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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 Discuss how the population of Texas has changed and continues to change.
- 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 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.



The 55-foot Big Tex, which presides over the Texas State Fair, is an icon to all Texans, no matter their origin.

Donovan Reese Photography / Contributor

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 help drive the state's economic success 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 the future while holding on to the state's oldest traditions.

In this chapter, we will chart the contours between legend and reality. 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, Vermont. 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 4,728,030 residents in 2021, making it more populous than half the states in the United States. All told, the state is home to six 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 57 residents. The state has eight counties with populations under 1,000, and about one-third (ninety) 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 necessary for close-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, where according to Key, "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 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 noted, "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 the tension created by a love of traditions faced with constant 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 groups depended on, and as a result, hunter-gatherer nations became more prevalent.

The Indigenous 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 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 emphasis on gathering and more time to form a society with social classes and to establish trading relations with other peoples. By 1500 CE, 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 communities with governing officials that included subchiefs, tribal chiefs, and the Grand Caddi, the great chief of all the Caddos.

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 groups 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 nations 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 Native American society by giving some nations 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 Native American nations 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 Native Americans 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.

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 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.

DC Productions

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

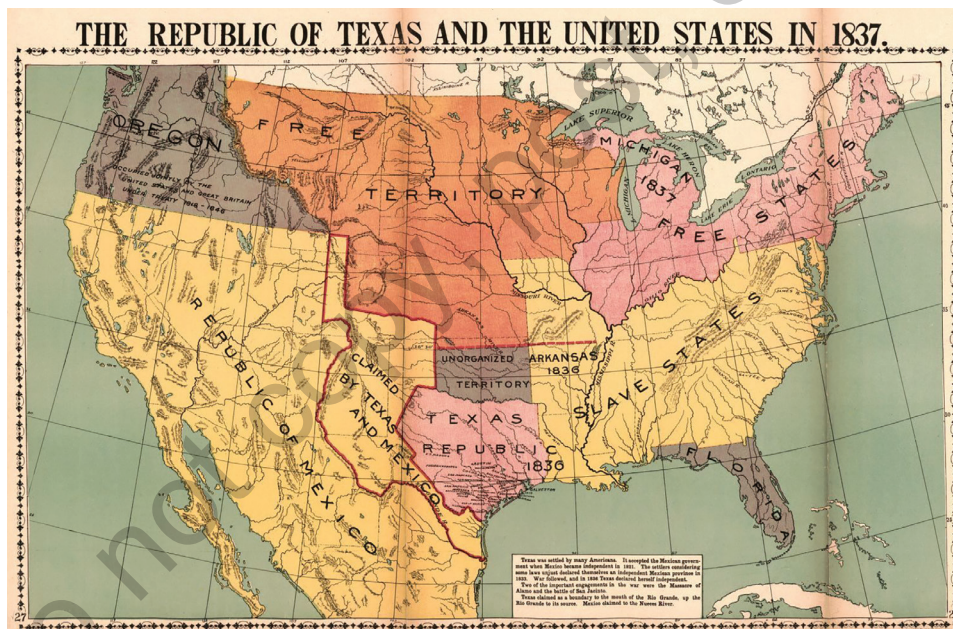
to Missouri, though not before expressing the hope that his son Stephen would carry on the endeavor. In fact, Stephen F. Austin initially had little interest in serving as an **empresario** (an entrepreneur who made money colonizing areas), and Texas was initially a somewhat unwanted inheritance. However, 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 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.

MAP 1.1 ■ Independent Texas

A map of the United States with the Republic of Texas in 1837



Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division

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 with Mexico. 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, 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.

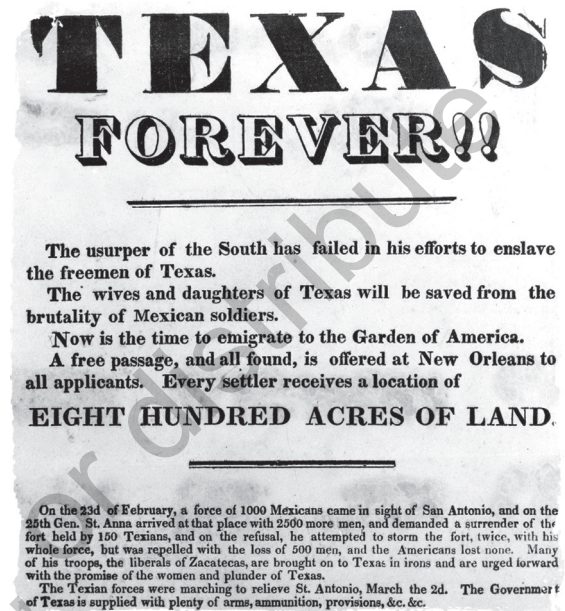
Voters on February 1, 1836, elected representatives to serve as delegates to a new convention that began deliberations on March 1. Shunning most of the more cautious men who had served in the earlier Consultation and in the General Council, Texans chose younger men, many of whom were newcomers—nearly 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 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



