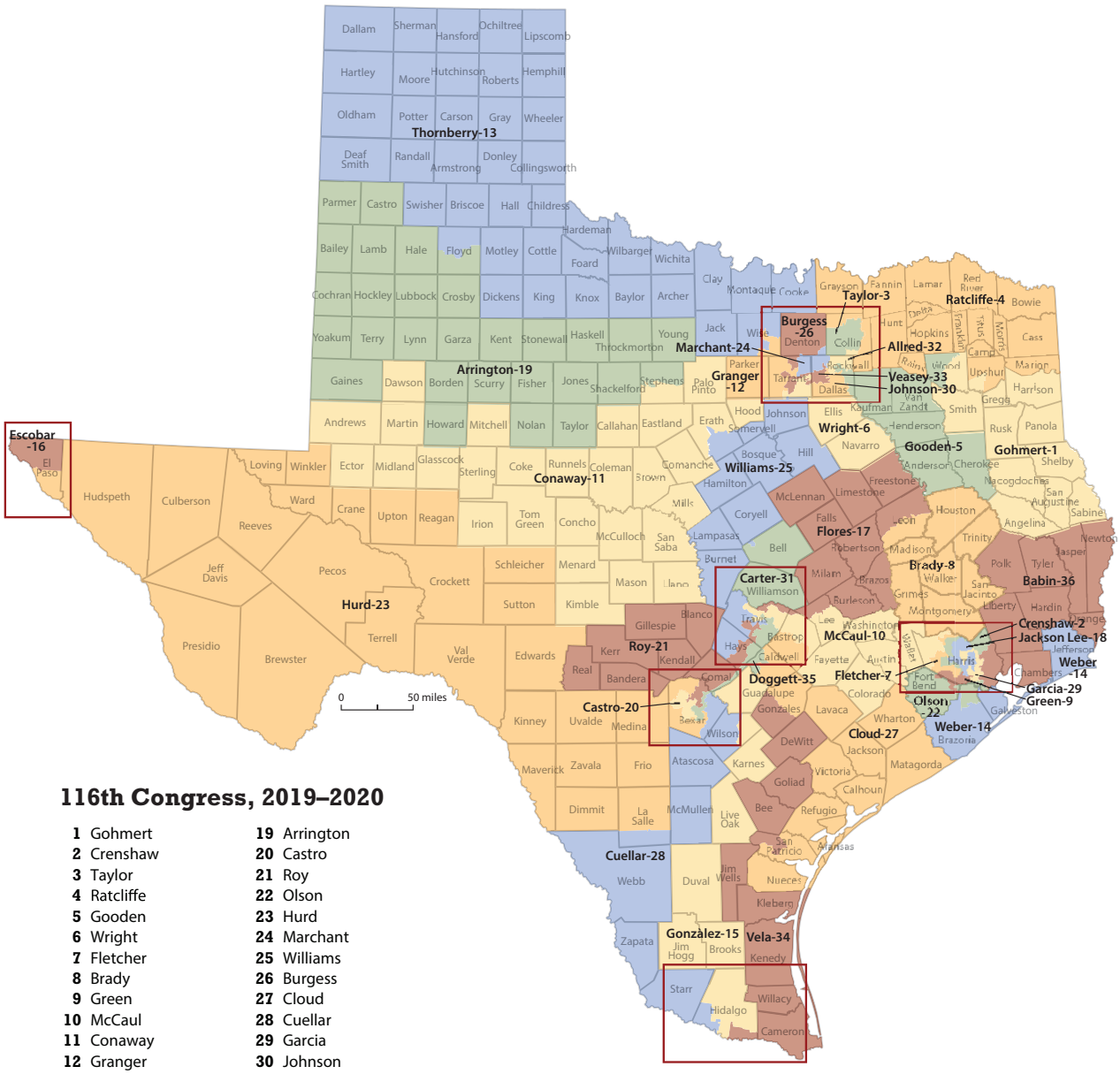
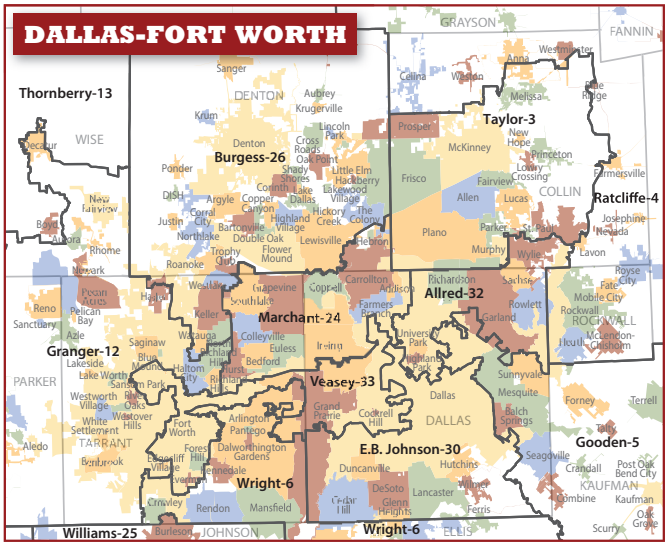

SEVENTH EDITION
LONE STAR POLITICS
TRADITION AND TRANSFORMATION IN TEXAS
KEN COLLIER ★ STEVEN GALATAS ★ JULIE HARRELSON-STEPHENS

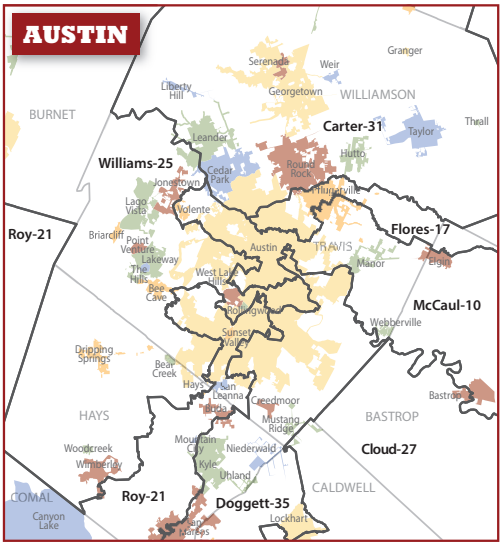
# U.S. Congressional Districts

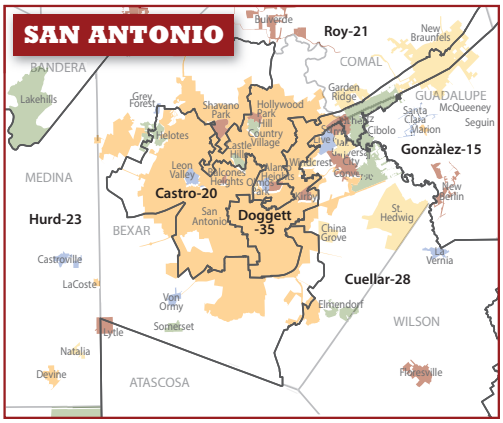



## 116th Congress, 2019–2020

1 Gohmert
2 Crenshaw
3 Taylor
4 Ratcliffe
5 Gooden
6 Wright
7 Fletcher
8 Brady
9 Green
10 McCaul
11 Conaway
12 Granger
13 Thornberry
14 Weber
15 Gonzàlez
16 Escobar
17 Flores
18 Jackson Lee
19 Arrington
20 Castro
21 Roy
22 Olson
23 Hurd
24 Marchant
25 Williams
26 Burgess
27 Cloud
28 Cuellar
29 Garcia
30 Johnson
31 Carter
32 Allred
33 Veasey
34 Vela
35 Dogget
36 Babin


DALLAS-FORT WORTH
Thornberry-13
Burgess-26
Taylor-3
Ratcliffe-4
Marchant-24
Allred-32
Granger-12
Veasey-33
E.B. Johnson-30
Gooden-5
Wright-6
Williams-25
Wright-6
GRAYSON
FANNIN
DENTON
WISE
COLLIN
PARKER
TARRANT
DALLAS
JOHNSON
ELLIS
ROCKWALL
KAUFMAN


AUSTIN
Carter-31
Williams-25
Roy-21
Flores-17
McCaul-10
Cloud-27
Doggett-35
Roy-21
BURNET
WILLIAMSON
TRAVIS
HAYS
BASTROP
CALDWELL
COMAL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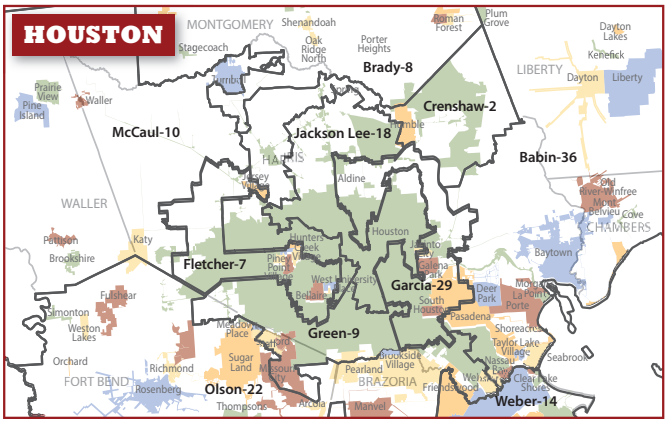
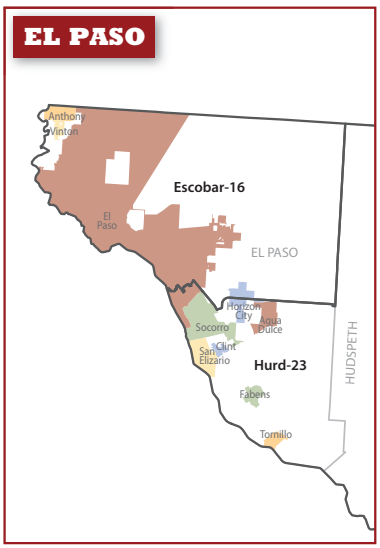
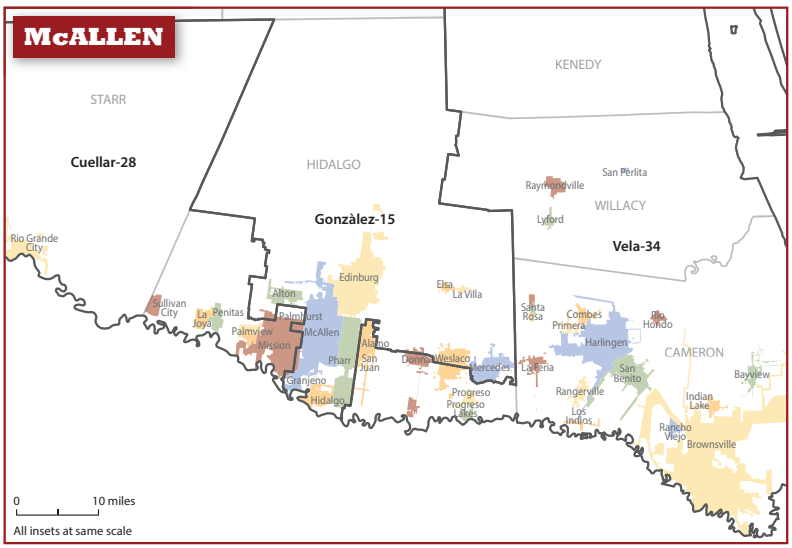
Gonzàlez-15
Castro-20
Doggett -35
Hurd-23
Cuellar-28
COMAL
BANDERA
MEDINA
BEXAR
GUADALUPE
WILSON
ATASCOSA


HOUSTON
Brady-8
Crenshaw-2
McCaul-10
Jackson Lee-18
Babin-36
Fletcher-7
Garcia-29
Green-9
Olson-22
Weber-14
MONTGOMERY
LIBERTY
HARRIS
WALLER
CHAMBERS
FORT BEND
BRAZORIA


EL PASO
Escobar-16
Hurd-23
EL PASO
HUDSPETH


McALLEN
Cuellar-28
Gonzàlez-15
Vela-34
STARR
HIDALGO
KENEDY
WILLACY
CAMERON
0
10 miles
All insets at same scale

*For Ken, our mentor and friend.*

**Ken loved all things Texas, from Six Flags to tumbleweeds. He is shown here with his great uncle Earl Persons in Grand Saline, Texas.**

# Lone Star Politics

## Tradition and Transformation in Texas

### 7th Edition

**Ken Collier**

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# BRIEF CONTENTS

# DETAILED CONTENTS

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# PREFACE

> *As has often been said, there is no State in the Union whose history presents such varied and romantic scenes as does that of Texas. This alone would recommend it to the general reader and the earnest student. But there is in addition to its interest a weighty reason why every school in the State should give Texas History a place in its course of study. No one who learns well the lessons taught can fail to become a better and wiser citizen.*[1]
>
> —Anna J. Hardwicke Pennybacker,
> *A New History of Texas for Schools* (1888)

Mrs. Pennybacker's "new" history of Texas presents a traditional view of the state's history. The copy we used when writing this book originally belonged to Earl B. Persons, the great-uncle of one of the authors. In the century since young Earl Persons first read this quotation in his schoolbook, Texans have written some new history and revised some old. Mr. Persons served in World War I before taking part in the rise of the oil business in East Texas—a period during which he saw his pastures become more valuable for the oil under them than the cattle that grazed on them. The next generation of Texans saw America through World War II, the Cold War, and the space race directed from NASA in Houston. That generation grew up on *Texas History Movies*, a comic version of Texas history sponsored by an oil company. Another generation saw the high-tech boom take root in the state. Texans born today may never own a printed book on the state's politics and history, and thus they will be unlikely to leave their names scrawled in a textbook to remind descendants of the Texas their ancestors knew. (However, today's students can still preserve the Texas they know by buying copies of this text and setting them aside so that their children and grandchildren can share the fun of Texas circa 2021—please contact CQ Press for inquiries regarding bulk sales.)

