



2015 - 2016 EDITION

TEXAS POLITICS

IDEAL AND REALITY

NEWELL ★ PRINDLE ★ RIDDLESERGER



Texas Politics helps you meet the State Learning Outcomes for GOVT2306

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.
6. Analyze the state and local election process.
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.

Chapter in Texas Politics	GOVT 2306 State Learning Outcomes (SLO) that are specifically addressed in the chapter
1. The Context of Texas Politics	SLO 2. Demonstrate an understanding of state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government. SLO 5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas. SLO 7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens. SLO 8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
2. The Constitutional Setting	SLO 1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution. SLO 3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas. SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.
3. Interest Groups	SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government. SLO 5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas. SLO 7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
4. Political Parties	SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government. SLO 5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas. SLO 6. Analyze the state and local election process. SLO 7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens. SLO 8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
5. Voting, Campaigns, and Elections	SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government. SLO 5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas. SLO 6. Analyze the state and local election process. SLO 7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens. SLO 8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
6. The Legislature	SLO 3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas. SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government. SLO 5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas. SLO 8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.

(continued on inside back cover)

Texas Politics: Ideal and Reality

Thirteenth Edition

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Thirteenth Edition**

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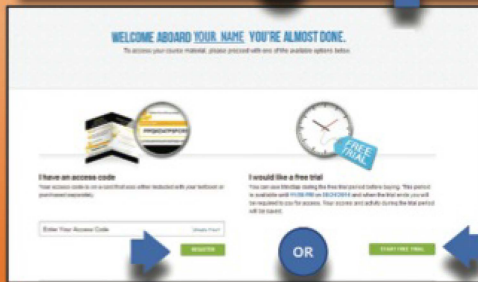
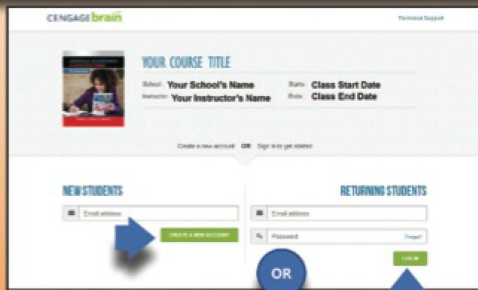
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to Instructors...

The authors have observed and taught Texas politics for more than 125 years collectively. We remain fascinated by the foibles of Texas government and the dynamic changes that have occurred in the politics of the state since this book was first published in 1979. We write *Texas Politics: Ideal and Reality* because we think the governance of the second-largest state in the United States warrants close scrutiny and that instructors and students deserve a book that takes both a broad view and provides enough details to allow readers to evaluate their government. We are aware that most students take the Texas politics course only because the state says they must, but we hope that by emphasizing current events and recent history, we can pique the interest of both those who teach and those who learn.

The Book's Themes

The dominant theme of this book is **ideal and reality**, that is, how democratic ideals of participation, majority rule, minority rights, and equality before the law are met by the realities of politics in a state that, through most of its history, has been a one-party state—not always the same party—and that emphasizes the values of individualism and traditionalism far more than a moralistic political culture. Two other themes help to shape the book: persistent but not unchallenged **conservatism** and **conflict** arising from various political factions and ethnic, racial, and economic diversity in the state. As political scientists we are trained to be analysts, not apologists, for the system. Thus, in chapter after chapter, you will see questions raised about whether political processes and practices in Texas meet the test of democratic morality and suggestions about how to improve the Texas political system. We also examine the evolution of today's political conservatism and the state's political disagreements and their consequences for public policy.

