Unionist Activism in the Confederate West:

A Case Study of Four North Texas Counties

Midn 1/c R.E. Mewett

Advised by Prof. Craig Symonds

13 December 2000

On February 23rd, 1861, nine days before Abraham Lincoln took the oath of office as the 16th president, the people of Texas approved an Ordinance of Secession by a vote of 46,129 to 14,697. Unionists achieved a majority in only 18 of the 122 counties that returned votes. The two significant blocs of pro-Union sentiment were in the German-dominated counties on the southwestern frontier around San Antonio, and in the counties north of Dallas, near the Red River.[1] In four of these northern counties – Collin, Cooke, Denton, and Grayson – Unionism would not be extinguished even after secession.[2] Indeed, Unionists in these four counties did more than vote against secession; they acted on their sentiments and resisted Confederate authority until they were all but stamped out by pro-Confederate vigilante movements in late 1862. No aspect of the "Lost Cause" tradition of Confederate historiography is more cherished than the notion that the secession movement was a genuine popular uprising – a virtually unanimous peaceful revolution against the oppression of the northern states. The extent of popular opposition to secession remained a subject of fierce contention well into the late 20th century. But an examination of one enclave of Unionist sentiment in north Texas reveals much about the secessionist movement and about the social fabric of the western Confederacy.

There were three main reasons why these four counties not only fought secession, but engaged in active Unionism from 1860 to 1862: the scarcity and relative unimportance of slavery in the four counties, their proximity to the frontier, and the class differences caused by their demographic makeup.

---

[1] For a list of counties that cast more than 40% of their vote against secession, see Appendix A. Marcus J. Wright, *Texas in the War: 1861-1865*, ed. Harold B. Simpson (Hillsboro: Hill Junior College Press, 1965), 191. Map 1 indicates the percentage of voters in each county who voted against secession. Walter L. Buenger, *Secession and the Union in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), 67.

[2] See Map 2.

The roots of the secessionist movement in Texas and all across the American South stretched back several decades. Beginning with the Missouri Compromise in 1821, Congress had cobbled together a series of agreements that had maintained the Union despite disagreements over the extension of slavery into the western territories. In 1850, when the question of the disposition of the lands gained in the Mexican Cession threatened to tear the Union apart, Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky had been able to form a compromise which would ultimately be approved by both the North and the South. But the Compromise of 1850 served merely to postpone the inevitable, and by 1860, the slavery question again dominated the national conversation. The Republican Party, predicated upon a platform of denying the further expansion of slavery into the western territories, threatened to add the Presidency to the already substantial list of offices held by its members.

Southerners felt themselves to be under siege, but despite the urgency of the situation, they were unable to form a cohesive political bloc behind a single Presidential candidate. The Democratic Party had split during the party convention in April 1860, when the delegates were unable to agree upon a platform and several Southern delegations, including the one from Texas, had walked out. Hence, there were two Democrats facing Republican Abraham Lincoln in the Presidential election: John Breckinridge, of the states' rights Southern Democrats, and Stephen Douglas, of the mainstream Democratic Party. The Southern vote was further split by John Bell, of the so-called Constitutional Union party. Despite being left off the ballot in every Southern state, Lincoln won the election with just under 40 percent of the popular vote.[3] In Texas, Breckinridge received the majority of the votes, with 76%. Bell took the remaining 24%.

---

[3] Even if the votes for all three opposition candidates had combined behind one, Lincoln would have lost just three free states. Instead of 180 electoral votes, he would have received 169, still over the required number for victory of 152. James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 232.

Sizable minorities supported Bell in North Texas.[4] The stark reality of Lincoln's election added fuel to the flames of secessionism by convincing many Southerners that they were no longer fairly represented in the Federal government. Following the Lincoln's election, the fire-eaters of Texas and six other states were able to fix the minds of their people upon the objective of disunion from the United States.

Secessionists in Texas added the election of Lincoln to an already long list of Northern "outrages," which included vocal support for John Brown's raid and the failure of the U.S. Congress to appropriate funds for Texas's state troops in 1859.[5] The extent of their sense of fear and outrage was evident in the public reaction to a series of fires that had consumed business establishments in several north Texas towns in the summer prior to the election. Despite the recent appearance of a new kind of phosphorus match – which had a tendency to combust spontaneously in hot, humid weather – the press hinted darkly that these fires had been the opening stages of an abolitionist assault on the communities of north Texas, with the ultimate objective of murdering slaveowners and carving a free state out of north Texas by force of arms.[6]

While few disputed that the Northern states had wronged the South on more than one occasion, by no means all Texans jumped on the secessionist bandwagon. According to Walter Buenger, a noted historian of the secession movement in Texas, there were four major categories

---

[4] Bell received 40% of the vote in Collin County, 34% in Cooke, 24% in Denton, and 36% in Grayson. W. Dean Burnham, *Presidential Ballots 1836-1892* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), 772-780.

[5] This failure was particularly heinous in view of the events of 1859. Indian attacks upon the Texas frontier had increased, and Juan Cortina had seized the city of Brownsville for several days and threatened South Texas for months afterward. There were rumors that Northern abolitionists had supported Cortina's raid. Buenger, 46.

[6] Floyd F. Ewing, "Unionist Sentiment on the Northwest Texas Frontier," *West Texas Historical Association Yearbook* 33 (1957): 62; Buenger, 55-57.

of political sentiment in Texas at the end of 1860. Ardent secessionists comprised a relatively small segment of the population. They had been convinced of the necessity of disunion for many years, and found in the events of 1859 and 1860 the means by which they could turn the tide of public opinion. A larger second group became convinced of the necessity of secession only after Lincoln's election. Another group opposed secession but would ultimately side with the majority. A fourth group, approximately the same size as the extreme secessionists, was composed of stalwart nationalists who would support the Union at all costs.[7]

Galvanized by the election of Lincoln, the secessionists succeeded in calling a convention at Austin on January 28, 1861. They did so despite the opposition of Governor Sam Houston, who supported the Union (though he would ultimately side with his state). On February 1, several delegates placed before the Convention "an ordinance providing for the secession of the State of Texas from the Federal Union."[8] The ordinance passed, 168 to 8. Among the delegates who voted against the ordinance was James W. Throckmorton of Collin County. He refused to answer with a simple "no," as required by the rules. He responded instead: "Mr. President, in view of the responsibility, in the presence of God and my country, and unawed by the wild spirit of revolution around me, I vote no." The gallery responded with disapproval, to which he replied, "Mr. President, when the rabble hiss, well may patriots tremble."[9]

---

[7] Buenger, 7.

[8] See Appendix B for the complete text of the Ordinance of Secession. Wright, 171.

[9] Richard B. McCaslin, *Tainted Breeze: The Great Hanging at Gainesville, Texas, 1862* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), 33.

