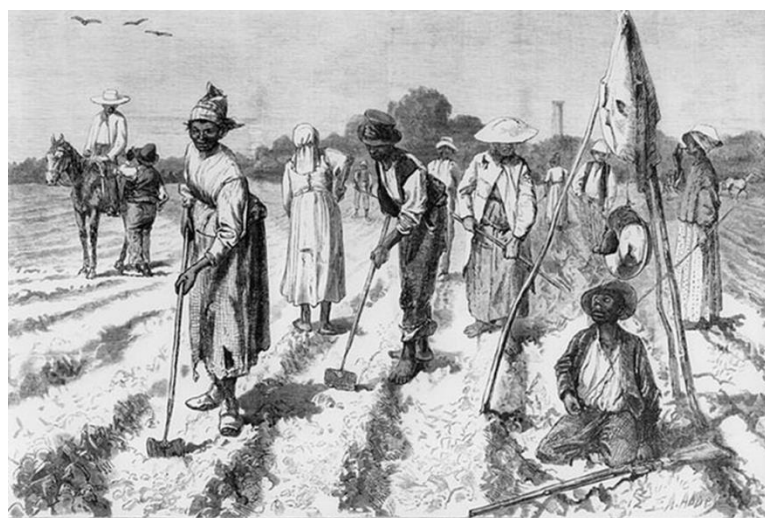


## Unit 07: Texas during the Civil War and Reconstruction – 1861-1876

### Causes of the Civil War

Conflict between the Northern and Southern parts of the United States was as old as the nation itself. **Sectionalism**, or loyalty to one's section or region of the country, had long divided North and South. People in these two sections argued over **states' rights**. This is the idea that states have the right to limit the power of the federal, or national, government. People in the South felt that the states should have the right to limit the power of the national government. For example, Southern states supported the idea of **nullification**, meaning that a state could reject a national law. Many in the North disagreed. By the mid-1800s, people in the North and South were also arguing about slavery. Opposition to slavery grew stronger in the North, and white Southerners feared the federal government would try to abolish it.



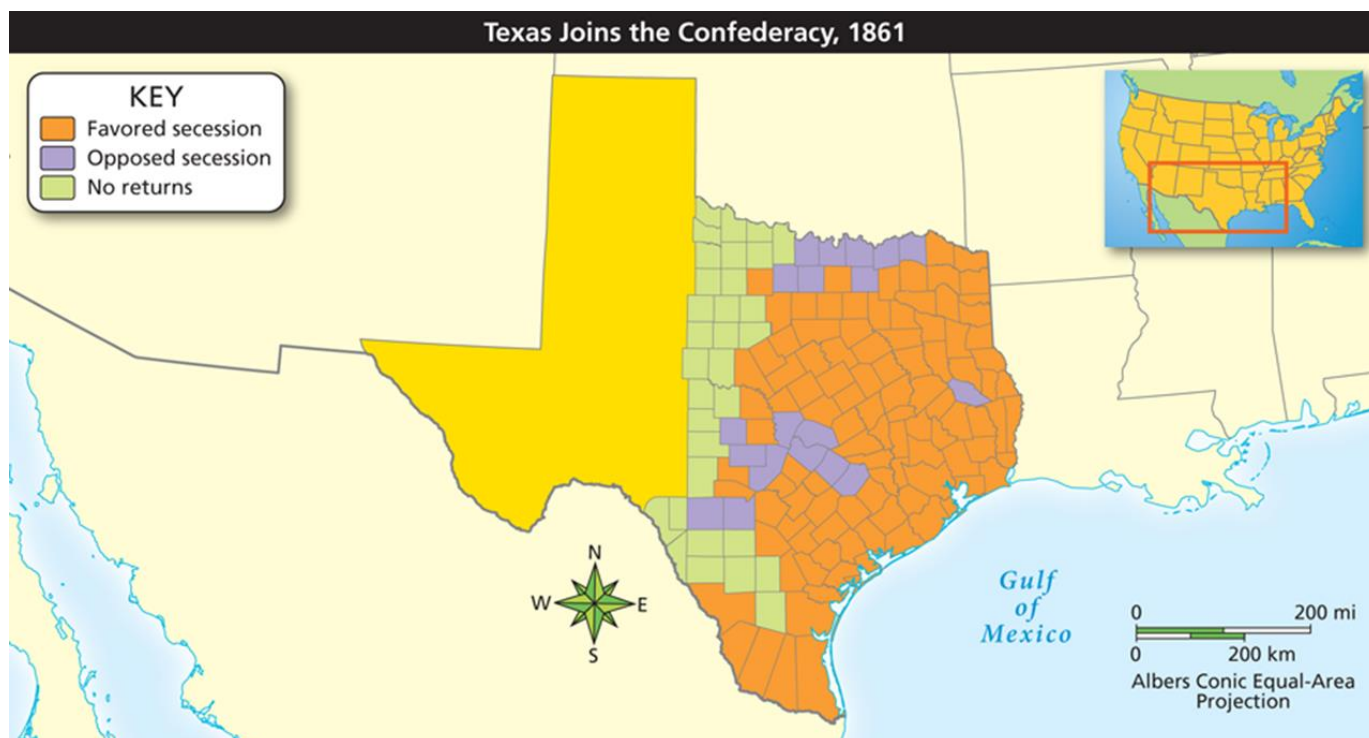
Texas was one of the states that allowed slavery. Most African Americans in the state were enslaved. By 1860, only about 400 African Americans in Texas were free. Some were free because they had fought in the Texas Revolution.