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

The Granger Collection, New York

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 Native Americans. 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 Black people).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 Native American nations living in Texas. Houston had worked to build friendships with Texas’s Indigenous peoples, 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 Native Americans 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 to 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

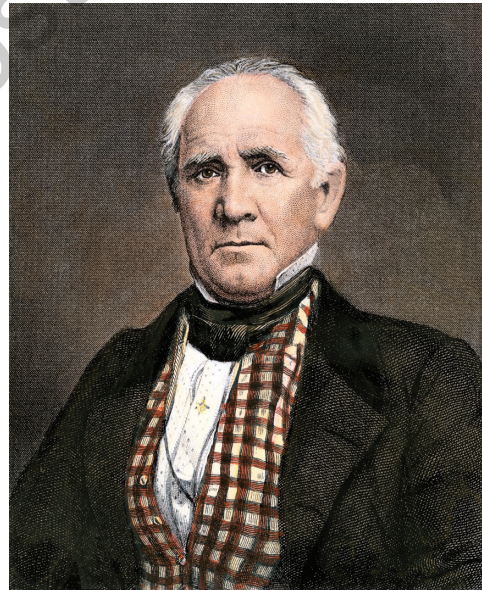
The rise of cotton farming in Texas increased the importance of slavery to the Texas economy as production of cotton grew from 40,000 bales in 1848 to 420,000 bales in 1860.¹³ By 1860, Texans held 182,566 enslaved persons, compared to a total population of 604,215.¹⁴ While much of Texas was becoming 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 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.

TEXAS LEGENDS

SAM HOUSTON

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 Native Americans 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



North Wind Picture Archives / Alamy Stock Photo

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 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.

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 Black people 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," 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 granting rights to African Americans, including 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.

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 groups. 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.



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

Stephen Saks Photography / Alamy

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 after he 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 the Prohibition issue, "Farmer Jim" shunned it 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 of alcohol 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, the prohibition of liquor 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 the ban of alcohol.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 rather than 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 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 the national prohibition of alcohol, with “wets” arguing that repeal would aid recovery.

TEXAS LEGENDS

BOB BULLOCK

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



Harry Cabluck / Associated Press

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.

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. Despite the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision in 1954, which mandated that states desegregate with “all deliberate speed,” Texas resisted desegregation. 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. However, by 1972, voters approved an equal rights amendment to the state constitution, and the legislature voted to ratify the national equal rights amendment (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.

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. 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 Elazar identified three political subcultures that followed America’s immigration pattern. 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 stresses politics as a means to power and tolerates corruption as inherent in politics. 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. This 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

