "the eternal whispering." He was concerned that all of the factions talked in "a subdued whisper, that savor [sic] of a dishonest purpose and dark and damning designs." In the same issue the Herald thanked Nat. C. Raymond for the "full proceedings of the 'Nigger Convention' up to June 3rd,
especially the last message by 'Early Marrowfat Pease,' meaning E. M. Pease, the military appointed Governor of Texas.  

To gain readmission to the Union for Texas, the convention delegates had to rewrite the state constitution to outlaw slavery, declare secession null and void, invalidate any laws that were repugnant to the U. S. Constitution, and repudiate all Confederate war debts. The job, at least at first glance, might have been short work, but for the factions involved. Of the ninety delegates elected, only twelve were Democrats. The others quickly split along moderate and radical Republican lines led respectively by former provisional Governor A. J. Hamilton and the Convention's president, E. J. Davis. In addition to the issues mandated by Congress, the delegates raised others which created much debate and dissension because of the strong personalities and interests involved.  

The convention reached an impasse first on the matter of invalidating laws enacted by the legislature during the late war. Hamilton and the Moderates wanted only slavery and secession to be rescinded, fearing immense legal repercussions if they tampered with too many of the other laws legislated during those years. The Davis faction wanted all laws passed by the de facto government of Confederate Texas to be nullified ab initio.  

Another issue that caused much debate and consternation was an initiative by the Radical, or ab initio faction as it
often was called, to divide Texas into two or three separate states. Encouraged by a bill already before Congress, their public reasoning was that expenditures for the northwestern portion of the state was placing too great a burden on the wealthier eastern portion and that the problems encountered in transportation and communication with the frontier sections made state administration difficult. Perhaps more to the point of Radical interests was the elimination of A. J. Hamilton, who resided in a central Texas county, from political activity in East Texas. 

While at first resigned to the division of the state by Congress as "an au fait accompli," the Dallas Herald later came out bitterly against it. Believing that division meant weakness while union brought strength, Hutchins did not think that "so wild a scheme" would be accomplished by "even" the Radical Republicans for the "aggrandizement and emolument of a set of brokendown, wind-galled, splintered spavined, sweeneyed, ringboned, glandered, poll-eviled, greasy healed, stifled old party hacks." He added with confidence that President U. S. Grant would veto such a ridiculous idea and that the people of Dallas County were not afraid. 

An incident involving Dallas County Judge A. Bledsoe who had been nicknamed "Iron-Clad Bledsoe" for having taken that oath at the opening of the proceedings was indicative of the tension and animosity flourishing at the convention. Accused of having a personal interest in a railroad he
wanted chartered, Bledsoe struck delegate Arvin Wright of Ellis County with, depending on the version related, either his fist or his cane. Wright, the oldest member of the assembly at sixty-nine, suffered a lump on his head. Austin correspondent "Caucasian" reported to Dallas County that Bledsoe's "little finger was somewhat hurt by the teeth of his antagonist." In response to the altercation, the newspaper commended Bledsoe, ironically a member of the convention's Committee on Lawlessness and Violence, by saying, "Brave Bledsoe! Bully Bledsoe!"

To emphasize the contention found in Austin, the Herald reported that a letter denouncing the proceedings had been placed on the desk of each member of the convention by the "Reverend Mr. McRea, private secretary to Governor Pease," alleged to be "one of the meanest, dirtiest and most extreme Rads [sic] in the land." According to the weekly's interpretation of the note, if the secretary had grown disgusted with the convention's work, then "that body must indeed be a scurvy affair." Hutchins encouraged his neighbors to read the article which he deemed "sensible" even if it had come from a Radical source. By the end of August, 1868, with very little of the new constitution written, the convention had depleted its funding. It adjourned to await the collection of a new tax ordered by General J. J. Reynolds to fund the completion of its task, to anticipate the outcome of the November Presidential election, and to let tempers cool.
During the autumn of 1868, the Herald turned its attention to matters of more direct concern to the county including the successful County Fair held in October by the Dallas County Agricultural and Mechanical Association, news of the Freedman's Bureau and the Dallas County residents' efforts to achieve redress for Captain William H. Horton's misdeeds, various military appointments including President Johnson's transfer of General Reynolds out of the 5th District and appointment of Brevet Major General Edward R. S. Canby to that post, and the 1868 Presidential election.