New to This Edition

Although *Texas Politics* retains its longtime structure and approach, the Thirteenth Edition offers several new features. They include:

- **A stronger emphasis on the contrast between democratic ideals and political reality**
- **More extensive coverage of federalism** and Texas's role in the federal system
- **Numbered learning objectives** that drive each chapter's organization, with a learning objective tied to each major section and to each paragraph of the chapter summary
- **Key term definitions in the margins** of each chapter as well as in the glossary
- **A new review section at the end of the chapter** with author-written multiple-choice and critical thinking questions
- **A new interactive "Texas Politics and You" box** in each chapter that asks students to become directly involved in an often controversial issue, often through social media, prompting students to react to specific postings, articles from Texas college newspapers, political cartoons, and more
- **Tightened language and improved organization** that makes the book shorter, easier to read, and less expensive than the previous edition

MindTap

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From the Authors

We hope you find *Texas Politics: Ideal and Reality* to be readable, thorough, and interesting. We welcome your comments and your reactions not only to the book itself but also to the new and exciting digital features designed to make your teaching job easier.

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to Students...

Few students in Texas politics classes are political science majors, but every student is affected by the political processes common in the state and by the policy outcomes that are a result of the Texas political culture, the state's diversity, the attitude toward the national government, and the boom-and-bust economy. For those at a public college or university, how does diminishing support for higher education affect you personally? Most readers of this book will continue to live in Texas and be affected by its political decisions. Are the highways congested and rutted, or nicely paved with free-flowing traffic lanes? Are the public schools adequate to prepare students for success in both college and the modern workforce? Is justice dispensed fairly and impartially, or according to ethnicity, race, or wealth? Can the state attract employers offering high-end jobs, or is the quality of life in Texas inadequate to the task? As citizens, you need to not only vote in every election but also understand the issues and the candidates. Gaining that understanding can actually be a lot of fun once you begin to realize just how “crazy” the Texas political system really is.

The Book's Themes

The dominant theme of this book is **ideal and reality**, with the themes of **conservatism** and **conflict** also appearing throughout the text. Texas politics so often presents two contrasting sides of a situation. For example, elected officials constantly rail against the national government, but also depend on it for a large share of the state's budget. Should a state always be a willing participant in the United States? Should it be consistent and either decline federal dollars or participate in all the programs available? The state has chosen not to expand Medicare and not to have a state pool under the Affordable Health Care Act even though Texas has the highest percentage of uninsured residents in the country. Yet this position is very popular with voters. Does the state meet the test of democratic morality—participation, majority rule, minority rights, and equality before the law—by the realities of its political practices? Similarly, the state is basically anti-tax, and, as the introduction to the finance chapter notes, a politician would rather handle a rattlesnake than suggest a tax increase. Resentment of taxes is a classic conservative position. Does the low-tax stance really save taxpayers money, or do they make their “contributions” in other ways such as college tuition, local utility rates, and borrowing?

Questions of democratic morality and conservatism exist in an environment of conflict. Politics is always about conflict, about disagreement, but Texas has extremes not only in its weather but also in its people—rich and poor, Anglo and non-Anglo, religious fundamentalists and non-religious humanists. Too often, these diverse groups play a “zero-sum” game, with the winner taking all and the loser receiving nothing. The room for compromise has grown smaller.

All of these conditions affect you now and will continue to affect you in the future. How much do you pay for tuition? Is there adequate student aid? Are there enough faculty members? Has a president or favorite faculty member been forced to resign because he or she disagreed with the politically appointed board of regents? How well are international students treated on your campus, especially those from the Middle East? Will you be paying college debt for the next twenty years? Did you miss a vital course due to campus cutbacks that will leave you ill-prepared for a future job? Has the college experience given you an appreciation of different cultures that will stand you in good stead in the future?

Features of the Book

Some of the key features of this book are:

- **Learning objectives for each chapter** that guide the organization of and discussion of the chapter and are also summarized at the end of the chapter
- **Key term definitions in the margins** of each chapter as well as in the glossary
- **Both multiple-choice and critical thinking questions** for review
- **A “Texas Politics and You” feature in each chapter** that asks you to become directly involved in an often controversial issue, often through social media
- **A “You Decide” feature in each chapter** that poses a question, gives pro and con arguments, and then asks you to make a decision on the issue
- **Cartoons**, mainly by Pulitzer Prize winner Ben Sargent, designed to provoke your reaction and spur discussion
- **Electronic aids** outlined below to help you master the course material

MindTap

As a student, the benefits of using MindTap with this book are endless. With automatically graded practice quizzes and activities, automatic detailed revision plans on your essay assignments offered through Write Experience, an easily navigated learning path, and an interactive eBook, you will be able to test yourself in and outside of the classroom with ease. The accessibility of current events coupled with interactive media makes the content fun and engaging. On your computer, phone, or tablet, MindTap is there when you need it, giving you easy access to flashcards, quizzes, readings, and assignments.