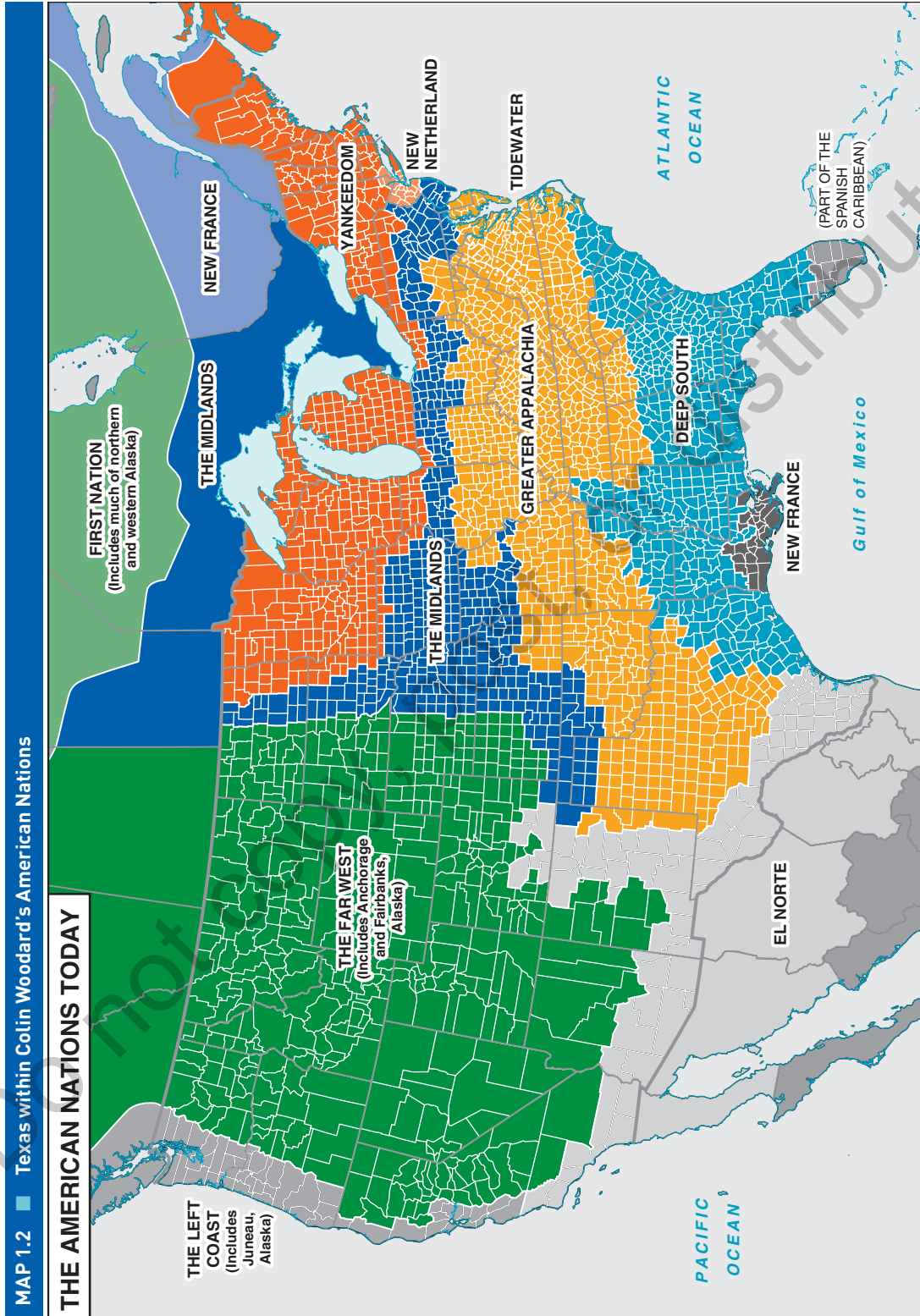
promise of land, were often forced to develop and protect that land without help from the government. Texas policies reflect the individualistic subculture, including rejecting government service and Texas's right to work law.

In contrast, the **traditionalistic political culture** sees government as having a limited role concerned with the preservation of the existing social order. Traditionalistic subcultures want to preserve traditional power of elites. The traditionalistic culture can be seen in areas such as East Texas that were more heavily influenced by the traditions of the Old South. Since low voter turnout is preferred, traditionalist states often adopt stricter voting laws. 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 premise is that political cultures are based on immigration patterns. While early immigrants to Texas were largely Anglos from the United States, Texas also saw significant German immigration. In 1830, Friedrich Ernst obtained a land grant to establish a colony, which would become Texas's first German town—Industry, Texas. By the 1840s, a group of nobles from Biebrich, Germany, created the **Adelsverein society** to establish a German state in Texas and provide a market for German goods. The Adelsvereins facilitated significant emigration from Germany to Texas. New Braunfels and Fredericksburg are perhaps the best-known settlements of the effort. While German Texans generally shared other Texans' preference for individualism, they were much more likely to oppose slavery and secession. By 1850, Germans comprised at least 5 percent of the total Texas population. The so-called Texas German Belt, in Central Texas along what is now I-35, still bears the cultural imprint of German settlements, visible in the Kolache stands and German festivals, as well as the names of towns (Fredericksburg) and attractions (Schlitterbahn). According to the 1990 U.S. Census, nearly 3 million Texans, or 17.5 percent of the state's population, claimed either pure or partial German ancestry.²²

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 cultivate the land, build their homes, and defend their piece of the frontier. 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 criminalized behavior, and an emphasis on punitive justice.

Colin Woodard provides another way to think about political culture. He argued that the United States includes eleven 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 one of the oldest areas of civilization on the continent. It took root when Columbus arrived in the New World and grew with the Spanish expeditions that viewed the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee



Source: From *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America* by Colin Woodard, copyright © 2011 by Colin Woodard. Used by permission of Viking Books, an imprint of Penguin Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

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.

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.



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.

Ray Whitehouse for the *Washington Post* via Getty Images

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.

As this discussion illustrates, identifying a single political culture in a state that is as large, diverse, and constantly changing as Texas is a tall order. Whether we rely on Elazar's lens, think about Texas as a frontier state, or use Woodard's nations topology, Texas is complicated. As John Steinbeck suggested, Texas is as much a state of mind as a geographic state. 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 that evokes cowboys and cattle drives 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.