When the convention reconvened on December 7, 1868, the delegates resumed their battles over not only the important issues at hand, but also over other seemingly mundane problems such as which newspapers to renew, where to print the finalized document, and who would present the new constitution to Congress. Although most of the major decisions were finalized in this session, no attention was given to it in the Dallas newspaper. In summarizing County Tax Assessor/Collector J. C. Seydell's annual report of property assessed for ad valorem tax purposes, the Herald noted that the total county assessment of $11,989.13 was exclusive of the Convention Tax, which was estimated at "somewhere in the neighborhood of $5,000," but did not make any remark on the tax itself or the need for it. In late December Austin correspondent "William" sent a routine report which the Herald carried, again with no comment. The February 6, 1869 edition of the weekly reported A. Bledsoe's
return from his duties as delegate for the Dallas area, but mistakenly gave the convention's closing date as January 30 rather than February 6. Hutchins speculated that the voters of Texas would approve the new constitution even though it called for black suffrage which he advised his community to regard as "a fixed fact." He stressed that there was some good in the document and that it could have included much more harm for the state, for which he uncharacteristically thanked the "moderate men in the Republican party." Hutchins was probably referring to the fact that while an attempt had been by the Radicals to disfranchise all former rebels, the Moderates held out until universal male suffrage was permitted. The right to hold office was not denied except by the guidelines of the Fourteenth Amendment. Ratified in 1868, the amendment eliminated only those who had previously taken an oath of office to uphold the U.S. Constitution and then, voluntarily engaged in rebellion. Even these disabilities could be removed by a two-thirds majority of Congress, and many individuals had been or were soon to be restored to full political rights.

A few weeks later, Hutchins reported that some editors of Texas newspapers were advising rejection of the constitution. However, he refused to support that movement, seeing no "profit in vain and impalpable abstractions." Saying that although he still ardently believed in "the right of secession and slavery as the best condition of the
Americo-African race," he had to admit that those tenets had become "shadows." He advised citizens of Texas to concern themselves with matters as they really were and to "deal with tangibles." Rejection of the Constitution of 1869 would lengthen the time they would have to suffer from "standing armies and all the concomitant horrors of military occupation, and perjured and partial civil rule." The sooner they accepted the "present offer the sooner we will be able to get out of the wilderness!"¹²

Not all of Dallas County, however, was ready to acquiesce in the Republican constitution. William C. Wolff, treasurer of the Dallas Democratic Association, delivered an opposition speech at the County Court House on May 13 to a small but "quite respectable" audience. The Herald reported that Wolff’s arguments were strongly in favor of "principle against policy, and against dirt-eating by the politicians generally."¹³ A letter to the editor from the Breckenridge community signed "JUSTE MILIEU" was especially concerned with Article 9 of the constitution which dealt with public schools. While professing to favor public schools in general, the county resident was afraid that the possibility of mandatory attendance was dictatorial over a free people. He did not want children to be compelled to attend "these public, mixed, mongrel schools," while their parents would "receive no benefit from the heavy taxes levied upon us for Public School purposes," because private schools would receive none of the public money. Hutchins responded with
sympathy to such reasoning and agreed that there were, indeed, many problems with the document. Saying that "greater evils were iminent [sic] while the dreaded amalgamation is remote," he advocated taking care of the immediate problem of restoring Texas to the Union and hoping that the future would be better. He also encouraged people to "take it as a whole rather than risk a worse affair by rejecting it." Correspondence from El Paso, on the subject of putting the constitution to a vote by sections, elicited agreement from the Dallas editor. ¹⁴

The most important consideration to Hutchins was to end "the cursed anomaly" of military rule. Because Democrats could not be assured of victory at the state level, they would have to fuse with Moderate Republicans to "defeat the Ab Initios and fix the paternity of the obnoxious features of the Constitution upon the Republican party of the State."¹⁵ As early as March, 1869, the Dallas Herald indirectly supported A. J. Hamilton for Governor. In answer to an article in the Galveston Dispatch suggesting that the Herald would back Hamilton, Hutchins replied that he was not "in a hurry to support anyone," but that "Mr. Hamilton stands far ahead of his party, and has done some things deserving the praise of all parties in the State." While he would rather the Democratic press support members of its own party, to do so would be not only "'love's labor lost,' but would tend to rouse the malignant genius of mischief in the State."¹⁶ Hutchins was, however, quick to go on the
offensive against E. J. Davis, President of the recent "destructive Texas Convention," and likely ab initio candidate, by saying that he was a "man of great pretensions and contemptible merit -- that if all the wind were pumped out of him, he would not be larger than a young hummingbird." By the end of the month the Herald was firmly and openly behind Hamilton, believing that, "everything considered," he was the best man for the governor's seat and recommended Dr. Boulds Baker for Lieutenant Governor."

To represent the North Texas area in Congress, Hutchins threw his support behind a "carpetbagger." This seemingly uncharacteristic endorsement is explained by the fact that this particular carpetbagger, John Cogswell Conner, was a Democrat. A native of Indiana, Conner had attended the U.S. Naval Academy, but when the war broke out he joined the Indiana Volunteer Infantry and was commissioned Second Lieutenant of the 63rd Regiment. Discharged after the war, he tried his hand in politics. After an unsuccessful run for the Indiana House of Representatives, Conner returned to the Army which sent him to Texas in 1866 as a Captain in the 41st Regiment of the U.S. Infantry. Amid rumors of mistreatment of the black troops under his command in South Texas, he decided to make a run for the seat in Congress from the 2nd District."