In addition to such defiant opposition, the conditional unionists in the Secession Convention found expression in a speech delivered by Representative Robert H. Taylor, of Fannin County:

> Now, sir, my people and I are opposed to secession: 1st, because there is no warrant in the Constitution for it. 2nd, because that it is not policy to secede, if it was Constitutional. 3rd, that we are unable to bear the burdens of the taxation that would ensue if we did secede. 4th, because we hope that by giving the people in the North an opportunity to choose their rulers, which we think they will do. 5th, because we doubt if this government is broken up whether it will ever be organized again. 6th, because we are afraid anarchy or aristocracy will prevail, neither of which suits us, and, 7th, because of love of country, love of history, the hope of the final liberation of the old world, by our example. 8th, because we are unwilling to destroy the hope of mankind the wide world over, and because we believe that secession will bring war, war, ruin, bloodshed, anarchy, despotism and every other ill now unknown to us, the happiest and best contented (until lately) people on the earth.[10]

A similar "Address to the People of Texas," dated February 6th, 1861, and signed by 23 state Senators, Representatives, and delegates to the Convention, raised similar disputes. In addition, the "Address" pointed out the haste with which the secessionists were conducting the proceedings. The Convention had called for a referendum to substantiate the Ordinance of Secession on February 23rd, the returns of which were to be reported to Austin by March 2nd, the anniversary of Texan independence. But the authors of the "Address" claimed that the secessionists were hoping to deprive the people of Texas of their rightful voice; there was no way all precincts could properly report in the time allotted. They referred to the 27th Section of the 7th Article of the State Constitution, which "requires that all amendments to the Constitutions which may at any time be proposed by the Legislature, shall be published in the public prints of

[10] "Speech of Robert H. Taylor, Delivered in the House of Representatives, Of the Texas Legislature, upon the Joint Resolutions, to 'Recognize or approve the Convention to assemble 28th of January, 1861,'" *Confederate Imprints*, microfilm, 144 reels (New Haven: Research Publications, 1974), 2856.

the State, at least three months before the next general election of Representatives."[11] These were only a few of the objections that the anti-secessionists raised in the interim between the calling of the Convention and the popular referendum that would ultimately approve of secession.

All across the Confederate South, the opponents of secession either left or, more commonly, recanted. The popular enthusiasm for the new government forced the nationalists into silence or acquiescence. Only in a few places did Unionism survive. One such place was north Texas. There, Unionist activities were characterized by political agitation and the formation of a Union League for mutual defense against persecution by the Confederate authorities. The roots of this activism were evident even before secession. In January 1861, a plan that was circulated through Collin and Grayson counties resolved "to make an effort to unite a sufficient number of the northern counties of Texas into a state, and make application at the proper time for admission into the Union."[12] The Convention's decision to convey at least some political legitimacy upon the proceedings by submitting the Ordinance of Secession to a referendum persuaded the signers of the petition to set aside their plans.

After the ratification of the Secession Ordinance, more Unionist activity began to take form in north Texas. Over the course of 1861, pro-Union residents of Collin, Cooke, Denton, and Grayson counties began quietly to discuss what they might do to ensure their security against persecution by their Confederate neighbors. In the wake of the Confederate Conscription Act, passed on April 16, 1862, a few enterprising individuals took the initiative of forming a Peace

---

[11] Almost all the signers of the "Address" were from northeast Texas or the area around Austin and San Antonio. "Address to the People of Texas, February 6th, 1861," *Confederate Imprints*, microfilm, 144 reels (New Haven: Research Publications, 1974), 2856.

[12] Austin *Southern Intelligencer*, 31 January, 1861.

Party to facilitate the defense of its members and resistance to Confederate authority. It was a secret organization, complete with "signs, grips, and passwords" to identify its members to one another. According to one member of the Peace Party, the oath bound members to "band together for self defense against the secessionists, protect each other and hunt down any traitor to the cause."[13] The group was loosely organized and soon came to include members with many different motivations. Some were staunch Unionists, who had been so since before secession and were resisting the separation of Texas from the Union. Others joined simply to protect themselves or to resist conscription. Some who joined the organization were ignorant of its purpose and plans.[14]

The leadership of the Peace Party was clearly motivated by Union sentiment. Representative of the leaders was M.D. Anderson, a thirty-one year old carpenter from Virginia, who later testified to being "a Union man [who] desired the restoration of the old government."[15] The strong Unionist character of the Peace Party, at least in its early days, was evident in the first oath of the party: members were obliged to swear that "they were American born, that they never had been engaged in any rebellion or insurrection against the Union and Constitution of the United States of America, and that they cast their vote for the Union and Constitution of the United States of America in the year 1860."[16]

---

[13] George Washington Diamond. *George Washington Diamond's Account of the Great Hanging at Gainesville, 1862*, eds. Sam Acheson and Julie Ann Hudson O'Connell (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1963), 61.

[14] Claude Elliott, "Union Sentiment in Texas, 1861-1865," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 50 (Winter 1947): 454.

[15] Diamond, 62.

[16] James Lemuel Clark, *Civil War Recollections of James Lemuel Clark*, ed. L.D. Clark (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1984), 96. J.L. Clark's spelling was

As time passed and the Confederate government became a more intrusive part of the lives of north Texans with the passage of the Conscription Act and the mustering of frontier units, the Peace Party's plans became progressively more ambitious. By the fall of 1862, the Party's leaders planned to raid arsenals at Sherman, in Grayson County, and Gainesville, in Cooke County, in order to seize the area for the Union. Other plans included joining the militia in case of a Union invasion, then going over to the Federal army when it came close enough to make contact. At this point, rumors in Cooke County placed the size of the organization at approximately 1,700 men.[17]

Confederate authorities learned of the Peace Party's existence by chance. On the 30th of September, James G. Bourland, the provost marshal for the area comprising Collin, Cooke, Denton, and Grayson counties, called for a muster of the militia. As he had expected, many of the men of the area did not report for duty; some openly expressed a lack of support for the Confederacy. That night, state troops under Bourland arrested "everyone so far as known (except those who had escaped) … in the name and by the authority of the people of the County of Cooke, State of Texas." When combined with additional arrests made during the following week after reinforcements had arrived, the total came to approximately 150. The Confederate authorities' official chronicler of the events, George Washington Diamond, was convinced that Bourland had acted in the nick of time: he believed the Unionist offensive was planned for that very night, but had been delayed by a terrible rainstorm. He also recorded that "large quantities

---

inconsistent and incorrect; the editor changed the spellings to be consistent throughout, but many words are still spelled incorrectly. Here and in subsequent appearances they are corrected without the addition of "[sic]."

[17] *Ibid.*, 30-31; Diamond, 16; J. Lee and Lillian J. Stambaugh, *A History of Collin County, Texas* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1958), 67.

of powder, lead and cartridges were found concealed in beds, ladies wearing apparel and every conceivable secret place." James Lemuel Clark, the son of one of the men arrested, disagreed. He believed that the Peace Party men planned to wait until their membership comprised two-thirds of the men remaining in the area before acting, and then to act peacefully.[18]

An armed force of Unionists under a Reverend Captain Garrison assembled with plans to save their friends; however, reinforcements soon arrived from surrounding counties to support the pro-Confederate Cooke County militia. These reinforcements helped to convince Garrison and his men that any effort to free the prisoners by force would be futile, and they turned back. The Cooke County authorities subsequently charged the detainees with treason – "colluding with other evil disposed persons to incite open and hostile opposition to the Civil Authorities" – and charged them as well with conspiracy – "advising the killing of good citizens, and the destruction of property, and the disturbing of the public peace, contrary to the public safety and the peace and welfare of the people of Texas and Cooke County." Ultimately, in consequence of these charges, forty-one men were hanged in Gainesville, Texas, in October 1862, and three others were shot while trying to escape. Similar trials were conducted with somewhat more moderation in Denton, Grayson, and Wise counties. There seven more men were executed and others were sentenced to Confederate service.[19] By the end of October 1862, Unionist activity, if not sentiment, had, for all intents and purposes, ceased to exist in North Texas. About the same

---

[18] Diamond's and Clark's accounts differ substantially in how they portray the events, for the obvious reason of justifying their own interests in the affair. The major facts of the affair seem consistent between the two accounts, but some small details are present in one and not the other, such as the impending attack and the discovery of munitions in the possession of the Peace Party members. Diamond, 29; McCaslin, 73; Clark, 31.

[19] Some of the men enrolled in militia units were from Wise County, which bordered Cooke County to the southwest and Denton County to the west. Wise County was not, however, a true base of Unionist activity, for reasons explained below. Diamond, 33-34; McCaslin, 75, 94; Elliot, 455.

time, true Unionist sentiment began to be overshadowed by anti-Confederate dissent and outlaw violence caused by war-weariness and the influx of displaced Southerners and other malcontents.