The economic, demographic, and political changes in the state continually introduce new ways of life to its citizens. Over the past century, as Texans moved from the ranches and farms of the countryside into more urban areas, these cities, suburbs, and exurbs became the natural habitat of Texans. As small towns gave way to cities, Texans found themselves living closer and closer together, meaning that they had to cooperate more with neighbors and fellow citizens. The farmer's lonely but simple commute from farmhouse to field has been replaced by long treks to work on crowded superhighways. For Texans of an earlier time, commerce meant the weekly trip into town to sell goods, buy supplies, and check the mail at the post office. Social networking meant gathering at the local coffee shop to swap stories over breakfast. Today, many Texans remain in constant contact with other Texans, other Americans, and other people from around the world. Many Texans have trouble working when their internet connection goes down even briefly.

Clearly, we Texans aren't what we used to be. However, our image of ourselves has not changed quite as much as the circumstances of our lives. During the century since Mrs. Pennybacker wrote those words that appear at the beginning of

this preface, most Texans have looked again at our history and found a much more nuanced view of our conflicts with the Mexican government during the revolution and with the U.S. government during and after the U.S. Civil War. Although scholars have reviewed and revised the stories of Texas, Texans have often clung to the more romantic version of our history. At the same time, Texans effortlessly blend together many of the traditions and cultural traits that find their way into the state. One can't help but think about the blending of cultures when revising chapters over a breakfast of jalapeño cheddar biscuits, which combine the state's southern and Mexican heritages, in the familiar confines of Whataburger, a chain restaurant with roots in Corpus Christi that has become a Texas tradition of its own. In Texas, we often take the blending of cultures for granted. Such a meal is neither Mexican nor southern—it's Texan.

Our state's government is in the unenviable position of having to keep pace with all the changes in the state while still remaining true to our traditions and legends. Texas government needs to be both lean and modern, capable of managing the affairs of nearly 29 million Texans while retaining a small-town feel and the frontier spirit. Texas leaders must be both engaged and rooted, nimble enough to respond to global competition and regional hurricane devastation but still able to ride a horse and swap stories with fellow Texans, whether over the counter of the local diner or over the internet on Reddit, Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

One of the most remarkable things about teaching Texas politics is that, although many Texas students only take the course because it's required, and so many instructors have trepidations about teaching it, the subject is actually pretty enjoyable. As Molly Ivins said, "I believe politics is the finest form of entertainment in the state of Texas: better than the zoo, better than the circus, rougher than football, and more aesthetically satisfying than baseball."[2] Generations of textbooks have stepped into the breach between these reluctant participants, often with mixed results. Textbooks about Texas politics tend to be rather dry, but the topic can be spicy, as our state's history is full of legends, criminals, preachers, hucksters, cowboys, and even comedians. Somehow, when all is said and done, the life is too often taken out of Texas politics, and we think that's a true Texas tragedy.

We've tried to breathe a little of that life back into the study of Texas politics. We can't engage in storytelling for storytelling's sake. However, any effort to put together a dry, story-free (i.e., "serious") textbook on Texas politics would lead us to forget the role that the state's legends and myths play in shaping how Texans think and how our politicians behave. You can't tell the story of Texas without revisiting a few tall tales, debunking some persistent myths in the state, and captivating the readers with the true stories that are often more interesting than the legends.

## READING BETWEEN THE LINES OF *LONE STAR POLITICS*

The plan for the book is relatively simple. We open with an introduction to the state and its history in Chapter 1. While much of this story will be familiar to many readers, we feel it bears repeating to bring focus to the political history of the state and to refresh the memories of Texas students who haven't read much about their state's

history since middle school. Building on the state's history, Chapter 2 examines the birth and rebirth of the state through its constitutions. That chapter emphasizes that while the Texas Constitution continues to evolve, it has not been able to keep pace with a rapidly changing state. Chapter 3 looks at how the Texas Legislature is elected and how it functions; it also looks at the legislative process. The legislature, which is at the heart of Texas democracy, is a fine example of how changes have been slow to come. Next, Chapter 4 visits the Texas governor's mansion to see if the governor's office is ready to keep up with the dynamic state. Chapter 5 examines many of the organizations and other offices that make up the Texas executive branch. Chapter 6 considers the court system of Texas, and Chapter 7 looks at the process of dispensing justice in Texas. Chapter 8 examines how Texans elect their officials, and it includes a discussion of how candidates campaign for those offices. Chapter 9 looks at how Texans work together (sometimes) through parties, and Chapter 10 explores the impact of organized interests in the state. Chapter 11 considers local government in Texas (including those pesky homeowner associations [HOAs]). Chapter 12 begins our discussion of what government produces: policy. That chapter focuses on our fiscal policy—how and why we tax citizens and how that money is spent. Chapter 13 investigates what Texas is doing in the areas of transportation, natural resources, the environment, and trade. Finally, Chapter 14 focuses on the public education system (K–12), higher education, the state's role in health care, and immigration. It also concludes the book and revisits a few themes.

## OUR FEATURES

This text is designed to draw readers into the key issues of politics in Texas. Several features of the text are designed to bring the reader's attention to an issue, often helping the reader to see it in a new light.

### Texas Legends

John Steinbeck observed after his first visit to Texas, "Like most passionate nations Texas has its own history based on, but not limited by, facts."[3] We have made a discussion of Texas legends a recurring feature of this text. When we look at the characters and stories that fill Texas politics, we often find that Texas's legends differ from reality. These legends play a role in shaping Texans' self-image whether or not they can be proven true. One historian who suggested that the real Davy Crockett surrendered rather than died fighting—unlike Fess Parker's heroic portrayal of Crockett in Disney's movie version of the battle of the Alamo—was told by an angry reader that the "Fess Parker image has done more for children than your book can."[4] Discussing what has been termed the "Texas creation myth," one writer concluded, "The mythic Alamo of the American collective imagination has become far more important than the Alamo of tedious historical fact."[5] It is odd that Texans have allowed Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and other legends of the Alamo to be recast (especially by Walt Disney). Many of the men who defended the Alamo were brave, but their lives were not necessarily family fare. For example, Bowie partnered in a slave-smuggling ring with pirate Jean Lafitte before arriving in Texas,[6] and William Travis abandoned a young son and a pregnant wife before he came to the state.

That these men and women lived hard lives and made serious errors is not the point of retelling their stories. Texas is a place where people come to start over and find a new identity. The celebrated Baron de Bastrop was really a Dutchman named Philip Hendrik Nering Bögel who invented the title when he arrived in San Antonio with very little money. When Moses Austin came to Texas in 1820 to win the right to form colonies in Texas, only to be sent packing by a Spanish governor who distrusted foreigners, it was the baron who persuaded the governor to forward Austin's proposal to the Spanish government. As one author put it, "He was among the first, but certainly not the last, loser to come to Texas to reinvent himself and emerge in prominence."[7] The flaws in Texas's leaders remain evident today. George W. Bush was honest—if not always specific—about the mistakes in his past. Despite those flaws, Texans twice chose him as their governor before recommending him to a nation that then twice elected him as president.

In this book, we take on many of Texas's legends, as both person and myth. The legends we include are all larger than life figures. Some are noted for their political prowess, such as Barbara Jordon (Chapter 3), Ann Richards (Chapter 4), and Bob Bullock (Chapter 1). For others, like Sam Houston (Chapter 1) and Judge Roy Bean (Chapter 6), the myth is more persistent than the reality. None of the Texas legends are saints, and a few, like Pa Ferguson (Chapter 14) and George Parr (Chapter 9), are remembered particularly for their sins. We also highlight how legends are made in the struggle for civil rights, focusing on, for example, the creation of the League of United Latin American Citizens (Chapter 10) and the failed attempt to desegregate Mansfield High School (Chapter 2). This edition adds Texas suffragists (Chapter 8), including Martha Goodwin Tunstall, Eliza Peterson, and Jovita Idár Juárez, who led the way for women's rights in the state. Some of the Texas legends we explore center on events, such as the Galveston hurricane (Chapter 11), or institutions, such as the Texas Railroad Commission (Chapter 5). All of Texas's legends are part giant and part lore.

Even as the legends of our history reinvented themselves, we Texans have reinvented our own history. Our recollection of history is less fixed than we care to admit. After Texans won the Battle of San Jacinto with the battle cry "Remember the Alamo," the Alamo itself would lie in neglect for half a century, a forgotten monument that was used to store onions and potatoes before being restored and elevated as the "Shrine of Texas Liberty."

Our explorations of Texas legends are not an attempt to resolve the debate between views of "Disneyland Davy" and other versions of Texas history. Texans need not be sidetracked by the debate about whether their state's heroes were perfect. They were not. Neither were the founders of the United States. What we need to understand is how important these images are to the people of Texas. Describing the "passionate nation" that is Texas, John Steinbeck noted that "rich, poor, Panhandle, Gulf, city, county, Texas is the obsession, the proper study and the passionate possession of all Texans."[8] The aspirations embedded in our myths play a role in how the state approaches change. Because our legends are about who we once were, retelling these stories now reminds us who we are today and keeps us from drifting too far from our values. At the same time, these legends can tell us a great deal about who we want to be and where our hopes come from. As Steinbeck wrote, "I have said

that Texas is a state of mind, but I think it is more than that. It is a mystique closely approximating a religion."[9]

## Winners and Losers

Politics involves the distribution of goods and by its nature produces winners and losers. While Texas's history, culture, and predilections may seem vague and distant to students today, the politics that spring from them have ramifications that are very real for the citizens of the state. This text is intended to encourage students to think critically about Texas politics, identify problems, and look ahead to solutions. We will frequently pause and look at who gets what from government by looking at winners and losers in Texas politics and featuring questions that encourage critical thinking. This is especially valuable in studying Texas political history because the victories won by a group in one era most often lay the groundwork for the next battles. Texas is in a constant state of change, and citizens need to consider what issues need to be addressed to deal with these changes and how their fellow Texans might be affected by them.

## Texas versus . . .

We will occasionally pause to compare Texas to other states, often focusing on those states that provide the most dramatic or interesting contrasts to Texas. We want to illustrate how Texas is different and why that difference is significant. Because most citizens of a state seldom consider their options, we felt it was important to illustrate the possibilities of state government and to illustrate the consequences of choices that people face. Comparisons were selected to provide examples from potentially familiar settings, such as Louisiana or California, as well as settings that Texans may have little exposure to, such as Vermont or Minnesota. It is our hope that students will come to appreciate why Texas is just a little bit different. Our comparison of Texas to other states is a good place to highlight critical thinking. We pose questions alongside each comparison to encourage students to look at options and ponder what would best serve the state.

