

RECONSTRUCTION IN COLLIN COUNTY, TEXAS, 1865-1876

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This is a work of local history examining the course of Reconstruction in Collin County, Texas. National and state level surveys of Reconstruction often overlook the experiences of communities in favor of simpler, broader narratives. The work proceeds chronologically, beginning with the close of the Civil War, and tells the story of Collin County as national Reconstruction progressed and relies on works of professional and non-academic historians, oral histories, census data, and newspapers to present a coherent picture of local life, work, and politics. The results exemplify the value of local history, as local conditions influenced the course of events in Collin County as much as those in Austin and Washington D.C. The story of Reconstruction in Collin County is one of anomalous political views resulting from geographical exclusion from the cotton culture of Texas followed by a steady convergence. As Reconstruction progressed, Collin County began to show solidarity with more solidly conservative Texas Counties. The arrival of railroads allowed farmers to move from subsistence agriculture to cash crop production. This further altered local attitudes toward government, labor, voting rights, and education for Freedmen. By the end of Reconstruction, Collin County had all but abandoned their contrarian social and political views of the 1850s and 1860s in favor of limited rights for blacks and Redemption. The results show the importance of local history and how Collin County's Reconstruction experience enriches and deepens how historians view the years after the Civil War. The author recommends further research of this kind to supplement broader syntheses.

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## INTRODUCTION

### ANTEBELLUM AND WARTIME COLLIN COUNTY

Historical studies at the state and national level are useful for a number of reasons. It is easier to draw broad conclusions, highlight long-term trends, and place a given period within the context of history. However, these kinds of studies often overlook elements at a local level that may not have influenced the course of history as dramatically as wars and presidential elections. They can also overlook the nuanced ways in which local history affected affairs at the state and national level.

Many of the characteristics that one would find in a large synthesis of Reconstruction scholarship are present in Collin County: appointed local government, disfranchised Confederate veterans, free blacks adjusting to life outside of chattel slavery, and a strong conservative resurgence. Many other characteristics seem to contradict the usual story of Reconstruction history: little systematic violence and lawlessness (with a few notable exceptions), an absence of U.S. Army and Freedmen's Bureau personnel, a small black population, rare political intervention, and an economy that had relied very little on cotton in the years preceding and during the Civil War. The story of Reconstruction in Collin County is one of political defiance and stagnation marked by tenuous economic growth followed by an economic boom following the late arrival of railroads and a steady convergence with the conservative politics of Texas.

Collin County occupies 870 square miles in northeastern Texas, thirty miles south of the Red River, surrounded by Dallas, Denton, Grayson, Hunt, and Fannin counties. Collin was demarked from the latter county on April 3, 1846. Buckner was originally made the county seat,

but two years later the center of government was moved to the geographical center of the county, three miles east. The new county seat, which became the town of McKinney, was chosen so that it would be roughly equidistant (32 miles each direction) from the towns of Dallas, Denton, Sherman, and Greenville. The town was named for Collin McKinney, one of the first white settlers in the area, and for whom the county was also named. Collin McKinney is also widely credited with insisting that new north Texas counties should have straight boundaries.<sup>1</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, a majority of the area consisted of prairie land, interspersed with timbered areas and creek bottoms. In the *Texas Almanac for 1867*, Reconstruction governor and Collin county resident J. W. Throckmorton described the county's geography thus:<sup>2</sup>

It is in the heart of the wheat region, and susceptible of almost entire cultivation... The western part of the county is high rolling prairie, as rich as Texas affords. Quite a number of streams rise in this part of the county, running a little south of east. This part of the county is rather scarce of Timber. The middle portion is equally rich in point of soil, and much more abundant in timber. The eastern part is still more heavily timbered, and, except the extreme east portion, it is not so susceptible of cultivation, on account of the heavy timbered ridge and bottoms. Yet the soil is very rich, with a dense growth of hackberry, elm, pecan, ash, bois d'arc, redbud, etc., on the ridges, and burr, overcup, pine, and Spanish oak, walnut, ash, elm, hackberry, pecan, wild China, etc. in the bottoms.... Corn, barley, oats, and wheat are the principal crops raised. Cotton grows well, but wheat and barley are leading products... Cattle do well, but the range is better adapted for horses and sheep.

In his description Throckmorton touched upon another factor that made Collin different from

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<sup>1</sup> David Minor, "Collin County," Texas State Historical Association, last modified June 12, 2010, accessed April 6, 2014, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/jgf01>; Walter B. Wilson, *History of McKinney and Collin County* (1924), 2, accessed April 6, 2014, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph61104/?q=TheEncyclopediaofTexas>.

<sup>2</sup> The Galveston News, *The Texas Almanac for 1867 with Statistics, Descriptive and Biographical Sketches, etc., Relating to Texas*, (Galveston: W. Richardson & Co., 1866), accessed April 4, 2014, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph123772/m1/94/?q=Collin>, 91-92.

other Texas counties and the South at large: very little cotton was grown there. It was true, as the governor pointed out, that cotton grew well in Collin. The main impediment to its widespread cultivation was poor profitability due to transportation issues. The county population grew at a steadily increasing rate between the 1850s and 70s. In 1850, the population was only 1,950. By 1860 this number had grown to 9,264, a growth of 375 percent. Despite losses suffered during the war, the population continued to grow. The 1880 census reveals that just a few years after the end of Reconstruction in Texas, the county population reached 25, 983.<sup>3</sup>

Transportation, an early challenge to Collin residents, persisted well into the Reconstruction years. After demarcation, two early roads remained from the Republic of Texas years, both of which travelled from Red River to Austin. These were called the Central National Road and Preston Road. Prior to the end of the Civil War, a few more roads were laid out through the county. A road from Dallas to McKinney opened in 1857 and was called the old Dallas Road. A route from Denton to McKinney was laid out in 1852. This road ran from Cole Street in modern-day McKinney to the town of Alton in Denton county, where Hickory Creek is now located, and was called the Old Alton Road. The Alton Road served as the main route between Denton and Collin until 1925. The first road east out of McKinney led to the East Texas town of Jefferson, and was never planned but rather cut by freight wagons traveling between the towns. Another early road, called Old Buckner Road, ran north through Trinity Settlement.

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<sup>3</sup> *Texas Almanac for 1871, and Emigrant's Guide to Texas* (TX History Portal); Walter B. Wilson, "History of McKinney and Collin County," *The Encyclopedia of Texas* (1924), 2; Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Schedule I (population). [http://www.collincotxhistdoc.info/census/1870\\_transcription\\_notes.php](http://www.collincotxhistdoc.info/census/1870_transcription_notes.php); *The Texas Almanac for 1867 with Statistics, Descriptive and Biographical Sketches, etc., Relating to Texas*, (Galveston: W. Richardson & Co., 1866), <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapath123772/m1/94/?q=Collin>, 91-92.



In 1858, the Sawyer brothers built a second road from Dallas to McKinney east of Old Dallas Road in hopes of establishing a shorter route by coach. This road was called New Dallas Road and saw use as the main road until 1915. Modern-day Interstate 75 travels along portions of what used to be this road.<sup>4</sup>

Collin’s political characteristics differentiated it from most other Texas counties, with only a few notable exceptions. While Texas, like the rest of the South, was rallying for secession, Collin was a hotbed of Unionism. The oldest newspaper in the county, the *McKinney Messenger*, and its Republican leading editor, James Thomas, consistently criticized secession, the Confederacy and, later, conservative efforts to impede Reconstruction. The strongest evidence for Collin’s deviation from Texas politics can be seen in the voting returns for the statewide referendum on secession. Collin opposed the measure by a wide margin, 405 for and 948 against. Voting totals in the eleven local precincts returned as follows:<sup>5</sup>

TABLE 1: COLLIN COUNTY SECESSION VOTE RETURNS

Precinct	For/Against
McKinney	124 - 248
Weston	31 - 164
Hamptons	1 - 74
Lebanon	14 - 21
Farmersville	62 - 106
Smiths	0 - 41
Baccus	5 - 25
Plano	55 - 18
Millwood	41 - 47
Maxwell	57 - 4
Mantua	15 - 80
<b>Total</b>	<b>405 - 948</b>

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<sup>4</sup> Joy Gough, *Early Collin County Roads: Routes and Builders* (2000), 1; Roy F. Hall and Helen Gibbard Hall, *Collin County: Pioneering in North Texas* (Quanah, TX: Nortex Press, 1975), 37.

<sup>5</sup> J. Lee and Lillian J. Stambaugh, *A History of Collin County, Texas* (Austin, TX: The Texas State Historical Association, 1958), 64.

Only Mason, Gillespie, Jack, and Duval counties cast higher votes against secession than Collin. Eight of the eighteen dissenting counties were located in North Texas, while three of Collin's neighboring counties; Dallas, Denton, and Hunt, voted for secession. Collin's political distinctions often drew the ire of more conservative counties, both those adjacent and across the state, throughout Reconstruction.<sup>6</sup>

The simplest explanation for Collin's dissent was its low slave and slaveholding populations, although not necessarily because slavery was not profitable there. One exception should be made before 1850, when most farming was done on smaller plots for subsistence purposes. The census found only 134 slaves in Collin that year, and in the years leading up to the war the slave population grew along with the population. 438 slaves were reported for tax purposes in 1856. The census for 1860 indicated that 933 slaves lived in the county and constituted a valuable economic asset at an average of \$599 per head for a total tax value of \$448,867. By comparison, the 20,192 cattle and 7,478 sheep reported in the county that year had a combined value of \$186,881. Only the land itself, 320,082 acres worth a total of \$1,465,980, made up a larger percentage of taxable property in the county. Enslaved blacks constituted approximately 12 percent of the local population, compared to a statewide average of 31 percent. This explanation for Collin's dissent also helps explain why Plano and Maxwell broke from the rest of the county and endorsed secession. The same census reported 111 slaves in Plano out of a total population of 516, a rate of 21.5 percent, practically double the county's average. It follows that this divergence gave Plano and Maxwell residents a greater stake in the preservation of slavery. Paul A. Gómez, in an essay devoted to African American

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<sup>6</sup> J. Lee and Lillian J. Stambaugh *A History of Collin County, Texas* (Austin, TX: The Texas State Historical Association, 1958), 64.

jury service in Dallas and Collin counties, included the argument that a relatively low slave population “differentiate[d] Collin County from many other counties in the state of Texas, and probably led [them] to vote against secession.”<sup>7</sup>

After secession, Collin County residents generally supported the war effort. One non-academic historian noted that out of the 1860 population of 9,264, muster rolls contained more than 1,500 names. A later work argued that out of a population of 8,000, over 2,000 men to war. All available evidence suggests that the former figure is more accurate. Support was not universal, however. The dense thickets in the area, particularly northeast Collin, were an ideal hiding place for deserters and bandits. James Throckmorton, once a staunch opponent of secession, returned to Collin prepared to crush dissent by practically any means. At one point, William C. Quantrill and his raiders were enlisted to hunt down deserters in the area.<sup>8</sup>

A large number of slaveholding families entered the county over the course of the war, presumably to escape the conflict in their home states and avoid emancipation and Reconstruction. In 1864, the last year that slaves were counted for tax purposes, officials recorded 326 slaveholding individuals with a total slave population of 1,536. The average value of each slave was reported at \$660.55 for a total value of \$1,014,650. This increase in slaveholding population during the war may account for the increased conservative influence in

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<sup>7</sup> Harold Beam, *A History of Collin County, Texas* (master’s thesis, University of Texas, 1951), 107; Shirley Schell, *Plano, Texas: The Early Years*, (Plano, TX: Friends of the Plano Public Library, 1985), 206; Paul Gómez, “African Americans and Grand Jury Service in Dallas and Collin Counties, in Texas During Congressional Reconstruction, 1867-1873 (a combination of two essays),” Unpublished essay (University of North Texas, 2006), 18.