The origins of this fracture in Texas had its roots in the one great issue of the middle decades of the 19th century – slavery. Texas was sharply divided about slavery according to its geography. The counties closest to the Gulf Coast and the Sabine River bore a strong resemblance to the counties along the Mississippi River valley. In Brazoria County, for example, which lay along the Gulf of Mexico at the mouth of the Brazos River, slaves comprised seventy-two percent of the population, a proportion that rivaled that of any county in the Black Belt of Mississippi and Alabama. Almost fifty-eight percent of the white citizens held slaves, and they owned an average of twenty-two slaves each. The numbers for Adams County, Mississippi, which lay along the Mississippi River in the southwest corner of the state, were strikingly similar. There, slaves made up seventy-one percent of the population; sixty-four percent of the free population owned at least one slave, and each slaveholder owned an average of twenty-two slaves.[20] These counties were representative of southeast and east Texas. Indeed, a contiguous block of counties stretching from the Red River down the Sabine and along the Gulf Coast had populations with

[20] Calculated using Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, *Historical Demographic, Economic, and Social Data: The United States, 1790-1970* (Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 1984), <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census/> (28 October 2000) [hereafter ICPSR]. This is an Internet resource that offers the ability to browse tabulated census returns compiled from the manuscripts by ICPSR. The percentage of the white population that held slaves may be very slightly overstated. It has been determined by dividing the number of slaveholders by the number of families; a few families contained more than one slaveholder. See Appendix C.

more than twenty-five percent slaves; several drew more than half of their population from their residents' slaveholdings.[21]

By contrast, North Texas contained relatively few slaves. State wide, approximately twenty-seven percent of Texas families owned slaves in 1860, and the average number of slaves per slaveholder was just under ten. In Collin, Cooke, Denton, and Grayson counties, just fifteen percent of families owned slaves, and the mean size of each slaveholding was approximately half what it was statewide. Slaves made up slightly over thirty percent of the total population of Texas; in the four counties under investigation, slaves comprised just eleven percent of the total population. Hence, the slave system was much less prominent in the culture, economy, and society of North Texas than in the rest of the state, and in the rest of the states that would ultimately form the Confederacy.[22]

These modest differences in slave demographics had a more profound impact than the numbers alone suggest. Even where the plantation system was in effect, less than one-third of the population owned slaves at all – but the remainder of the population in those counties was closely tied to the slave system. The whole economy of the Cotton Belt depended on the slave labor system. Even though two-thirds of the population in the river and Gulf Coast counties was not directly involved with slavery, they were nevertheless dependent on it. They raised food crops or produced manufactured goods that they sold to their slaveholding neighbors; they benefited from the influx of cash and imported goods that came to their communities in

---

[21] Randolph B. Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989): 60. See Map 3.

[22] The numbers were slightly higher for Collin and Grayson counties as compared to Cooke and Denton. This probably lies with the reluctance of slaveowners to take their valuable property too close to the dangerous frontier lands, where Indian raids would threaten it. ICPSR. See Appendices C and D.

consequence of the export of cash crops such as cotton; and finally, they shared in the cultural and racial bond, one element of which was the fear of a slave revolt. Even non-slaveholding whites knew that, as demonstrated by Nat Turner's rebellion in Virginia in which over 60 whites were murdered, revolting slaves would not be likely to draw a distinction between those whites who owned slaves and those who did not. For these reasons, among others, even the non-slaveholding population of the Gulf and river counties in Texas felt that their fate was tied with that of the planters who led the secession movement.

The relative scarcity of slavery in North Texas was a direct result of the lack of any significant cotton cultivation in the area. There were two reasons why cotton had not spread to the North Texas prairies by 1860. First, the soil and climate were different from the eastern and coastal areas of the state. In contrast to the alluvial soils of the river and creek bottoms further east, the soil in this area was predominantly Houston black clay, mixing with sandier prairie soils to the west. Wood, which was required for fencing, was rare on the prairie.[23] Twenty years later, after windmills, dry-farming, and drought-resisting crops became common, the seventeen counties of the blackland prairie, combined with the ten counties of the Grand Prairie, would produce 310,422 bales of cotton, a sum equal to seventy-two percent of Texas's total cotton crop in 1860.[24] But in 1860, cotton growing was difficult and generally unprofitable in the soil and climate of North Texas.

The other important reason why cotton cultivation had not spread to North Texas was the lack of available transportation to market. Not a single railroad penetrated the interior of Texas

---

[23] Stambaugh, 5, 107. Charles W. Ramsdell, "The Natural Limits of Slavery Expansion," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 16 (1930), 156.

[24] Campbell, 64; Ramsdell, 157.

in 1860, and no navigable rivers served the area. The Red River was consistently navigable only as high as Bowie County, on the Louisiana border. Occasionally the river would flood high enough to allow small boats up to Fannin County, which bordered Grayson to the east, but such floods were highly unpredictable. The nearest market was at Jefferson, 125 miles east of McKinney, the county seat of Collin County; demand there was rather limited and sporadic. In order to sell his cotton crop, a planter from Grayson County would have been forced to haul his bulky crop "during the wet winter season along nearly impassable pioneer roads and across unbridged streams to Houston or Shreveport, or some other far-off market." Such an endeavor was simply not profitable, even if it was possible in the more fertile bottomlands of the Red River and its tributary creeks.[25]

For both of these reasons, cotton cultivation was not a profitable undertaking in the North Texas counties. The four counties combined produced fewer than 300 bales of cotton in 1860, and Collin produced none at all.[26] Instead, farmers in the area concentrated on grain crops such as wheat and corn, in addition to raising livestock. Throughout much of the South, the raising of cotton was the overarching reason for the slave labor system; because cotton was not a staple crop in the four counties under investigation, slavery never took root in precisely the same way.

---

[25] Ramsdell, 155-156; Stambaugh, 28, 107; Cecil Harper, "Slavery Without Cotton: Hunt County, Texas, 1846-1864," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 88 (Fall 1985), 389.

[26] Manuscript returns of the 8th Census of the United States, Schedule IV: Agricultural Products; Microfilm, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C. One bale was equal to approximately 400 pounds. As a point of reference, according to John W. Blassingame, between 1825 and 1860 slaves in Mississippi picked an average of 130 to 150 pounds of cotton per day. The total output of the four counties equaled what five slaves might pick in an average picking season of August through December. See *The Slave Community*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 250, 280.

Moreover, because of the seasonal nature of grain growing, slave labor would be idle for large portions of the year, and therefore unprofitable.[27]

Lacking an intensive slave-based economy, the political and cultural values of the North Texas population differed from those of the inhabitants of many plantation-based areas. Whereas Gulf Coast and East Texans saw their fortunes and their daily lives tied directly to the slave economy, residents of North Texas could afford to be indifferent towards the system of which only their richest neighbors had the luxury of partaking. Their feelings about secession and the Confederacy are embodied in another of the remarks of state Congressman Taylor, who asked metaphorically: "In this new Cotton Confederacy what will become of my section, the wheat growers and stock raisers?"[28]

This same pattern has been noted in other seceding states as well. Other states that harbored pockets of Unionist sentiment – eastern Tennessee, West Virginia, northern Alabama, and the piedmont region of the Carolinas – had geographies that precluded a plantation culture as well. In the foothills of the Appalachians, hemp, tobacco, and wheat were much more common agricultural products than cotton. Like these areas, the residents of north Texas were less dependent – psychologically as well as economically – on slavery and therefore were more likely to see little advantage to secession.[29]

---

[27] Ramsdell, 155.

[28] "Speech of Robert H. Taylor," *Confederate Imprints*, op. cit.