## Federalism in Action

Chapter 2 introduces the topic of federalism, but it's nearly impossible to leave behind the relationship between the state and federal governments. Federalism permeates a diverse set of issues covered throughout the book, and students can get to know that relationship more intimately. This box feature explores how Texas and the federal government—and Texas local governments—relate on topics including abortion; redistricting; voting rights; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, or asexual (LGBTQIA) rights; and campus carry. The COVID crisis has reignited the fundamental questions of what is the purpose of government and which government is in charge, illustrating that the question of federalism is more than merely an academic one. These are important contemporary issues that deserve greater scrutiny. Questions that go with each box encourage students to think actively about what they've just read and engage in debate or draw their own conclusions.

### How Texas Government Works

With every edition, we try to ensure a good representation of visual material because we know that some people simply process information better that way. We also understand that sometimes a picture really is worth a thousand words. We haven't taken those words out of the book, because not everyone gets what the picture is saying, but we have included full-page infographics in this edition—roughly one for each chapter. They focus on processes and structures that convey how Texas government works, and they provide big-picture perspectives in showing how Texas compares to the rest of the United States or even internationally. Students will come away with a better understanding of not only how Texas government functions but also how it fits into this wider world in which we live.

## NEW TO THE SEVENTH EDITION

Texas politics and Texas identity have been intertwined with state versus federal power since the Civil War. While that theme continues to dominate, the question of state versus local control is increasingly central to Texas politics. Chapter 2 expands the discussion of federalism with particular attention to the tension between state power and local power, a tension that has become pricklier in recent years. The theme of federalism is also central to the COVID response, which is woven throughout the text. The "Federalism in Action" feature in Chapter 4 looks specifically at the way uncertainty around who should be in charge led to a confusing response to the pandemic. These discussions also encourage students to think critically about the state and federal relationship and probe beyond what they may hear with half an ear on the news or read in a tweet.

In this seventh edition, we continue to give attention to diversity—from the book's main narrative and feature boxes to the data it conveys and the photos it displays. Diversity is woven throughout the book. We expand the discussion of immigration and demographics in Chapter 1. We want all students in Texas to find themselves represented within *Lone Star*'s pages, and we welcome your suggestions on how we can improve our coverage.

Like everyone else who teaches in core curriculum at the state's universities, we're very aware of the impact of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) curriculum standards and have tried to make the connections between the text and the coordinating board's assessment goals as clear as possible. In the seventh edition, we expand the **Chapter Objectives** to coincide with the major section headings, so instructors and students can connect the topic of the section with specific learning objectives. The book's chapter objectives and the inclusion of questions on critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, personal responsibility, and social responsibility in the "Texas versus" comparisons, the "Federalism in Action" features, and at the end of each chapter are designed to make the instructor's assessment tasks as easy as possible. *Lone Star*'s comparative approach provides a wealth of opportunities to get students thinking from a variety of angles, and many questions are crafted with the THECB standards in mind to ensure that students develop these skills. **Discussion Starters** are included to focus on some of the critical debates that come up in the chapter. These provide a handy jumping-off point

for a dialogue about difficult policy choices. The end of each chapter includes **Active Learning** assignments that address the standards of communication and teamwork.

## TEACHING RESOURCES

This text includes an array of instructor teaching materials designed to save you time and to help you keep students engaged. To learn more, visit **sagepub.com** or contact your SAGE representative at sagepub.com/findmyrep.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Obviously, we didn't do this by ourselves. We did make all the mistakes. Against all odds, a small band of dedicated people tried their best to detect these mistakes and set us right.

While the book's heart came from Texas, we got some help from friends in Washington, D.C. As parts of this book were being written at a small-town Whataburger, the good people at CQ Press, located far from Texas, labored to keep us on schedule and under control. Despite the fact that they still haven't found the pictures we wanted of the "Los Conquistadors Coronado Burro Ride" at the Six Flags Over Texas amusement park (or hid them from us if they did), we would like to thank senior acquisitions editor Scott Greenan, senior content development editor Jennifer Jovin-Bernstein, senior editorial assistant Tiara Beatty, copy editor Karen Taylor, and senior project editor Veronica Stapleton Hooper for their benevolence, patience, and diligence. We'd also like to thank Theron Waddell and the other reviewers who offered up a valuable balance of criticism and encouragement:

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# NOTES

1. Mrs. Anna J. Hardwicke Pennybacker, *A New History of Texas for Schools* (Tyler, Tex.: Author, 1888), v.
2. Molly Ivins, *Nothin' But Good Times Ahead* (New York: Random House, 1993), 55–56.
3. John Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), 226.
4. James E. Crisp, *Sleuthing the Alamo: Davy Crockett's Last Stand and Other Mysteries of the Texas Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 142.
5. Crisp, *Sleuthing the Alamo*, 144.
6. Crisp, *Sleuthing the Alamo*, 17.
7. James L. Haley, *Passionate Nation: The Epic History of Texas* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 70.
8. Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley*, 226.
9. Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley*, 227.

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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# 1 Introduction

## Chapter Objectives

**1.1** Describe how the state's geography and demographics shape its politics.
**1.2** Discuss the role of tradition and legend in Texas politics.
**1.3** Describe the political developments that accompanied Texas's move from a country to a state.
**1.4** Describe the political culture of Texas and its impact on Texas government.
**1.5** Explain the context of Texas's increasingly diverse population.
**1.6** Discuss how Texas's identity is shaped by immigration.

After watching immigrants stream across the border into Texas year after year, government officials on the Texas side began to worry that their state was being transformed into a part-Mexican, part-Anglo society that would prove unmanageable and ungovernable as the growing number of immigrants asserted their political power. Some immigrants entered lawfully, patiently working through the government's cumbersome process; others came without regard for the laws, exploiting a border that was too long and too remote to be effectively monitored. Most of the new immigrants proved to be both hardworking and enterprising additions to Texas's society and economy. Many brought their families for a chance at a better life or planned to bring family along as soon as they earned enough money to do so. A few crossed the border to escape legal and financial problems back home and contributed to criminal enterprises or squandered their wages on alcohol and vice, eventually abandoning their families. Established residents worried that they would become foreigners in their own country or doubted that their new neighbors would ever prove anything but a challenge, since many newcomers refused to assimilate or adopt the politics and culture of their new home. Many of the new arrivals stubbornly clung to their native tongue; some even began to demand that official business be conducted in it.

The government felt that much of the problem lay on the other side of the border. Some of these immigrants seemed to be entering the state to foment change, and

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**The 55-foot Big Tex, which presides over the Texas State Fair, is an icon to all Texans, no matter their origin. The 2010 census found that about 61 percent of Texans were born in Texas, 23 percent were born elsewhere in the United States, and 16 percent were foreign born.**

many had strong ties to political leaders back home. Sam Houston, the former governor of Tennessee, was a close political and personal friend of U.S. president Andrew Jackson. Davy Crockett, also a product of Jackson's Democratic Party in Tennessee, had served in the U.S. Congress and was one of the more dynamic political figures of the day. It seemed likely that his political ambitions had followed him to Texas.

Many of the early Texans who fought for independence from Mexico came to Texas against the expressed wishes of the Mexican government. Whereas early American colonists along the Eastern Seaboard settled among, and then pushed aside, the more loosely organized Native American populations, some early Texans violated a border officially recognized by the United States government as they brushed aside Mexican law. The immigration issue—today as then—represents the challenge of governing a rapidly changing state. While immigrants today generate a great deal of revenue for the state through sales and income taxes, they also cost the counties and local governments a great deal in services. Immigrants contribute greatly to the economic success of the state by meeting the demand for inexpensive labor, but they sometimes do so at the expense of native-born labor.

Immigration, then and now, shows us that Texas's placement at the crossroads between new and old has been one of the few constants in the politics of the state. Texas has relished its growth but has often been uncomfortable with the new arrivals who have fueled it. Texans have enjoyed the prosperity that growth brings but have only reluctantly accepted the new Texans and the changes they have triggered.

While change may be inevitable, a society is rooted by the stories citizens share and hand down from generation to generation. We Texans are especially attached to our state's history and its legends of larger-than-life people and events. Stories from Texas history are more than dramatic scenes we retell and recreate for entertainment; these stories define who we are and remind us of our values. Texas's unique relationship with its history is reflected in a favorite theme park, Six Flags Over Texas, an amusement park originally constructed around Texas history themes and that at one time featured rides such as "La Salle's River Boat Adventure" in the French section and "Los Conquistadores Mule Pack Coronado Trek" in the Spanish section.[1] Like the state it represents, the theme park has undergone constant change since its inception. Today, the legends portrayed at Six Flags Over Texas are decidedly modern, and tourists are more likely to pose for pictures with Batman and Bugs Bunny in front of gleaming metal roller coasters than with the costumed deputies who duel horse thieves in front of the replica county courthouse.

Legends are stories passed down for generations—but stories that are often presented as history. While not always entirely true, legends play an important role in politics. Legends reveal a desire to be culturally connected to our fellow citizens and to a larger entity, and they also tell us a great deal about who we want to be.

So where, between legend and reality, is the true Texas? Even as it takes care to project a rustic frontier image, Texas today is home to many of the most innovative businesses in the global marketplace. Greg Abbott launched his campaign for governor in La Villita near the Alamo in San Antonio, but he did so in front of a large video screen that flashed his message digitally to the crowd. Thus, even as they remember the Alamo and the rest of Texas's past, the leaders of Texas today embrace new technology as well as the state's oldest traditions.

In this chapter, we will chart the contours of this gap. We will start by looking at Texas history and geography, casting an eye toward the traditions and transformations that have shaped the state's politics. We will examine some of the legends behind Texas politics and highlight the differences between Texas and another one-time independent U.S. state. We will conclude the chapter by focusing on the state of Texas today—its people, economy, and culture.

## TEXAS GEOGRAPHY

### >> 1.1 Describe how the state's geography and demographics shape its politics.

The landmass of Texas defines the state's image as much as it has determined the course of its history. With a land area totaling 261,232 square miles, it is the second largest of the U.S. states, behind Alaska's 663,276 square miles. From east to west, the state spans 773 miles and from north to south 801 miles. The 785-mile drive from Marshall to El Paso takes a traveler from the Piney Woods of East Texas to the sparse landscape of the West Texas desert. Driving the 900 miles north from Brownsville to Texline takes the traveler from the border of Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico to the borders of Oklahoma and New Mexico. The Texas Gulf Coast consists of shoreline and marshy areas, while the Trans-Pecos region includes the arid desert of Big Bend and Guadalupe Peak, the highest point in Texas at 8,749 feet.

Texas runs the full gamut from urban to rural. The state's most populous county, Harris County, which contains Houston, had 4,698,619 residents in 2018, making it more populous than half the states in the United States. All told, the state is home to five counties with populations over 1 million. Texas also has some of the nation's least populated counties, with Loving County's 677 square miles in the Panhandle occupied by only 169 residents. The state has eight counties with populations under 1,000, and about one-third (eighty-eight) of Texas's 254 counties have populations under 10,000.

Texas's size encourages more than bragging rights. V. O. Key, a native Texan and one of the founders of modern political science, pointed out that the geographic size of the state has limited the face-to-face interactions needed to develop closely knit political organizations. While this helped inoculate Texas from the large party machines that corrupted politics in many other states during the nineteenth century, it has also inhibited the formation of beneficial groups that would bring together more benevolent forces from across the state.