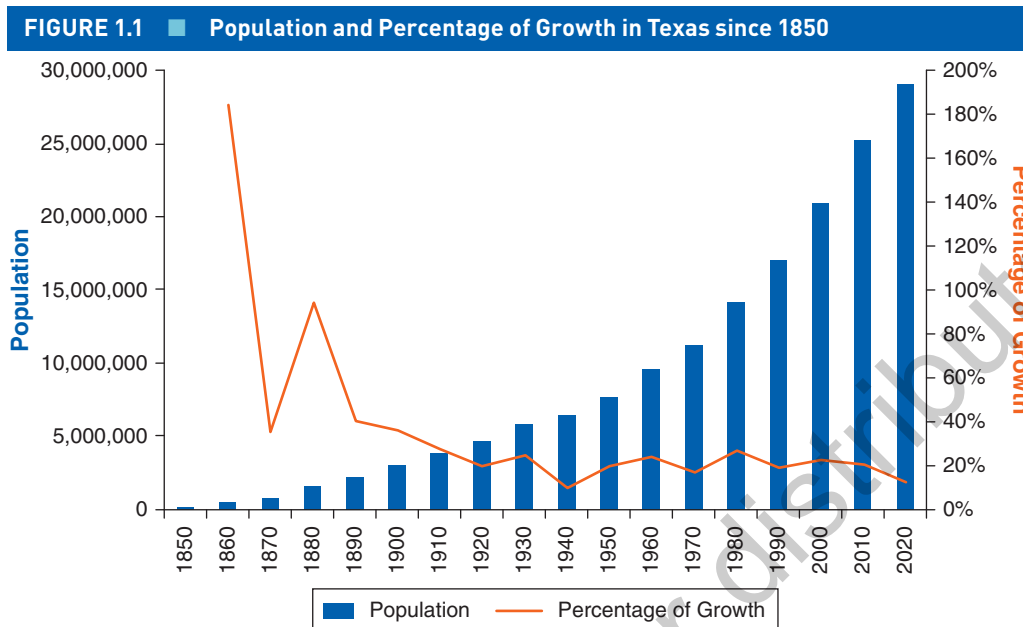
A TRADITION OF CHANGE

1.5 Discuss how the population of Texas has changed and continues to change.

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 nation.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 who lived in Texas that the people 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 29,52,941 Texans in 2021, up 15.9 percent since 2010.²⁶ Viewed differently, the 3.99-million-person growth that Texas saw between the 2010 census and the 2020 census is larger than the total population of half of the states. Six of the ten counties with the largest population growth were in Texas, including Harris, Tarrant, Bexar, Dallas, Collin, and Travis Counties. In 2020, Texas boasted the fastest-growing cities by rate: Georgetown (10.1 percent) and Leander (10.1 percent), as well as the city with the greatest absolute gain (San Antonio).²⁷



Source: Data from U.S. Census Bureau, "Texas: 2020 Census," accessed August 27, 2022, <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/state-by-state/texas-population-change-between-census-decade.html>.

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. Over the last three decades, the primary driver of Texas's population growth has shifted to domestic migration. In the 2010 to 2020 census period, natural increase accounted for 48.3 percent of Texas's population growth; domestic migration contributed to 31 percent of the population growth; and international migration contributed 20.7 percent. Between 2020 and 2021, domestic migration accounted for 55 percent of the state's population growth, while international migration shrank to just 7.5 percent. 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.

Change is especially difficult for a political system that must meet the needs of a large, diverse, and ever-shifting population. Political systems tend to represent the status quo, and established groups are inherently threatened by changes to the government's base of power. Because politics is, in the words of a classic definition, about "who gets what," newcomers compete against established residents, leaving the government to resolve the conflict and determine who wins and who loses. Politics becomes a battle between the old and the new, and this battle is often repeated in Texas. The Texas Revolution, which came about when Mexican officials refused to meet the needs of Anglo settlers, is probably the most dramatic—and ultimately literal—example of politics as a battle.

A snapshot of Texas reveals increasing population diversity as the state grows. In 2005, Texas became a majority–minority state, joining Hawaii, New Mexico, Nevada, Maryland, and California as states in which the country's majority (Anglos) make up less than half of the state's population. In Texas today, Anglos account for 40.3 percent of the state's population. While about 77.9 percent of Texas residents describe themselves as white, this category includes both Anglos and Hispanics. Almost 17 percent of Texans (compared to 13.5 percent of Americans)

are foreign born, and just over one in three Texans speaks a language other than English at home (compared to one in five Americans).²⁸

The state's future will be even more diverse. The state demographer estimates that from 2010 to 2050, Texas's Hispanic population will grow from just under 10 million to just over 30 million. During that same time, the Anglo population is expected to stay relatively unchanged at 11 to 12 million.²⁹ While some of the increase in the number of Hispanics in Texas may result from immigration, the number will rise even if immigration ends because the state's Hispanic population continues to grow while its Anglo population remains relatively flat. Thus, the Texans most likely to make baby Texans in the immediate future are Hispanic.