<sup>8</sup> J. Lee and Lillian J. Stambaugh. *A History of Collin County, Texas*. (Austin, TX: The Texas State Historical Association, 1958), 64; Roy F. Hall and Helen Gibbard Hall, *Collin County: Pioneering in north Texas* (Quanah, TX: Nortex Press, 1975), 43; Harold E. Massey, “A History of Collin County,” (master’s thesis, Southwestern University, 1948); Richard B. McCaslin, “Wheat Growers in the Cotton Confederacy: The Suppression of Dissent in Collin County, Texas.” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 96 (1992): 533-536.

the county during Reconstruction. Despite continued white and black population growth, sources on Collin county history reported that agriculture came to a near standstill during the war, with women and slaves doing most of the farming as the men supported the war effort. Whether or not this is an accurate assessment of the wartime economy in Collin, there is evidence of stagnation, due in large part to the war but also to pre-existing transportation issues.<sup>9</sup>

For most of the twentieth century, the works of non-academic historians constituted the majority of relevant research on Collin county history. Walter B. Wilson, co editor of the prominent late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> century newspaper, the *Courier-Gazette* (later called the *Weekly Democrat-Gazette*), was one early authority. His “History of McKinney and Collin County” (1924), which first appeared in the *Encyclopedia of Texas*, has been referenced in many subsequent works. Two master’s theses, Harold E. Massey’s “A History of Collin County” (1948), and Harold Beam’s “A History of Collin County, Texas” (1951) covered much larger periods of time than this study and were less detailed, offering general developments instead of in-depth analysis. Wilson, Massey, and Beam all offer pedestrian research on the Reconstruction period. Husband-wife local historians J. Lee and Lillian J. Stambaugh’s 1958 work, *A History of Collin County, Texas*, offered much more information on the era covered by this study. If one can take into account the Stambaughs’ apparent Pro-Southern political biases, this work remains quite useful.

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<sup>9</sup> J. Lee and Lillian J. Stambaugh. *A History of Collin County, Texas* (Austin, TX: The Texas State Historical Association, 1958), 64; Roy F. Hall and Helen Gibbard Hall, *Collin County: Pioneering in north Texas* (Quanah, TX; Nortex Press, 1975), 43; Harold E. Massey, “A History of Collin County,” (master’s thesis, Southwestern University, 1948).

During the 1970s, another husband-wife team, Roy Franklin and Helen Gibbard Hall, published perhaps the most comprehensive history of Collin, *Collin County, Pioneering in North Texas* (1975). The Halls immigrated to the area in the 1930s and remained for the rest of their lives. Roy Hall was a naval captain prior to moving to Collin, and eventually served as the mayor of McKinney, and Helen taught many years for the McKinney ISD and served as the leading Collin county historian until her death in 2008.

Smaller works of non-academic history were periodically published in partnership with the McKinney, Allen, and Plano public libraries. Jeanette Bickley Bland was one such author. In 1981, she published a collection of data with her sister, Rita Bickley Roose, *Collin County, Texas Records of Reconstruction Days*. This work provides essential data on the era, including voter registration rolls. Bland published a second compilation in 1989, entitled, *African-Americans in the Early Records of Collin County Texas*. Joy Gough published two useful works of local history in partnership with these public libraries. *Hear that Lonesome Whistle Blow* (1997) was a thorough, though undocumented, study of trains in Collin, including information on Houston & Texas Central railroad officials, routes, and local residents who helped build the line. Her second work, *Early Collin County Roads: Routes and Builders*, was published in 2000 and is effective as a supplement to the research on roads offered by Hall & Hall's work.

Two useful scholarly works from the late twentieth century include Randolph B. Campbell's 1997 book, *Grassroots Reconstruction in Texas*, and Richard B. McCaslin's article in *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* July 1992 – April 1993 issue, "Wheat Growers in the Cotton Confederacy: The Suppression of Dissent in Collin County, Texas." Campbell's work emphasized the importance of studying Reconstruction at the county level, as opposed to state

or national-level analyses that are often problematic because of their sweeping generalizations. Although Collin is not among the six Texas counties included in the work, Campbell's analysis rightly exerts a strong influence over this work. McCaslin's article included little information on the Reconstruction period, although he appropriately linked wartime violence in the county with its residual effects in the years after the war.

In order to tell the story of Reconstruction in Collin county accurately, this work will proceed chronologically, beginning with the end of the Civil War and the state of Collin as its surviving veterans returned home, with reference to national and state level events when particularly relevant. This will include the years of Presidential Reconstruction, local government appointments, and an analysis of the postwar economy. Next, the work will move to the years of Congressional Reconstruction, in which the federal government took a more active role in state affairs, although events in Collin continued relatively unchanged from the previous era, apart from an upsurge in lawlessness that was mostly the result of events in adjacent counties. Finally, Republican government, the arrival of the railroad, rapid economic growth and the end of Reconstruction will be examined.

## CHAPTER 1

### PRESIDENTIAL RECONSTRUCTION, 1865-1867

In his authoritative synthesis of Reconstruction in Texas, *Texas After the Civil War*, Carl H. Moneyhon stated the “collapse of the Confederacy confronted Texans with an uncertain future.” Collin County residents appeared to corroborate this testimony. Years after returning from the war, Elder R. E. Horn of McKinney described the times simply as “uncertain.” Most returning Collin County veterans, like Elder Horn, returned with a singular purpose: to settle back into farm life as quickly as possible. In the *Texas Almanac* for 1867, near the close of the first phase of Reconstruction, Senator J. K. Bumpass penned a rosy picture of life in Reconstruction Collin County:<sup>10</sup>

The traveler is struck with the uniform moral deportment, quiet, industrious habits, and Christian devotion of the plain farmers of Collin... The population is rapidly increasing, and soon the county will be densely settled. Our chief market now is Jefferson, Marion county, distant 140 miles...There are but few Africans now...and what few are left are doing very well, but re decreasing by going back to Louisiana, Missouri, and Arkansas, from whence they were driven by the war. Most of our labor is being performed by white men who own their little farms, and by steady young white men who are employed by our farmers, and are far preferable to black laborers.

Bumpass verified that the slave population growth during the war was a result of an influx of refugee slaveowners and their chattel property. His claim that there were “few Africans,” is somewhat dubious but is accurate by comparison to counties with much higher prewar and wartime slave populations. Bumpass’ statement regarding the black population of

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<sup>10</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 15; Bev Zavitz. *Living in Murphy, Texas, 1845-1945*, (1984), 50; *Texas Almanac for 1867 with Statistics, Descriptive and Biographical Sketches, Etc., Relating to Texas* (Galveston, Texas: W. Richardson & Co, 1866), 91-92.

Collin was likely an appeal to the conservative sentiment of potential émigrés who may have feared a large free black population.

In his statements, Bumpass also correctly acknowledged both Collin's distance from its chief market in Jefferson and the fact that whites performed most of the farm labor. This may have been another appeal to fears of how a free black labor force would act (a fear exemplified by Bumpass' political ally, James W. Throckmorton). The argument that white labor was preferable to black labor is somewhat enigmatic given the predominant racial belief that blacks were more ideally suited to menial labor, supervised by whites. It is possible that this statement targeted potential immigrants from northern states like Missouri. It is possible to explore the accuracies, inaccuracies, and exaggerations of Bumpass's testimony side by side with the additional resources to better understand Reconstruction in Collin County as it unfolded objectively and in the minds of its residents.

Collin County came out of the Civil War with a completely stagnant economy. Pre-existing transportation issues such as the absence of railroads and poor infrastructure continued as they had for years with almost no sign of progress. The added impact of defeat further heightened economic woes. After the close of the war, the wagon trade with Jefferson reopened, stopping in the Southeast Collin village of Millwood. Muddy, seasonally impassable roads along this route meant that there was very little money coming in to the county. Some marketable crops were grown, primarily tobacco and corn, but with wagon transport costs averaging one dollar per one hundred pounds, these crops were typically consumed personally



or sold locally. During this phase of Reconstruction, these goods seldom made it to market at all.<sup>11</sup>

The high costs associated with the available modes of transportation further held back economic growth because Collin County farmers could not participate in the cotton market. The crop grew exceedingly well throughout the county, but the continued necessity for subsistence agriculture to the well being of local farmers prevented the sort of specialization needed to make money. Collin's small and underpaid pool of labor was also problematic.

In his 1948 master's thesis, "A History of Collin County," Harold E. Massey made three erroneous claims regarding the post-war economy in Collin. The first was that "immediately following the Civil War, cotton became the primary crop to be grown in the county." Oral histories, newspapers, and tax and census records contradict this claim. The second was that "a surplus of money was available from the northeastern states." Collin had no formal banking system, and although many émigrés to the county came from northern or Border South states, the influx of capital was negligible. Finally, Massey claimed that there was rapid town growth between 1866 and 1886 with "many" newspapers established across the county. This figure is misleading, as population growth between 1866 and 1872 was slower than it had been during the war and much slower than the same figure after the arrival of railroads. There were also only two newspapers of record until the 1880s, the Unionist *McKinney Messenger* and the conservative *McKinney Enquirer*.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Roy F. Hall and Helen Gibbard Hall, *Collin County: Pioneering in North Texas* (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1975), 43.

<sup>12</sup> Harold E. Massey, "A History of Collin County" (master's thesis, Southwestern University, 1948), 111-112.

As a result of these conditions, between 1865 and the arrival of railroads in 1872 residents of Collin County were not particularly wealthy. Even the most prominent local families lived in modest homes. During this period the J. B. Wilmeth family of McKinney lived in a one-story house made of 36-foot beams hauled by oxen from Jefferson. Bricks for the chimney and fireplace were made on site and the beams were connected with pins cut from local Bois d'Arc trees. Those poorer residents of Collin faced even more tenuous conditions. Most farmers worked their own land for subsistence and had little money to pay out to others for goods or services. Farmers who did hire laborers paid less than \$100 per year in total wages. In addition to corn and tobacco, many farmers grew wheat, rye, and sweet potatoes. Some other food products, like butter, cheese milk, molasses, wax, honey, and animals for slaughter, were produced. Few bothered to grow cotton, hay, or forest products.<sup>13</sup>

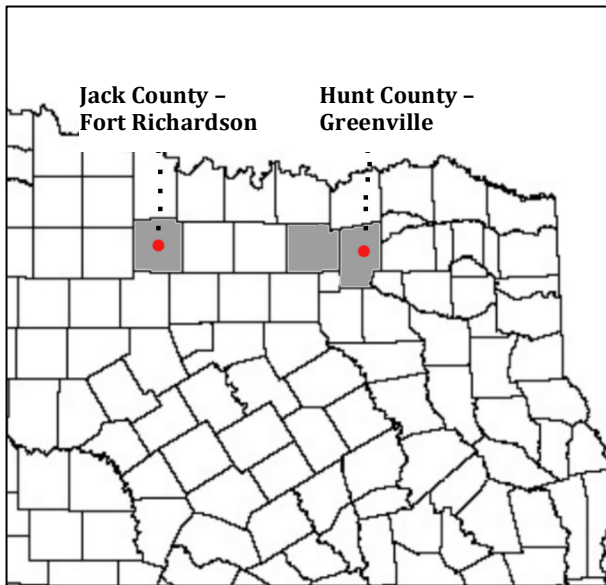
Senator Bumpass' boast of "uniform moral deportment" within early Reconstruction Collin County is difficult to address. Available evidence suggests a somewhat more tense social landscape. In his article, "Wheat Growers in the Cotton Confederacy," Richard B. McCaslin argued that a "bitter legacy sown by wartime violence" persisted locally as a result of atrocities committed against Texas dissenters. Local historian Bev Zavitz explained, "the peace was not peaceful in Collin County. The tension from grief, poverty and defeat were heightened by other results of the war including Reconstruction, high taxes, the disparity in personal losses, effects of army experience, and the arrival of U.S. soldiers, resentment, and violence." J. Lee and Lillian J. Stambaugh echoed this theme of post-war violence in Collin County and argued that the close of the Civil War did not bring peace or order. Despite the corroborating testimonies of

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<sup>13</sup> *McKinney-Courier-Gazette*, July 3 1896; Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Schedule 2 (Productions of Agriculture).

professional and non-academic historians on the tumultuous state of the county after the war, little evidence exists to support dramatic levels of tension. Few incidences of local violence were recorded at all (those exceptions will receive attention later in this work).<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 1 - Locations of military posts at Greenville and Ft. Richardson**



Contrary to Zavitz’s claim of tension brought on by the arrival of soldiers, the absence of an occupying military force was one of Reconstruction Collin County’s most distinct features. Newspapers and works of local history made frequent references to the U.S. military, but most of the reported events occurred far from home, usually on Texas’s western frontier or its southern counties. Two military outposts existed within a reasonable distance from Collin

County, Fort Richardson, outside of Jacksboro, one hundred miles to the west, and at Greenville in neighboring Collin’s eastern neighbor, Hunt County.<sup>15</sup>

In *Pioneering in North Texas*, Roy and Helen Hall reported that a bi-annual patrol between Ft. Richardson and Greenville was the sole extent of military operations in Collin County. The Halls also claimed that Collin County fell under the military supervision of one “Major G. McClellan.” They continued, noting that McClellan had no troops with which to

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<sup>14</sup> Richard B. McCaslin, “Wheat Growers in the Cotton Confederacy: The Suppression of Dissent in Collin County, Texas.” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 96 (1992): 539; Bev Zavitz. *Living in Murphy, Texas, 1845-1945*. (1984), 49.