Hutchins enthusiastically endorsed Conner after hearing him speak to a gathering of Dallas County residents in late September, 1869. In a review of the evening, the Herald
said that Conner was a "gentleman and orator and straight-out Democrat," and told Conservatives not to fail to vote for him in November. When the Bonham News charged that Conner had bribed forty witnesses to clear himself of charges of misconduct, the Herald indignantly answered that no man of "good sense" could blame someone for trying to bribe the vary black witnesses who were his accusers rather than be dismissed from the service in disgrace for "cowhiding" black soldiers.¹³

By the end of October, Hutchins was confident that Conner would win the election, but not without "earnest, zealous work on the part of his friends." Trying to squelch apprehension about Conner's nativity, the editor assured his readers that the future representative would remain in the state and become a "thorough Texas by adoption." He again emphasized Conner's oratorical abilities as well as his talents for disarming his opposition and making friends wherever he travelled. Two weeks later Hutchins defended Conner as a Union man who fought for what he believed in, and added that one should not refuse friendship simply because individuals came from different parts of the country. To do so would be "unmanly and in direct antagonism to the spirit of forgiveness which will, if anything can, conceal the ghastly scars of civil war." It is obvious that Hutchins had been convinced of Conner's abilities and Conservative Democratic stance and wanted his
neighbors to follow his lead rather than elect the Republican candidate, B. F. Grafton.²⁰

As the gubernatorial and congressional races took shape, Dallas County residents began to look forward to the local political scene. While Republicans controlled the contests for state-wide offices, Conservatives outnumbered them in the county arena. This was their chance at victory and home-rule. The Constitution of 1869 changed the composition of county government by eliminating the police court consisting of commissioners elected at large and headed by a county judge. Reminiscent of the county court system employed during the Republic of Texas the constitution created a court of three to five justices of the peace elected for four year terms from single member precincts. The presiding justice was elected from the precinct containing the county seat. Having both civil and criminal jurisdiction, each justice also assessed the taxes from his own precinct (which were then collected by the sheriff), supervised and levied taxes for the roads in his area, and assumed the duties of coroner and notary public.²¹

By the end of May, 1869, candidates for the various state and local offices began to announce in earnest. The Herald initiated a new feature called the "Candidate Department" which listed the election slate, but gave little in the way of commentary on the county races on a regular basis after that. In June Hutchins began to wonder about the probability that the election would be postponed until
November, but he offered no explanation. Finally, President Grant set the election day for November 30 in a proclamation issued on July 15. When the Herald printed the proclamation on August 7, Hutchins wondered if state and county elections would be held on the same day because only a vote on the constitution was specifically mentioned.  

Hutchins did not receive a definitive answer until October 1, 1869, when General J. J. Reynolds, who had been sent back to Texas to command the 5th Military District, issued General Order, No. 174. Elections were to be held from November 30 through December 3, 1869, for the constitution, four members of Congress, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Comptroller, Treasurer, Commissioner of the General Land Office, thirty state senators, and ninety state representatives. Each county would elect one district county clerk, one sheriff, and five justices of the peace. The order added that counties not already divided into justice of the peace precincts should do so immediately and that the election for district attorneys would be postponed until the legislature met. Fourteen days before the election, registration would commence for ten days (excluding Sundays). The Boards of Registrars were to begin to revise their lists and to appoint two white and two black men to challenge electors’ rights to register. Challenged voters were given the right to call witnesses and to appeal to the District Commander if rejected. To prevent any disturbances, the sheriff and two deputies were to be
present when the registration lists were revised and during the election. If any problems did arise at the polls, they would be closed and not reopened until so directed by District Headquarters. To help prevent complications, no alcoholic beverages would be sold in county seats from November 29 until December 4.23

The Herald reprinted an article from the Galveston News that explained the voter make-up of the 21st Legislative District of Texas which included Dallas, Collin, and Tarrant Counties. According to the paper there were at that time 2,777 white and 824 black registered voters entitled to elect one state senator and 3 representatives. The article went on to say that the new legislature would consist of 30 senators and 90 representatives responsible to the 59,161 white and 48,919 black registered voters in the state.

Competition for state representative from the 21st district was not very rigorous. A. M. Cochran, a long time Dallas County physician and part owner of a Dallas drugstore, announced his candidacy in April. Cochran, a Moderate Republican, had served as representative from Dallas County to the Eleventh Legislature, and was said to have been "well and favorably known to the people."24

Other aspirants for representative were A. F. Leonard, B. S. Shelburne, H. S. Johnson, and Captain John W. Lane, a former mayor of Dallas. A partner with John W. Swindells in the Dallas Herald from 1859 until 1866, Lane resigned to become private secretary to Governor J. W. Throckmorton. He
later entered into a partnership in the *Austin Gazette* and served in the 1868 Conservative Convention as a delegate from Travis County. The *Herald’s* November announcement of Lane’s candidacy contained accolades about his integrity, genial manners, his host of friends, and his career during the war in Colonel Darnell’s regiment. Saying that not only the *Austin Gazette* but also the *Austin Statesman* commended Lane, the *Herald* added its support.23