The state's size makes campaigning expensive for candidates trying to win votes statewide and has left the state's politicians more dependent on those capable of financing a statewide campaign. The sheer size of the state has also rewarded a

dramatic style. As Key observed after surveying the electoral history of his home state, "attention-getting antics substituted for organized politics."[2] In the absence of closely knit state political networks, and given Texans' fondness for independence, the path to power for the political outsider may be a little bit easier. The ability to quickly grab the imagination of voters has given Texas politics a colorful cast of characters rivaled by few other places. Texas's political candidates are often larger than life, and while change has been a constant in Texas politics, subtlety is often lacking. These colorful characters often make for good storytelling, but they do not always make for good government. As former lieutenant governor Ben Barnes once mused as he looked out at the Texas Senate, "there were more eccentric, unpredictable, and flat crazy characters than you'd find in any novel."[3]

Size has contributed to the state's mentality in other ways. With its seemingly endless frontier, Texas represents limitless potential to many. At the same time, its spaciousness offers an escape that reinforces Texans' sense of independence and freedom. With Texans dispersed across such an extensive landscape, history and legends become even more important as a shared culture. The vast geographic distances and the differences in human geography leave many wondering exactly what it is that binds so tightly all these people from all these places and makes them into such fiercely loyal Texans. The answer, of course, is Texas's unique history. As John Steinbeck wrote, "there is no physical or geographical unity in Texas. Its unity lies in the mind."[4]

While Texas's history unites its citizens, it also represents a long string of transitions that brought with them conflict between old and new. As we will see, the Texas political system has often resisted the needs and wishes of new arrivals because those that preceded them were reluctant to give up the power for which they had fought. While this pattern is not unique to Texas, Texas's history offers a vivid tableau of upheaval along the hard road of change.

## HISTORY: THE BIRTH OF TEXAS TRADITIONS

**>> 1.2 Discuss the role of tradition and legend in Texas politics.**

The first wave of change began about 12,000 years ago when humans who had drifted into North America some 20,000 years ago eventually found their way into Texas. These earliest Texans hunted mammoths before those large animals became extinct. Later, bison served as a primary food source on the grassy plains that covered present-day West Texas. As changes in the climate began to warm the plains, the land could no longer support the large mammals the hunting tribes depended on, and, as a result, hunter-gatherer tribes became more prevalent.

The native people that European explorers "discovered" about 500 years ago were diverse and well established. Much of their history was lost to the rising water levels that would bring the Gulf of Mexico's current coastline to its current location about 3,000 years ago. About 1,500 years ago, the Caddo people developed agricultural tools and practices that gave them a more stable food supply, which meant less need to roam and more time to form a society with social classes and to establish trading relations with other tribes. By 1500, an estimated 200,000 Caddos inhabited

a society that was extensive enough to lead some historians to call the Caddos the "Romans of Texas."[5] They lived in tribes with governing officials that included subchiefs, tribal chiefs, and the Grand Caddi, the great chief of all the tribes.

Along the Gulf Coast, the Karankawa people relied on fish and shellfish for much of their diet. Dubbed cannibals by some, the Karankawas ate only their enemies and were in fact so shocked to learn that the Spanish survivors of the Narváez expedition had cannibalized each other that some Karankawas expressed regret at not having killed the Spanish explorers when they first came ashore.[6] Coahuiltecan tribes roamed the area southwest of the Karankawas, surviving on a diverse diet of whatever they could gather or catch. Because subsistence needs forced them to move about the prairies, these small hunter-gatherer bands lacked the cohesive society that developed among tribes such as the Caddos. The Apaches, who inhabited areas of what would become the Texas Panhandle, lived in large, extended families in a peaceful and well-ordered society.

Christopher Columbus's first voyage brought great change to the Texas region as the Spanish Empire in America began to take root in the Caribbean, Central America, and the Southwest. As would many others after them, the conquistadores Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and Hernán Cortés visited the region seeking wealth. One of the most significant instruments of change the Spanish brought with them was the horse. Even though the Spanish forces were never a large enough presence to transform the region, the horses they brought changed American Indian society by giving some tribes the means to move their camps more quickly and become more effective hunters and warriors. While the Spanish brought horses to Texas, they also systematically set out to erase all traces of Aztec and other cultures rooted in modern Mexico.

The French, led by René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, managed only a brief presence in Texas. La Salle, who, in the view of one historian, had the sort of personality and exhibited the kind of behavior that "led many to question his mental stability,"[7] had an ambitious plan to build a series of posts down the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico, claim all the land drained by the Mississippi, and name it Louisiana in honor of the French king Louis XIV. La Salle's venture into Texas failed, and La Salle himself was killed in an ambush. However, La Salle's incursions spurred the Spanish to increase their settlement of East Texas to counter any future French arrivals.

Although relative newcomers themselves, the Spanish, like the American Indian tribes before them, were suspicious of the motives of new arrivals and sought to bar outsiders; they attempted to strengthen their hold on the region by encouraging their own people to establish or expand settlements in the area. Over the course of the eighteenth century, the Spanish gradually established themselves in Texas through a system of missions and presidios (forts). The missions were designed to bring American Indians closer to God while pushing the French away from the area. Native Americans in the region showed little interest in converting to Catholicism, however, and the Spanish had to supplement their religious outposts with presidios. Given the high costs of maintaining these forts, Spanish investments in the area ultimately proved inadequate, and by the 1790s, there were fewer than 3,200 Spanish-speaking people in Texas.

DC Productions via Getty Images

**The Alamo, the most famous historic site in Texas, was originally part of the network of missions that the Spanish hoped would establish their presence in Texas.**

Building a border wall to keep American immigrants out of Spanish territory was out of the question, but Spanish officials declared in 1795 that local officials should take "the utmost care to prevent the passage to this kingdom of persons from the United States of America."[8] In one of the first recorded verbal assaults on immigrants, one Spanish official colorfully warned that the American immigrants "are not and will not be anything but crows to pick out our eyes."[9]

Despite the efforts of Spanish officials, the tides of change proved too strong to resist, and eventually the Spanish government resorted to giving citizens of the United States land grants to settle in Louisiana (before that territory was acquired by France in 1800). While recruiting Anglo settlers from the United States to serve as a buffer against intrusion by the U.S. government seems self-defeating, the Spanish government had little choice. Many in Spain realized that closing off Texas was futile. Spanish officials hoped that by abandoning Florida and negotiating the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819, which established clear boundaries between Spanish and U.S. claims, American interest would be diverted away from Texas long enough for Spain to build a stronger presence there.

The Spanish legacy in Texas can be seen on any Texas map, as every major river except the Red River bears a Spanish name. Spanish rule also left a different, but particularly Texan, kind of mark: a 1778 Spanish proclamation stated that all unbranded cattle were property of the king, which led to the practice of cattle branding to identify ownership.[10]

The roots of the organized Anglo settlement of Texas in the early nineteenth century can be traced to the last years of Spanish rule in Texas. A Missouri resident, Moses Austin, visited Texas in 1820 in hopes of winning the legal right to form colonies in the area. Unfortunately, the return trip took its toll on Austin after his horses were stolen, and he died soon after returning to Missouri, though not before expressing the hope that his son Stephen would carry on the endeavor. In fact, Stephen F. Austin initially had little interest in serving as an **empresario** (an entrepreneur who made money colonizing areas), and Texas was initially a somewhat unwanted inheritance. However, Austin, a canny businessman, came to see the potential of the land and ultimately warmed to his task.

## Mexican Independence

The next round of change began on September 16 (still celebrated by many Tejanos—Texans of Mexican origin—as Diez y Seis de Septiembre) when Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla launched the Mexican War of Independence against Spain through his revolutionary "Call of Hidalgo" (also known as the "Grito de Dolores"), which demanded that those born in the New World be endowed with the same rights

**empresario** an entrepreneur who made money colonizing areas of the Mexican territories

**MAP 1.1**

## Independent Texas


The Granger Collection, New York

as those born in Europe. Mexican independence ended Spanish control of Texas, but it did not end the desire of local authorities to stop the growing trickle of immigrants from the United States. The fledgling Mexican government eventually approved Austin's colonization plan in the hope that legal settlers brought by authorized empresarios like Austin would become loyal to the Mexican government rather than their U.S. roots.

By 1824, Austin had assembled the 300 families allowed under his initial contract and had begun to settle in Texas. While these colonists suffered more than their share of hardships, Austin's colonies prospered so much that he received four additional contracts to bring settlers to the area over the next seven years. In what would become a familiar problem in Texas, the same opportunities that drew legal settlers and other empresarios to the colonies of Austin also drew illegal immigrants unwilling to deal with the encumbrance of law. Soon Austin and other empresarios found themselves laboring to protect their legal colonies from a flood of illegal squatters.

By the 1830s, there were about 10,000 Anglo settlers in Texas. Some came to Texas hoping to make money quickly in land speculation, but most were subsistence farmers looking for a chance to own land and control their own destiny. Some were fleeing financial ruin brought on by the Panic of 1819; others came to Texas to escape legal problems in American states. Tensions between the Anglos and the Mexican government developed as a result of differences in political culture and the Mexican government's insistence on Spanish as the official language. In addition, many Anglo settlers were Protestants who resented the Mexican government's requirement that they become Catholics. Finally, some wanted to use their land to produce cotton, a cash crop that depended heavily on the labor of the approximately 1,000 enslaved persons they brought with them. This, too, created conflict, as the Mexican government was opposed to slavery. In fact, many wealthy southern plantation owners did not move to Texas for fear that Mexico would enforce its prohibition on slavery.

## The Texas Revolution

The tension between the Mexican government and the Anglo settlers eventually turned into that most dramatic political transformation—revolution. Initially, Anglo settlers were divided on the issues of revolution and independence. Stephen F. Austin and many of the established settlers advocated a moderate course, asking for separate statehood within the Mexican nation. The Mexico Constitution required that Texas have a population of 80,000 before becoming a state, a number far greater than the 30,000 inhabiting the area at the time. During the early 1830s, the Mexican government granted some of the Anglos' other requests: the right to trial by jury and the official use of the English language. Despite these concessions, many Anglos remained unhappy and began to openly defy the Mexican government. When Texans in Gonzales fired on Mexican troops who came to take away the cannon the town used for its defense, the Texas Revolution began.

Tejanos were in a difficult position. In the 1820s, about 4,000 Tejanos inhabited the region, including many former soldiers who had been stationed in the area and remained after leaving military service. Many had become community leaders

and owned large ranches. While Anglo settlers were unhappy about life under the Mexican government, Tejanos were uneasy about the possibility of living under the rule of Anglo settlers, many of whom considered Mexicans and their culture inferior. At the same time, Tejanos shared the concerns of Anglo settlers who did not want a central government in Mexico City controlling their fate and hampering their economic development.

The politics of the independence movement was often chaotic. When Mexican president Antonio López de Santa Anna became less tolerant toward the Texans' aspirations and sent troops to enforce his laws, the Texans began to mobilize politically, calling for a meeting to organize their response. They termed the meeting the "Consultation" of the people of Texas to avoid drawing the ire of Mexican officials with the label "convention," which implied the authority to rewrite the constitution. The Consultation assembled on November 1, 1835, and on November 13 passed the Organic Law. This law created a government with a governor, lieutenant governor, and the General Council, which comprised representatives from each geographic district. Henry Smith, the leader of the more radical group favoring immediate independence, was elected governor by a 30–22 vote, beating out Stephen F. Austin, who clung to a more moderate course. Perhaps Texans should have worried more about their choice. Smith had been married to—and quickly widowed by—two sisters in succession, only to marry a third sister, the twin of his second wife. Smith's political relationships died even more quickly than his romantic relationships. Smith resisted compromise and suspended the General Council. Meanwhile, the council impeached him after less than four months in office. The effect of all this was a government paralyzed.

The revolution was further hamstrung when the council created a regular army under the command of Sam Houston without formally bringing the volunteers already in the field under Houston's command. The volunteers were notorious for their autonomy and lack of discipline, as Austin would find out on November 23 when he ordered them to attack Mexican troops in Bexar, only to have his order refused.

Voters on February 1, 1836, elected representatives to serve as delegates to a new convention that began deliberations on March 1. Shunning most of the more cautious men who had served in the earlier Consultation and in the General Council, Texans chose younger men, many of whom were newcomers—nearly half of the fifty-nine delegates had lived in Texas fewer than two years. They met in the town of Washington (on the Brazos River) in part because local business owners provided a building without charge. There the delegates adopted, without debate, a declaration of independence drafted by George C. Childress, who had been in Texas for fewer than eight months. The convention continued meeting until it completed the Constitution of the Republic of Texas on March 17. The constitution protected slavery and permitted a freed enslaved person to live in Texas only with the

TEXAS
FOREVER!!

The usurper of the South has failed in his efforts to enslave the freemen of Texas.

The wives and daughters of Texas will be saved from the brutality of Mexican soldiers.