While much has been made of the emergence of a Latino majority in Texas, we have to remember how broad these racial categories are and how many differences exist within such groups. The term "Hispanic" includes many recent immigrants who may share a language but have origins that go beyond those of the Mexican Americans usually considered Hispanics in Texas. In fact, Texas has seen immigration from both Central and South America. While Hispanics who come from countries in these regions may share a language, the nations are very different. At the same time, some Hispanics in Texas trace their lineage to Spain's control over the region before the United States, Texas, or even Mexico existed. These Texan families represent some of the state's oldest and including them in the same category with the state's newest arrivals illustrates the problems of relying on such broad categories.

Frequently overlooked in the debate over immigration today is the rising number of immigrants coming from Asia. According to the Texas Demographer's office, Texas has experienced an increase in immigration coming from Asia and Africa in the last decade. Since 2010, over half of Texas non-citizen immigrants come from Latin America, 30.5 percent come from Asia, and another 11 percent come from Africa.³⁰ Thus, new Texans are increasingly more diverse, a reflection in part of the state's continued involvement in an increasingly complex global economy.

TABLE 1.1 ■ Texas Population Projections

	2000 Census	2010 Census	2020 Census	Projected 2030	Projected 2040	Projected 2050
Total Population	20,851,820	25,145,561	29,145,505	34,894,452	40,686,496	47,342,105
NH White	10,933,313	11,397,345	11,872,409	12,774,056	13,203,514	13,523,839
NH Black	2,364,255	2,886,825	3,567,765	4,322,983	5,141,963	6,030,795
NH Asian	554,445	948,426	1,515,085	2,414,778	3,772,186	5,782,879
NH Other	330,141	452,044	578,942	929,686	1,308,013	1,812,842
Hispanic	6,669,666	9,460,921	11,683,452	14,452,949	17,260,820	20,191,750

Note: NH = non-Hispanic.

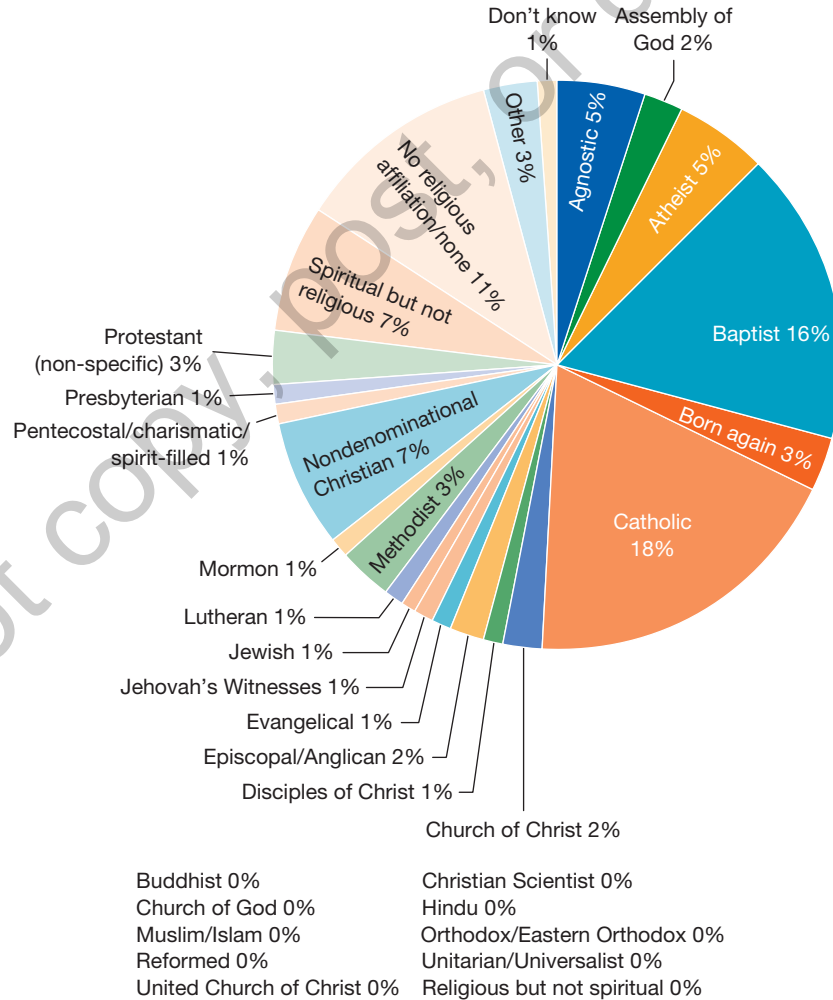
Source: Texas Demographic Center, *Texas Population Projections 2010 to 2050*, September 2019, https://demographics.texas.gov/Resources/publications/2019/20190925_PopProjectionsBrief.pdf.