[29] Even amongst states as a whole, it can be seen that the influence of slavery corresponded very closely with secessionism. The order in which they seceded was very similar to the ranking of the states by slave population. Most notably, South Carolina, with the highest percentage of slaves (57%), seceded first; Tennessee, with the lowest percentage (25%) seceded last. Every state with a slave population of 25 percent or more seceded from the Union; the four states with less than a quarter of their population made up of slaves – Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri – all stayed in the Union. See Appendix D. ICPSR; Lewis C. Gray, *History of*

A second major cause of Unionist sentiment in north Texas, and a catalyst to Union activism in the four north Texas counties, was their proximity to the frontier. Both their residents and the lawmakers in Austin considered Cooke and Denton Counties to be on the frontier, despite the fact that Wise, Jack, Clay, and Montague counties had been organized further west in the late 1850s. A December 1861 act of the Texas legislature ordered that all these counties provide troops for a regiment assigned to the defense of the frontier.[30] Collin and Grayson counties, while not considered part of the western frontier, were nevertheless near it. As recently as the middle to late 1850s, they had been on the front line of counties organized in the west, and the settlers vividly remembered the depredations of the Indians.

This proximity to the frontier, and the marauding Indians who lay beyond it, motivated residents of North Texas to side with the Union for two reasons. First, the U.S. Army had provided some degree of protection from Indians before secession and while this protection was not always effective, most North Texans felt that it was at least as good as, and probably better than, any efforts by local, state, or Confederate authorities. The western frontier – across which lay the Comanches and Apaches – and the border with Indian Territory – across which lay the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles – together measured in excess of 800 miles. To defend it effectively, according to historian David Paul Smith, perhaps double the 3,500 troops that were stationed there in 1860 would have been required.[31] Because the Civil

---

Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860 (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1933), 482.

[30] "An Act, to provide for the protection of the Frontier of the State of Texas," *Confederate Imprints*, microfilm, 144 reels (New Haven: Research Publications, 1974), 2169.

[31] David Paul Smith, *Frontier Defense in the Civil War: Texas' Rangers and Rebels* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992), 13.

War took up virtually all of their military assets, the Confederate and state government showed no signs of sending help to the frontier, and the frontier settlers had witnessed the state's ineffectiveness in the recent past. To make matters worse, the settlers were unable to defend themselves effectively. According to Henry E. McCulloch, who was dispatched to the northwest frontier by the Secession Convention's Committee for Public Safety in February 1861:

> The people here have been so long and so much harassed by the Indians and have lost so many horses, time and means by them, that they cannot now mount more than every 3rd or 4th man on an efficient horse, and when they are mounted 'tis very difficult to get arms to fight with, and unless something is done to arm the citizens, or place an efficient force to protect them against the marauding Indians, the frontier must be broken up, even worse than it is now … I would feel that I had shamefully failed to do my duty to them and to you, as your commissioner, if I did not urge upon you in the strongest possible manner, the *great great* necessity of giving full and ample protection to the frontier at every hazard, and at no odds what cost.[32]

Despite McCulloch's pleas, the state government did little to help, spreading just a single company (75 men) of the frontier regiment over all four counties.

Most settlers viewed both the United States Army and the government of Texas with disdain when concerned with defense of the frontier. Historian Floyd F. Ewing has suggested that this was not a factor in their loyalties. He posits that they concluded that the responsibility of frontier defense would be left to its residents regardless of which government held power. Therefore, defense against the Indians would have been discounted as a relevant issue in choosing sides in the conflict, and the North Texans would have "voted their convictions on secession as they were influenced by other factors."[33]

---

[32] McCulloch, H.E. "Letter from H.E. McCulloch to Hon. J.C. Robertson, Feb 26, 1861," Record Group 109, Chapter 8, Volume 276, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

[33] Floyd F. Ewing, "Origins of Unionist Sentiment on the West Texas Frontier," *West Texas Historical Association Year Book* 32 (1956), 22-23, 26.

If an individual felt strongly one way or the other about secession, security from the Indians was probably not a crucial issue. Many secessionists – usually those who did not live on the frontier and therefore did not feel the frontier settlers' skepticism about government assistance – cited a lack of adequate frontier defense by the Federal government as a reason to secede; it was even included in the Ordinance of Secession.[34] For those individuals who lacked strongly held beliefs, however, the opportunities for profit provided by Federal posts may have influenced their feelings on the matter of secession.

But there was another defense issue that influenced many north Texans. They feared invasion by the Federal army after secession due to their proximity to Northern territory. Not only did they border on Union-held Indian Territory, which would later serve as a base of operations for several Union armies, they were also less than 300 miles from Louisiana, which fell to the Union shortly after Commodore David Farragut captured New Orleans in April 1862. In fact, Cooke and Montague Counties were closer to Kansas than they were to their own state capital in Austin.[35] Their fears were enhanced when, in August 1862, an advance by Indians and Federal troops took control of Fort Cobb, in the Indian Territory. The militia was called out throughout North Texas, which coincidentally helped to precipitate the discovery of the Peace Party.[36]

---

[34] See Appendix B. "WHERAS, the Federal Government has failed to accomplish the purposes of the compact of Union between these States, in giving protection either to the person of our people upon an exposed frontier, or to the property of our citizens…"

[35] As pointed out by state congressman George Erath, frontiersmen feared a nearby border with the United States for another reason. As in the days before annexation to the United States, the Indians could flee across the Red River into a foreign country, thereby completely defeating Texans' efforts to effectively deal with them. Buenger, 114.

[36] Diamond, xii; McCaslin, 58.

Another factor that tied north Texans to the Federal government was that Union soldiers had provided an important market for their crops and manufactures. As discussed above, North Texas lay hundreds of miles from the nearest markets, and transporting their agricultural products over such long distances simply was not profitable. Fort Fitzhugh, on the other hand, which was part of the second line of Federal forts, was just three and a half miles south of Gainesville, the seat of Cooke County.[37] There was a greater demand from Federal troops for the products of north Texas than there in eastern or southern towns. Most farmers produced subsistence crops of wheat, corn, and oats, in addition to raising livestock and producing some small homemade goods. The U.S. Army was always interested in a nearby supply of food, and often contracted with local merchants for the purpose of obtaining the surplus crops of farmers in the area.[38]

If a concern for military protection led some north Texans to cling to the old Union, it was a sense of independence that led other to reject the authority of the new Confederacy. The self-reliance, independence, and initiative of the people who settled beyond developed areas made them more likely to act on their sentiments than those in more developed areas. They had left their previous homes to strike out into a land where the influence of the government was negligible, and they would not sit idly by as a government led by newcomers to the area persecuted them for their political beliefs. This initiative led them to form groups such as the Peace Party and to prepare to act against the government that persecuted them. According to James Lemuel Clark, the son of one of the men murdered in the Great Hanging, "most of them

---

[37] A. Morton Smith, *The First 100 Years in Cooke County* (San Antonio: Naylor, 1955), 7.

[38] "Three Counties in the Red River Valley," B.P. Gallaway, ed., *The Dark Corner of the Confederacy: Accounts of Civil War Texas as Told by Contemporaries* (Abilene: Abilene Christian College, 1968), 26.

[Peace Party members] were old settlers in this country, and had fought the Indians from their door steps, and they did not want to be crowded back on the back seat by a few new comers that was trying to take the lead and run the country." [39]

In this respect, the April 1862 Confederate Conscription Act was also important in spurring the residents of the frontier to act. Many were content to oppose the Confederacy silently, as anti-secessionists did elsewhere, as long as they were not required to serve it in any capacity and could continue with their daily lives. But the Conscription Act forced them to make a choice: either accept conscription and leave their homes, thereby removing their families' only hopes of defense against the Indians, or actively resist Confederate authority by avoiding the draft. Many chose the second option, and in order to protect themselves from persecution by those authorities, they banded together to strike preemptively against their oppressors.[40]

Proximity to the frontier also helped determine who would not actively oppose the Confederacy. The residents of several other north Texas counties, in addition to those of Collin, Cooke, Denton, and Grayson, voted in large proportions against secession, but did not act against the Confederacy in any overt way. These other counties, such as Fannin and Lamar, lay east of the four counties under investigation here. When the Federals conquered Louisiana in 1862, many residents of those counties saw the promise of rescue from Confederate persecution. They may have been on the verge of acting as their western neighbors did, but decided not to do so when faced with the prospect of a Federal invasion of North Texas down the Red River, which would release them from the danger posed by their pro-Confederate neighbors. That rescue never came, but the thought of it weighed heavily on the minds of Unionists from 1862 until the

---

[39] Clark, 104.