For people in Dallas County, the race for the state senate appeared to be no contest although attorney James K. Polk Record was in a three-way contest with B. F. Barkley (who had first announced for representative) and Samuel Evans, both of Tarrant County. Record, one of the county’s leading citizens, had served as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1866 and as senator from Dallas County under that constitution. The fact that he was a Moderate Republican and his support of Captain William Horton of the Freedmen’s Bureau two years earlier must have been put aside by many in the community because the *Herald* extended more coverage and compliments to Record than to any of the candidates in the other races. Record, however, voiced opinions that many in the county wanted to hear. He favored adoption of the constitution, "although objectionable in many respects," and of the Fifteenth Amendment in an effort to end Reconstruction. He wanted to restore suffrage to those disfranchised, and he supported Hamilton. He pledged, if elected, to work to increase the
number of district judges and to enlarge the jurisdiction of the justices of the peace to ease judicial difficulties. On the issue of public schools, Record proposed that counties comprise school districts and opposed any legislation making public school attendance mandatory or that would insist that black and white children attended the same schools. The Herald commented that because of Record's "acknowledged ability" and "political status," he would be of "incalculable service in the Legislature to the interests of this section" and would be "acceptable" to a majority of the North Texas voters.

At various times during the long election season, Hutchins published articles to encourage the county residents to maintain their interest in the campaigns. He first tried humor to sympathize with the apathy he detected among his neighbors. In an editorial entitled "Look Sharp," Texas politics was, he said

a bare bone, and all the dogs of all the parties and parts of parties have been licking it until it is as slick as a mouthful of okra and as slippery as an eel. Talking Texas politics in Texas, just now, is about as unsatisfactory as attempting to eat boarding house soup with a fork -- you get nothing but mad. . . ."

By September, however, Hutchins began to emphasize how important the Legislative races were to the future of the state. Voters should choose only "honest, true-hearted men" who were devoted to the best interests of the state. He encouraged the candidates to make public speeches "ventilating their views and giving the sneaking, negro-
hugging, oath-bound, midnight-prowling, war-of races breeding, loyal league, radical revolutionary republicans a little oratorical, rhetorical, metaphorical, linguistical hell."27

The Dallas Herald continued to avow that to vote for Democrats would amount to political suicide for the state and to advise against a Democratic convention proposed by some conservative leaders and newspapers in the state. Hutchins agreed that a Democratic slate would be best, but it was not now possible. Asserting that the offices were "not so honorable and certainly not so lucrative that there should be a scramble for them," the outspoken editor encouraged his neighbors to select the most capable "material" available for each position, men who were "prudent, able, and discrete." He did, however, give notice of a Conservative mass meeting to be held to suggest "suitable" persons for the county and legislative offices.28

The Conservative Party of Dallas County met on October 30, 1869, chaired by Judge William H. Hord. A committee produced a number of resolutions, among which was one that assured the public that the meeting was not "assembled in a spirit of opposition to the plan of reconstruction devised by the Congress of the United States, but bowing to the will of the majority," which they "cheerfully and peaceably" accepted. They proposed the following slate of candidates:
State Senate  
Captain Sam Evans  
(Tarrant County)  
State House  
L. Huffman  
(Tarrant County)  
Dr. B. F. Shelburne  
(Collin County)  
James Stratton  
(Dallas County)

Dallas County Offices  
Sheriff  
Jeremiah Brown  
J. P. Prct. 1  
J. D. Kerfoot  
Treasurer  
Joseph Fisher  
District Clerk  
John J. Eakins

Three of the nominees, Eakins, Kerfoot, and Brown had not announced their candidacies before their draft by the Conservatives. The gathering expressed a preference for only one of the places for justice of the peace and none for any of the men running for either Governor or for Congress. As conservative as the the Dallas Herald had been, it was willing to send Republicans to Austin in an effort to compromise. The group of men who made up the Conservative Party of Dallas County were not as willing to be understanding and selected a straight Democratic slate. 29

Very little is known about Republican activities in Dallas County during these months. While the freedmen were courted by the Radicals in other areas of the state, Hutchins did not witness the same efforts in his county. He viewed the black role in the campaign a "small part" in that area. Assuming apathy, he attested that the "machinery to engineer this is out of repair, no loyal leagues, no obi and
fetish, not even a camp meeting nor midnight horror of Ku Klux, have yet invoked to swindle Sambo out of his vote."

Three military appointees ran for county offices. It must be assumed that as these men had been acceptable to the military regime, that they were also acceptable to the Union men and Republicans of the county. Ben Long, who had held appointments as clerk of the Registration Board, as district court clerk, and most recently as mayor of Dallas, placed his name in nomination for county sheriff. Two of the candidates for justice of the peace had been among Reynolds’s first appointments to Dallas County. J.C. Seydel, tax assessor/collector, now had his eye on justice precinct No. 1 which would make him the presiding justice on the court; and Sheriff N. R. Winniford sought to trade his badge for a seat as justice of the peace in Precinct No. 2.