Many of the 47 million Hispanics living in Texas in 2050 will be the product of several generations of living in America and of all the socialization inherent in the public school system, media, and broader culture. Some observers believe that the rising number of Hispanics will lead inevitably to a Democratic electoral majority in Texas. In 2020, Hispanics in Texas favored Democrats in statewide races by nearly a two-to-one margin.³¹ Of course, the popularity of the

two parties among Hispanics will turn on a variety of policy issues. Hispanics, like German Americans and other groups, will continue to evolve and eventually become a natural part of political life in Texas. Further, while segregation remains a reality in the United States, that barrier is often not enough to stop the cause of true love; as one study found, 26 percent of Hispanic men and 28 percent of Hispanic women had married someone of another race or ethnicity.³² By 2050, several generations will have married Texans from other demographic groups and have produced Texans who do not fit the demographic labels we attach so much meaning to today. Today's great-grandchildren of the German and Irish immigrants likely put little stock in the distinctions between these groups, and future generations of Texans will doubtlessly see themselves differently than we do today.

Texans often quip that they are “the buckle in the Bible Belt,” reflecting a strong Christian presence in the state. A 2016 study found that Texas rated as the eleventh-most religious state, with 63 percent of Texans saying religion is very important in their lives and 69 percent reporting that they believe in God with absolute certainty (Alabama led the nation, with 77 percent saying religion is very important in their lives and 82 percent saying they believe in God with absolute

FIGURE 1.2 ■ Religious Traditions in Texas



Source: Data from University of Texas and *Texas Tribune*, “Texas Statewide Survey,” October 15–21, 2018, <https://static.texastribune.org/media/files/9ec7041712e3c2c2d7e23f79ba5d2387/ut-tt-201810-summary-3.pdf>.

certainty).³³ While most Texans might generally fall under the label “Christian,” the more specific practices encompassed by that broad category are quite diverse. A recent poll found that Catholics (23 percent), evangelical Protestants (23 percent), and Protestant (17 percent) make up the largest religious categories in the state³⁴ (see Figure 1.2).

The state’s economy is as diverse as its people. The state still has more farms and ranches (241,500 averaging 537 acres) than any other state,³⁵ but Texans today are engaged in providing virtually every kind of product and service (see Table 1.2). Educational services and health care are the biggest industries, while agriculture, despite the image, is one of the smallest, with fewer people working in agriculture than in public administration.

TABLE 1.2 ■ Texas Civilian-Employed Population, Sixteen Years and Older

Industry	Number Employed	Percentage of Employed
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	382,157	2.8
Construction	1,162,805	8.6
Manufacturing	1,136,354	8.4
Wholesale trade	376,139	2.8
Retail trade	1,511,963	11.2
Transportation and warehousing, utilities	808,075	6.0
Information	227,404	1.7
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	911,531	6.8
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	1,576,600	11.7
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	2,932,061	21.8
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	1,212,944	9.0
Other services, except public administration	680,503	5.1
Public administration	542,822	4.0
	13,461,358	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, “2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates,” accessed September 8, 2022, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=&g=0400000US48&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Data%20Profiles&tid=ACSDP5Y2020.DP03>.

The Texas economy is massive and still growing. In 2021, the state’s economy was estimated to have produced approximately \$2.1 trillion in gross state product (GSP). If Texas were a country, its economy would be one of the largest in the world, just behind France and ahead of Russia and Canada (see Table 1.3).

The state’s rural nature has also been transformed, and today, about 80 percent of Texans live in 1,210 cities or suburbs. Between 2010 and 2020, rural Texas shrank; at the same time, about 88 percent of Texas’s population gain occurred in the region between Houston, Austin,

TABLE 1.3 ■ Top Fifteen Economies by GDP and GSP, 2021

Rank	Country	2021 GDP in Trillions
1	United States*	23.0
2	China	17.7
3	Japan	4.9
4	Germany	4.2
	California**	3.5
5	United Kingdom	3.2
6	India	3.2
7	France	2.9
	Texas	2.1
8	Italy	2.1
9	Canada	2.0
	New York**	1.9
10	South Korea	1.8
11	Russia	1.8
12	Brazil	1.6
13	Australia	1.5
14	Spain	1.4
15	Mexico	1.3

Notes: *Includes all states.

**Calculated as if an independent country.

Source: Compiled from data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis and World Bank.

and Dallas–Fort Worth, known as the Texas Triangle.³⁶ While Texas is often defined by its open spaces, many Texans spend much of their day stuck in traffic. According to the Census Bureau, the average working Texan spends 26.4 minutes every day getting to and from work.³⁷ As more people move to Texas, the demand for roads and mass transit systems will only increase, presenting new challenges for local governments as well as the state.

Even as Texas grapples with challenges within its borders arising from its diverse, growing population and expansive economy, it also must deal with competition from overseas. While Texans have always relished their independence, the state today must work to ensure its place in a growing global economy. Even farmers must look overseas as they attempt to cultivate foreign markets for their products while warding off foreign competitors.