<sup>15</sup> William L. Richter, *The Army in Texas During Reconstruction, 1865-1870* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1987); “Blank County Map of Texas,” Yellow Maps World Atlas, [www.yellowmaps.com/map/texas-blank-map-151.htm](http://www.yellowmaps.com/map/texas-blank-map-151.htm).

control the vote, as many other officers in the state did, and that he was well liked in the County. However, there is startlingly little evidence to support these claims.<sup>16</sup>

Collin County newspapers made reference to only one US military officer named McClellan during the entirety of Reconstruction: Major General George McClellan. Further, local editors made no reference to anyone of that rank with that kind of military authority at a local level. The Halls did not volunteer their sources or explain their claims in any further detail. Despite this, some external evidence presents a difficulty in dismissing them entirely. There was a Major G. McClellan stationed at Fort Richardson. An August 1870 article for *The Houston Telegraph* tells of Major G. McClellan's heroism during a particularly bloody skirmish with Indians seventy miles outside of Jacksboro (en route to Fort Richardson).<sup>17</sup>

President Andrew Johnson appointed ardent Unionist Andrew J. Hamilton as provisional governor of Texas immediately following the close of the war. One of Hamilton's most prominent and vocal opponents during this period was prewar Unionist and influential Collin resident James W. Throckmorton. The conflict between Throckmorton and Hamilton proved highly demonstrative of the rift between Texas Unionists after the war. This division proved advantageous to conservatives as they moved to regain control of state and local government.<sup>18</sup>

J. W. Throckmorton was for years one of North Texas's most vocal and influential figures; at different times a Unionist and a Confederate nationalist. He was one of only eight

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<sup>16</sup> Roy F. Hall and Helen Gibbard Hall, *Collin County: Pioneering in North Texas*. (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1975), 57.

<sup>17</sup> *The Houston Telegraph*, August 11, 1870.

<sup>18</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 21-28.

individuals at the Secession Convention of 1861 to vote against the measure, and in part because of his influence at home, Collin County followed suit. After secession, however, he not only served in the Confederate military, but also proved to be a strict enforcer of Confederate loyalty. Here lay one of the major dividing elements among Texas Unionists that continued throughout Reconstruction. After the war, Throckmorton returned to civilian life and made his living as an attorney at law at the private practice of Throckmorton & Brown (with partner T. J. Brown). He was highly critical of President Johnson's choice of provisional governor, and contended that because Hamilton fled the state during the war, he was a traitor to Texas and unfit for leadership.<sup>19</sup>

Throckmorton was not alone in his distaste for Andrew Johnson's choice of provisional governor. Fears of a free labor system, and rumors that it could be avoided, allied Collin County's most influential figure with the cotton growing interests that dominated other Texas counties. In an attempt to secure a more loyal state government and a constitution that was acceptable to Congress, Hamilton was compelled to delay the call for a state constitutional convention.<sup>20</sup>

Hamilton made it clear from the beginning of his time in office that he would appoint all "indispensible" state, district, and county officials. Carl H. Moneyhon noted that Hamilton's definition of "indispensible" ultimately expanded to include virtually every public position. It

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<sup>19</sup> *McKinney Messenger*, February 2, 1866; Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004) 15; David Minor, "Throckmorton, James Webb." *Handbook of Texas Online*, June 15, 2010, accessed March 2, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 25-27

took the provisional governor months to vet potential officeholders to ensure loyalty, but by the end of September, most Texas counties had their local government positions filled.<sup>21</sup>

Hamilton’s choice of appointees for Collin County indicated that he did not have much difficulty locating loyal officeholders. He chose Fountain J. Vance for the position of Chief Justice of Collin County. Vance was originally from Missouri and served in the Mexican War. County Sheriff Josiah Nichols arrived in Collin County around 1848, also from Missouri. The Commissioners Court consisted entirely of Southerners. Half of them owned slaves and most had been in the county for at least twenty years. Oliver Hedgcoxe’s father was an agent for the Peters Colony stockholders of the Texas Emigration and Land Company, and as such was very wealthy. Hamilton’s appointment of men who were well established in their county served as further evidence that the provisional Governor had relatively little doubt of the loyalty of Collin County residents.<sup>22</sup>

TABLE 2 – APPOINTMENTS FOR OCTOBER 2, 1865<sup>23</sup>

Chief Justice	Fountain J. Vance
County Clerk	J. M. Benge
County Sheriff/Deputy	Josiah Nichols, William C. Hall
Commissioners Court	Oliver Hedgcoxe Isham Pittman Stephen Jones Alfred Chandler
Tax Assessor and Collector	Enoch Yantis
Treasurer	I. T. Newsome
Surveyor	A. T. Robertson
Coroner	John Lockridge

<sup>21</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 29-31.

<sup>22</sup> Patrick Davis, “Political Reconstruction in Collin County, Texas 1865-1876,” Unpublished essay, University of North Texas, 1998.

<sup>23</sup> “Collin County, Texas, ‘List of Elected Officials.’” 2009. Accessed 2014.

On November 15, Governor Hamilton laid out the process for the election of delegates to a new constitutional convention. It did not actually take place until January 8, 1866. Collin County once again deferred to the judgment of its most influential leader, Throckmorton, and elected him to fill one of these positions. Throckmorton's political ally, J. K. Bumpass, was elected as the county's second delegate. James Thomas of the *McKinney Messenger* reported that the two men left for Austin on Tuesday January 31, 1866, following delegates from Red River, Fannin, Bowie, Cooke, and Grayson counties, all of whom passed through McKinney on their way to the convention. Despite the obstacles of Confederate defeat, military supervision, and the Hamilton-controlled provisional government, from the beginning Throckmorton had no intention of ensuring a new state constitution that would be acceptable to Congress. Although he had been a Unionist, his political views placed him more in line with former secessionists and the Democratic leadership than Unionists of Hamilton's styling.<sup>24</sup>

During deliberations, Throckmorton worked effectively to forge a coalition of Conservative Unionists to overpower the Hamilton-backed Unionists at the convention and ensure a more conservative constitution. The future of the Freedmen proved to be the most significant point of disagreement between factions. According to Moneyhon, Throckmorton "typified those Unionists who viewed any action other than the simple recognition of the fact of emancipation as unnecessary and dangerous." Correspondence suggests that he believed the efforts of the government at Austin were detrimental to the ability of farmers to obtain labor and advocated some form of "compensated abolition" or forced labor. Throckmorton also

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<sup>24</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 32; David Minor, "Throckmorton, James Webb," *Handbook of Texas Online*, June 15, 2010, accessed March 2, 2014.

vehemently opposed blacks serving on juries, a perceived first step toward citizenship and, somehow, also detrimental to farmers' ability to obtain labor. Moneyhon argued that the racial appeals of anti-Hamilton Unionists did not differ much from secessionists' opposition to efforts to integrate blacks into the political system.<sup>25</sup>

The defeated Unionist measures, according to J. Lee and Lillian J. Stambaugh, included "an...effort to improve the schools of Texas," perpetrated by Carpetbaggers to, "force an arbitrary and extravagant system of public free education and compulsory school attendance on the people." Reforms to the antebellum paid-school system would not come in earnest until after Reconstruction.<sup>26</sup>

The paid school system that existed in Texas before and during the war continued in Collin throughout Reconstruction. Roy and Helen Hall identified forty-two paid schools that existed in the county by 1876. Mantua Seminary was one of these. It was founded in 1859 but opened in 1865 with 80 pupils and 8 teachers. Tuition started at \$10-\$20 for each of the two terms. The Mount Pleasant Male and Female High School opened in the home of Elder James Sanford Muse. Sessions at the Mount Pleasant school were twenty-one weeks long (from February to June), and each session cost \$75 for tuition, room, and board, \$15 for day scholars. Courses in Mathematics, History, "Belles-Lettres", and the Sciences cost \$20 per session, and Latin and Greek cost \$25. In 1870 room and board tuition was \$150 per session, September to

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<sup>25</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, *Republicanism in Reconstruction Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980), 28-33.

<sup>26</sup> D. W. C. Baker, *A Texas Scrap-book: Made up of the History, Biography, and Miscellany of Texas and Its People* (New York, NY: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1875), 296; Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 39; J. Lee Stambaugh and Lillian J. Stambaugh, *A History of Collin County, Texas* (Austin, TX: The Texas State Historical Association, 1958), 77.



June. Subjects covered at the Mount Pleasant Male and Female High School included the “elementary branches,” natural science, math, Latin, Greek, and music.<sup>27</sup>

A February 1866 ad in the *McKinney Messenger* advertised the terms and tuition for the Prairie Hill School for Males & Females, five miles west of McKinney, which began classes on February 20 and continued for twenty weeks:<sup>28</sup>

TERMS PER SESSION:

JUNIOR CLASS, (including Orthography, Reading, Penmanship, Mental Arithmetic, &c.)...\$10 00

MIDDLE CLASS, (including Written Arithmetic, Geography, English Grammar, History, &c.) ...\$15 00

SENIOR CLASS, (including Algebra, Philosophy, Chemistry, Astronomy, Physiology, Elocution, &c.) ...\$20 00

Latin, Greek and French languages, each \$3 50 per session

Good Boarding for a limited number of students in the vicinity of the school at \$10 00 per month.

The above prices are in specie; paper currency taken at its market value.

The School is limited to 35 regular pupils.

According to the advertisement, penned by Prairie Hill School Principal A. L. Darnall, pupils were expected to give full command of their time to their teachers and to give “prompt, strict and *cheerful* obedience to all regulations.” These paid schools were only available to whites. The history of early black education in Collin County is more difficult to understand given the limited and often contradictory information available.<sup>29</sup>

One such account of early black education in Collin County came from Roy and Helen Hall’s *Pioneering in North Texas*. They claimed that the first local “negro school” opened in McKinney in 1866 on the same spot that the segregated Doty School stood during the Jim Crow

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<sup>27</sup> *McKinney Messenger*, Friday February 2, 1866

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *McKinney Messenger*, February 2, 1866.

era. In recent years the site has functioned as the McKinney Community Garden, without any indication of the site's former significance. The Halls further claimed that a man named John Garrett was the first teacher of this school.<sup>30</sup>

There are a few problems with the Halls' account. First, a thorough investigation of archived newspapers from Collin County and across Texas yields no mention of a black school in McKinney ca. 1866. Any paid black school opened without the direction of the Freedmen's Bureau, U. S., or state governments that early would likely have been newsworthy. That the *Messenger's* conservative rival, the *McKinney Enquirer* is not available complicates the matter.