[40] *Ibid.*, 103; McCaslin, 55.

failed invasion of 1864. Further west, Unionists enjoyed no such illusions. They were beyond the limit of navigability of the Red River, and likely had seen how Federal offensives in the western and trans-Mississippi theaters lay tied to the waterways. Because these circumstances held little hope of rescue by the Federals, they determined to act for themselves.

The geographic origins and class differences of the settlers combined to produce a third factor that contributed to Unionist sentiment in Collin, Cooke, Denton, and Grayson Counties. The clash of Upper South and Lower South cultures engendered resentment of the planter class within the middle and lower classes in the area. This resentment was the most important factor causing these north Texans to actively defend their political beliefs.

Even in 1860, Texas boasted a population that was predominantly from out of state. In the Gulf and eastern counties, most of the residents had moved there from one of the Deep South, cotton belt states. Sixty-one percent of migrants into East Texas came from Louisiana, the lower half of Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina.[41] But the great majority of Texans in the four counties under investigation hailed from the Upper South and west-central border area. Thirty-two percent of immigrants into Grayson County had migrated from Missouri; other contributing states were Tennessee (16%), Arkansas (13%), Illinois (10%), and Kentucky (9%). By contrast, just six percent of Texas's total immigrant population came from Missouri. With the exception of Tennesseans (19%), who comprised the

[41] Frank L. Owsley, "The Pattern of Migration and Settlement on the Southern Frontier," *Journal of Southern History* 11 (May, 1945): 147-176.

largest group of immigrants in Texas, other Upper Southerners were similarly represented statewide: Kentuckians comprised 6% of immigrants, Arkansans 5%, and Illinoisans just 3%.[42]

While these numbers may not seem significantly different, there is an important factor to consider. Immigrants made up a much larger portion of the population of north Texas than of the rest of the state. The areas near the Louisiana border, and particularly along the Brazos and Colorado Rivers and the Gulf Coast, had been settled much longer. Most of their population was made up of native Texans. In fact, native Texans comprised 36% of the population of the state. There is no reliable data on the percentage of immigrants in north Texas, but eighty percent is a reasonable estimate. If so, then approximately 26% of the area's total population would have come from Missouri. By contrast, just 2% of the state's total population emigrated from Missouri. Likewise, the percentage of Grayson County residents from Tennessee (14%) was double the percentage of all Texas residents (7%). It is important to note that there were large differences when referenced to total population instead of just immigrant population.[43]

---

[42]The Upper South included Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, the piedmont regions of North Carolina and Virginia, and the portion of Arkansas that did not lie along the Mississippi River. The west-central border area, as defined by Ewing, included Missouri, Tennessee, Arkansas, Kentucky, Illinois, and Indiana. With few exceptions, those Texans who immigrated from Illinois and Indiana were Upper Southerners who populated the southern part of those states (which was very similar geographically to the Upper South). They remained emotionally aligned to the Upper South, as opposed to the Northerners who populated the upper portions of those states, and were generically known as "Butternuts." Hereafter there will be no differentiation made between Upper Southerners and Butternuts from the Midwest; they will be collectively referred to as Upper Southerners. Data for population origins is derived from both 1850 and 1860; there are no appreciable differences between population origins in these two years. See Map 1 for a depiction of population origins by county for the whole state, and Map 4 for migration patterns throughout the South. Terry G. Jordan, "Population Origins in Texas, 1850," *Geographical Review* 59 (1969), 88; Ewing, 23; McPherson, 31; Barnes F. Lathrop, *Migration into East Texas, 1835-1860* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1949), 37, 48.

[43] Lathrop 36.

Two factors determined the concentration of different cultural groups in different areas of Texas. The first was the avenue of approach by which immigrants from different areas of the country entered the state. In his landmark study of emigration in the antebellum South, historian Frank L. Owsley noted that "men seldom change their climate, because to do so they must change their habits; the almost universal law of internal emigration is that it moves west on the same parallel of latitude."[44]

This theory does not explain, however, the preponderance of immigrants from the Upper South in north Texas. Barnes Lathrop suggested that this shunting southward was caused by the hostility of Kansas and the Indian Territory, which lay to the west of the Upper South states. This factor, along with the paths taken to enter the state may well account for the high percentage of Upper Southerners in north Texas. The easiest route from Missouri into Texas was around the western side of the Ozark and Ouachita Mountains and this road ended in the counties above Dallas.[45] Also, the Butterfield Overland Stage Route was extended from St. Louis through North Texas in late 1858; it passed through Grayson, Cooke, and Denton Counties and was a major thoroughfare for emigrants.[46] An important reason why north Texas was settled by Upper Southerners (and why east and southeast Texas were settled by Lower Southerners) was simply that those regions were closer to, and more accessible from, the respective origins of the immigrants and thereby quicker and easier to reach.[47]

---

[44] Owsley, 150.

[45] East Texas is considered here to be the 38 counties that lay east of the Trinity River. Lathrop, 57-58; Jordan, 92.

[46] McCaslin, 9; Smith, 26.

[47] See Map 5.

A second reason for this anomaly in immigration patterns was the nature of *collective emigration* to new states and territories. Generally one pioneer would come to Texas, find an area that he found suitable, and write back to friends and relatives about the advantages of his wonderful new home. Letters describing wide-open plains, big sky, and good weather induced many emigrants to join him. According to geographer Terry Jordan, such migration "tended to snowball until a large-scale movement was under way from a county or cluster of counties in Missouri or Tennessee or Alabama to a small area in Texas." Some enterprising individuals organized "colonies" in Texas, which they populated with members of a community who were anxious to move to the new land without the uncertainty of searching for a good spot to settle down.[48] The geographic origin of settlers is significant because the cultural baggage they brought with them helped shape their whole lifestyle, particularly the type of agriculture they practiced and the social framework that existed as a result of social stratification. The majority of Upper South immigrants chose a place similar to their former homes, where they could practice the same type of agriculture as they had previously. That type of agriculture was based on subsistence farming rather than cash crops and did not feature slavery as a crucial part.[49]

There was a small minority of the population in north Texas who came from the Lower South, owned slaves, and attempted to pursue a plantation-type lifestyle in north Texas. Almost

---

[48] Jordan offers the community of Holford Prairie, in Denton County, as an example. Many residents of Platte County, Missouri, came to Denton County in this manner during the 1840s. As a result of this migration and others like it, Missourians dominated the county by 1850. Jordan, 89-91.