While the wealthy Texas oil baron or cattle rancher is a familiar image in movies and television, Texans fall below the national average on many measures of wealth. Compared to

the national average, in 2021 Texans have a lower per capita income (\$32,177 vs. \$35,384), a higher poverty rate (13.4 percent vs. 11.4 percent of all Americans), and a lower rate of home ownership (62.3 percent vs. 64.4 percent). Texans are less likely to graduate high school (84.4 percent vs. 88.5 percent) and more likely not to have health insurance (19.9 percent vs. 10.2 percent) than the national average. While Texas may be a land of great wealth, it is also a land of great need.³⁸

Thus, the state with a constitution that was authored in the nineteenth century by isolated farmers who formed the Grange to connect with other farmers has become a booming high-tech center with citizens connected to each other and to the wider world through an amazing range of social media. Visitors arriving in the Texas capital will not find lonely cowboys astride horses on the open plains; instead, they will encounter computer engineers and game programmers checking social networks on their smartphones while stuck in traffic.

WINNERS AND LOSERS

1.6 Discuss how Texas's identity is shaped by immigration.

Certainly one of the most significant forces of change that has shaped Texas's past, present, and future is immigration. Texas is a state defined by its ever-changing immigrant population. If we are to understand Texas's past and try to prepare Texas for the future, no immigrant population is more integral to the state than the Hispanic population. As the historical overview in this chapter makes clear, Tejanos in early Texas were central to its development. As Anglos came to dominate the state, historical revisionists overlooked early cooperation between Anglos and Tejanos, emphasizing and often exaggerating the tensions between the two groups. Just as many Tejanos were driven out of Texas after the revolution against Mexico, their contributions to the war on both sides of the conflict were driven from the pages of Texas history. At some point, the Mexican flag failed to appear in the Alamo's "Hall of Honor" that commemorates the country of birth of the Alamo's defenders, allowing Texans to forget that nine of the eleven defenders of the Alamo born in the Mexican territory of Texas had Hispanic origins. Juan Nepomuceno Seguín, who neither wrote nor spoke English, was a close friend of Stephen F. Austin's and helped drive Mexican forces from San Antonio before slipping out of the Alamo to seek reinforcements. Later, Seguín joined Sam Houston's army at the decisive battle of San Jacinto. As one historian put it, "Remember the Alamo" became a formula for forgetfulness.³⁹ A rapidly anglicizing Texas replaced the legend of heroic Tejanos with a legend that emphasized dictatorial Mexican rulers seeking the expulsion of the Anglos.

The Tejano population of Texas declined from the time of the revolution until a repressive regime in Mexico, coupled with decades of revolution within that country, created a new wave of immigrants. This tripled the Mexican population in Texas from 1900 to 1920. While these immigrants played an important role in cotton production, they were often not welcome and took their place somewhere between Anglos and African Americans, unaccepted in either community. Techniques such as "white primaries," which were used to exclude African Americans from voting, were eventually also employed against Tejanos. As the state continued to change and immigrants continued to move into Texas, Hispanics were marginalized in the political process as well as in the history books.

TEXAS VERSUS VERMONT

A comparison of Texas and Vermont illustrates the diversity of states within the United States. Vermont, a northeastern state, got its start when Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys rebelled against attempts by New York and New Hampshire to exert control over the region after the American Revolution. On January 15, 1777, the independent Republic of New Connecticut was declared; later, the name was changed to the Republic of Vermont. Vermont sent ambassadors to France, the Netherlands, and the United States. In 1791, Vermont entered the United States as the fourteenth state to balance the admission of slaveholding Kentucky as the fifteenth state.

While both Texas and Vermont share a history of independence before joining the United States, the similarity ends there. Geographically, Vermont is quite small, at 9,250 square miles. Vermont's size is smaller than the combined area of the largest two Texas counties (Brewster and Pecos Counties in West Texas, together totaling 10,957 square miles). Vermont's landscape is dominated by the Green Mountains, abundant forests, and plentiful rivers and streams. As the second-largest state by area, Texas covers a vast territory that varies tremendously in land formations, water resources, and natural resources.

The demographics of the two states are also strikingly different. Settled by the English and some French colonists from nearby Quebec, Vermont remains among the most homogeneous states in the United States. In 2021, Vermont held the distinction of being one of the "whitest" states in the United States, with over 92 percent of its residents describing themselves as white and not of Hispanic origin; Texas, in contrast, was among the most racially and ethnically diverse states, with the largest group, Anglos, constituting only 40.3 percent of the population.

Vermont also consistently ranks as one of the smallest states in population. In 1850, the first census in which Texas participated, Vermont had a slightly larger population than Texas. Immigration over the following decade saw Texas surpass Vermont in population by the 1860 census, at which point Texas already had over 600,000 residents. It would take Vermont 140 years to reach that level of population, and the population today is about 643,077.