From the Authors

We hope that you will enjoy *Texas Politics: Ideal and Reality* and find it a useful tool to sparking your interest in state and local government and politics. At a minimum, we hope the book helps you to appreciate why you need to understand state and local politics and government and to vote regularly. Texas is a big, boisterous, sprawling state, and its politics follows suit. Think of Texas politics as a primetime soap opera.

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Resources

Students

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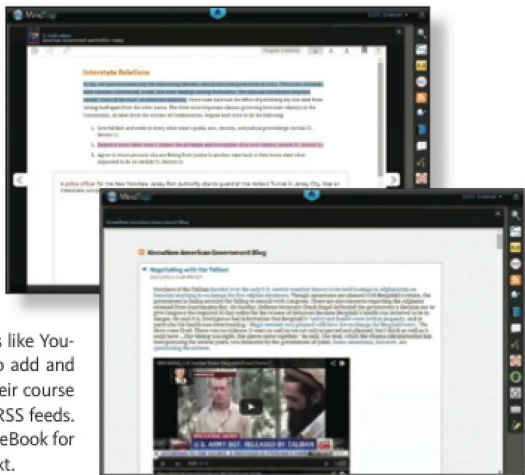


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Reviewers

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Texas sometimes
looks like
the United
States taken
to its logical
conclusion.

ERICA GRIEDER,
*BIG, HOT, CHEAP,
AND RIGHT:
WHAT AMERICA
CAN LEARN FROM
THE STRANGE GENIUS
OF TEXAS*, 2013



The San Jacinto Monument near
Beaumont commemorates the
1836 battle in which Texans won
their independence from Mexico.

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THE CONTEXT OF TEXAS POLITICS

1

Much has changed in Texas between its entrance to the United States of America in 1845 and the present era in which journalist Erica Grieder, quoted above, described the state as a model for the nation. During the entire nineteenth century and much of the twentieth, Texas was poor, agricultural, and sparsely settled. Today, it is the nation's second most populous state, four-fifths of the population lives in cities or suburbs, and it leads the country in consuming energy and producing semi-conductors, among other distinctions. Yet, as we shall see, in some ways Texas has changed little since 1845. The Lone Star State is a constantly developing mix of old and new.

Old habits of thought and behavior evolved to meet the problems of the nineteenth century, when Texas was settled by Americans of western European background. These habits persist today, despite serious new problems created in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. As Texans prepare themselves to meet the challenges of the future, they have to ask themselves if the habits and institutions they have inherited are up to the job.

In this chapter, the first topic is a summary of the history of Texas, with an emphasis on important political events and development of the economy. Some of the most basic principles of democratic theory are then discussed, along with an explanation of why it is vital to understand them, and a brief look at one of democracy's problems, private influence over public policy. Two discussions then situate Texas within the American federal system and the international arena. The focus then shifts to Texas's political culture and some historically crucial social and political attitudes. The next subject is the economy of Texas and the way it interacts with the state's political system. As an introduction to some discussions later in the book, the origin and distribution of the state's population are then considered. Finally, there is a brief outline of the agenda for the rest of the book.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

LO 1.1 Give a brief account of the causes and consequences of the major events in Texas history, such as the Texas Revolution, slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, the cotton and oil industries, world wars and the Depression, political changes from the Old South to modern Texas, and the state's evolution to a modern economy.

LO 1.2 Summarize democratic theory and the standards it supplies by which we can evaluate the democratic legitimacy of any state or country.

LO 1.3 Discuss whether it is desirable, or even possible, for Texas to have a "foreign policy."