Several of the Radical candidates for state offices visited Dallas to campaign, but little attention was paid to them in the Herald. The most cordial criticism received by a Radical from the weekly was that the individual was a "good fellow, but politically all wrong." But when E. J. Davis, Radical candidate for Governor stopped in Dallas on November 17, 1869, Hutchins took off his gloves. According to the newspaper, Davis delivered not a discourse of issues but a three-hour "tirade" against Hamilton. Although the audience remained attentive, there was "not a smile or any demonstration of approval" except perhaps from "a few of the ab initio." The editor mused that most likely result of
Davis’s oration was inadvertently to help Hamilton’s campaign. Even an appeal to the freedmen was “weak . . . filled with clap-trap and hypocritical professions of personal friendship . . . disgusting to all who know the truth.”

Reynolds issued General Order No. 179 on October 8, naming three-member registration boards in 125 counties, and in just over half of the counties, he appointed military officers to the boards. Forces of the U.S. Army were directed to those county seats by General Order No. 185 on October 18. Dallas County received ten men under the command of Captain Daniel Madden from the 6th Cavalry at Fort Richardson. Appointed to the Board of Registrars along with Captain Madden were William Fleming and Melvin Wade.

The Herald’s only comment about the board was a scornful remark Hutchins’ made about Wade, who some "fools" in Dallas were saying was "a white man with a black skin."

Registration opened on November 16 for ten days. The Herald recounted that although there were "quite a number of rejections," no complaints had reached Hutchins’ office. He complimented Madden for being "guided alone by the law and his instructions" and by the courteous manner in which the registrants were treated. The old voter lists were still in effect, only those who had not registered before or who were re-registering due to previous rejection appeared before the board. Of the 429 registered at this session, 53 were
rejected, placing the total registration for Dallas County at 1736.33

Among the Dallas County men disqualified were two of the candidates for county offices. John J. Eakins, conservative choice for district clerk, had once served four days as deputy county clerk. At Captain Madden's insistence, N. O. McAdams withdrew from the race for sheriff because he had filled that post during the war. Two weeks before the election others chose not to compete. J. D. Stratton, a Dallas resident, resigned in deference to John W. Lane for state representative. J. P. McKnight left the same contest, due to "circumstances beyond [his] control." Junius Peak, candidate for sheriff, withdrew because he was living in Missouri."34

Hutchins sustained his insistence that the people of the county vote, calling this election "the most important ever held in the State." Each voter needed to accept the task as his "solemn duty to the Country, the State and himself to deposit his ballot in favor of good and true men" and not to succumb to feelings that his one voice would not be heard. Hutchins devoted nearly the entire November 27 issue of the Herald to campaign news. In a final attempt to stress the significance of the election, he cautioned his readers that a vote for the Davis-Flanagan ticket was one cast for a continuation of "the rule of the bayonet in the State of Texas." For the community's convenience, he printed the conservative ballot.35
The day after the election, Hutchins related the requests he had received from "many citizens" to compliment Captain Madden for the way he conducted the procedure with "uniform courtesy and correctness," and added "praise and good-will on the behalf of the people." However well the citizens thought Madden had performed his duties, they were not without criticism of the local Radicals' behavior on Election Day. The editor related stories of freedmen who had sought the assistance of Conservative men to mark their ballots only to have them exchanged for Radical ones by the opposition stationed at the polls. Exclaiming that the acts were "small business, engaged in by very little men," Hutchins emphatically denied having printed the Radical tickets, and advised that any doubts were to be directed to the "great Loyal League Mongul [sic], Ben Long." 36

Sensing that Conservatives might have suffered in the election, Hutchins called the registration process "a swindle designed to secure Radicalism in its abuse of power." He alleged that blacks were registered whether or not they met the age or residence requirements, a "fraud" he blamed on the law and not the registrars. He ended his editorial with the supplication, "When will the Radical buzzard take its beak from the bleeding heart of prostrate and mangled Liberty?" Hutchins departed from his exasperation temporarily when he paid a tribute to departing county clerk Samuel S. Jones. Although "diametrically and earnestly opposed" politically from
Jones, Hutchins praised him for never showing "inefficiency or incapacity or partiality in the duties of his office."

The editor also acknowledged that he had never heard of one incident in which Jones had abused the office for Republican party ends, and assured the retiring county official that he had "won golden opinions from all sorts of people."

A week later the Dallas County returns were in, but not those from around the state. The Constitution received overwhelming approval by a vote of 826 to 47. In every state-wide race the Conservative/Democratic choice prevailed. Hamilton had twice the votes of Davis for Governor, as did Baker over Flanagan for Lieutenant Governor. Connor continued the trend by prevailing over Republican B. F. Grafton for the congressional seat. Although Radical A. Bledsoe eventually won the state vote for Comptroller, he lost in Dallas County 250 to A. T. Monroe's 591. Democrats Lane and Shelburne took the first and second seats from the 21st District in the Legislature and A. F. Leonard won the third over Dallas's own Moderate A. M. Cochran by only four votes.