[49] Some economic historians, like Robert Russel, have theorized that small farmers did not make use of slavery in any significant way simply because it was more profitable to engage in general farming than specialized, commercial farming. According to Russel, "slaves were better adapted to the routine of the plantation than they were to the more varied tasks of general farming with considerable household manufacturing." See "The Effects of Slavery upon Nonslaveholders in the Ante-Bellum South" in Harold D. Woodman, ed., *Slavery and the Southern Economy: Sources and Readings* (USA: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), 112-126.

exclusively they inhabited the land along the Red River and the creek bottoms, choosing the areas that were more suitable for cotton cultivation. These planters exercised disproportionate economic and political power in north Texas, an area where they were in the extreme minority. Though only four residents of the counties under investigation owned more than $100,000 worth of property, all four were slaveowners. They also owned a disproportionate amount of the improved acreage and livestock. In Cooke County, the tenth of the population that held slaves herded more than half of the livestock and raised almost forty percent of the wheat and fifty percent of the oats. In nearby Hunt County, the statistics were very similar to those of Cooke County. There, slaveholders (who comprised fourteen percent of the population) controlled forty-six percent of the taxable wealth in the county.[50]

Commensurate with this economic clout, this small minority of planters also exercised a great deal of political control in north Texas. Texans from the Lower South dominated politics both statewide and in the northern counties. The twenty-seven percent of all household heads who owned slaves filled sixty-eight percent of the political offices statewide. Seventy-two percent of the delegates to the secession convention were slaveowners in 1860. Of the six delegates to the secession convention from Collin, Cooke, and Grayson Counties, four owned slaves. Despite the fact that the people of the county would ultimately vote against secession by a vote of 901 to 463, two out of three delegates from Grayson were planters, staunch secessionists, and fiery defenders of Southern rights.[51]

---

[50] Ralph A. Wooster, "Wealthy Texans, 1860," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 71 (October 1967), 166, 171-180; Campbell, 210; McCaslin, 15-16; Harper, 391.

[51] Ralph A. Wooster, "An Analysis of the Membership of the Texas Secession Convention," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 63 (January 1959), 326-335; 8th Census, Schedule I; Wright, 179-181, 191.

This over-representation by the planter aristocracy in a region predominantly populated by non-slaveholding families naturally led to a social and political tension. The people of the four counties in question, as exemplified by Grayson County, felt themselves not legitimately represented by their state congressmen or their delegates to the secession convention. According to James Lemuel Clark, a resident of Cooke County, "there was an election to see whether Texas would go out of the Union or not … Now the Union men claimed they got the majority, so [J.J. Diamond] claimed to be a delegate on the Rebel side, and whipped out to Austin, Texas and helped to put the state out of the Union. And that caused some bad feeling on the side of the Union men."[52]

The economic and political divisions between the majority of settlers from the Upper South and the influential minority from the Lower South were exaggerated by the different cultural backgrounds of the two societies. Wealth and land ownership were the almost exclusive determining factors in the economically driven caste system of the plantation South. At the bottom, obviously, were the slaves, who were unable to own property and whose very lives were owned by others. At the top were the planters: the wealthy, influential farmers who held more than twenty slaves and enjoyed a prominent place in the community. Somewhere in between lay everyone else, including several layers of middle- and lower-class whites.[53]

In the plantation culture, there was widespread obedience to the will of the planters as a result of the social and economic order. Because of their prominent role in community, state, and regional affairs, the wealthy planters were able to make decisions and enact laws that

---

[52] Clark, 95.

[53] For an exhaustive discussion of the many layers of antebellum Southern society, see Gray, 483-500.

benefited their "special form of property."[54] There was a feeling of paternalism all the way down the line: not only from slaveholder to slave, but from planter to small farmer, and so on. Perhaps just as important was the idea of Herrenvolk democracy, which has gained notice recently in the study of Southern social history. Some historians have proposed that, because of the position of blacks in Southern society, even poor whites who might have had nothing else tying them to the rich could have looked to race and felt themselves inextricably linked to their wealthier white brothers, helping to civilize the savage Negro. Whatever the reason, there were very structured roles for different classes of whites in the Lower South and the Lower South-dominated areas of Texas. Planters expected socially inferior whites to conform to their position in the social hierarchy as much as they expected their slaves to know their own role. In the Upper South, however, the social conditions that influenced society were markedly different.

Unlike the Lower South, the Upper South and north Texas did not have intensive slave-based economies. Slaves were still a part of the economy, but certainly not as crucial a part as they were in the Lower South and elsewhere in Texas. Percentage wise, just half as many Upper Southerners as Lower Southerners were connected with slaveholdings of ten or more. There were certainly planters, just far fewer of them.[55]

For all these reasons, the class system that existed in the Lower South was not present in the Upper South or in the Upper South-dominated communities of north Texas. The average, middle class white male was more influential in the politics of the Upper South than in the Lower South because planters did not enjoy pride of place as they did in the plantation-based South. The average Upper South male was more likely to feel himself politically empowered; he

---

[54] Campbell, 210.

[55] Gray, 482.

was much less likely to feel that anyone, regardless of wealth, had a right to impose their will upon him. As author David Pickering noted in a recent book:

> one important cultural difference between the two geographic groupings was that Lower Southerners were trained in the Virginia manner to bend the knee to their betters, and they expected like deference from their own social inferiors. The Upper Southerners, on the other hand, commonly were rough folk who believed in dealing with one another 'more or less as social equals,' regardless of wealth or status. The historical record is filled with resentful comments by Lower South 'aristocrats' about Upper Southerners, whom they found 'insolent' and 'impudent' and who displayed 'undue familiarity and a lack of deference to age, wealth, birth, and breeding.'[56]

Nevertheless, the small minority of planters who settled in the four counties under investigation consciously or unconsciously attempted to impose the cultural framework of the Lower South on north Texas, with themselves as the aristocratic, upper class and others as a subordinate, lower class. They had been acculturated into this sort of system in their former homes, and expected life in Texas to be no different. After all, it was even the same in the Lower South-dominated counties of eastern and southeastern Texas.

The yeoman farmer majority in Collin, Cooke, Denton, and Grayson Counties resisted the imposition of this class system. Because of the absence of a significant class system in their former homes, they did not expect to be treated as a lesser people by their wealthier neighbors. The social framework that the planters attempted to recreate was foreign to the Upper Southerners, and they resented the planters for their assumption of superiority.[57] One

---

[56] See *Brush Men and Vigilantes* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 8. Pickering's quotations come from David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 633.

[57] This resentment was exacerbated by the perception that planters ran the government in a way that would cause the middle classes to bear the burdens and the upper classes to reap the benefits. Because of the exemption measures of the Confederate draft, for example, "the wealthy slave owner and his sons were given an opportunity to remain out of uniform … Once again, the planter class seemed to have gained the advantage, and to many frontiersmen, the conflict had become the rich man's war but the poor man's fight." See Ewing, 64.

anonymous resident of Cooke County noted in 1915 that "there was not the harmony existing between the people on the river and the people in the timbered sections." This witness likened it to "the feeling now existing between labor and capital" in 1915.[58]

Historian Richard White posits that vigilante movements throughout American history have been driven by the local elite and supported by the middle levels of the community. He notes that "sometimes [the victims'] only crime was to have challenged the social dominance of a local elite and thus to have excited the wrath of the vigilantes … the tendency of some vigilante movements to label entire social groups as criminal is particularly significant."[59] When the yeoman farmers of Collin, Cooke, Denton, and Grayson Counties formed the Peace Party, the planter elite saw this not only as treason, but social rebellion, and they sought to stamp it out. The reaction against threats to the planter authority took the form of the arrest and mass hanging of suspected Unionists.

The individuals who orchestrated the Citizens Court and the hangings were planters and prominent members of the community. Two of the most important were James G. Bourland and William C. Young. Bourland was originally from South Carolina; he lived on a plantation on the Red River and owned 23 slaves. He had led several military companies against the Indians and in the Mexican War, and was named Confederate provost marshal of the region when the war began. Young was the largest slaveowner in Cooke County, and one of the wealthiest men in

---

[58] There was virtually no public record of the events of the Great Hanging when Clark wrote his memoirs. Clark, 100-101,103.