LO 1.4 Give a brief description of the three political cultures, and explain how they apply to Texas.

LO 1.5 Summarize the overall pattern of the relationship of Texas government to the Texas economy, and explain why it is difficult to determine whether or not Texas is a good place to live.

LO 1.6 Discuss the ratios of Anglo, Latinos, and African Americans in the Texas population, and explain why those ratios matter to a book about state government.

Like a human being, a state is partly what it is because of what it has experienced. A review of Texas history will highlight the background and context of the themes, institutions, behaviors, and events we discuss in this book.

THE EARLIEST DAYS

Humans have inhabited Texas for much longer than there has been such a thing as a state. Skull fragments found near Midland (dubbed “Midland Minnie”) and a complete female skeleton discovered near Leander have been dated at 10,000 to 13,000 years old; a larger Clovis period (10,000–9,000 B.C.) site has been excavated in Denton County. At the time of the first European exploration in the sixteenth century, perhaps 30,000 to 40,000 Native Americans inhabited what is now Texas, and some estimates run as high as 130,000. Among the major groups were the Caddo tribes of North and East Texas, Tonkawas in Central Texas, Karankawas along the coast, Coahuiltecas from the Rio Grande to what is now San Antonio, Lipan Apaches and Comanches in West Texas, and Jumanos in the Trans Pecos region. Determined to keep their lands, they violently resisted European settlement. Westward advancement in Texas cost seventeen White lives per mile. One can only guess at the cost to the Native Americans, although it was undoubtedly much higher.

As early as 1519, just twenty-seven years after the European discovery of the New World and a century before the English Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, Spanish explorer Alonzo Alvarez de Pineda mapped the entire Gulf Coast. Several expeditions followed, but Spanish activity was not extensive until 1685, when the French explorer Rene Robert Cavaliere de Sieur La Salle built a small fort in what is now South Texas. This threat of competition from their imperial rivals spurred the Spanish to establish a series of missions beginning in 1690.

The purposes of these missions were to extend the sphere of Spanish domination and civil law and to convert Native Americans to Christianity. Spanish influence extended across South Texas from Louisiana to New Mexico, and by the time of the American Revolution in 1776, about 2,300 Native Americans had been baptized.

However, Spanish power was already waning as a result of economic and military factors. After one abortive attempt, Mexico achieved independence from Spain in 1821. By that year, despite the centuries of Spanish influence, there were only three permanent European settlements in Texas—San Antonio, Nacogdoches, and Goliad—and the European population had declined to 7,000 during the previous thirty years. Although their numbers were relatively small, Spaniards and Mexicans left rich and indelible influences on Texas through their language, law, religion, and culture.

ANGLO-AMERICAN COLONIZATION

Colonization from the south did not succeed in Texas because of shortsighted economic policies. The Spanish government exploited the few settlers by paying poor prices for their cattle and other products and, at the same time, by charging them high prices for trade goods. As a result, few settlers moved to the giant province.

Texas was potentially much more attractive to settlers from the neighboring United States. There, frontier land was sold to would-be settlers, but in Texas, land was free if one could get a government grant. Because the Spanish government had

failed to persuade Mexican citizens to colonize the area, it was nervous about expansionist impulses in the United States. Spain decided to gamble that it could acculturate Anglo settlers and use them to protect Mexican interests against the growing, rambunctious democracy to the north.

Moses Austin, a native of Connecticut, abandoned his unsuccessful business activities in Missouri and turned his attention to Texas. Moses died after filing a formal application for settlement with the viceroy of Mexico in 1819. He was succeeded by his son, Stephen F. Austin, who received a generous land grant, as well as permission to bring in 300 families for colonization. The first settlements were at Columbus on the Colorado River and at Washington-on-the-Brazos. As impresario, or agent, Austin had wide powers over his colony to establish commercial activity, organize a militia, and dispense justice.