John Garrett, the supposed teacher identified by Roy and Helen Hall, does not appear in available census or tax records for the period. The voter registration rolls for 1867 are perhaps the only surviving local record making reference to a man by that name. Garrett was classified as "colored" and, most interestingly, marked an "X" for his name, indicating that he was illiterate or unable to sign. If this was the same individual identified by Roy and Helen Hall, it is difficult to suppose that he taught at the first black school in Collin County. Another account of black education in the county follows in a subsequent chapter.<sup>31</sup>

The June 25, 1866, gubernatorial election was a significant victory for Conservatives and Conservative Unionists. With the support of his county, J.W. Throckmorton defeated Unionist candidate Elijah M. Pease by a margin of 49,277 to 12,068. He was inaugurated on August 8. Carl H. Moneyhon argued that from the beginning Throckmorton's actions as governor "placed

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<sup>30</sup> Roy F. Hall and Helen Gibbard Hall, *Collin County: Pioneering in North Texas* (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1975), 61; "Garden History," McKinney Community Garden, accessed 2015.

<sup>31</sup> Rita Bickley Roose and Jeanette Bickley Bland, *Collin County, Texas, Records of Reconstruction Days* (Spring Hill Press, 1981), 124.

him on a collision course with the federal government. He blocked expanded Civil Rights for freedmen, ignored cases of civil government failing to protect freedmen, and hindered the military and Freedmen’s Bureau in their interventions on behalf of the Freedmen.”<sup>32</sup>

In 1866 Collin County also selected local officials. Voters returned Fountain J. Vance to the position he had been appointed to by Governor Hamilton in 1866 (the position of Chief Justice of Collin County no longer existed). Commissioner Stephen Jones was also elected to his previously appointed position. This indicated that voters were not unhappy with Hamilton’s 1865 appointments or their performance in office. County Sheriff Simon P. Brown was yet another Missourian who immigrated to Collin County in the late 1840s. William Bush, from Kentucky, and William A. Brown, from Virginia, also arrived prior to the war. Henry R. Lyday arrived in Collin County during the war from Tennessee and was the only newcomer to the county elected to an influential position in 1866.<sup>33</sup>

TABLE 3 – ELECTED OFFICIALS, JUNE 25, 1866<sup>34</sup>

District Clerk	Jordan E. Straughn
County Judge	Fountain J. Vance
County Clerk	J. M. Benge
County Sheriff	Simon P. Brown
Commissioners Court	Stephen Jones Henry R. Lyday William R. Bush Wm. A. Brown
County Attorney	
Assessor	Enoch Yantis
Collector	Enoch Yantis (TABLE CONTINUES)

<sup>32</sup> D. W. C. Baker, *A Texas Scrap-book: Made up of the History, Biography, and Miscellany of Texas and Its People* (New York, NY: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1875), 296; Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 50-63.

<sup>33</sup> Patrick Davis, “Political Reconstruction in Collin County, Texas 1865-1876,” Unpublished essay, University of North Texas, 1998.

<sup>34</sup> “Collin County, Texas, ‘List of Elected Officials.’” 2009, accessed 2014.

(Continued) Surveyor	A. F. Robertson
Treasurer	Jonathan L. Faires
Coroner	John Lockridge

Roughly four months after Throckmorton's election, on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1867, Presidential Reconstruction came to an end with the passage of the First Reconstruction Act. Texas was placed within the Fifth Military District under Gen. Philip H. Sheridan. General Charles Griffin, the commander for Texas, objected to Throckmorton's actions as governor. With Sheridan's help, Griffin had Throckmorton removed from office on July 30 as an "impediment to Reconstruction." Carl H. Moneyhon contended that as a result of Throckmorton's belligerence in office, he had guaranteed Texas' inclusion in whatever plans Congress might have for Reconstruction. This escalation in congressional oversight corresponded with the beginnings of a conservative surge in Collin County that brought it closer to political alignment with its neighbors.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, "Reconstruction," Handbook of Texas Online, June 15, 2010, accessed May 3, 2015; Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 68-76.

## CHAPTER 2

### CONGRESSIONAL RECONSTRUCTION, 1867-1870

The beginning of Congressional Reconstruction brought immediate changes to the state and local political climate. North Texas in particular became a focal point in efforts to reconstruct the state. One of General Charles C. Griffin's first priorities as military commander of Texas was to set the process for new voter registrations. To expedite these efforts he appointed three men to supervise registrations in each of Texas' fifteen judicial districts. Texas Republicans believed that black enfranchisement was crucial to the success of Reconstruction, and local Union Leagues or Loyal Leagues were created to aid in this process.<sup>36</sup>

Collin's judicial district did not have a large enough black population for General Griffin to appoint a black registration supervisor. Further, there were no reported interventions in the registration process by the military post at Greenville, and there was no local Freedmen's Bureau presence to aid in the process. There was, however, a reported Union League organization in nearby Fannin County. Despite these circumstances, Collin County voter registration records for 1867 show that a large number of black males, roughly 109, registered to vote. This figure far exceeded the number of white people in the county that registered.<sup>37</sup>

A similar trend in voter registration occurred across Texas. Carl H. Moneyhon pointed to newspaper reports from Fort Bend County that indicated that less than one-fourth of eligible potential white voters bothered to register. The reasons for low white voter registration varied.

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<sup>36</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 69-73.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid*; Jeanette Bickley Bland, *African-Americans in the Early Records of Collin County, Texas*. (Richardson, TX: J. B. Bland, 1989), 42.

These included hostility towards the military and the Reconstruction process, fear and anger over black voter registration, the Jury Order, which required that Freedmen be seated on grand juries, and continued economic woes.<sup>38</sup>

After having Throckmorton removed from office, General Griffin appointed Elisha M. Pease as governor. Pease immediately lobbied Griffin to extend his practice of removal to all disloyal public officials, including those at the county level. Griffin's death from yellow fever on September 15, however, prevented much from being done initially. Griffin's successor, Joseph J. Reynolds, moved quickly to address complaints from Unionists, Freedmen, and Freedmen's Bureau Agents. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, Reynolds issued special order No. 195, which removed or replaced more than 400 officials in fifty-seven counties.<sup>39</sup>

Most of Collin County's major public officials were replaced under special order No. 195. Fountain J. Vance was removed from the county judge position and replaced with Sylvester Bowlby under special order No. 207 on November 19, 1867. Bowlby came to Texas from New Jersey before 1860, although many locals at the time perceived him as a carpetbagger. The appointed Commissioners Court included John Scott, Jacob Routh, John Kinkaid, and William P. Honaker. All were southerners and Scott and Routh were known to be in Collin County before 1860. George A. Wilson, a Tennessee farmer, replaced Simon P. Brown as county Sheriff.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 78-79.

<sup>39</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, "Reconstruction," Handbook of Texas Online, June 15, 2010, accessed May 3, 2015.

<sup>40</sup> Patrick Davis, "Political Reconstruction in Collin County, Texas 1865-1876," Unpublished essay, University of North Texas, 1998; James Ferguson, "Sylvester Bowlby: Collin County Judge during Reconstruction," Unpublished Essay, University of North Texas, 1994.

TABLE 4 – APPOINTMENTS UNDER SPECIAL ORDER NO. 195<sup>41</sup>

District Clerk	R. M. Rudolph
County Judge	Silvester Bowlby
County Clerk	George W. Patterson
County Sheriff	George A. Wilson
Commissioners Court	John Scott Jacob Routh John M. Kincaid W. P. Honaker
County Attorney	Missing
Assessor	John Tarpley
Collector	John Tarpley

Excluding census data, voter registration rolls, and tax data, few local records exist from the early phases of Reconstruction that give insight into the lives of Collin County’s freedmen. Ben Thomas wrote in the compilation, *Plano: Texas: The Early Years*, “after the Civil War many blacks came with their former masters to the Plano area.” It is unclear why this was the case, although it may have been due to the higher concentration of former slaveowners and former slaves in the area.<sup>42</sup>

Due to the high numbers of black people listed on voter rolls for 1867 and no extant reports of violence or intimidation over black voter registration, it appeared that the policies created during Reconstruction to that point were not as poorly received or executed as they were in some Texas counties. Griffin’s Jury Order also appears to have made little dramatic impact in its execution, as few black jurors were seated in Collin County between 1868 and 1873. In a 2006 essay, Paul Gómez from the University of North Texas found that at least one and at most three African American men occupied four grand jury seats during these years.

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<sup>41</sup> “Collin County, Texas, ‘List of Elected Officials,’” 2009, accessed 2014.

<sup>42</sup> Ben Thomas, *Plano, Texas: The Early Years* (Plano, TX: Friends of the Plano Public Library, 1985), 191.

Following the war, African Americans composed about 31 percent of the total population of Texas. In Collin County they composed only 12 percent of the population. With 286 grand juror slots to be filled between 1868 and 1873 in Dallas and Collin Counties, this means that African American males only occupied roughly 1.4 percent of the total slots.<sup>43</sup>

By comparison to more excessively lawless areas of the South, few notorious incidents of violence survived in the public or private memory of Collin County residents. The most notable exception was the Lee-Peacock Feud, which raged for five years and ended with twelve dead and at least ten injured as a direct result (many more deaths occurred on the periphery of this feud). J. Lee and Lillian J. Stambaugh devoted a large portion of their *Civil War & Reconstruction* chapter to this single topic. They described the events surrounding the conflict as, “by far the best known and most disastrous of the disturbances [in North Texas] during the Reconstruction Period.” Non-academic historian Bev Zavitz referred her readers to G. B. Ray’s work of popular history, *Murder at the Corners*, which described how the violence “between Union sympathizers and the followers of a former Confederate officer kept the people of the counties nearby in a state of fear and tension by their assaults and murders.” In an article about feuds in Texas, C. L. Sonnichsen commented that the Lee-Peacock feud was highly representative of the “feuding spirit” that emerged during Reconstruction and resulted from feeling against Union authorities and those who supported them. The events of the Lee-Peacock Feud took place primarily in the “Corners” or “Five Corners” region of North Texas,

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<sup>43</sup> Jeanette Bickley Bland, *African-Americans in the Early Records of Collin County, Texas* (Richardson, TX: J. B. Bland, 1989); Rita Bickley Roose and Jeanette Bickley Bland, *Collin County, Texas, Records of Reconstruction Days* (Spring Hill Press, 1981), 124; Paul Gómez, “African Americans and Grand Jury Service in Dallas and Collin Counties, in Texas During Congressional Reconstruction, 1867-1873 (a combination of two essays),” Unpublished essay (University of North Texas, 2006), 18-21.



named for the extreme angles formed where northeast Collin meets southeast Grayson county, southwest Fannin county, and northwest Hunt county.<sup>44</sup>

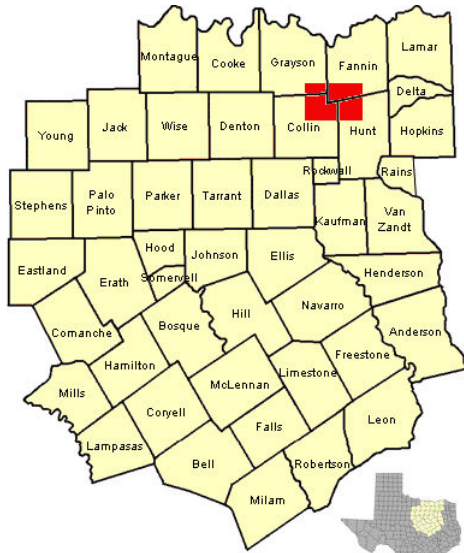


Figure 1 - Five Corners Region

Professional and non-academic historians interested in the Lee-Peacock feud generally traced its origins to Lewis Peacock’s 1867 establishment of a Union League “control point” in neighboring Fannin County. Unionist Judge James H. Bell had introduced the organization to Texas earlier that year. Its purpose was to attract, educate, and mobilize black voters for the Republican Party. Although the exact circumstances are

unclear, while operating in the four corners, Peacock came into conflict with an aggressive, rebellious, and well-connected former Confederate captain, Robert “Bob” Lee. More recent scholarship less sympathetic to former Confederates and the Lost Cause has shifted much of the blame for the outbreak of violence to Bob Lee’s criminal activity in the region. Historians James M. Smallwood and Barry A. Crouch noted that in 1867 alone, Lee murdered and terrorized Unionists and freedmen on several occasions before coming into conflict with Lewis Peacock.<sup>45</sup>

In *Murder at the Corners*, G. B. Ray reported that Lee volunteered with a Captain McCoolle, who travelled to Pilot Grove in 1861 to raise a company after the Governor issued a

<sup>44</sup> Bev Zavitz, *Living in Murphy, Texas, 1845-1945*, (1984), 49; C. L. Sonnichsen, “Feuds,” Handbook of Texas Online, June 12, 2010, accessed March 2, 2014; NOAA, [www.srh.noaa.gov/msd/firewx/images/](http://www.srh.noaa.gov/msd/firewx/images/).