Large cities are found throughout Texas; three of the nation's ten largest cities are located in Texas. Vermont's largest city, Burlington (44,781 in 2021), is so small that it would rank seventy-fifth in city size in Texas. Even the images of the two states generate contrasts. Texas is the land of open plains, oil wells, cattle, gunslinging cowboys, and big-time football. Vermont is the land of maple syrup, ice cream, fall foliage, and quaint towns.

TEXAS VERSUS VERMONT: ETHNIC MAKEUP

Population Group	Texas	Vermont
White alone, not of Hispanic origin	40.3%	92.2%
Hispanic/Latino	40.2%	2.2%
African American	13.2%	1.5%
Asian American	5.5%	2.0%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, "Quick Facts: Texas and Vermont," <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/TX,VT,US/PST045221>.

Obviously, to govern a diverse population spread over a vast geographic area with extensive mineral wealth, Texas requires a fundamentally different approach than Vermont. In many instances, Texas politics is vastly different in practice than Vermont's political system. However, these differences may not be exactly what we expect.

Is your community more like typical Texas or Vermont? **Critical Thinking**

What are the advantages and disadvantages of a diverse state like Texas? **Social Responsibility**

One of the enduring legends of early Texas history is how Anglo order and hard work saved the state from Mexican chaos. According to this view, it was immigrants from the United States who, in the words of one public school textbook from the 1880s, “changed Texas from a wilderness into a civilized state: Mexico had nothing but fear and hatred.”⁴⁰ Like other legacies, this historical “truth” ignores some aspects of history and exaggerates others. So far, Hispanics have been the losers in the formation of historical legend.

By 1930, the Tejano population of Texas had begun to rise with the rest of the population, reaching almost 684,000. Reflecting the return of Tejanos to Texas politics, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) was formed in Corpus Christi in 1929. LULAC quickly became a major factor in Texas politics. In 1956, Henry B. González became the first Tejano in over half a century to hold a seat in the Texas Senate. During the 1957 legislative session, González set the record for a filibuster in the Texas Senate as he fought laws backing segregation in Texas public schools. In 1961, González broke ground again by winning a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. By that time, half a dozen Tejanos were serving in the Texas Legislature, and a Tejano was serving as mayor of El Paso. Tejanos won their first statewide office when Dan Morales was elected attorney general in 1990. Hispanics are both the largest and fastest-growing group in the state and today hold a variety of offices. In 2009, Eva Guzman became the first Hispanic woman to serve on the Texas Supreme Court when Governor Rick Perry appointed her to fill a vacancy. Tejanos are increasingly successful in organizing and exerting political pressure in Texas. As the Hispanic population continues to increase and organize its interests within the state, Hispanics are in a position to be the winners in a future Texas.

Today, Texas is again dealing with immigrants whose numbers are increasing so rapidly that they form a majority in some parts of the state. The struggle to deal with this change is part of what defines Texas as a state. As we will see throughout this text, legends tend to be static and are often at odds with the changing nature of the state. The myth that Texas's story is a primarily Anglo one ignores others' contributions. What's more, the myth of Anglo primacy remains the dominant legend in Texas's history books. Throughout the rest of the book, we will continue to explore this tension between legend and change.

CONCLUSION

Today's Texas is an enigma. Texans cling to the idea of wide-open plains and the rugged individualism of the Texas cowboy. The Texas economy competes on a global stage, as likely to deal in computers and aerospace as oil or Texas beef. Texas remains a frontier state and the population

continues to grow and diversify, reinventing Texas along the way. Texas's frontier experience and individualism is reflected in how we set up government and what we get out of government. Our distrust of government manifests itself in the state's constitution, criminal justice system, and public policy. As you read the following chapters in the book, you may find yourself coming back to our political culture and the never-ending frontier that is Texas.

KEY TERMS

Adelsverein society (p. 22)

empresario (p. 7)

individualistic political culture (p. 21)

moralistic political culture (p. 22)

political culture (p. 21)

presidential republicanism (p. 21)

traditionalistic political culture (p. 22)

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (p. 11)

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What does the size of the state's economy tell us about its politics? **Critical Thinking**
- What are other ways of looking at the size and scope of the Texas economy? **Empirical and Quantitative**
- How accurate should our Texas legends be? **Critical Thinking**
- How will changes to the population and economy shape Texas state government in the future? **Critical Thinking**

ACTIVE LEARNING

- Create a short brochure that introduces someone who's never been to Texas to the cultural and historical ideas that define the state. Think of the brochure as something that might be distributed at a visitors center at the state border. **Communication**
- Either as an entire class or in smaller groups, generate a list of characteristics that define Texas and that also distinguish Texans from other Americans. **Teamwork**