[59] He also notes that 'this privileged access to extralegal violence not surprisingly paralleled a similar uneven access to political and economic power. Politics remained the major arena for resolving the conflicts of class, race, community, and economic interest. The frequency of social violence demonstrates that politics could not resolve all social conflicts." Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 333-334, 351.

north Texas. He was originally from Tennessee, but had lived in Lower South-dominated Red River County, in east Texas, for over twenty years. He owned over 16,000 acres of land spread across eight counties, and owned 53 slaves. Before the war, he had served as a United States marshal; in 1861, he was called to Montgomery, Alabama, to consult with Jefferson Davis after which he organized and commanded the Eleventh Texas Cavalry. Bourland and Young were representative of the Lower South planter class of north Texas: large landholders, slave owners, and prominent community leaders.

By contrast the victims of these Citizens Court executions were almost exclusively lower- to middle-class Texans with roots in the Upper South. Of the thirty-one men for whom state of origin can be determined, twenty-seven of those hanged (87%) were from the Upper South or Midwest; one other was a Yankee (from Connecticut), and the other three were from the Lower South. Twenty-eight of the thirty-nine men for whom tax data is available (72%) held less than $1000 of taxable property in 1860.[60] The yeoman farmers' resentment of the planter class and fear of persecution by them proved to be justified.

The planters took advantage of uninvolved (or involved but undiscovered) populace's fear of inclusion among the persecuted, combined with the political indifference of some of the settlers, to turn them against the members of the Peace Party who had been arrested. These "natural leaders" of the South claimed that the true objective of the Peace Party was to overthrow peace and order in the community and to go on a rampage, burning, pillaging, raping, and killing

---

[60] The above data concerning Bourland, Young, and the victims was derived from the *New Handbook of Texas Online*, the manuscript schedules of the Eighth Census (schedules I, II, and IV) and McCaslin's appendices, which provide some information about many of the participants in the Great Hanging. See McCaslin, 195-210; *New Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "Bourland, James G." and "Young, William C.", <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/index.new.html> (28 October 2000).

indiscriminately. Young, the largest slaveowner in all four counties, delivered a speech to the assembled men of Cooke County shortly after the arrests:

> Fellow citizens. The information having been received by the people of Cooke County that a vile and secret organization existed in their midst, giving for its objects the overthrow of the government both State and Confederate, the seizure and destruction of property, both public and private; the perfecting of an alliance with the invading armies, both civilized and uncivilized now gathering upon our borders, and the indiscriminate slaughter of ourselves, our wives, and our children, it becomes our duty to adopt some plan to stay these impending evils, and marshal our strength in self defense … I am quite confident that you will all agree with men when I say that something *must be done* to check these conspirators in their villainous schemes and arrest the further progress of their wicked machinations.[61]

In this way, by turning the majority of the populace against their neighbors and portraying the Peace Party as a radical terrorist group, the planter minority was able to counteract the resentment of, and win the approval of (or at least the acquiescence of) the common people.

In Collin, Cooke, Denton, and Grayson Counties of north Texas, a substantial Unionist movement emerged between 1860 and October 1862. It was fostered by the unique relationship of the economy to slavery, which was unlike that of most of Texas and the Lower South; the position of these four counties on the second tier of the frontier; and the resentment caused by cultural clashes between the Lower South minority and the Upper South majority in the region. These factors combined to foster the emergence of Unionism in this area, and explain why there was widespread pro-Union activity, not merely sentiment, in these four counties.

Although eleven north Texas counties voted against secession, only Collin, Cooke, Denton, and Grayson Counties harbored significant Unionist activity during the period of 1860

[61] Diamond, 36-37.

to late 1862.[62] The activity in these counties defies traditional interpretations of the Confederate homefront. Contrary to the theory of the Lost Cause, neither north Texas nor almost any area of the Confederacy were totally unified behind the Confederate cause. Though the secession movement was genuinely popular in some areas, notably those most heavily involved with slavery, elsewhere it was seen as no more than the fantastic dream of the slavocrats. Most dissenters joined their state upon secession, but a few remained loyal, like those in north Texas.

As the war continued, dissent became more widespread as the war-weary and those dissatisfied with the Richmond government joined with Unionists in opposing the Confederacy. These opponents became more outspoken and daring. By 1864, after Federal troops gained possession of the whole Mississippi River, Texas was physically no longer a part of the Confederacy, and the Texas countryside became a hunting ground for anti-Confederate forces. Even after the Great Hanging, Confederate supporters were not able to quash dissent. The Unionist activity of the early war period foreshadowed the internal conflict that would haunt the Confederacy until 1865.

[62] Collin, Cooke, Denton, Fannin, Grayson, Hunt, Jack, Lamar, Montague, Red River, and Wise Counties all had votes of greater than 40 percent opposed to secession. Buenger, 67.

Appendix A – Texas counties that cast at least 40 percent of their votes against secession

County	*For*	*Against*	*Percent Against*
Angelina	139	184	57
Bandera	33	32	49
Bastrop	335	352	51
Bexar	827	709	46
Blanco	108	170	61
Burnet	157	248	61
*Collin	405	948	70
*Cooke	137	221	61
*Denton	331	256	44
Fannin	471	656	58
Fayette	580	626	52
Gillespie	16	398	96
*Grayson	463	901	66
Hays	166	115	41
Hunt	416	339	45
Jack	14	76	84
Kerr	76	57	43
Lamar	553	663	55
Lampasas	85	75	47
Mason	2	75	97
Medina	140	207	60
Montague	50	86	63
Red River	347	284	45
Titus	411	275	40
Travis	450	704	61
Uvalde	16	76	83
Van Zandt	181	127	41
Williamson	349	480	58
Wise	78	76	49

Sources: Buenger, 67; Ernest W. Winkler, *Journal of the Secession Convention of Texas, 1861* (Austin: Austin Printing Company, 1912), 88-90.

Appendix B – Secession Ordinance of the State of Texas

"An Ordinance to dissolve the union between the State of Texas and the other States, united under the compact styled "The Constitution of the United States of America."

Sec. 1. Whereas, the Federal Government has failed to accomplish the purposes of the compact of union between these States in giving protection either to the persons of our people upon an exposed frontier or to the property of our citizens; and whereas the action of the Northern States of the Union, and the recent development in federal affairs, make it evident that the power of the Federal Government is sought to be made a weapon with which to strike down the interests and the prosperity of the Southern people, instead of permitting it to be as it was intended our shield against outrage and aggression: Therefore

We the people of the State of Texas in Convention do declare and ordain, that the ordinance adopted by our Convention of delegates on the 4th day of July A.D. 1845, and afterwards ratified by us, under which the Republic of Texas was admitted into union with other States and became a party to the compact styled "The Constitution of the United States of America" be and is hereby repealed and annulled; that all the powers which by said compact were delegated by Texas to the Federal Government are revoked and resumed; that Texas is of right absolved from all restraints and obligations incurred by said compact and is a separate sovereign State.

Sec. 2. This ordinance shall be submitted to the people of Texas for ratification or rejection by the qualified voters on the 23rd day of February A.D. 1861, and unless rejected by a majority of the votes cast shall take effect and be in force on and after the 2nd day of March, A.D. 1861.

Done by the people of the State of Texas in Convention assembled at Austin, this 30th day of January, A.D. 1861."

Source: Winkler, 35-36.

Appendix C – Slavery in Texas

	Slaves as Pct. of Total Pop.	Slaveowners as Pct. of Total Pop.	Mean Slaves Per Holder
Adams (MS)	70.9	63.5	20.8
Brazoria (TX)	71.5	57.5	22.0
Collin	11.3	17.3	4.4
Cooke	9.8	11.9	5.0
Denton	5.0	10.0	2.9
Grayson	15.8	19.4	5.5
Avg. for 4 counties	12.8	15.6	4.6
Texas	30.2	28.5	8.3

Source: ICPSR.