<sup>45</sup> Richard B. McCaslin, “Wheat Growers in the Cotton Confederacy: The Suppression of Dissent in Collin County, Texas,” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 96 (1992): 538; James Smallwood, Barry A. Crouch, and Larry Peacock, *Murder and Mayhem: The War of Reconstruction in Texas* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2003), 45.

call for three thousand Confederate troops. He reportedly served with distinction in the Confederate military, and his skill at riding and shooting earned him a number of promotions during the war. His first assignment was in Company C of the Ninth Texas Cavalry under General Ben McCulloch as a Second Lieutenant. He then enlisted with E. R. Hawkins' Texas Fencibles and later served in Whitfield's Legion as part of the Army of Tennessee. During the war, he served with or under such Confederate generals as Albert Pike, Earl Van Dorn, Henry Forney, Henry Little, and Nathan Bedford Forrest.<sup>46</sup>

Older scholarship contended that hostilities commenced when Lewis Peacock, Henry Boren, and other riders, dressed as federal troops, kidnapped Lee and his brother. James Smallwood and Barry Crouch disregarded many of the supposed early developments of the Lee Peacock Feud and argued instead that in 1867 the Bob Lee gang attacked army commissary wagons, seized mail and supplies, and repeatedly threatened and harassed District Judge Hardin Hart, drawing the ire of the military. They further reported that Lieutenant Thomas Tolman accompanied Peacock and a number of troopers on the first of several raids on Lee's home in August of that year.<sup>47</sup>

Whatever the specific circumstances, by August 27, 1868, General Reynolds felt compelled to intervene. He offered a \$1,000 dead-or-alive reward for Lee and sent troops to the area to assist in the manhunt. Henry Boren, accompanied by soldiers from the Sixth Cavalry, managed to ambush and kill Lee on June 25, 1869, near his home. However, Lee's death did not

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<sup>46</sup> G. B. Ray, *Murder at the Corners* (San Antonio, TX: Naylor, 1957), 2-3.

<sup>47</sup> G. B. Ray, *Murder at the Corners* (San Antonio, TX: Naylor, 1957), 29-30; Richard B. McCaslin, "Wheat Growers in the Cotton Confederacy: The Suppression of Dissent in Collin County, Texas," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 96 (1992): 538; James Smallwood, Barry A. Crouch, and Larry Peacock, *Murder and Mayhem: The War of Reconstruction in Texas* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2003), 45-60.

mark the end the retaliatory violence. Fighting continued until Peacock was assassinated at his home on June 13, 1871.<sup>48</sup>

Over decades of historiography on the Lee-Peacock feud, professional and non-academic historians have drawn their own conclusions regarding which, if not both, parties were responsible for the outbreak of violence, but their interpretations of the cause of such incidents have been similar. Richard B. McCaslin argued, “wartime violence in Collin County ended only with the eradication of the last vestiges of dissent.” G. B. Ray commented that the Lee-Peacock feud served as a reminder that “tribulation and war bring hardships and misunderstandings that only peace can cure.” C. L. Sonnichsen argued that the lawlessness and feuding in this era derived from the fact that Texas was left undamaged from the war. Many outlaws came from ruined areas and joined forces with “homegrown scoundrels” and caused an “outbreak of desperadoism.” When Reconstruction ended, the accumulated anger from postwar violence continued for generations. This is especially true for the Lee-Peacock feud, which remained a subject of controversy in the region for another half-century.<sup>49</sup>

There was a Ku Klux Klan organization present in McKinney during Reconstruction, but for various reasons including the fact that it was relatively inactive, little is known about it. J. Lee and Lillian J. Stambaugh described an account of the McKinney Ku Klux Klan written in 1925 by Scott Allison. He explained how, “after the war, disenfranchised Confederates and other property owners, seeing experienced Texas officials displaced by inexperienced and

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<sup>48</sup> Richard B. McCaslin, “Wheat Growers in the Cotton Confederacy: The Suppression of Dissent in Collin County, Texas,” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 96 (1992): 538.

<sup>49</sup> Richard B. McCaslin, “Wheat Growers in the Cotton Confederacy: The Suppression of Dissent in Collin County, Texas,” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 96 (1992): 538; G. B. Ray, *Murder at the Corners* (San Antonio, TX: Naylor, 1957), 2-3; C. L. Sonnichsen, “Feuds,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, June 12, 2010, accessed March 2, 2014.

irresponsible carpetbaggers, organized to prevent depredations and outrages.” This was a fairly typical explanation for its time. Moneyhon’s *Texas After the Civil War* included a quote from one North Texas Klan member who described the organizations purpose being to, “protect citizens...from military arrests and prosecution, and to defeat the radical party, and to prevent negro suffrage.”<sup>50</sup>

R. D. Allison, Scott’s father and a Mexican-American War and Civil War veteran, reportedly founded the McKinney Ku Klux Klan. After returning from the latter conflict, he obtained a charter from the Ku Klux Klan headquarters in Tennessee and set out to establish a local chapter. The exact number attracted to Allison’s organization is unknown, but the McKinney charter reportedly never accumulated more than an estimated 100 to 200 members during Reconstruction. Tax assessment rolls for 1867 list R. D. Allison as a fairly poor individual. His taxable property included one horse, \$100 cash, \$180 in miscellaneous personal property, and a total net worth of \$380.<sup>51</sup>

Smallwood and Crouch confirmed the Stambaugh’s assessment of the origins of Klan activity in Collin County, R. D. Allison, and the likely number of members. They went on to note that “as late as 1868 sympathetic news sheets denied that terrorist groups existed.” Newspaper reports indicate that this problem persisted even longer. An 1872 article from James Thomas and the *Messenger* mocked the *Galveston News*’ denial that the Klan existed at all. It also

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<sup>50</sup> J. Lee Stambaugh and Lillian J. Stambaugh, *A History of Collin County, Texas*, (Austin, TX: The Texas State Historical Association, 1958), 74.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*; Rita Bickley Roose and Jeanette Bickley Bland, *Collin County, Texas, Records of Reconstruction Days* (Spring Hill Press, 1981), 66.

verified the existence and relative inactivity of the Klan organization in Collin:<sup>52</sup>

When a man (a good Democrat) comes into open court and reluctantly testifies that he is a member of the Klan, and gives the names of other members, as has been done in the county of Collin...it is rather late...to repeat your stereotyped denial. We cannot help agreeing...that journals which persist in the denial of a fact so well established as that of the existence of the Ku-Klux Klan, but convict themselves of palpable dishonesty by doing so. Democrats, as well as Republicans, in this part of the State, know you tell an untruth every time you repeat the oft [sic] told tale of the non-existence of the Klan.

Threats of violence and logistical problems delayed the vote on a constitutional convention in Texas until February 1868. Due to low white voter registration and a low turnout of registered white voters, the outcome was an overwhelming Republican triumph. Not only could conservatives not block the meeting of a convention, in many districts they failed to elect their desired delegates. Oddly, many of the white Republicans of Collin County, including the *Messenger's* James Thomas, opposed the convention. On February 2, 1868, Thomas wrote thus of the convention in the days leading up to the vote:<sup>53</sup>

What will the convention do? What can it legitimately do? What should it do? – These are all interesting questions... It matters not who authorized the new mode, for the constitution of the State of Texas has but one superior, and that superior is the Constitution of the United States... Paradoxical as it may seem, in opposing, we do but uphold the President's policy. He believes the States indestructible. So do we. The radical republicans assert that the constitutions of the States lately in rebellion, were overthrown by the rebellion. This the President denies. We also deny it.... That slavery has ceased to exist within the State of Texas, and consequently that all laws and parts of the constitution having reference to slaves or slavery are objectless and therefore without force or effect.

Apart from his legalistic objection to the calling of a convention, Thomas went on to express a hope that the convention “advise the calling of the legislature and the enactment of such laws

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<sup>52</sup> J. Lee and Lillian J. Stambaugh. *A History of Collin County, Texas* (Austin, TX: The Texas State Historical Association, 1958), 74; James Smallwood, Barry A. Crouch, and Larry Peacock, *Murder and Mayhem: The War of Reconstruction in Texas* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2003), 50; *McKinney Messenger*, March 16, 1872.

<sup>53</sup> *McKinney Messenger*, February 2, 1868.

as may be necessary for the protection of the freedman in his newly acquired rights.”<sup>54</sup>

Although unreconstructed Texas could not participate officially in the 1868 presidential election, Collin County Republicans watched the results with keen interest. A November 1868 article in the *McKinney Messenger* hailed Republican victories nationwide.<sup>55</sup>

The result of the election on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. was an overwhelming triumph of the Republican Party. We hail the result with joy, deeming it a bright omen of the future peace, prosperity and unity of the American people.

As Collin County Republicans celebrated developments on the national level, General Reynolds continued his practice of removal. Accounts vary, but between November 1867 and November 1868, Reynolds had Twentieth Judicial District Judge W. T. G. Weaver, a former Confederate captain, removed from office and subsequently arrested. Accounts of reason for Weaver’s removal vary from allowing crimes against Unionists to go unpunished to a simple misunderstanding. On November 13, 1868, the *McKinney Messenger* provided an account for the arrest of judge Weaver that made no reference to crimes against Unionists.<sup>56</sup>

We learn that Judge W. T. G. Weaver, of Cooke county, has been arrested by a party of U. S. troops and taken to Austin, but are not certain that we are correctly advised as to the cause of his arrest. We understand, however, that in a public speech at Gainesville he urged the citizens to organize for the purpose of chastising the Indians; that the citizens did organize in accordance with his advice, but failed to report their organization to military headquarters, as they were required to do. For this failure we feel sure Judge Weaver was in no wise responsible, and confidently expect his release when the facts are made known to Gen. Reynolds.

In the same November 13 issue, James Thomas informed his readers that on March 4 the following year, General Grant would succeed Andrew Johnson, the latter “[retiring] to the

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<sup>54</sup> *McKinney Messenger*, February 2, 1868.

<sup>55</sup> *McKinney Messenger*, November 13, 1868.