Now is the time to emigrate to the Garden of America.

A free passage, and all found, is offered at New Orleans to all applicants. Every settler receives a location of

EIGHT HUNDRED ACRES OF LAND.

On the 23d of February, a force of 1000 Mexicans came in sight of San Antonio, and on the 25th Gen. St. Anna arrived at that place with 2500 more men, and demanded a surrender of the fort held by 150 Texians, and on the refusal, he attempted to storm the fort, twice, with his whole force, but was repelled with the loss of 500 men, and the Americans lost none. Many of his troops, the liberals of Zacatecas, are brought on to Texas in irons and are urged forward with the promise of the women and plunder of Texas.

The Texian forces were marching to relieve St. Antonio, March the 2d. The Governor of Texas is supplied with plenty of arms, ammunition, provisions, &c. &c.

The Granger Collection, New York

**An 1836 flyer offers free transportation and land to new settlers in hopes of reinforcing the Anglo presence in Texas.**

permission of the Texas Legislature. A government ad interim, made up of the members of the constitutional convention, was empowered to run the affairs of the state. One of the first orders of business was the election of David G. Burnet as Texas's first president. For vice president, the convention selected Lorenzo de Zavala, who had served as Mexican minister to Paris under Santa Anna but left his post when Santa Anna claimed dictatorial powers in 1835.

While united by their struggle against the Mexican government, the revolutionary leaders of Texas often fought among themselves even after independence was won. After Houston's ankle was shattered in the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836, President Burnet denied the victorious general permission to leave for New Orleans to seek medical treatment. Burnet eventually relented when the captain of the boat Houston was set to embark on refused to take anyone at all if he was not allowed to take Houston.

## The Republic of Texas

On September 5, 1836, Sam Houston was elected president of the Republic of Texas by a landslide, receiving 5,119 votes compared to 743 for Henry Smith and only 586 for Stephen F. Austin. The Constitution of the Republic of Texas also won approval from voters, as did a referendum on pursuing annexation to the United States. With over 3,000 citizens voting to seek annexation and fewer than 100 objecting, Texas's interest in joining the United States was clear from its first day of independence.

The government was temporarily located in Columbia but soon moved to a new town located on Buffalo Bayou that backers, much to the new president's delight, suggested be named Houston. The new capital city, like much of the republic, was improvised; the legislature met in an unfinished capitol building with tree branches forming the roof.

While the period of Texas independence was relatively brief, it was neither simple nor quiet. The population of Texas doubled. Just after the revolution in 1836, Texas had about 30,000 Anglos, 5,000 Black enslaved persons, 3,470 Tejanos, and 14,500 American Indians. By 1847, its "white" population (including 12,000–14,000 persons of Mexican descent) had soared to 102,961, and its Black population had climbed to 39,048 (38,753 enslaved persons and 295 freed Blacks).[11]

Change was not limited to population. While the republic's second president, Mirabeau B. Lamar, helped develop the Texas education system, his administration proved disastrous for the American Indian tribes living in Texas. Houston had worked to build friendships with Texas's tribes, but Lamar sought to eradicate them. During the three years of the Lamar administration, the Republic of Texas's debt skyrocketed from $2 million to $7 million and the value of its currency plummeted. Lamar opposed annexation by the United States at a time when the United States was expressing doubts of its own. Sam Houston returned to the presidency only after a bruising political battle. Once back in office, Houston helped make peace with the American Indians and brought fiscal discipline back to government, spending one-tenth of what Lamar had spent.

The path to statehood would not be as simple as Houston hoped. In the United States, northern interests in the U.S. Congress, led by John Quincy Adams, balked at bringing another slave state into the nation. Houston managed to stir U.S. interest

by making overtures to European powers—a course of action designed to pique the jealousy of the United States and make it wary of foreign intervention along its borders. As threats from Mexico continued into the 1840s, Texas turned to England and France for help in obtaining the release of Texas soldiers imprisoned in Mexican jails. Houston also positioned Texas for future bargaining by claiming for the republic disputed land reaching west and north as far as Wyoming, including portions of the Santa Fe Trail used for trade between the United States and Mexico. The Texas Congress went even further and passed (over Houston's veto) a bill that claimed all the land south of the forty-second parallel and west of Texas to the Pacific, as well as portions of Mexico—a claim that would have made Texas larger than the United States at the time.

## TEXAS STATEHOOD

**>> 1.3 Describe the political developments that accompanied Texas's move from a country to a state.**

The issue of the annexation of Texas eventually became central to the 1844 U.S. presidential election when James K. Polk, the candidate backed by Andrew Jackson, campaigned for the acquisition of Texas. Texas's expansive claim to territory was resolved when Henry Clay crafted a compromise whereby Texas accepted its present borders in return for a payment of $10 million. While the joint resolution inviting Texas to join the United States passed the U.S. House easily, it barely squeaked through the Senate, 27–25. John Quincy Adams and Texas's opponents made one final, last-ditch effort to stop Texas statehood by asserting that the admission of Texas through a joint resolution was unconstitutional because that method of admission was not spelled out in the U.S. Constitution.

Texas called a convention for July 4, 1845, to approve annexation and draft a constitution to accommodate Texas's new role as a U.S. state. The only vote in the Texas Legislature against entering the United States came from Richard Bache, who allegedly voted against annexation because he had come to Texas to escape his ex-wife and did not care to live in the same country with her again.[12] Texas was able to retain ownership of its public lands, a term of annexation that other new states did not enjoy. The U.S. Congress accepted the state's new constitution in December, and President James K. Polk signed the bill on December 29, 1845. Texas formally entered statehood on February 19, 1846.

A telling part of the residual folklore of Texas's admission is the notion that Texas retains the right to secede—and if it so chooses, to reenter the United States as five separate states. The origins of this idea come from a compromise designed to overcome objections in the U.S. Congress to the original admission of Texas. The joint resolution that admitted Texas to the Union provided that Texas could be divided into as many as five states. New states north or west of the Missouri Compromise lines would be free; in states south of the compromise lines, a popular vote would determine the legality of slavery. However, the power to create new states ultimately rests with the U.S. Congress, and the right to divide was not reserved to Texas.

J. Pinckney Henderson earned the honor of serving as Texas's first governor after winning the election by a large margin. Texas sent Sam Houston and

Thomas Jefferson Rusk to serve as the state's first two U.S. senators. Texas's only Jewish member of Congress for 130 years was among its first: David Kaufman of Nacogdoches, a Philadelphia-born Jew who had worked as a lawyer in Mississippi before arriving in Texas, distinguishing himself as an Indian fighter, and then serving two terms as the Speaker of the Republic of Texas's legislature. Kaufman was only the second Jewish member of the U.S. House, taking office the year after Lewis C. Levin became the nation's first Jewish representative in 1845. Passed over in the selection of Texas's first congressional delegation was Anson Jones, who had been sworn in as president of Texas on December 9, 1844. Jones was embittered by this perceived slight and set about putting together his own volume of the history of the republic, published posthumously a year after Jones shot himself on the steps of the old capitol in Houston.

Americans who had resisted the admission of Texas for fear of provoking war with Mexico soon saw those fears realized when fighting broke out in 1846. Many historians believe that U.S. president Polk orchestrated the Mexican-American War by ordering General Zachary Taylor into territory near the mouth of the Rio Grande that Mexican officials had claimed was part of Mexico. Mexico responded by declaring a defensive war on April 23, with the United States responding with its own declaration of war on May 13. The Mexican-American War ended after troops under the command of U.S. general Winfield Scott moved into Mexico City. The **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo** was signed on February 2, 1848, recognizing the Rio Grande as the official boundary between Texas and Mexico. While the treaty offered assurances that the rights of erstwhile Mexican citizens who suddenly found themselves citizens of the United States would be protected, this promise proved fragile.

The rapid population growth following Texas's annexation further transformed the state. However, not every group grew at an equal rate. Despite the general population surge, the Tejano population declined, and by the 1847 census, the 8,000 Germans in Texas were one of the largest ethnic minorities in a state with a total population of around 142,000, including 40,000 enslaved persons and only 295 free people of color. Even though Tejanos had fought for independence, many were forced to move to Mexico as the clash of Mexican and Anglo cultures intensified, marking one of just a few times in its history that Texas saw people moving away.

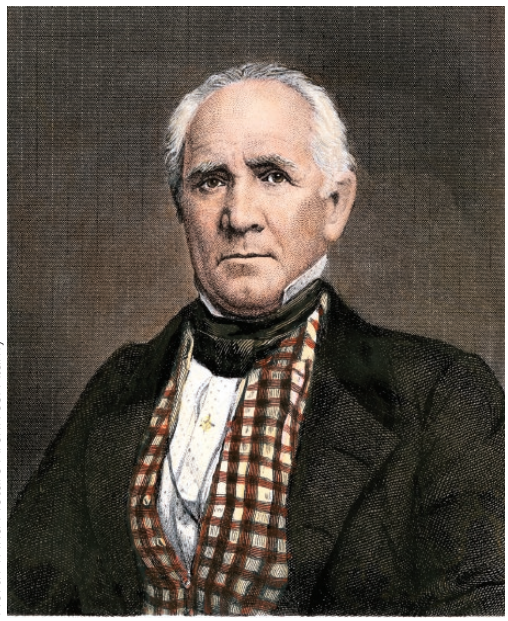
## Texas in the Confederacy

The rise of cotton farming in Texas increased the importance of slavery to the Texas economy as production of cotton grew from 40,000 bales in 1848 to 420,000 bales in 1860.[13] By 1860, Texans held 182,566 enslaved persons, compared to a total population of 604,215.[14] While much of Texas was becoming dependent on legalized slavery, Sam Houston battled slavery and in 1855 became one of the few southern members of Congress to publicly oppose it. Once again, Houston's personal popularity was undone by an unpopular stand on the burning issue of the day. In 1857, two years before his term expired, the Texas Legislature voted to not return Houston to the Senate for another term, leaving Houston to serve the remainder of his term as a lame duck. Houston responded to the insult by running for governor in 1857. Over the course of this campaign, he traveled over 1,500 miles, visited forty-two cities, and gave endless speeches, many lasting as long as

**Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo** signed February 2, 1848; this agreement between the United States and Mexico ended the Mexican-American War and recognized the Rio Grande as the boundary between Texas, now part of the United States, and Mexico

TEXAS *LEGENDS*

# Sam Houston



North Wind Picture Archives/Alamy

By the time he became a Texan and led Texas to independence, Sam Houston had gone through two wives and lots of alcohol and was, in the words of Texas historian James L. Haley, "considered in respectable circles as unsavory as he was colorful."[i] However, no one better reflects the reality that the greatness of Texas's legends can be found in less-than-perfect people, as Houston guided Texas through some of its most dramatic transitions.

In his youth, Houston generally preferred sneaking away to live among the American Indians to working in the family business. Houston distinguished himself during the War of 1812, serving bravely and winning the admiration of General Andrew Jackson. Houston followed Jackson, his new mentor, into politics and was sometimes mentioned as a successor to President Jackson. However, Houston's first marriage abruptly ended in 1827 in the middle of his term as governor of Tennessee and just two months after his wedding. His marriage over and his political career in ruins, Houston went to live again among the Cherokees. During this time, he took a Cherokee wife without entering into a formal Christian marriage. Over time, Houston's state of mind deteriorated and his hosts eventually stripped him of his original American Indian name ("The Raven") and began to call him Oo-tse-tee Ar-deet-ah-skee ("The Big Drunk").[ii] After abandoning his second wife and returning to public life in America, Houston narrowly avoided jail after assaulting a member of Congress who had insulted his integrity. Brought before Congress to face charges, Houston delivered an impassioned defense on his own behalf, allegedly because his lawyer, Francis Scott Key, was too hungover to speak.

During the Texas Revolution, gossips frequently attributed Houston's disappearances to drinking binges rather than military missions. Some questioned his bravery and military leadership during the war. Many Texans wanted Houston to turn and fight the Mexican Army sooner, despite Houston's protest that his troops were undertrained and outnumbered. While most Texans sided with Houston after his victory at San Jacinto, criticisms of his conduct of the war reappeared in political campaigns for the rest of his career.