Other colonies quickly followed and the non-Native American population jumped from 7,000 to more than 35,000 between 1821 and 1836. The great majority of the settlers came in good faith, intending to take the oath of allegiance to Mexico and be good Mexican citizens. However, the cultural differences they encountered made this difficult. Not only was Spanish the official language, but the colonists, mostly Protestant, also were required to accept Roman Catholicism. Some colonists continued to keep Black slaves, although this practice was illegal in Mexico.

Furthermore, the new Mexican nation was suffering from violent political instability, and policy toward Texas was both inconsistent and made 900 miles away in Mexico City by men who knew little about conditions in the area. Moreover, Anglos tended to regard themselves as culturally superior to Mexicans and vice versa. Alienation between Texas and Mexico grew, much as alienation between the colonists and the British had grown prior to the American Revolution two generations earlier.

REVOLUTION

The Mexican government now feared further Anglo-American settlement and acted to curtail it. The settlers responded with demands for concessions, including the right to use the English language in public business and the separation of Texas from

The Alamo in San Antonio symbolizes the state's colorful political history.

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the state of Coahuila. Austin was imprisoned in Mexico City for a time, and conditions degenerated. What followed is known to virtually every schoolchild in the state: Texas's war for independence. The most celebrated engagement was the battle in San Antonio during March 1836 in which a few Anglos and Texas-Mexicans held the Alamo against a much larger Mexican force for eleven days before being massacred. Nevertheless, although it makes a stirring story, the Alamo was not a decisive engagement. That distinction belongs to the Battle of San Jacinto, which took place between the new Texas army, led by Sam Houston, and the Mexican army, led by General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, on April 21.

Surprising the Mexicans while they took a siesta in the afternoon, the Texans routed them in a mere eighteen minutes, captured Santa Anna, and ordered him to sign a document agreeing to their independence or be executed. Santa Anna signed, but repudiated the treaty as soon as he was safely across the border. Texans, however, considered themselves independent, and the Republic of Texas became a reality.

The history of the republic was eventful, but short. Independence brought sudden growth, with the population rising rapidly to about 140,000. The Mexicans invaded twice, capturing San Antonio both times before being repulsed. Resistant Native Americans continued to cause severe problems as well. The new nation soon found itself in debt and with a depreciating currency. Sentiment for annexation by the United States had always been strong, and on December 29, 1845, the U.S. Congress voted to admit Texas into the Union as the twenty-eighth state. This was one of those rare events in history in which an independent nation voluntarily gave up its sovereignty and became part of another nation. Unlike other states, Texas retained the title to all of its public lands when it accepted statehood.

EARLY STATEHOOD

A final peace treaty with Mexico had never been signed, and the Mexican government still considered Texas merely a rebellious province. Annexation of the area by the United States precipitated the Mexican War. This conflict was short and decisive. The first engagement took place at Palo Alto, near present-day Brownsville, on May 8, 1846, and Mexico City fell less than a year and a half later, on September 14, 1847. Under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the defeated nation relinquished all claim to Texas and, in return for \$15 million, ceded all territory west of Texas and south of Oregon to the United States. One can only wonder what the value of this vast tract is today.

No political parties, as such, existed in the Republic of Texas. Sam Houston, the hero of the Battle of San Jacinto, was the dominant political figure, and political debate generally divided along pro-Houston and anti-Houston lines. For the reasons outlined, to the extent that Texans thought about national politics, most were Democrats.

At the time of her independence in 1836, Texas was home to about 5,000 Black slaves.¹ By joining the United States, however, the Lone Star State plunged into the political controversy over slavery. That issue simmered at higher and higher temperatures until it boiled over with the election of an antislavery Republican, Abraham Lincoln, as president in 1860. Fearful that Republican control would mean a federal effort to emancipate their slaves, the southern states withdrew from the Union. Texas seceded in February 1861 and joined the new Confederacy in March.

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SECEDE...



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It seemed like a good idea at the time. Trying to create more avenues for citizens to express their opinions, in the week after he was reelected in 2012, President Obama had the White House Office of Public Engagement put up the “We the People” Web site. Citizens could log on and manufacture a petition on any subject. Ideally, such a site would not only allow administration officials to gauge the intensity of public opinion on many issues, but also might even produce some new proposals for public policy.