In the county races the story was the same but carried a much stronger meaning. Not a single contest produced a Republican victory, and this meant "redemption" for Dallas County. Most of the men selected to those positions were very familiar faces to the electorate. The race for district clerk was closely contested between two long-time county Conservatives. John. M. Laws defeated Z. E. Coombes,
the former county judge, by only fourteen votes. J. M. Brown, elected sheriff in 1866 and removed in 1867 by Reynolds, defeated a field of three other opponents, including doubling the canvass of Radical Ben Long, to reclaim the keys to the county jail. He had become a photographer in his years away from public service, the Herald periodically advertising the "beautiful, life-like" Sun pictures that Brown made in his Sky Light Gallery.\(^3\)

**County Elections**

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<tr>
<th>District Clerk</th>
<th>Sheriff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. M. Laws 448</td>
<td>J. M. Brown 592</td>
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<tr>
<td>Z. E. Coombs 434</td>
<td>Ben Long 291</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. M. Dean 11</td>
<td>Red Robberson 30</td>
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<tr>
<th>JP Precinct No. 1</th>
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<tr>
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<td>B. F. Ricketts 69</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. C. Seydel 125</td>
<td>W. R. Winniford 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. P. McKnight 6</td>
<td>G. W. Darret 24</td>
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<tr>
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<td>W. J. Halsell 151</td>
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<td>Wm. Haley 31</td>
<td>John Jackson 34</td>
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<tr>
<td>G. H. Foree 53</td>
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<td>J. P Potter 31</td>
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<td>W. B. Cole 1</td>
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Elected justice of Precinct No. 1, John D. Kerfoot, was educated at the University of Virginia, and came to Dallas County in 1855 to practice law. When the Civil War began, he went back to Virginia to volunteer in the Army of Northern Virginia for the Confederacy. Returning to Dallas
in 1867, he resumed his law practice in partnership with John M. Crockett.°

Forty-year-old Meredith Myers, JP Precinct No. 3, had been among the county's earliest residents, settling on the land in the southwestern portion of the county. He enlisted in Dallas on May 14, 1862, in Company G, 31 Texas Cavalry (Hawpe's Regiment), but returned home ill in August 1863. His only public service was as local magistrate until the removals in 1867. The Herald had been quick to endorse his candidacy, saying that Myers "would bring to the discharge of the duties of his office, competency, and integrity. The voters in his precinct cannot do better than to elect him."

Taking on the responsibilities of Precinct No. 4 was W. J. Halsell, born in Bowling Green, Kentucky, in 1830. He was one of the first aldermen in the town of Dallas, having arrived in the county in 1852, but he settled in the Breckinridge community in 1859 where he was a blacksmith. In 1862 he enlisted in Colonel R. M. Gano's squadron of the Texas Cavalry which was said to be composed of well armed, expert horsemen. By 1868 Halsell was behind the counter of a new store which sold "family and fancy groceries."

Although both Benjamin F. Ricketts and Thomas L. Franks, victorious in Precincts Nos. 2 and 5 respectively, were in Dallas County before 1860, there is little information about them available today. Both young farmers, they served the Confederacy and returned home after the war
to their families. Franks had been a local magistrate the year before his election to the county post."

Seeing the results from Dallas County gave Hutchins a renewed sense of hope, not only for Dallas County but for the state as well. In a series of editorials, he predicted that the "foul atmosphere of political strife" was past and urged everyone to turn their attentions to public and private enterprise because the "South is once more on the road to prosperity." He predicted Hamilton’s election in spite of the Radical’s manipulation of the freedmen, maintaining that more than half of the black vote would have been Conservative had they been left to their own decisions. If Radicals thought blacks were competent to vote, he suggested that they be allowed to do so as they pleased. In turning his attention to the defeated candidates, Hutchins complimented the "many well-meaning men" among them and encouraged them to "bear their present defeat with calm dignity and manly fortitude," from which they would benefit next time. He also promised not to "crow" over any of the defeated except the "ultra, Loyal League Radicals, whose politics it is the duty of every honest man to despise."4

Although obviously pleased with the county elections, the Herald’s editor was disappointed in the state returns. E. J. Davis was elected Governor of Texas by a vote of 39,901 to A. J. Hamilton’s 39,092. Hutchins reported a number of incidents of election fraud from all over the state, most of which involved the freedmen. There were also
stories of Conservatives who induced the freedmen to smuggle in their tickets."

As the state had been without a government since Pease resigned in late September, General Reynolds issued Special Order No. 6 on January 8, 1870, which appointed the newly elected state officials to their positions. The Herald carried the order without remark and in the same issue recommended that editors of Texas newspapers back away from the political essays and turn their attentions to the state's economy. From that point forward throughout the spring of 1870, the editor closely followed his advice. He occasionally lapsed into waxing eloquently about Reconstruction in general and he carried news of the Legislature or Congress, but there were no lengthy dissertations as there had been before the election."