After leading Texas through the revolution, Houston continued to play a major role in the changes in the state while serving as Texas's first president during its years as an independent nation. Houston struggled in the years after the Texas Revolution to protect the Tejanos who had served alongside him during the war. Similarly, his years among the Cherokees and his continued fondness for them left him at odds with many Anglos who preferred to see Native Americans driven off or killed.

After Houston played a central role in winning Texas's entry into the United States, his final political act was the struggle to keep Texas from seceding and joining the Confederacy. Houston disliked slavery and defied state law by freeing his own enslaved persons. He had been one of few southern senators to speak out against slavery, a

*(Continued)*

(Continued)

sentiment that led the Texas Legislature to vote against his return to the Senate. His final departure from politics came when he refused to support the secession of Texas in the American Civil War and, as a result, was forced by the legislature to resign his governorship. If Texans had followed Houston's leadership, the lives of many Texas soldiers would have been saved and the state spared postwar Reconstruction.

Houston finally settled down after marrying his third wife and finding redemption, but he never denied his faults. When asked if his sins had been washed away at his river baptism, Houston joked and said, "I hope so. But if they were all washed away, the Lord help the fish down below."[iii]

However numerous his sins, Houston's principles make him a much more heroic historical figure than many of his more sober peers. From the moment Houston arrived in Texas, he became a central figure in the transformation of the state, and for thirty years he guided Texas through its most turbulent times. While Houston might be unelectable today, he did more to shape modern Texas than any other person.

How should Sam Houston's contribution to Texas shape how voters think about elected officials?

**Personal Responsibility**

How do people's personal lives shape how they can serve the public?

**Critical Thinking** ★

i. James L. Haley, *Passionate Nation: The Epic History of Texas* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 107.

ii. James E. Crisp, *Sleuthing the Alamo: Davy Crockett's Last Stand and Other Mysteries of the Texas Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 29.

iii. Haley, *Passionate Nation*, 277.

four hours. Despite his efforts, Houston lost the election to Hardin R. Runnels by a vote of 32,552 to 28,678. Houston's loss came in part from his association with the anti-immigrant Know-Nothing Party, which proved unpopular among voters of Mexican and German ancestry who might otherwise have sympathized with Houston's antislavery stance.

After serving out the remainder of his term, Houston left the U.S. Senate in 1859 to run once again for governor, hoping that when the South seceded from the Union he could lead Texas back to independence. This time, Houston was successful, defeating Runnels 33,375 to 27,500. Nonetheless, over the objections of Governor Houston, the Secession Convention was subsequently convened, and on February 1, 1861, it voted overwhelmingly in favor of secession. A few weeks later, voters statewide approved a secession ordinance by a three-to-one margin. The Secession Convention approved a requirement that all state officers swear an oath of loyalty to the Confederacy. After Houston refused to take the oath, the governor's office was declared vacant.

The Confederate regime in Texas was a disaster for many. Not only were free Blacks victimized but Germans were targeted for harassment because of their opposition to slavery. Tejanos saw their land seized, and many Tejanos chose to align themselves with the Union. Some enlisted, becoming the heart of the Union's Second Cavalry, while others fought as pro-Union guerrillas. Many pro-Union Anglos were forced to flee the state. William Marsh Rice, whose wealth would one day endow Rice University, had to leave Houston and move his businesses to Matamoros in Mexico.

## Reconstruction in Texas

Northern rule arrived with the end of the Civil War on June 19, 1865, when Union forces under General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, bringing with them a proclamation ending slavery in Texas. That date, known as "Juneteenth" in Texas, was the day on which persons enslaved in Texas were actually freed, despite President Abraham Lincoln having signed the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863. While many transformations in Texas history involved the arrival of new citizens from outside the state, the end of slavery meant that former enslaved persons were now new citizens in their old state. Joining with a small number of Anglo Republicans, African Americans helped elect Republicans to statewide offices and constitutional conventions.

Freedom proved a mixed blessing for the "freedmen." While legally they were free, in practical terms freedmen endured horrendous intimidation and exploitation. State law would not recognize any marriage involving African American Texans until 1869. Although the Freedmen's Bureau was created to help former enslaved persons, the bureau's efforts were sometimes limited by administrators who, while supporting the end of slavery, doubted the goal of racial equality. Texas, like other southern states, passed so-called black codes that were designed to limit the rights of African Americans in the state. In Texas, any person with one-eighth or more of Negro blood could not serve on a jury or vote. With local law enforcement often in the hands of Confederate sympathizers, African Americans relied on Union troops for protection. As elsewhere in the former Confederate states, the Ku Klux Klan became a vehicle for terrorizing former enslaved persons and those sympathetic to their cause, as well as "carpetbaggers" (people from the North who came south to assist or cash in on Reconstruction) and "scalawags" (Republicans of local origin).

In January 1866, Texans elected delegates to a convention to draft a new state constitution aimed at winning the state readmission into the United States. However, the Texas Legislature seemed to have missed the news that the South had lost the war: the legislature refused to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment (ending slavery) and the Fourteenth Amendment (guaranteeing equal rights) and instead drafted a framework of laws limiting the rights of African Americans. The Constitution of 1866 failed to meet the demands of the Radical Republicans, who had won control of the U.S. Congress in the 1866 election. While much has been made of the influx of carpetbaggers during this time, in fact the political transition to Republican control of Texas government during Reconstruction resulted less from an influx of outsiders from the northeast and more from African Americans gaining the right to vote at the same time that supporters of the Confederacy lost their right to vote or hold office after Congress passed the Second Reconstruction Act. With most white Democrats purged both from office and from voting lists, the next constitutional convention was dominated by Republicans, who accounted for seventy-eight of the ninety delegates. The resulting Constitution of 1869 won for Texas readmission to the United States by including many provisions granting rights to African Americans: the rights to vote, run for office, serve on juries, testify in court against whites, and attend public schools.

## The End of Reconstruction and Rise of the "Redeemers"

Texas politics was transformed again when Reconstruction ended and more Confederate sympathizers were allowed to vote. The Democrats (the party of the white Confederate sympathizers) won control of the legislature in the election of 1872. Like emancipation, this transformation of Texas politics did not arise from an influx of new Texans but rather resulted from the renewal of citizenship of old citizens. Republican E. J. Davis was widely despised by Democrats, who considered him at best a symbol of northern oppression and at worst incredibly corrupt. Once in control of Texas government, the Democrats proclaimed themselves "Redeemers" and removed the last remnants of Republican rule. On August 2, 1875, the Texas Legislature authorized a new constitutional convention and elected three delegates each from the state's thirty senatorial districts. None of the ninety members of the 1875 convention had been a member of the convention that drafted the Constitution of 1869, and the partisan composition was dramatically different. Seventy-five members were Democrats while only fifteen were Republicans. At least forty were members of the Patrons of Husbandry, also called the Grange, an economic and political organization of farmers. Voters ratified the constitution on February 15, 1876, by a vote of 136,606 to 56,652.

The rise of the Redeemers and the impact of the Grange are especially important transitions in Texas politics because the constitution of this era remained in force long after the politics and politicians responsible for it had vanished. Texas has continued to change and grow, but the Texas Constitution has not been replaced since, only amended—piecemeal changes resulting in minor alterations to the basic design of 1876. The twenty-five years that followed the Civil War spawned the cowboy imagery that Texans still relish. It was during this brief period that the frontier truly existed, when Texas was in fact home to the quintessential rugged cowboy who tended large ranches and oversaw herds of cattle—a stereotype that has remained rooted in the Texan persona ever since. And even then, the image of Texas as the "Old West" was based on the lives of only a small number of Texans. Although Texans hold the legend of the cowboy in high esteem, the cowboy's life was anything but glamorous. Most were young. About one-third were Hispanic or African American. The ranch owners generally regarded them as common laborers on horseback, and the men who rode the range and drove the cattle were paid less than the trail cooks.[15] By the 1890s, the fabled trail drives had come to an end, finished by drought, quarantines, barbed-wire fencing across the open range, and competition from the railroads.



**Although glamorized in movies and television shows, cowboys, or vaqueros, led a hard life and were often shunned by civilized society.**

The state government encouraged immigration in the last half of the nineteenth century to help settle and populate the western part of the state and drive off Native American tribes. Some state officials saw the immigration of white settlers and farmers as a means of counteracting the increase in African Americans, many of whom had become sharecroppers. Germans flooded into Texas, their numbers surging from 41,000 in 1870 to 125,262 in 1890; at this time, Texans of Mexican ancestry numbered only 105,193.[16] While Texas west of Austin may have resembled the Wild West, most Texans resided in the eastern portion of the state, which resembled the "New South" that was emerging elsewhere out of the former Confederacy and was characterized by railroad networks and urbanized cities, such as Dallas.

## The Era of Reform

As Texas transitioned from the farming and ranching of the nineteenth century to the industrial and oil economy of the twentieth century, the state began to struggle with the limits of the Constitution of 1876. In 1890, Attorney General James Stephen Hogg decided that his office lacked the resources to adequately enforce regulations on the state's railroads. Hogg's call for the creation of a railroad commission became a centerpiece of his campaign for governor. The railroads labeled Hogg "communistic," but his economic and political reforms proved popular, and his election represented the first stirrings of the reform movement in Texas. While the creation of the Texas Railroad Commission was heralded as a means to achieve fair competition, in practice it was often used to restrict out-of-state railroads and protect Texas-based businesses from international competitors.

Frustrated by the lack of responsiveness from the Democrats to their needs, farmers organized the People's Party, more commonly known as the Populist Party. While the populists were short-lived, their call for radical reforms, including public ownership of the railroads, and their willingness to reach out to Black voters rattled the political order. After the populists were absorbed into the Democratic Party, the progressives took up the role of reform party. In contrast to the populists' narrow base in agricultural communities, the progressives emerged in the 1890s as a broader reform movement attacking both the railroads that bedeviled the farmers and the big industries that challenged urban labor.

While progressive candidates for governor won elections, their legislative victories were limited. Thomas Campbell won the governorship in the election of 1906 only to see much of his progressive agenda hijacked or sidetracked by the legislature. Most crucially, Campbell was unable to win approval of statewide referenda and recall. Legislation requiring that insurance companies invest 75 percent of their premiums in Texas did change the way insurance companies operated, but this mainly benefited Texas businesses and drove foreign insurers from the state.

The progressive movement in Texas became consumed by the alcohol prohibition issue, in part because Texas politics lacked the large corporations and big-city political machines that energized the efforts of progressives in the North. Much of the prohibitionists' efforts took place at the local level; they were especially

successful at winning local option elections that outlawed drinking. In 1891, the Texas Legislature put a prohibitionist constitutional amendment before the state's voters. The campaign was intense, and voters turned out at more than twice the rate they had in the previous gubernatorial election to narrowly reject the amendment by a 237,393 to 231,096 vote.

While the emergence of a new Texas economy early in the twentieth century and the reforms of the progressive movement captured the attention of many voters, others remained fixated on the old issues of race and the Civil War. In a struggle that foreshadows today's battle over the history that is taught in Texas's classrooms, Governor Oscar Branch Colquitt struggled in his 1912 reelection bid because he had criticized the state textbook board for rejecting a history book because it contained a photograph of Abraham Lincoln. Meanwhile, voters flocked to see Colquitt's opponent, William Ramsay, who played upon southern sentiments in his speeches and had bands play "Dixie" during campaign events. Prohibition was a hotly contested issue on its own and reflected old racial hatreds as alcohol was portrayed as a vice of the Germans and Mexicans.

No one better personifies the failures of Texas progressives to produce reform in the state than James E. "Pa" Ferguson. While the rest of the Texas political system obsessed over prohibition, "Farmer Jim" shunned the issue and instead won office with promises of capping how much rent tenant farmers could be charged by their landlords. Ferguson's tenant farmer law was ultimately ruled unconstitutional, but he remained a hero to the state's small farmers. Ferguson could be charming, but his politics were often petty. For example, he used appointments to the board of Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College to remove Principal Edward Blackshear, who had had the temerity to support a political rival. Ferguson also took his personal political fight to the University of Texas (UT), demanding the removal of William J. Battle, the president of the university. When asked his reason for wanting Battle's removal, Ferguson proclaimed, "I don't have to give any reason. I am Governor of the State of Texas."[17] Later, Ferguson vetoed appropriations for the university. After Ferguson was elected to a second term in 1916, his battle with the university and its allies ultimately brought him down. On July 23, 1917, the Speaker of the Texas House called for a special session to consider impeachment, and in August the Texas House voted on twenty-one articles of impeachment, including charges dealing with Ferguson's personal finances, especially bank loans. The Senate found him guilty on ten charges, primarily those dealing with his finances. While impeachment removed Ferguson from the governor's office and disqualified him from holding other public office, Texas was not so easily rid of his influence.