<sup>56</sup> Randolph B. Campbell, “The District Judges of Texas in 1866-1867: An Episode in the Failure of Presidential Reconstruction,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 93 (Jan 1990): 357-77; *McKinney Messenger*, November 13, 1868

shades of private life,” and that General Edward Canby had succeeded General Reynolds as military commander of the district of Texas. For the time being, Reynolds would retain command of his regiment at Austin. Canby officially received command of Texas the following January.<sup>57</sup>

Although significant economic improvement would not begin in Collin County until the 1870s, in 1869 Francis Emerson opened Collin County’s first bank, F. Emerson & Co, a major step toward future development. F. Emerson & Co. bore its name until 1873, when it became the First National Bank of McKinney. The building is still standing at 108 N. Tennessee St. in what is now the historic downtown district of McKinney. In his 1951 Master’s thesis, *A History of Collin County, Texas*, Harold Beam cited the opening of Emerson’s bank as one of three advancements prior to the arrival of railroads that revolutionized the Collin County economy.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to the beginning of economic growth, 1869 and 1870 featured the heaviest concentration of reported violence and unrest in Collin County for the entire Reconstruction period. On April 24, 1869, Deputy Sherriff William C. Hall, who had served as county Sheriff from March to June 1866 under the provisional government, was killed outside of McKinney. Hall and an unknown number of U.S. soldiers attempted to capture a group of local “desperadoes,” including William Penn, a man referred to only as “Hayes,” and Dow Witt, all reported members of Bob Lee’s gang, and all of whom were wanted for murder and other crimes. Deputy Sheriff Hall and a soldier named James Johnson approached the group first as gunfire broke out. Hall was struck four times and died of his injuries three weeks later. In

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<sup>57</sup> *McKinney Messenger*, November 13, 1868.

<sup>58</sup> Harold Beam, “A History of Collin County, Texas” (master’s thesis, University of Texas, 1951), 110; Rita Bickley Roose and Jeanette Bickley Bland, *Historic Markers of Collin County* (Farmersville, TX: Collin County Historical Commission), 1986.

September of 1897, McKinney's new conservative paper *The Democrat* published an account of the killing of Dow Witt that conflicted with the official record of the slaying of Deputy Sheriff Hall. It claimed that a man named William McGraw shot and killed Witt on March 7, 1869 in East Fork Bottom, more than one month after the reported killing of W. C. Hall.<sup>59</sup>

June 1869 saw one of the few reported incidents between Collin County residents and US soldiers. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of the *Messenger* informed its readers that a "drunken soldier belonging to the post at Greenville entered the house of Isom Mallory, a worthy and industrious freedman of this place [Plano], during Isom's absence, frightened the female members of the family, and finally made off with a couple of watches which he found hanging against the wall of the cabin."<sup>60</sup>

Klan activity in the North Texas region spiked sharply in 1869. Generally, Ku Klux Klan activities in Texas were most common in counties with high black populations. In these areas they engaged heavily in black voter intimidation. In 1869, however, the Ku Klux Klan was active in North Texas despite the fact that blacks constituted less than one-third of the populations of counties. Voter intimidation was therefore not the primary focus of Klan operations there. In Collin County's Second Congressional District, they worked to compete with the Union League by motivating and mobilizing white conservatives against black suffrage and the radical Republican agenda.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Terry Baker, "William C. Hall, Deputy Sheriff, Collin County, TX" (Dallas: Dallas County Sheriff's Department); *The Democrat*, September 9, 1897.

<sup>60</sup> *McKinney Messenger*, June 19, 1869.

<sup>61</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 110-111.



Preceding the 1869 election, a number of officeholders were removed or disqualified from holding office and replaced with appointments from the governor. On June 19, The *Messenger* reported several appointees as well as those officials removed.

Jacob S. Heims to be Justice of the Peace, precinct No. 9, *vice* A. T. Robertson, disqualified.

George Coffey to be Justice of the Peace, precinct No. 2, *vice* Jesse Coffey, disqualified.

Andrew J. Scott to be Justice of the Peace, precinct No. 3, *vice* J. T. Coleman, disqualified.

Town of McKinney – A. J. Taylor to be Mayor, to fill a vacancy.

R. M. Rudolph, George W. Patterson, T. H. Emerson, W. S. Cloyd and John Faires to be Aldermen, to fill vacancies.

General Reynolds appointed Jonathan L. Faires, who had served as county treasurer since June 1666, to the position of Alderman for McKinney and replaced him with John T. Darnall. R. M. Rudolph and George W. Patterson served as District Clerk and County Clerk respectively by General Reynolds's appointment since 1867. A. T. Robertson had served as Chief Justice of Collin County under the Confederate government and as a Justice of the Peace since 1865.<sup>62</sup>

The Governor's race for 1869 was highly controversial. Conservatives and moderate Republicans were skeptical of Reynolds's choice for the Republican ticket, Edmund J. Davis. They favored Morgan Hamilton, a moderate who feared alienating white voters by attempting to build a bi-racial coalition. Governor Pease resigned in September upon learning that Reynolds had encouraged the President to recognize Davis as the Republican candidate. Collin County cast 751 ballots for Governor. Those local participants favored the Hamilton ticket by an overwhelming margin, with 723 votes (96 percent) to Davis' 28 votes (4 percent). By

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<sup>62</sup> *McKinney Messenger*, June 19, 1869; "Collin County, Texas, 'List of Elected Officials,'" 2009, accessed 2014; Brice B. Early, "Alexander T. Robertson, Judge 1815-1891," Unpublished essay, University of North Texas, 1994.

comparison, Texas's Second District, which contained Collin County, supported Hamilton over Davis by a margin of 70 percent to 30 percent.<sup>63</sup>

The election of 1869 appeared to be part of a trend of increasing conservative dominance in Collin County, although election returns do not tell the whole story. Moneyhon noted that, although North Texas Klans did not engage themselves primarily in black voter intimidation, their activities were very effective in discouraging Freedmen from taking to the polls. Collin County saw the greatest reduction in black voter participation over one year across the entire second congressional district, with 70 percent fewer black voters in 1869 than had voted in the 1868 convention elections, although the specifics as to how Collin County's black voters were prevented from taking to the polls are not known.<sup>64</sup>

Whatever methods of political mobilization or intimidation were at work in Collin County in 1869, they were not very effective in altering the political makeup of local government. Voters elected William N. Bush, a county Commissioner from 1866 to 1867, to the position of Sheriff. The elected Commissioners Court consisted of J. W. Thomas, Leaniday Wilson, O. K. Hedgcoxe, and Silvester Bowlby. Thomas, the Unionist editor of the *Messenger*, was also listed as having won the position of County Registrar. Another account lists either Thomas or C. W. Cameron as County Treasurer. Andrew J. Hamilton had appointed Oliver

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<sup>63</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 103-116.

<sup>64</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, *Republicanism in Reconstruction Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980), 208; Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 116.

Hedgcoxe Commissioner in 1865. Silvester Bowlby was appointed County Judge by General Griffin in 1867 and returned as a County Commissioner, this time by a vote.<sup>65</sup>

TABLE 5 – LOCAL ELECTION RETURNS FOR 1869:<sup>66</sup>

District Clerk	J. C. Bengé
County Clerk	Missing
County Sheriff	W. N. Bush
County Attorney	Missing
Assessor	Missing
Collector	Missing
Surveyor	Tom B. Wilson
Treasurer	J. W. Thomas or C. W. Cameron

The election of 1869 gave additional evidence of Collin County’s anomalous political affiliations within the state. Multiple editors across Texas spoke out against the county’s support of Rev. Josh Johnson for Congress over John C. Connor, the preferred conservative candidate of other North Texas counties. The editor of the Democratically affiliated, Austin-based *Tri-Weekly State Gazette* wrote thus of the vote in Collin:<sup>67</sup>

Collin County, Throckmorton’s county, the Collin county *Enquirer*, Throckmorton’s paper, and McKinney, Throckmorton’s town, are all against Connor. The meaning of the whole thing is that Throckmorton is opposed to Conner, and the meaning of that is, that Throckmorton wants to go to Congress himself...

We know the Radicals are chuckling over the apparent dissatisfaction in Collin county, but there is no cloud there, not even half so large as a man’s hand. The Democracy of Collin County in common with that of the entire district, are a unit for Conner. The *Enquirer* cuts no figure in the contest, while its Radical neighbor, the *Messenger*, it opposed Connor before, and yet he survives... You may cut the head off a secretive creeping reptile in the morning, thus rendering him powerless for evil, yet he will continue to wiggle his tail till the sun goes down. The

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<sup>65</sup> *Collin County Elected Officials 1848-1992*, (Secured from the Archives of the State Of Texas), McKinney Public Library.

<sup>66</sup> “Collin County, Texas, ‘List of Elected Officials,’” 2009, accessed 2014.

<sup>67</sup> *Tri-Weekly State Gazette* (Austin) November 23, 1870.

*Enquirer* may continue to wiggle 'till after the next election, but then it will go out in the darkness of political defeat.

On January 8, 1870, General Reynolds began preparations for Texas to return to the Union. He called for the Twelfth Legislature to meet at Austin and take the necessary steps for readmission. The U.S. Congress seated the Texas delegation on March 30, and military rule in Texas came to an end on April 28. The end of Congressional Reconstruction and the end of direct military supervision marked the beginning of an era of statewide Republican control with increasing conservative opposition and dramatic local economic growth. Collin continued to differ from more traditionally conservative districts, but regional pressures and the return to statehood diminished these differences during the final phase of Reconstruction.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 117-118.

## CHAPTER 3

### REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT, 1870-1876

Upon Texas's readmission to the Union, the Davis government set out immediately to address the widespread violence and lawlessness across the state. These problems were especially common in northeastern Texas, where groups of outlaws like the Bob Lee gang operated out of dense thickets with little fear of reprisal. As before, Collin County appears to have been spared much of the worst of the violence associated with North Texas at this time, although white conservative dominance continued to rise.<sup>69</sup>

Conservative Unionists of Throckmorton's ilk were closely aligned with Democrats on the issues of enfranchisement and education for blacks. This was one of the major obstacles faced by Texas Republicans. On April 30, 1870, The *Messenger* copied an editorial from its conservative counterpart, the *McKinney Enquirer*. It is unknown who penned the *Enquirer* article, although the paper was closely associated with Throckmorton. The article, entitled "Shoo Fly," reported the founding of a local Freedmen's school:<sup>70</sup>

We learn that a negro school has been established on the prairie near town, presided over by a genuine, black, greasy, saucy buck negro, who, ten years ago, would have brought \$1500 gold.

Apart from aforementioned reports of a Freedmen's school in McKinney as early as 1866, this is the first credible account of black education in Collin County. James Thomas of the *Messenger* responded to the copied article and took particular issue with the author's racial rhetoric:<sup>71</sup>

The above paragraph is, to say the least, exceedingly unmanly. The blacks constitute numerically a very small proportion of this county. Had they no other defense, their very

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<sup>69</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, "Reconstruction," Handbook of Texas Online, June 15, 2010, accessed May 3, 2015.

<sup>70</sup> *McKinney Messenger*, April 30, 1870.

<sup>71</sup> *McKinney Messenger*, April 30, 1870.

weakness ought to protect them from insult and injury. The author...does not seem to consider that they are human beings and...they are citizens, and as such entitled to the equal protection of the law...It will afford us great pleasure to see [the teacher] liberally sustained by the people of his own color, and to chronicle his success...in dispelling the mental darkness which has so long shrouded his race.