On March 26, 1870, the Herald reported hearing of a bill before Congress to readmit Texas to the Union. Introduced by Benjamin F. Butler on February 24, the bill included the conditions that the members of the state legislature take the oath from the Fourteenth Amendment within thirty days and that the state constitution could not be amended nor any state law be passed to deprive any citizen of his rights under the U.S. Constitution. Meeting with no opposition in Congress, the act was signed by President Grant on March 30, 1870. Hutchins expressed hope that Texas would do nothing to upset Congress while it was
controlled by the Radicals that would induce them to return her to the former military status."

With General Order No. 74 issued in Austin on April 27, 1870, Reynolds turned over the government of Texas to civil authorities. Presenting their bonds and securities before the Dallas County Police Court on May 2, the duly elected justices of the peace began their proscribed duties at the following May 9 meeting, Chief Justice J. D. Kerfoot presiding. Hutchins printed, in full and on the front page, Governor Davis' message to the state, adding that it was "well-written" and contained nothing that he was ready to "combat" at that time. While Texas would be under Radical rule for another three and one-half years, military rule had ended. For Dallas County, however, the assumption to power of Conservative officeholders meant "redemption" in May 1870. The Herald proudly proclaimed, "Radical party is dead in this county."
END NOTES

1. **Dallas Herald**, February 22 (1st and 2nd quotations), March 7, 1868 (3rd quotation).

2. Ibid., June 13, 1868.


6. **Dallas Herald**, March 14, 1868 (1st quotation); February 13, 1869.


15. Ramsdell, *Reconstruction in Texas*, 268; *Dallas Herald*, March 27, April 17, 1869 (quotations).


17. Ibid., March 13 (1st and 2nd quotations), March 27, 1869.


20. Ibid., October 30 (1st & 2nd quotations), November 13, 1869 (3rd quotation).


25. *Dallas Herald*, December 29, 1866; January 12, 1867; July 18, 1868; September 12, 1868; November 13, 27, 1869; Cochran, *Dallas County: A Record of its Pioneers and Progress*, 219, 220.

26. Record was one six Dallas men who signed a petition to Gen. Reynolds which complimented Horton's administration and approved of the "Hog Order." Freedmen's Bureau, Reports of the Assistant Commissioner, Samuel S. Jones to Horton, April 23, 1868; Cochran, *Dallas County: A Record of its Pioneers and Progress*, 203, 204; *Dallas Herald*, August 3, 1867, July 31, October 2, 9, 23 (1st quotation), 30 (other quotations), November 20, 1869.

27. *Dallas Herald*, July 10 (1st quotation), September 25 (2nd quotation), October 2, 1869 (3rd quotation).
28. Ibid., October 23, 1869.
29. Ibid., November 3, 1869.
30. Ibid., June 19, 1869.
31. Ibid., November 20, 1869.


34. *Dallas Herald*, November 20, 1869.
35. Ibid., November 27, 1869.
36. Ibid., December 4, 1869.
37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., April 4 (quotation), October 3, 1868, February 13, December 11, 1869; Cox, *Sheriffs*, 22, 27; Election Registers, 1865-1870.


41. Proud Heritage: Pioneer Families of Dallas County, 114, 176, 177; Cochran, *Dallas County*, 28, 113; Election Registers, 1865-1870; CSA, Texas Records; *Dallas Herald*, November 13, 1869.

42. CSA, Texas Records; Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas County, 467; Cochran, *Dallas County: A Record of its Pioneers and Progress*, 111, 217; *Dallas Herald*, July 11, 1868.

43. Eighth Census, (1860); Cochran, *Dallas County: A Record of its Pioneers and Progress*, 106; CSA, Texas Records: Election Records, 1865-1870.

44. *Dallas Herald*, December 11, 1869.
45. Ibid., December 18-25, 1869.

47. Dallas Herald, March 26, April 9, 1870; Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, 291.

48. Dallas County Commissioners Court Minutes, May 2, 9, 1870; Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, 291; Dallas Herald, December 18, 1869 (quotation), March 26, April 9, 1870.
CHAPTER 6

HOW RADICAL WAS MILITARY RECONSTRUCTION
IN DALLAS COUNTY?