Ferguson's departure made passage of statewide prohibition easier. The presence of military training camps in Texas led prohibitionists to argue that patriotism required that the state protect young recruits from liquor. Initially, the Texas Legislature simply made it illegal to sell alcohol within ten miles of a military base. The next year, in May 1919, Texas voters approved an amendment to the Texas Constitution that brought prohibition to Texas a year before it went into effect nationwide.

As in other states, prohibition in Texas proved unworkable, as many Texans refused to give up alcohol. The legislature contributed to the failure of the

initiative by providing very little funding for the enforcement necessary to make prohibition a success. Organized crime thrived on the revenue that illegal alcohol distribution and sales brought and allegedly worked with prohibitionists to keep alcohol illegal. During prohibition, over 20 percent of all arrests in the state were related to prohibition.[18] Galveston became a major center for liquor smuggling as foreign ships anchored along "Rum Row," a line just beyond U.S. territorial waters where boats dropped anchor to distribute alcohol just out of the reach of American law.

While voters were approving prohibition, they also rejected an amendment that would have embraced another item on the progressives' list of reforms: the right of women to vote in all elections. Some of the resistance was based solely on gender discrimination, but some southern voters believed that granting equal rights to women would open the door to "Negro rule" and socialism.

The economic changes that came with the new century resulted from a flood of oil, not of new citizens. While oil's presence in Texas had been noted since Spanish explorers used natural tar seeps to patch their boats, its impact on the state was not realized until the early twentieth century. A few wells were drilled in Texas in the 1890s, but the state lacked the refinery capacity to make use of the oil. After the first refinery was built in Texas, interest in oil exploration increased, but the state remained a minor producer. That changed in 1901 when the Spindletop oil rig near Beaumont hit oil and gas, eventually producing 100,000 barrels of oil a day. Investors began streaming into the state in search of oil; by 1928, Texas was leading the nation in oil production, providing 20 percent of the world's supply. By 1929, oil had replaced "King Cotton" as the largest part of the Texas economy.

Just as oil investors transformed much of the Texas countryside and economy, oil revenues had a huge impact on Texas government, contributing almost $6 million to state accounts by 1929 and reducing the need for other state taxes. Texas's other major business was lumber, which grew dramatically early in the twentieth century, eventually topping 2.25 billion board feet in 1907 before overcutting slowed production. Highway construction boomed in Texas, and by the end of the 1920s, Texas had almost 19,000 miles of highway. Fruit trees were introduced into southern Texas, providing a new segment of the economy and planting the seeds for future immigration, as seasonal, migratory labor was needed to harvest these fruits. By the 1920s, Texas seemed well on its way to establishing a strong and diverse economy—a trend that would be undone by the Great Depression.

## The Great Depression and the New Deal in Texas

By the late 1920s, Texans were beginning to show a little independence from the Democratic Party. The state went for a Republican presidential candidate for the first time in 1928 when Texans shunned Democrat Al Smith, a Catholic New Yorker who drank. However, many Texans regretted their vote for Republican Herbert Hoover, as Texas was hit hard by the Depression that many blamed on him. As many as one-third of farmers in some areas were driven from their farms by the Depression, and the Texas oil boom did little to spare the state. Overproduction of oil caused prices

TEXAS *LEGENDS*

# Bob Bullock

AP Photo/Harry Cabluck

When Texas governor George W. Bush delivered the eulogy for Bob Bullock in June 1999, he honored him as "the largest Texan of our time." Although the state's historical museum in Austin now bears his name, Bullock's path to legendary status was neither steady nor straight. Bullock began his political career aligned with segregationists, transformed himself into a liberal Democrat, and then metamorphosed into one of Republican George W. Bush's most important political allies. Bullock was very much like Sam Houston, a Texan who transcended personal failing to rise to greatness and become a state icon. As Bullock quipped when Hill Junior College put his name on a building, "I'm so happy that they named a gym after me instead of a prison."[i]

Bullock grew up in Hillsboro, Texas, where it seemed to many that he was more likely to end up inside the walls of one of the state's penal institutions than atop its political institutions. Some in Hillsboro attribute to a young Bob Bullock a prank right out of *American Graffiti*. One night someone wrapped a chain around the rear axle of a police cruiser, tied it to a telephone pole, and then called the police to tell the officer on duty that evening about a big fight at a local café. When the officer leaped into his car, the car lurched as far as the end of the chain before its rear end was yanked clear off.

Bullock battled his way through Texas government as legislator, lobbyist, staffer for Governor Preston Smith, and secretary of state. Even as he worked his way up in Texas politics, he chain-smoked and drank a fifth of whiskey daily. In 1974, Bullock won statewide election to the position of comptroller of public accounts, and he modernized the office's accounting practices by replacing paper-and-pencil account ledgers and mechanical adding machines with computers. Bullock won an expanded budget for his office by promising legislators that, with a few more million dollars provided for auditors and enforcers, he would find a few hundred million more in revenue that the legislature could appropriate. Bullock used these resources to stage dramatic, highly visible seizure raids at some businesses. The raids encouraged other delinquent businesses to settle their accounts. Bullock never shied from a battle, once forcing the Texas Council of Campfire Girls to pay $13,284 for sales taxes on their fundraising candy sales.[ii] He also used the comptroller's ability to generate tax revenue estimates that effectively served as a cap on legislative spending as a tool for influencing state policy.

As much as Bullock mastered political office, he was unable to master his appetites. Bullock occasionally showed up at work drunk and traveled around the state on business accompanied by a companion selected from the secretarial pool. Once, after being caught using a state airplane for personal trips, Bullock proclaimed, "Yeah, I'm a crook, but I'm the best comptroller the state ever had."[iii] While he could be blunt in his politics, he wasn't interested in having too much truth reported. When pressed too insistently by reporters at a press conference, Bullock warned, "I keep files on reporters, too. I could name your girlfriends and where they live and what flowers you buy them . . . if I wanted to

tell that to your wives."[iv] When the paper began reporting on his use of public funds for a new truck, Bullock mailed boxes of cow manure to the *Dallas Morning News*, a move his spokesman later defended by saying, "He did it on his own time, on his own money."[v]

By the time he was elected lieutenant governor in 1990, Bullock had put most of his troubled past behind him, telling one person, "There is nothing left for me to do but what's good for Texas."[vi] When George W. Bush became governor, he immediately realized that Bullock's years of experience, fundraising skills, and legislative connections made him an indispensable partner, especially for a governor new to state government. Working closely with Bullock, Bush built the record of bipartisan legislative success that helped propel him to the White House. The endorsement of Bullock, a longtime Democrat, gave Bush an important boost. Known for closing his remarks with "God bless Texas," Bullock found a way to move beyond the personal controversy that often swirled around him and help Texas forge ahead.

How did Bullock survive political scandal?

**Critical Thinking**

Would a candidate like Bob Bullock be electable today?

**Personal Responsibility** ★

i. Dave McNeely and Jim Henderson, *Bob Bullock: God Bless Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 16.

ii. McNeely and Henderson, *Bob Bullock*, 111.

iii. McNeely and Henderson, *Bob Bullock*, 7

iv. McNeely and Henderson, *Bob Bullock*, 114.

v. McNeely and Henderson, *Bob Bullock*, 141.

vi. McNeely and Henderson, *Bob Bullock*, 207.

to fall to as low as three cents a barrel. When the Railroad Commission refused to act to reduce overproduction, Governor Ross S. Sterling declared martial law and used members of the National Guard to shut down the East Texas oil fields. The desperation of the times brought about the repeal of national prohibition, with "wets" arguing that repeal would aid recovery.

Burdened with a depressed economy and the overproduction of oil and cotton, Governor Sterling ran for reelection against "Pa" Ferguson's legacy, his wife, Miriam "Ma" Ferguson, who trounced Sterling at the ballot box. While the Fergusons finally departed the governor's office for good in 1935, it wasn't long before another character, Wilbert Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel, ushered in a new brand of populist politics. O'Daniel, a former sales manager for a flour mill, became known statewide as the host of a radio show that featured the music of the Light Crust Doughboys mixed with inspirational stories. Purportedly encouraged by listeners' letters urging him to run—although some suggested that wealthy business interests and a public relations expert had done the urging—O'Daniel declared his candidacy, proclaiming the Ten Commandments as his platform and the Golden Rule as his motto. He won the Democratic nomination without a runoff and, facing no real opposition, won the general election with 97 percent of the vote.

Although a colorful personality on the campaign trail, O'Daniel accomplished little of importance once in office, as he lacked the skill to work with legislators and tended to appoint less-than-qualified people to office. After winning reelection to the governorship in 1940, O'Daniel shifted his sights to Washington, D.C., when the death of Senator Morris Sheppard created a vacancy in 1941. O'Daniel won the special election to replace Sheppard, narrowly edging out a young ex-congressman named Lyndon Johnson in a disputed election.

# TRANSITIONS TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

**>> 1.4 Describe the political culture of Texas and its impact on Texas government.**

Texas spent the rest of the twentieth century in transition, shedding some old habits. Even with the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision in 1954, Texas managed to resist desegregation, despite the court's mandate of instituting it with "all deliberate speed." Many Texas schools remained segregated well into the early 1970s, when federal courts ordered them to desegregate. In 1954, Texas women belatedly won the right to serve on juries, but further progress toward equality was slow. In the 1960s, only six women served in the Texas Legislature, and the state failed to ratify the national equal rights amendment (ERA). However, in 1972, voters approved an equal rights amendment to the state constitution, and the legislature voted to ratify the ERA (although it would fail to get the required three-quarters of states nationally). In 1975, Liz Cockrell was elected mayor of San Antonio, making her the first woman mayor of a major Texas city.

By the 1960s, the partisan legacy of the Civil War was finally beginning to wear off. In 1961, John Tower was elected to the U.S. Senate, becoming the first Republican to win statewide office since Reconstruction. With the Republican Party showing signs of viability, many conservative Democrats shifted their allegiance to the Republican Party in state elections. This followed years of dividing their loyalty by voting for Republicans in national elections while supporting Democrats for state and local offices, a practice labeled **presidential republicanism**. The career of Texas governor John Connally is a case in point. Connally, although friendly with Lyndon Johnson and elected governor as a Democrat, served in the cabinet of Republican president Richard Nixon before eventually seeking the presidency himself as a Republican candidate. Texas did not elect its first Republican governor until 1978 when William P. Clements won an upset victory. His narrow victory proved a significant first step, as Texas Republicans thereafter began to score more and more successes. Once conservatives saw that they could win elections under the Republican banner, they began to shift their party affiliation. By the 1996 elections, Republicans dominated, winning every statewide office on the ballot.

**presidential republicanism** the practice in the South of voting for Republicans in presidential elections but voting for conservative Democrats in other races; this practice continued until animosity over Reconstruction faded and the Republicans demonstrated their electability in the South

**political culture** the shared values and beliefs of citizens about the nature of the political world that give the public a common language as a foundation to discuss and debate ideas

**individualistic political culture** the idea that individuals are best left largely free of the intervention of community forces such as government and that government should attempt only those things demanded by the people it is created to serve

## Texas Today

Texas can be viewed through a variety of lenses. Political boundaries create the most obvious way of looking at the state, but this is not the only way of looking at Texas and its citizens. If Texas is, as John Steinbeck suggested, as much a state of mind as a geographic state, then we need to look at who we are and where we come from.