The man referred to by both editors was named Charlie Hubbard. The 1870 census identified Hubbard as a forty-three year old mulatto, born in Cuba, who emigrated to Collin County at an unknown time. Mr. Hubbard boarded at a home with eight other black people in McKinney: the Chamberlain family (farm laborer Jacob, his wife Mary, and their five children) and another boarder named Eliza Johnson.<sup>72</sup>

The name of the school is no longer known, although it was reportedly located a half mile from the public road, situated about one mile west of McKinney as it stood in 1870. According to the *Messenger*, this location was chosen “for its seclusion, in the hope that the unpretending structure would never offend the eye or ear of any who might feel unfriendly to their race or to its mental or moral improvement.” The building was constructed from logs which, “some of the poor blacks of the vicinity had purchased and paid for out of the hard earnings of their honest toil, and had taken down and hauled a distance of four or five miles.”<sup>73</sup>

Much of the available information on this school came from three issues of the *McKinney Messenger*, April 30, June 18 and July 16, 1870. The second issue describes the June 14 burning of the school, perhaps incited by the *Enquirer* article. James Thomas reported that the incident occurred “around midnight, and was the work of an armed party of unknown persons.” It was unknown whether the assailants wore disguises, and one witness reported that a large number of individuals participated. The latter issue reported that black and white

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<sup>72</sup> Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Schedule I (Inhabitants).

<sup>73</sup> *McKinney Messenger*, June 18, 1870.

members of the community helped to rebuild the building, although no references to the school, Hubbard, or the burning appear in extant issues of the *Messenger* after that date. While tensions remained high regarding black education, Collin County entered an era of unprecedented improvements in transportation, trade, and communication.<sup>74</sup>

As of 1870 transportation and trade remained the chief impediment to economic growth in Collin County. One article in the *McKinney Enquirer* from this era described a bill, secured by Senator J. K. Bumpass, which provided for the chartering of three toll bridges between McKinney and Farmersville on East Fork, Pilot Grove, and Sister Grove creeks. High tolls and muddy bottom lands on each side of these creeks periodically cut off trade between McKinney and eastern Collin and contributed to the growth of Farmersville, which still had access to the villages in the eastern part of the county. An entry in the *Texas Almanac* for 1871 confirmed that there were not yet any railroads in the county and that their chief markets were Jefferson and Galveston. It further reported that the county had between fifteen and twenty churches, four or five high schools, and many common schools. McKinney, Farmersville, and Plano were already Collin County's most prosperous towns. The arrival of railroads added exponentially to the growth of these towns and led to the demise of others.<sup>75</sup>

Railroads existed in parts of Texas, particularly the southern portion of the state, since the 1850s. Charters for lines to Collin also date back to the 1850s, but decades and a Civil War passed before such plans could be completed. The impact of the railroad arriving in Collin and the enthusiasm with which many local residents welcomed these changes are difficult to

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<sup>74</sup> *McKinney Messenger*, June 18, 1870, July 16, 1870.

<sup>75</sup> J. Lee and Lillian J. Stambaugh, *A History of Collin County, Texas* (Austin, TX: The Texas State Historical Association, 1958), 112; *The Texas Almanac for 1867 with Statistics, Descriptive and Biographical Sketches, Etc., Relating to Texas* (Galveston, Texas: W. Richardson & Co., 1866), 101.

overstate. Roy and Helen Hall described the arrival of the railroad in October of 1872 as “the biggest thing that ever happened to Collin County.” Local newspapers from the fall of 1872 confirm both this arrival date and the enthusiasm felt across the county.<sup>76</sup>

The early effects of the railroad on the lives of Collin County residents arrived more than a year before the first trains. Houston & Texas Central Railroad (H&TC) contractors arrived in Plano, McKinney, and elsewhere in 1871 and immediately began hiring men to build the railroad bed. In *Pioneering in North Texas*, the Halls described the process of rail construction in Collin County in great detail. A laborer could potentially earn up to ten dollars per day, an amount virtually unheard of at the time considering that the average Collin County farmer could previously allot no more than \$100 annually for hired labor. A man with a team of horses could earn even more, up to fifteen dollars per day.<sup>77</sup>

Construction of the roadbed was divided into three-mile sections with a contractor responsible for hiring his own men and completing his particular section. Forty contractors worked throughout Collin in this manner, with the entire roadbed from Plano to Red River completed in approximately one month. The Halls reported that a contractor named Mullins was assigned to one section from McKinney north to East Fork creek. He hired his own men and teams, which were composed of two men, two horses or mules, and a plow or scraper. Road

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<sup>76</sup> Roy F. Hall and Helen Gibbard Hall, *Collin County: Pioneering in North Texas* (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1975), 51.

<sup>77</sup> Roy F. Hall and Helen Gibbard Hall, *Collin County: Pioneering in North Texas* (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1975), 51.



grading was complete around Christmas of 1871, and by August of 1872 the track reached Wilson Creek.<sup>78</sup>

Cross ties for the railroad were taken from local Bois d'Arc trees, offering Collin County residents another potential source of income. Sam Young reportedly cut such ties for the H&TC Railroad at a rate of 10 cents per 100 ties. The railroad company did not rely exclusively on local labor to complete the line. Reports indicate that as many as 100 Chinese, Irish, and Italian immigrants worked alongside Collin County residents.<sup>79</sup>



Upon its completion, the H&TC Line ran from Harrisburg, Texas (now a part of Houston), to Dallas County. From there it followed a path that roughly corresponded to modern-day North Central Expressway and SH 5 into McKinney. It was originally called the Texas & New Orleans Railroad, and it took approximately 18 hours to travel the line's 341 miles. For

Figure 2 - Houston & Texas  
Central Railroad Map, 1872

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<sup>78</sup> Roy F. Hall and Helen Gibbard Hall, *Collin County: Pioneering in North Texas* (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1975), 51.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.* 51-53.

residents of Collin, this was a revolutionary advance in transportation capabilities.<sup>80</sup>

By all indications from local newspaper editors and local historians, the people of Collin County were ecstatic over these new developments. An article in the *McKinney Messenger*, entitled "CELEBRATION," informed its readers of an "old fashioned barbecue," Thursday, November 21, 1872, commemorating the completion of the railroad to McKinney. The editor encourages all members of the press, telegraph and railroad companies, and all North Texas citizens to attend. The editor concluded:<sup>81</sup>

Fully ten thousand people are expected and ample preparations for their entertainment are promised. Let the people come out, and let us rejoice together over our present good fortune and bright prospects for the future.

A second article in the same issue noted that construction cars had reached a point near *Messenger* headquarters on Saturday, November 9, 1872.<sup>82</sup>

The benefits from the arrival of the H&TC line were immediate and dramatic. The line passed through the then small village of Plano (population 155 in 1870), which donated and sold over thirty acres of land to the railroad for the right-of-way as it came through the area. Plano had been settled in the fall of 1850 and experienced only limited growth until the arrival of the railroad. A February 15, 1872, article in the *Houston Telegraph* described Plano during construction of the H&TC line:<sup>83</sup>

This [is] an interesting village on the stage route from Dallas to McKinney eighteen miles from the former and fourteen from the latter place. It contains five respectable

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<sup>80</sup> Roy F. Hall and Helen Gibbard Hall, *Collin County: Pioneering in North Texas* (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1975), 51-53.; Joy Gough, *Hear That Lonesome Whistle Blow: The History of Railroads and Interurbans in Collin County, Texas*. (1997), 2; Herman Lungkwitz, "Collin County," General Land Office (1872), in the Portal To Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph88437/>.

<sup>81</sup> *McKinney Messenger*, November 16, 1872.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *The Houston Telegraph*, February 15, 1872.

dry goods stores, one drug store, [and] one family grocery. In its immediate vicinity is a first-class Seminary of learning of which Professor E[?]leon is Principal assisted by competent teachers. In this Seminary are successfully taught all the higher branches of education, music, etc. The professor has recently purchased a first class Piano, of our townsman, E. H. Cushing, whose music and musical instruments are rapidly gaining popularity in this region of country.

I have had the pleasure to day of aiding in the inauguration of the first book store ever attempted in Plano. The stock is ordered from your townsman previously named. It is in contemplation to organize here, soon, a Union Sundry School. The price on unimproved lands in this vicinity varies from eight to ten dollars per acre. The soil is unsurpassed for fertility, producing wheat, corn, cotton, potatoes, onions, etc. in great abundance. Of the general health of the country there can be no doubt. Either well or cistern water can be easily procured. Fruits of any variety adapted to the climate are produced in great abundance...

The farmers are exerting themselves during this exceedingly favorable weather to prepare for planting, most of the corn crop will be planted here during March. The wheat crop continues to look promising. The immigration of the past season has been comparatively light in this section. Much interest is being manifested in railroad enterprises. Many speak of coming to your State Fair next May.

According to the Hall's, a purchasing agent for the H&TC line named Oglesby founded Allen in 1871. The area was settled as early as the 1850s and was the site of the county's first gristmill, but the capital brought in by the railroad brought the city into prominence. It was named for one of two Collin residents (accounts vary), either Ebenezer Allen, the recipient of the original 1848 railroad charter who died in the Civil War, and after whom the first engine on the line was named, or J.K. Allen, a contributor to the line. In 1874 a dam was built on Cottonwood Creek, just north of the town, to provide water for steam locomotives. The path of the railroad also led to the creation of the towns of Melissa and Anna, just east and north of McKinney respectively. Reports vary, but these towns were named for the daughters of either C.P. Huntington or G.A. Quinlan, both railroad officials.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Roy F. Hall and Helen Gibbard Hall. *Collin County: Pioneering in North Texas*. (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1975), 89; Joy Gough, *Hear That Lonesome Whistle Blow: The History of Railroads and Interurbans in Collin County, Texas* (1997), 3.

Despite the benefits conferred on the county as a whole, the railroad often meant ruin for towns it bypassed. When Melissa was formed, the line skipped past the old town of Highland and led to its demise. The formerly prominent town of Mantua reportedly refused to pay for the privilege of having the railroad pass through when approached by H&TC officials. As a result, the line skipped Mantua and created the town of Van Alstyne nearby. Most residents of Mantua migrated to the new town, and within years it was a ghost town.<sup>85</sup>

The railroad also dramatically altered the agricultural picture of Collin County. From 1855 to 1872, very little changed due to limitations in transportation and the minimal potential to market or acquire quality goods. By utilizing the railroad, supplies could be hauled at a fraction of the prohibitive costs associated with freight wagon trains. Farm labor wages immediately increased, and there was an abundant supply of local labor to take advantage of this. Collin County farmers could finally afford to repurpose their land for cash crop production. By 1876, over 10,000 acres of cotton were reportedly planted across the county with an average production of one bale per acre. For the time, though, corn remained the chief crop.<sup>86</sup>

As a result of rapid economic development, demand for luxury goods greatly increased, especially high quality clothes, and fine homes and buildings began to appear, utilizing better, imported materials. The Halls noted that suddenly, for the first time, “2000 men of the county were making [up to] fifteen dollars per day.” Collin County was bustling. The women “blossomed out in Calico in brilliant hues,” and men discarded their homemade jeans to “don clothing made in England.” Local economic improvements, however, did not help to eliminate

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<sup>85</sup> Joy Gough, *Hear That Lonesome Whistle Blow: The History of Railroads and Interurbans in Collin County, Texas* (1997), 3.

<sup>86</sup> Roy F. Hall and Helen Gibbard Hall, *Collin County: Pioneering in North Texas*. (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1975), 43-53.

violence or unrest.<sup>87</sup>

For much of 1871, newspapers across Texas closely followed developments surrounding the murder of young James P. Golden by Stephen M. Ballew in Collin County. J. Lee and Lillian J. Stambaugh described the events as “the most spectacular...[and] celebrated murder trial...in the police annals of North Texas.” Stephen M. Ballew, of Menden, Illinois, entered the home of James P. Golden, also of Menden, in the fall of 1869. He befriended the Golden family and claimed to own valuable herds of livestock in Missouri. He mentioned that he and Nate Dougherty, who Ballew claimed was his cousin, were going to Shreveport, Louisiana, in the spring of 1870 with a drove of mules after which he had a contract to sell horses. He persuaded Golden to include four of his own horses in the contract on the promise of high profits.<sup>88</sup>

When he returned, Ballew lied that the trip had been a financial success. He reported that one of Golden’s horses had died, but the other three sold for \$1,080 at Shreveport and Golden could collect upon his return trip that fall. Later in 1870, he again persuaded Golden to go into business with him. This time, he asserted that while in Missouri, he had purchased goods worth \$22,000 to be distributed among small Texas towns, for which \$14,000 was paid in cash and \$8,000 was still due. He further claimed to be out of cash, while the merchandise was already en route to Jefferson. Golden agreed to furnish the remainder, as well as \$1000 for a rig and an additional \$500 for travel expenses. During his time in Collin County, Ballew became engaged to

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<sup>87</sup> Roy F. Hall and Helen Gibbard Hall, *Collin County: Pioneering in North Texas*. (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1975), 43-53.