What it produced at first, however, was a discredited old proposal. Micah Hurd, an engineering student at the University of Texas at Arlington, and a Texas National Guardsman, started a petition asking permission from the federal government to allow the state of Texas to secede—leave the union and establish itself, once again, as an independent country. The petition cited the “economic difficulties stemming from the federal government’s neglect to reform domestic and foreign spending,” and asserted that secession would protect “the original ideas and beliefs of our founding fathers which are no longer being reflected by the federal government.” Within two weeks after being put up on the We the People site, the petition had attracted more than 125,000 signatures.

The petition generated an enormous amount of publicity on the Internet, in television news and late-night talk shows, and from opinion columns in newspapers, much of it mocking. But the hype was out of proportion to the significance of the petition. The most important reason to ignore the signatures was that the question of secession had been settled by the defeat of the Confederacy in 1865—states cannot leave the Union. The U.S. Supreme Court, in the case of *Texas v. White* in 1869, officially enunciated the policy that had been made permanent reality by the Civil War, stating, “When... Texas became one of the United States, she entered into an indissoluble relation,” and therefore, secession would be “invalid and void.”

But there were other reasons. For one, the number of people who signed the petition constituted only a tiny proportion of the adult Texas population. For another, one examination of the signatures concluded that about one out of four of them were from people who lived outside the state. Apparently they represented non-Texans who would be happy to see the state depart the Union. In addition, the White House petition immediately spawned counter-petitions, as some citizens of Austin and the Bolivar Peninsula requested permission to secede from the state and remain in the United States.

In the end, the petition and its aftermath mainly gave everyone a good chuckle. On the serious side, however, the incident did illustrate how intensely some Texans dislike some of the policies that have been implemented by Washington in the last few decades.

Sources: Chuck Lindell, “Texas Secession Petition a Hit on White House Site,” *Austin American-Statesman*, November 14, 2012, B1; Juan Carlos Llorca, “White House: Texas Must Remain in U.S.,” *Austin American-Statesman*, November 21, 2012, B3; Harvey Rice, “Bolivar Peninsula Residents Talk of Seceding, Switching Counties,” *Austin American-Statesman*, December 9, 2012, B6; *Texas v. White*, U.S. 700 (1869).

Texans fought at home, on an expedition into New Mexico, and in large numbers in West Virginia, Tennessee, and elsewhere during the Civil War. Southern troops and southern generals were usually superior to their northern counterparts and won many battles. The agricultural South, however, was outgunned, outmanned, and outsupplied by the industrial North, and southern political leadership was inferior to Lincoln's. The U.S. president issued the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the slaves, on January 1, 1863—an act that persuaded European powers not to enter the war on the South's behalf. As a consequence, the North ground down the South's ability to wage war over four years until the Confederacy fell apart in the spring of 1865. With the defeat of the rebellion, federal troops landed at Galveston on June 19, 1865, proclaiming the freedom of the state's 250,000 slaves. "Juneteenth" was originally celebrated by African-American Texans as Emancipation Day, and has now spread to the rest of the country as an informal holiday.

POST-CIVIL WAR TEXAS

Confusion and bitterness followed the war. Despite President Lincoln's stated policy of "with malice toward none, with charity for all," the reaction in Texas, as in other parts of the South, was to continue to oppose national policy even though the war was over. Confederate officials and sympathizers were elected to state and local office; Black Codes that severely restricted the activities of the former slaves were passed by state legislatures. This defiance by the defeated South strengthened the position of the Radical Republicans in Congress and caused a hardening of policy, and Lincoln's assassination prevented him from moderating their desire to punish the states of the defunct Confederacy for their rebellion. During the period known as Reconstruction, military government was imposed on the South, and former Confederate officials and soldiers were largely excluded from voting and from holding public office.