In a classic study of political life in America, Daniel Elazar focused on political culture. **Political culture** comprises the shared values and beliefs about the nature of the political world that give us a common language that we can use to discuss and debate ideas.[19] The **individualistic political culture** that many observers attribute to Texans holds that individuals are best left largely free of the intervention of community forces such as government, which should attempt only those

things demanded by the people it is created to serve.[20] Government operates in a marketplace; its goal is to encourage private initiative but not particularly create a "good society."[21] The individualistic subculture is most dominant in western parts of the state where vast amounts of land created opportunities for individual success. Texans, initially attracted to the state by the promise of land, were often forced to develop and protect that land without help from the government. According to Elazar, the individualistic subculture is present where people seek to improve their lot and want the government to stay out of their lives. From these roots, a preference for as little government as possible and a general distrust of government persists today across much of the state.

In contrast, the **traditionalistic political culture** sees government as having a limited role concerned with the preservation of the existing social order. The traditionalistic culture can be seen in areas such as East Texas that were more heavily influenced by the traditions of the Old South. Finally, the **moralistic political culture** sees the exercise of community forces as sometimes necessary to advance the public good. In this view, government can be a positive force and citizens have a duty to participate. While this view can be found in many places in New England and other parts of the United States, it is rare in Texas.

Elazar's division, based on immigration patterns, is useful in distinguishing political cultures between states overall. However, its applicability to a large and complex state like Texas is limited. Texas continues to be significantly characterized by its long-standing frontier. For most of its existence, Texas had a vast and significant frontier that hampered the ability of Spain and later Mexico to govern the state. Political culture in Texas, as in other frontier states, would develop peculiar preferences and institutions quite distinct from those of states far from the frontier. Life on the frontier was more difficult and more uncertain than life in Massachusetts or Virginia. Moving to Texas meant that, in exchange for inexpensive land, settlers had to build their homes, cultivate the land, and defend their home. Law enforcement, for example, was sparse in Texas, with the Texas Rangers traveling around the state. If the average Texan preferred small government and few social services, as Elazar contended, they also came to prize their guns and their right to defend their home. Justice needed to be swift and harsh to deter criminals. This created a punitive understanding of justice rather than a preference for rehabilitation. We see the influence of the frontier continue today in our preferences for little gun control, a permissive castle doctrine (the right to defend your castle), a greater amount of behavior criminalized, and a punitive justice system that embraces the death penalty.

**traditionalistic political culture** the idea, most prevalent in the parts of Texas most like the Old South, that government has a limited role concerned with the preservation of the existing social order

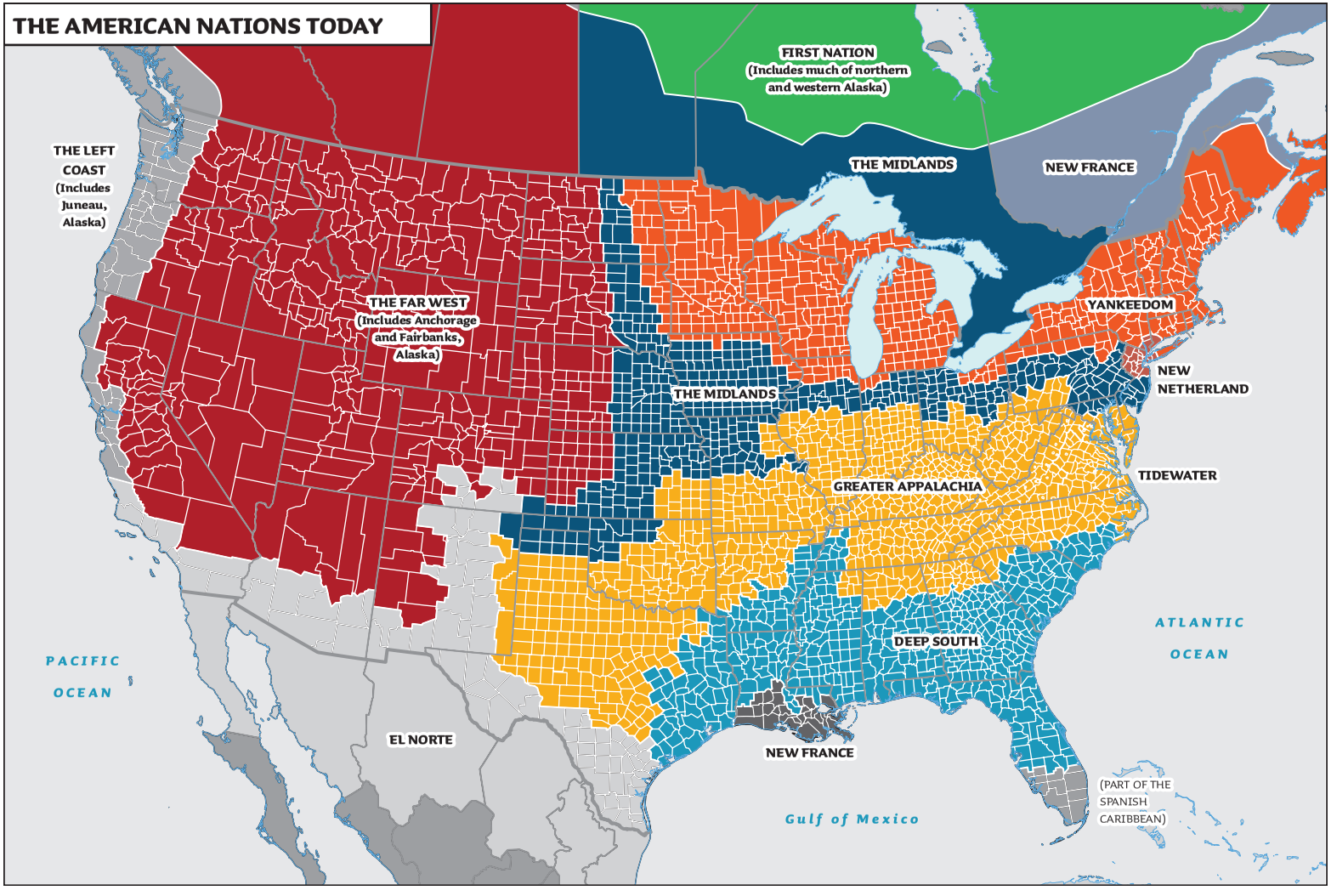
**moralistic political culture** rare in Texas, the view that the exercise of community pressure is sometimes necessary to advance the public good; it also holds that government can be a positive force and citizens have a duty to participate

While the discussion of distinct cultures or nations within Texas or the United States might seem foreign at first, it reflects an ongoing discussion in political science about distinguishing *nations* from *states*. A nation is formed by "groups of people who share—or believe they share—a common culture, ethnic origin, language, historical experience, artifacts and symbols."[22] On the other hand, a state represents a sovereign political entity with defined political boundaries.

Colin Woodard has argued that the United States includes eleven such nations, four of which can be found in Texas: the Deep South, Greater Appalachia, the Midlands, and El Norte. (See Map 1.2.) El Norte is actually part of the oldest area of civilization on the continent. It took root when Columbus arrived in the New

MAP 1.2

## Texas within Colin Woodard's American Nations



World and grew with the Spanish expeditions that viewed the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee and the Grand Canyon, all by the time the English arrived in Jamestown. This nation, which includes parts of northern Mexico as well as southern Texas, shares a language, cuisine, and societal norms that are distinct both from other parts of Texas and from the interior of Mexico. While the political divisions created by the Texas Revolution may have tried to divide El Norte, like the *norteños* of northern Mexico, Tejanos value a reputation for being more independent, self-sufficient, adaptable, and work centered than residents of the interior of Mexico.

Parts of Texas belong in the Deep South nation, a tradition where the remnants of aristocratic privilege and classical republicanism can still be seen in the notion that democracy is a privilege of the few. The Deep South is internally polarized on racial grounds and deeply at odds with other nations over the direction of the state and the country. Greater Appalachia runs through much of the northern part of the state and shares some of the Deep South's resistance to the intrusion of northern nations via the Civil War, Reconstruction, and subsequent social and economic reforms. Greater Appalachia holds a deep commitment to individual liberty and personal sovereignty but dislikes the aristocrats of the Deep South as much as social reformers from the northeast. The Midlands, which comprises only the northernmost counties of the state, is skeptical of government but subscribes to the idea that it should benefit ordinary people. Residents of the Midlands are moderate and at times even apathetic about politics and care little about either ethnic or ideological purity.

The mixing of cultures in Texas has produced entirely new cultures unique to the state. In no place is this unique mixture more evident than in Laredo's annual Washington's Birthday Celebration, a monthlong festival to celebrate George Washington's birthday. Created in 1898, it takes an American-style celebration and unites it with the city's diverse roots. Today, Mexican food, colonial gowns, and fireworks all star in this celebration of the city's multicultural roots, and Laredoans and their guests move easily from an International Bridge ceremony to jalapeño-eating contests to formal colonial pageants and a Princess Pocahontas pageant. In this sense, Laredo perfectly embraces the tradition of change that defines Texas as very different cultures find their place in the Texas spirit.


Ray Whitehouse For The Washington Post via Getty Images

**Residents of Laredo watch the 2017 Washington's Birthday Parade from a rooftop. The parade is part of an annual celebration of George Washington's birthday that reflects the blending of cultures and traditions found in Texas.**

The diverse range of traditions found in the state gives Texans a rich variety of legends from which to draw. According to historian Randolph B. Campbell, most Texans have opted to draw upon the rugged individualism of the cowboys of the cattle drive rather than the slavery, secession, and defeat of the Old South.[23] Even then, the lonely cowboy driving cattle across the open plains is an uncertain guide for Texans trying to find their place in the state today. Texans' identity and expectations

of their government are grounded in images of the past that may not be entirely true. Thus, we have to wonder how our understandings of our past are shaping the state's future.

## A TRADITION OF CHANGE

**>> 1.5 Explain the context of Texas's increasingly diverse population.**

Texas continues its tradition of change. For hundreds of years, people left their old lives to build new ones in Texas, leaving behind them signs declaring "Gone to Texas." While these generations of new Texans brought different languages and cultures, all consistently brought one thing—change. Such transformations have defined Texas since the 1500s when newly arrived Spanish explorers turned the Caddo word for *friend* (*techas*) into *Tejas*, a term describing the Caddo tribe.[24] In the centuries since, waves of people have come to Texas seeking opportunity and bringing change.

The changes have not always been welcome by established Texans. When explorer Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's expedition arrived and proudly proclaimed to the Zuni Indians who lived in Texas that the tribe now enjoyed protection as subjects of the Spanish king, the Zunis answered with a volley of arrows.[25] The arrows bounced off the Spanish armor, and today immigrants arriving from across the nation and around the world generally receive a better reception. Still, new arrivals have often been seen by many Texans as competitors rather than partners in the state's future.

New arrivals remain a constant in Texas. The state's population has increased about a hundredfold since Texas joined the United States, growing at an average of just over 40 percent each decade (see Figure 1.1). The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that there were 28,995,881 Texans in 2019, up 15.3 percent since 2010.[26] Viewed differently, the 3.8-million-person growth that Texas saw from 2010 to 2018 is larger than the population of twenty states. Seven counties in Texas grew more than 50 percent in the ten years between the 2000 and 2010 censuses: Rockwall (81 percent), Williamson (69 percent), Fort Bend (65 percent), Hays (61 percent), Collin (59 percent), Montgomery (55 percent), and Denton (53 percent). Of the fifteen cities nationwide with the highest rate of population growth in the single year from 2017 to 2018, seven were in Texas: New Braunfels (7.2 percent), Frisco (6.1 percent), McKinney (5.4 percent), Georgetown (5.2 percent), Rowlett (5.1 percent), Midland (4.4 percent), and Round Rock (4.3 percent).[27]

According to the Office of the Texas State Demographer, Texas will do a lot more growing. Changes in immigration and birth rates make predictions difficult, but the state could have as many as 31.2 million citizens in 2050, even if there is zero migration into the state. If migration into the state continues at the pace seen from 2010 to 2015, then 2050 could see over 47.3 million Texans. In the years from 2000 and 2010, international migration made up 52 percent of the total net migration to Texas while migration from other states in the United States contributed about 48 percent. That picture has shifted dramatically and from 2010 and 2015, domestic migration made up over 61 percent of total net migration while international migration accounted for only 39 percent.[28] How today's Texans make room for the millions of new residents expected over the next two decades is an important part of the state's politics.