<sup>88</sup> J. Lee and Lillian J. Stambaugh, *A History of Collin County, Texas* (Austin, TX: The Texas State Historical Association, 1958), 132-133.

James's sister, Clara Golden.<sup>89</sup>

On September 13, 1870, James P. Golden accompanied Ballew to Quincy, where he presented him with a note for \$1,500 for the horses sold on the previous trip, to be paid when the merchandise was sold. Ballew raised suspicions when he wrote to the Golden family on November 1 of the profits received on their merchandise and returned to the Golden farm, alone, riding one of the horses supposedly sold in Shreveport that March. He feigned surprise that James was not waiting there for him. Nine days later, Ballew married Clara Golden. He began to tell members of the Golden family that while in Quincy, he had given James \$11,000 dollars and that he believed James had run away with the money. He further contended that, because James Golden was responsible for his financial losses, that the Golden family should deed him a farm adjoining their property.<sup>90</sup>

Fearing that Ballew would receive the Golden farm, James' Uncle, Stephen Golden, travelled to Quincy, where he learned that Ballew's stories of stock and goods were untrue. Stephen Golden and State Attorney W. G. Ewing lured Ballew to Quincy under the pretense of drawing up the necessary papers to deed him the farm, and had him arrested. In March 1871, Ewing arrived in Texas and located James Golden's body and his horse, wagon, and other personal items, all of which had been sold. It was later concluded that Ballew had killed Golden with an axe three miles southeast of McKinney and buried him there. With substantial evidence, Ewing obtained an indictment by a McKinney grand jury and called for Ballew's return

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<sup>89</sup>J. Lee and Lillian J. Stambaugh, *A History of Collin County, Texas* (Austin, TX: The Texas State Historical Association, 1958), 133-134.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, 134-136.

to Collin County.<sup>91</sup>

On Saturday June 24, 1871 The *McKinney Messenger* reported that Collin County Sheriff W. N. Bush arrived with Ballew bound in “[nineteen] pounds of bracelets, shackles and chains,” en route from Quincy, Illinois. The report concluded that Ballew was lodged in jail, due to stand trial for the murder of Golden the following July. A July 6 edition of *The Houston Telegraph* corroborated this account. On June 3, 1872, *The Galveston Standard* reported that Ballew’s trial occurred earlier than expected and had been swiftly concluded:<sup>92</sup>

EXECUTION OF BALLEW – Yesterday between the hours of one and three o’clock, Stephen M. Ballew suffered the extreme penalty of the law in expiation of the offence for which he had been tried, convicted, and sentenced; to wit, the murder of James P. Golden.

Ballew’s hanging on May 24 was Collin County’s one and only legally sanctioned execution during Reconstruction. In December of 1872 an article from the *McKinney Enquirer* advertised a 200-page history of Stephen Ballew, “embracing an account of Ballew’s early life and tendencies, ...and his transactions...in which his peculiar idiosyncrasies crop out, as well as the testimony in full upon final trial and conviction.” The author concluded that, “the crime has rarely been equaled and never surpassed in the boldness and wickedness of its conception; and ingenuity and remorselessness of execution.” In the midst of intrigue surrounding the Ballew-Golden affair, Collin County and the rest of Texas participated in state and national elections during 1871 and 1872.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> J. Lee and Lillian J. Stambaugh, *A History of Collin County, Texas* (Austin, TX: The Texas State Historical Association, 1958), 134-136.

<sup>92</sup> *McKinney Messenger*, June 24, 1871; *The Houston Telegraph*, July 6, 1871; *The Galveston Standard*, June 3, 1872.

<sup>93</sup> *Dallas Herald*, December 7, 1872.

Between October 3 and 6, 1871, Texas held congressional elections. Democratic Congressman John Connor won reelection easily in Collin County's Second District against Republican challenger A. M. Bryant, 18,285 votes to 6,948. Unlike in previous elections, the Democratic victory was not reliant on keeping blacks from voting. Instead, it was the result of massively increased Democratic voter turnout, largely due to the improved organization of the Democratic Party.<sup>94</sup>

The election of 1872 potentially held more important contests than those the previous year, with every seat in the state house of representatives, one-third of the seats in the state senate, and most county officials. On October 12, 1872 the *Dallas Herald* endorsed Collin County's E. D. Chambers for the state Legislature, twenty-first district. The names of most local election winners in Collin County for 1872 have been lost. The only name on Collin County's list of elected officials for this year was that of G. W. Cameron, who is listed as having won the office of Treasurer on November 8 or December 2 of 1872.<sup>95</sup>

The election 1872 was also the first presidential contest in which Texas participated since 1860. Despite the enthusiasm displayed in 1868 by Republican editors like James Thomas of the *Messenger*, Collin supported Horace Greeley over President Grant by a margin of 79 percent to 21 percent. This figure was much higher than the state of Texas as a whole, which Greeley won by a margin of 58 percent to forty-two percent. Between 1871 and 1872, the advancement of Republican programs and the ability to enforce those programs largely came to

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<sup>94</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 182-183.

<sup>95</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 183-184; *Dallas Herald*, Saturday October 12 1872; "Collin County, Texas, 'List of Elected Officials,'" 2009, accessed 2014.



an end. With rising numbers white conservative voters, the result of the upcoming gubernatorial elections seemed a foregone conclusion.<sup>96</sup>

The cotton crop was highly successful during the harvest of 1873. Not only had Collin finally begun to participate in the cotton economy of Texas in a meaningful way, it outperformed many other cotton growing districts in the South. On August 21, the *Houston Telegraph* published the Monthly Report of the Department of Agriculture for July, which rated the average condition of the cotton crop in all the Southern states as 89.5. Texas fared slightly worse than the rest of the South according to this estimate, with an average condition of 78. However, ten Texas counties outperformed the rest of the South, with Collin and Hill counties' cotton crop ratings at 125, Tarrant County at 120, Comal at 155, Orange and Sabine counties at 110, Medina and Karnes counties at 105, and Rusk and Anderson counties at 100.<sup>97</sup>

The Democrats' primary difficulty leading up to the 1873 election was uniting the pro-railroad and agrarian factions of the party. James Throckmorton counted among the contenders for the Democratic nomination with close ties to railroad interests. Agrarian Democrats made it clear that they would not support a candidate like Throckmorton, so as a compromise the convention opted for Richard Coke, a Waco lawyer and Confederate veteran who had not taken a stance on railroad issues. Collin County's voting totals for governor aligned closely with the other counties in Texas's Second District, signaling a continued shift towards conservative dominance in the region. With 1,973 voters participating, Richard Coke carried Collin County with 86 percent (1,691) to 14 percent (282). The Second District went to Coke by a margin of 82

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<sup>96</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, *Republicanism in Reconstruction Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980), 215; Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 187.

<sup>97</sup> *Houston Telegraph*, August 21, 1873.

percent to 18 percent. Statewide returns indicated a crushing defeat for Davis and the Republican Party, who failed to capitalize on discontent among Democratic factions and lost by a statewide vote of 85,549 votes to 42,663. Once again, high white voter turnout and low black voter turnout contributed heavily to the result.<sup>98</sup>

After Coke's election, a brief controversy ensued regarding the legality of the election. Democrats were ultimately successful in their efforts to take control of the governor's office and seat the Fourteenth Legislature before the end of Governor Davis's term. Coke and the "Redeemer Democrats" quickly moved to solidify white control with laws guaranteeing wealthy planters necessary labor. The illegality of some of these measures according to the Constitution of 1869 led to the Democrat-dominated constitutional convention of 1875, which produced a constitution that heavily decentralized state power. The new constitution passed overwhelmingly in February 1876 and provided the framework under which Democrats dominated state politics for decades.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), 194-197; Carl H. Moneyhon, *Republicanism in Reconstruction Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980) 220.

<sup>99</sup> Moneyhon, Carl H. *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004) 198-200.

## CONCLUSION

A study of Collin County during Reconstruction justifies scholarly attention to local history. Early accounts of local Reconstruction history were subject to the same political biases of professional historians writing about Reconstruction, but the fact that many local histories were written by non-academics complicates this matter. They often did not offer their sources. They often based their arguments on rumors, urban legend, or hearsay. With increased scholarship focusing on Reconstruction at the state and county level, it is possible to compare older works with more recent research and the wealth of archived and digitized evidence available to learn how Reconstruction really played out in local communities.

Collin County residents always differed from their fellow Texans in a number of ways. Early settlers were primarily from the Border South states of Missouri, Ohio, and Tennessee, and thus many did not have the southern heritage of other Texans. Few owned slaves or farmed for commercial purposes, so they were not subject to the same vested interest in preserving slavery that eventually led Texas to secession. A sufficient number of Collin County residents showed disloyalty to the Confederacy to warrant punitive action from Throckmorton and the Confederate government. Unionist newspapers reminded readers of atrocities committed during the war for years to come. Collin County did not begin to align with its neighbors until the 1870s, when Republican government, increased white conservative political involvement, and a growing population placed the county firmly in the hands of Conservatives.

Collin County was not without violence, but the nature of the violence was perhaps different than in some other parts of Texas. Former Confederates like Bob Lee harassed, threatened, and at times murdered freedmen, unionists, and federal officials, yet outspoken

unionist editors like James Thomas of the *Messenger* promoted the Republican platform and called for laws protecting the freedmen for decades without reprisal. It would appear that outbreaks of violence and unrest in Collin County were the exception, not the rule. The U. S. Military did not appear to intervene, with the exception of the Lee-Peacock Feud, which spanned over four other North Texas counties.

Collin County had been poor before the war and remained so in the years that followed. Muddy, often impassable roads, poorly constructed bridges that were seasonally wiped out by flooding, and sole reliance on wagons stymied trade. Innovation and growth occurred elsewhere, but because of lack of capital and relative isolation, most of these benefits did not arrive before the first railroad contractors arrived. Within a short time, the county was bustling. Cheaper, faster transportation combined with the rich local soil meant that Collin County residents could grow cotton, make money, invest in better homes, clothes, and equipment, and attract further development.

Although Collin County had a larger black population than many other north Texas counties, African Americans constituted a very small percentage of the population. This meant that any political gains as a result of black suffrage came from the disillusionment of white voters rather than any substantive political organizing by the Union League or Republican Party. Ku Klux Klan activities also took a different form there, working more towards mobilizing white conservatives than intimidating or pressuring potential black voters. This is not to say that black people in Collin County were not harassed. Their comparatively low population made it that much easier for whites to act against black suffrage and, particularly, education when they were determined to do so. It serves as evidence of widely divergent political affiliations within

the county, for instance, that within a few months in 1870 a freedmen's school was built, burned, and rebuilt.

Collin County's Reconstruction experience is most notable for its drift from diehard Unionism to mainstream conservatism. National and state level studies of the period are not detailed enough to give readers an accurate picture of Collin County, its people, or its politics. Some observed trends, like the early and short-lived momentum of black voters followed by increased white political interest were commonplace. Other factors, like open support for the civil rights of freedmen in a region with little to no available protection from the military or Freedmen's Bureau, defy conventional narratives. By the end of Reconstruction, Collin County's anomalous status within its region and state had all but disappeared.

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