These actions by the federal government intensified the hostility with which most White Texans viewed the Republican Party. African Americans, as one might expect, voted for Republican candidates, giving White Texans even more reason to support the Democrats. Political activity by the freed slaves also gave rise to the Ku Klux Klan in Texas and throughout the South. Klan members met in secret, bound themselves by oath, and frequently wore hoods to conceal their identities. Their purpose was to keep African Americans in a position of great inferiority. Their methods included intimidation, violence, and sometimes murder.

The best remembered governorship of this Reconstruction period was that of E. J. Davis, one of a number of Texans who had fought for the Union during the war. A Republican, Davis held office from 1870 to 1874. Using the substantial powers granted by the state's Constitution of 1869, Davis acted like a true chief executive and implemented policies consistent with the philosophy of the Radical Republicans in Washington. To his credit, Davis reformed the penal system and greatly improved public education. To his discredit, during his tenure, state indebtedness increased considerably, and there were allegations of financial impropriety. But whatever the merits of his administration, to White Texans he was a traitorous agent of the hated Yankees.

In 1873, after political restrictions against former Confederate officials and soldiers were removed, a Democrat, Richard Coke, defeated Davis in his reelection bid by a two-to-one margin. Just as important as the return of the Democratic Party to power was the repudiation of the Constitution of 1869 and its replacement with Texas's current basic law, the Constitution of 1876. The adoption of this document

represented the end of Reconstruction and a substantial return to the traditional principles of the Jeffersonian Democrats, including very limited government and low taxes.

THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Texas did not suffer the physical destruction that burdened other Confederate states, and economic recovery and development came quickly after the Civil War. The Hollywood version of this era in Texas is one of cowboys, cattle drives, and range wars. There is some basis for the mythical view of post-Civil War Texas as a land of ranches and trail drives, for between 1866 and 1880 four million cattle were driven “north to the rails.”² Nevertheless, the actual foundation of the state’s economy was King Cotton. In East Texas, the fields were worked largely by African Americans, and in West Texas, by Mexican Americans. Cotton remained the cash crop and principal export well into the twentieth century. However, in terms of the self-image of Texans, the myth of cow culture has been far more important than the reality of cotton farming.

Texas has few navigable rivers, and therefore transportation was a major problem. Because of the size of the state, thousands of miles of railroad track were laid. In 1888, railroad construction in Texas exceeded the total for all of the other states and territories combined. In 1881, embarrassed officials discovered that the state legislature had given the railroads a million more acres of land for rights-of-way than were available, and the land-grant laws were repealed. In all, more than 32 million acres of land were given to the railroads, thus establishing early on the easy relationship between the state government and large corporations.

Race relations were difficult statewide, but particularly in East Texas. “Jim Crow laws” severely limiting the civil rights of African Americans began to make their appearance, and violence against the former slaves was common and often fatal. Between 1870 and 1900, an estimated 500 African Americans died as a result of mob violence, much of it led by the Ku Klux Klan. Although citizenship is much more equal today than it was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there is still ethnic conflict in Texas, and some parts of the state continue to display “Old South” racist patterns of behavior.

Throughout most of the final quarter of the nineteenth century, conservative Democrats maintained control of the state. Their rule was based on White supremacy and the violent emotional reaction to the Radical Republican Reconstruction era. But other political parties and interest groups rose to challenge them.

With the penetration of the state by railroads and the increase in manufacturing came organized labor. Most notable were the militant Knights of Labor, which struck the Texas & Pacific Railroad in 1885 and won concessions. Another strike a year later, however, turned violent. Governor John Ireland used troops, ostensibly to protect railroad property, and the strike was broken. In the optimistic and growing economy of the 1880s, labor unions were less acceptable in the South than elsewhere. In Texas, they were viewed as “Yankee innovations” and “abominations.” Although a combination of capital was called a corporation and given approval by the state to operate under a charter, combinations of labor, called unions, were frequently labeled restraints of trade by the courts and forbidden to operate. Laws and executive actions also restricted union activities. These biases in favor of capital and against organized labor are still common in Texas.

More important than early labor unions was the agrarian movement. By the 1870s and 1880s, many of those who worked the land in Texas—whether White,