Appendix D – Slavery in the Southern States

	Percentage of slaveholders with							
	Less than 10 slaves	10 to 19 slaves	20 or more slaves	Mean Slaves Per Holder	Median Slaves Per Holder	Slaves as Pct. of Pop.	Rank	Order of Secession
Lower South								
Alabama	18.4	63.7	17.9	12.9	33.4	45.1	4	4
Arkansas	26.1	62.0	11.9	9.7	23.4	25.5	10	9
Florida	20.1	64.2	15.7	12.0	28.4	44.0	5	3
Georgia	22.2	62.3	15.5	11.3	26.4	43.7	6	5
Louisiana	15.8	66.3	17.8	15.1	49.3	46.9	3	6
Mississippi	16.8	64.2	19.1	14.1	35.0	55.2	2	2
S. Carolina	15.8	64.4	19.8	15.1	38.9	57.2	1	1
Texas	31.0	59.1	9.9	8.3	17.6	30.2	9	7
Upper South								
Kentucky	48.9	47.1	4.0	5.8	10.4	19.5	12	n/a
Missouri	60.1	37.7	2.2	4.7	8.3	9.7	13	n/a
*N. C.	27.4	60.9	11.7	9.6	19.3	33.4	7	10
Tennessee	36.8	55.2	8.0	7.5	15.1	24.8	11	11
*Virginia	27.2	61.7	11.1	9.4	18.8	30.7	8	8

*Western section of state had geography similar to Upper South; coastal areas had geography similar to Lower South

---

Sources: ICPSR; Woodman 14-15; Gray 482, 530.

Bibliography

Primary sources

"Address to the People of Texas, February 6th, 1861." *Confederate Imprints*. Microfilm, 144 reels. New Haven: Research Publications, 1974: 2856.

"Address to the People of Texas, March 30th, 1861." *Confederate Imprints*. Microfilm, 144 reels. New Haven: Research Publications, 1974: 2151.

"Addresses delivered in the Senate and House of Representatives of the Legislature of Texas on the Death of Gen. Forbes Britton and Maj. Sam Bogart, by Hons. A.C. Hyde, B.F. Neal, J.W. Throckmorton, Thos. Lewellyn, A.M. Hobby, and A.B. Norton." *Confederate Imprints*. Microfilm, 144 reels. New Haven: Research Publications, 1974: 2557.

"An Act to provide for the protection of the Frontier of the State of Texas." *Confederate Imprints*. Microfilm, 144 reels. New Haven: Research Publications, 1974: 2169.

Austin *Southern Intelligencer*. 31 January, 1861.

Barrett, Thomas. *The Great Hanging at* Gainesville. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1961.

Cates, Cliff D. *Pioneer History of Wise County*. St. Louis: Nixon-Jones, 1907.

Clark, James Lemuel. *Civil War Recollections of James Lemuel Clark*. Edited by L.D. Clark. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1984.

Diamond, George Washington. *George Washington Diamond's Account of the Great Hanging at Gainesville, 1862*. Edited by Sam Acheson and Julie Ann Hudson O'Connell. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1963.

Houston, Sam. *The Writings of Sam Houston, 1813-1863*. Edited by Amelia W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1943.

Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. *Historical Demographic, Economic, and Social Data: The United States, 1790-1970*. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 1984. Internet on-line. <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census/>. [28 October 2000]

Manuscript returns of the 8th Census of the United States. Schedule I: Free Population. Schedule II: Slave Population. Schedule IV: Agricultural Products. Microfilm. National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

McCulloch, H.E. "Letter from H.E. McCulloch to Hon. J.C. Robertson, Feb 26, 1861." Record Group 109, Chapter 8, Volume 276. National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

Olmsted, Frederick Law. *The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveler's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States*. Edited by Arthur M. Schlesinger. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953.

"Speech of Robert H. Taylor delivered in the House of Representatives of the Texas Legislature upon the Joint Resolutions to 'Recognize or approve the Convention to assemble 28th of January, 1861.'" *Confederate Imprints*. Microfilm, 144 reels. New Haven: Research Publications, 1974: 2856.

"Three Counties in the Red River Valley." In *The Dark Corner of the Confederacy: Accounts of Civil War Texas as Told by Contemporaries*, edited by B.P. Gallaway. Abilene: Abilene Christian College, 1968.

Winkler, Ernest W. *Journal of the Secession Convention of Texas, 1861*. Austin: Austin Printing Company, 1912.

Wright, Marcus J. *Texas in the War: 1861-1865*. Edited by Harold B. Simpson. Hillsboro: Hill Junior College Press, 1965.

Secondary sources

Books

Armstrong, Orland Kay. *Old Massa's People: The Old Slaves Tell Their Story*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1931.

Blassingame, John W. *The Slave Community*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Buenger, Walter L. *Secession and the Union in Texas*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984.

Burnham, W. Dean. *Presidential Ballots 1836-1892*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955.

Campbell, Randolph B. *An Empire for Slavery*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989.

Fischer, David Hackett. *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Gray, Lewis C. *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*. Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1933.

Huckabay, Ida L. *Ninety-Four Years in Jack County*. Austin: Steck, 1949.

Lathrop, Barnes F. *Migration into East Texas, 1835-1860*. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1949.

McCaslin, Richard B. *Tainted Breeze: The Great Hanging at Gainesville, Texas, 1862*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994.

McPherson, James M. *Battle Cry of Freedom*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1988.

New Handbook of Texas Online. Internet on-line. <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/index.new.html>. [28 October 2000]

Pickering, David. *Brush Men and Vigilantes*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000.

Smith, A. Morton. *The First 100 Years in Cooke County*. San Antonio: Naylor, 1955.

-------, David Paul. *Frontier Defense in the Civil War: Texas' Rangers and Rebels*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992.

Stambaugh, J. Lee and Lillian J. *A History of Collin County, Texas*. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1958.

White, Richard. *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A History of the American West*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

Woodman, Harold D., ed. *Slavery and the Southern Economy: Sources and Readings*. USA: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966.

Journal articles

Elliott, Claude. "Union Sentiment in Texas, 1861-1865." *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 50 (Winter 1947): 454.

Ewing, Floyd F. "Origins of Unionist Sentiment on the West Texas Frontier." *West Texas Historical Association Year Book* 32 (1956): 21-29.

----------. "Unionist Sentiment on the Northwest Texas Frontier." *West Texas Historical Association Yearbook* 33 (1957): 58-70.

Harmon, George D. "The United States Indian Policy in Texas, 1846-1860." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 17 (1930): 377-403.

Harper, Cecil. "Slavery Without Cotton: Hunt County, Texas, 1846-1864." *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 88 (Fall 1985): 387-405.

Jordan, Terry G. "Population Origins in Texas, 1850." *Geographical Review* 59 (1969): 83-103.

Kolchin, Peter. *American Slavery: 1619-1877*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1993.

Lathrop, Barnes F. "History from the Census Returns." *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 51 (April 1948): 293-312.

Norton, Wesley. "The Methodist Episcopal Church and the Civil Disturbances in North Texas in 1859 and 1860." *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 68 (Fall 1965): 317-341.

Owsley, Frank L. "The Pattern of Migration and Settlement on the Southern Frontier." *Journal of Southern History* 11 (May 1945): 147-176.

Ramsdell, Charles W. "The Natural Limits of Slavery Expansion." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 16 (1930): 151-171.

Sawyer, William E. "Martin Hart, Civil War Guerrilla." *Texas Military History* 3 (Fall 1963): 146-153.

Sutherland, James, ed. *Guerrillas, Unionists, and Violence on the Confederate Home Front*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999.

Tatum, Georgia Lee. *Disloyalty in the Confederacy*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934.

Wooster, Ralph A. "An Analysis of the Membership of the Texas Secession Convention." *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 63 (January 1959): 326-335.

----------. "Wealthy Texans, 1860." *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 71 (October 1967): 163-180.