Dallas County passed the years of Congressional Reconstruction with little radical or lasting change. When the war was over, the men came home to a community much like the one they had left. Although General Gordon Granger’s order meant giving up their slaves, people in the county treated the freedmen as second-class citizens at best. There was congenial support for President Andrew Johnson and his Reconstruction policies, and the first elections in the county after the war reflected little or no change in the political makeup of local government. However, with the arrival of the Freedmen’s Bureau agents and the passage of the Reconstruction Acts in 1867, the military entered the lives of ordinary citizens as it had never done. Dallas County, however, did not experience the "radical" treatment that took place in other parts of the South, for better or for worse. A number of conditions that existed in the county prevented alterations in the lives of the white population more than to give up slavery and to accept black suffrage, and the black population welcomed their freedom and suffrage but made little further progress.
The county was removed from the areas that experienced significant change during Radical Reconstruction. The community’s lack of adequate roads and bridges were often the subject of the Herald’s editorials. Travel between Dallas and the counties in East Texas was difficult (two days by stage to Marshall) and almost impossible in rainy seasons. Attempts made to navigate the Trinity were met with failure time and time again. Only in May, 1868, were subscriptions solicited to build a telegraph line between Dallas and Tyler, and the first railroad line, the Houston and Texas Central, did not arrive in Dallas until July, 1872.

Comparatively few people in the county owned slaves in 1861, as there was virtually no plantation system in the area. Although the black population grew the following years, it remained relatively small. Heavy immigration of whites into the county began shortly after the war ended and continued throughout the entire period. The majority of these new residents were farmers from Missouri, Tennessee, and Illinois who were taking advantage of the fertile soil found in North Texas and brought with them only the desire to work hard to improve their lives and communities and were welcomed additions. Dallas County did not experience an influx of "carpetbaggers" looking to take advantage of the people or take over the government.
The *Dallas Herald* served the white Conservative majority of the county well as a calming voice. Owner John W. Swindells and his series of editor-partners kept their readers abreast of the events in the community, state, and nation and endeavored to interpret the proclamations, orders, and laws that rapidly circulated. However outraged the newspapermen might have been at particular circumstances, they composed their stories with care not to incite any action that would bring shame to the citizenry. Even in what they considered to be among the darkest days of Reconstruction, the *Herald* cautioned its readers to remain calm so that a "worse" fate would not befall them. They flavored their articles with humor and anecdote. When they found fault with a particular concept or policy, their criticism went straight for the jugular but never lashed out at the citizens themselves, whether Conservative or Unionist. Occasionally, if nothing constructive could be said, the weekly remained quiet, as was the case with Captain William Horton of the Freedmen’s Bureau.

There were Union men in the county who were available, though in many cases not enthusiastically, to fill the county offices during the Radical period when many of the Conservatives had been disqualified. Although they identified with the Republican party, they were moderate rather than Radical. James K. Polk Record, for instance, used his influence to support the efforts of the Freedmen’s
Bureau, but was endorsed in 1869 by the *Herald* for election to Congress from the 21st District because he held generally the same opinions on the issues as the Conservatives in that area. Yet, he could not poll a majority of voters against a Democratic challenger. The numbers of the Unionists were never significant enough to affect any change. Even when they held the majority of the public offices, had an agent of the Freedmen's Bureau in Dallas, and military support for a brief period of time, they made no meaningful improvements, but simply cared for the day-to-day needs of the county.

Dallas County was in physical contact with the U.S. Army and the Freedmen's Bureau for only a few months, and to white Conservatives, the only regrettable consequences, occurred during Captain Horton's tenure. Most of the time Horton was in charge, he remained in the town of Dallas encountering only a small circle of residents. The companies of soldiers who came to Dallas camped only a short while, caused no problems, and received compliments and congratulations from the *Herald* when they left. Several people in the county made friends with and remained in contact with some of the men in Company G of the 17th Infantry which stayed the longest.

Another element that contributed to the ease with which Dallas County escaped "radical" treatment from Military Reconstruction was the foundation upon which the county was
organized. John Neely Bryan came to the land beside the Trinity River with the idea to build a community. The families soon who followed him came for the same reasons. These people wanted to see their county grow and prosper, and they worked hard to that end. They were neighbors and, because a large number of them intermarried, families who had the best interests of the whole community in mind when they made decisions. They took immense pride in working together to improve their lives whether it was building bridges or trying to make the Trinity navigable. When people are working together for a unified purpose, very little can stand between them for long, and when something does temporarily interfere, the effort is rejoined as soon as possible. While any community in Texas, the South, or the country might have displayed these same characteristics, what made "boosterism" significant in Dallas County was the fact that it was working. The county's population increased, erected new buildings, and made civic improvements during a time when many other communities were experiencing a much different Reconstruction. Dallas County whites understood that political differences existed, but they were more concerned that their community prosper, and with prosperity and growth came less worry about the effects of Reconstruction.

Radical Reconstruction may have seemed harsh and unyielding at the time and for years later to the white
Conservative community, and not nearly as dynamic as it should have been to the Unionist and black communities. The white Conservatives, however, made up the majority of population. In 1868 Conservatives saw how easily apathy could turn the tide in an election, determined not to let that happen again, and were rewarded in 1869 with "redemption" of their county. There were no lasting effects from Radical Reconstruction for this group. Once back in political power, they quickly and enthusiastically put Reconstruction aside and focused on the continuation of creating an environment of progress and community. The black population would have to endure another ninety years and the Republicans even longer, before seeing any real change in their favor in Dallas County.
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