The lives of enslaved African Americans in Texas—and everywhere—were hard. Most had to work in cotton fields from sunrise to sunset. They had

no control over their lives. The slaveholders could split families apart. Still, the enslaved African Americans built a strong culture. Religion and music were important parts of that culture.

Some enslaved people practiced **resistance**. This is an effort to stop something. One way they resisted was by attempting to escape to Mexico, where slavery was illegal.

In the 1850s, the conflict between the North and the South grew more tense. Southern states threatened to **secede**, or withdraw, from the Union. There were not many antislavery leaders living in Texas. Some white Texans attacked **abolitionists**, or people who wanted to end slavery.



By 1860, the nation was about to break apart. In early 1861, Texas delegates met and voted 166 to 8 to secede. The popular vote revealed that many Texans supported secession. However, some Texans voted against it,

including Governor Sam Houston. On March 5, 1861, Texas declared itself independent of the United States. State leaders then took an oath of loyalty to the Confederate States of America.

## The Civil War and Texas

When Southern states seceded, the United States moved toward civil war. The government of the United States said the Southern states could not secede from the Union. Southerners said they had a right to do so. Both sides raised armies. The North had many advantages. It had four times more men of fighting age than the South. It had many more factories to make clothing and supplies. Still, thousands of men from Texas and other Southern states volunteered to join the Confederate Army.

Before war broke out, Confederate volunteers in Texas seized the Alamo, a federal **arsenal**. An arsenal is a storehouse for weapons. They also forced Union soldiers to leave the state. The battle lines had been drawn.

In April 1861, war broke out between the two sides. The coast of Texas was an important area to both the North and South. The North tried to **blockade** the



coast, using its ships to block people and supplies from moving in or out of its enemy's port. The South tried to keep the coast open. Texans wanted to be able to sell their cotton so they could earn money for the war effort. Some

Texas cotton was shipped out of Mexico. Trade in cotton continued throughout the war.

Texans served in many areas during the war. Some **regiments**, or small groups of soldiers, fought with the Confederate Army in Virginia. This was where much of the fighting in the Civil War took place. Many Texas troops fought in Texas and Louisiana. Several key battles were fought in defense of the state. The Union was unable to win any big victories in Texas.

The Union was more successful at harming Texas trade. The people of Texas faced a shortage of goods during the Civil War. The blockade slowed trade, though it could not stop it completely. Ships called **blockade runners** brought in some goods by sailing quickly past the blockading ships.

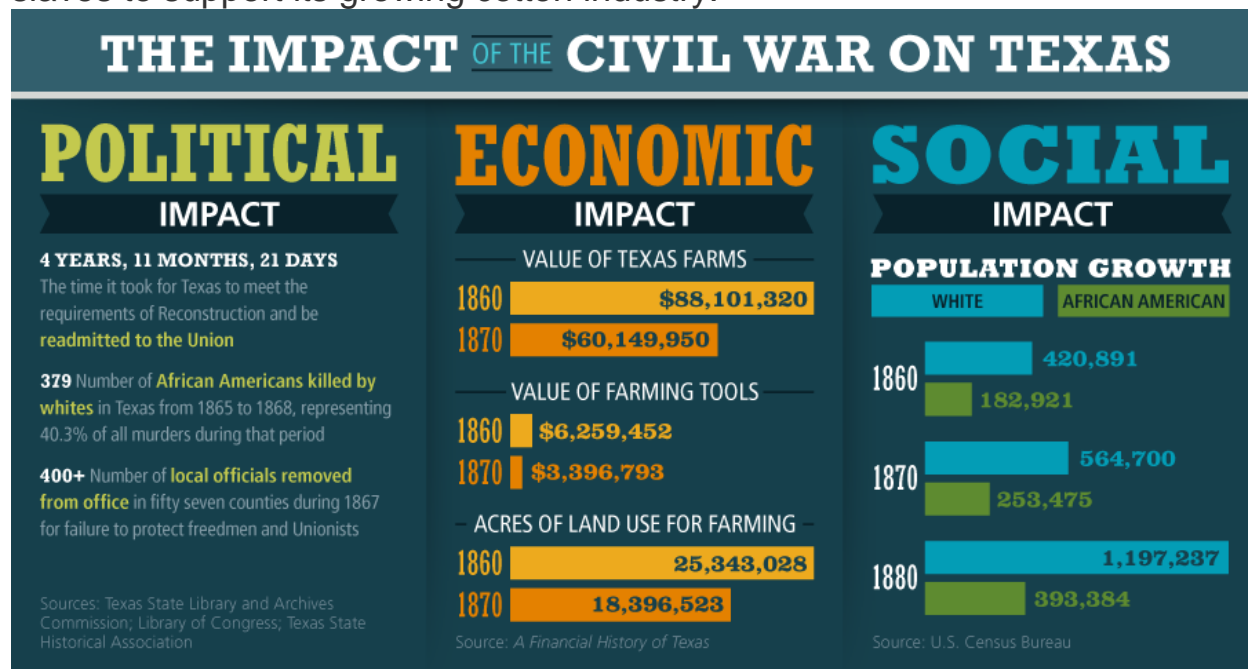


Most Texans supported the Confederacy. Some, though, were **Unionists**. They supported the United States government. Some Unionists left the state. More than 2,000 Texans joined the Union Army.

By 1864, it was clear the Union would win the

war. **Desertions**, or quitting one's post without permission, increased in the Confederate Army. In April 1865, the Civil War ended when the Confederate Army surrendered. A month later, the last battle of the war was fought in Texas.

Following the war, Texas came under military rule. Enslaved African Americans were freed, but they were still rejected by white society. Many white Texans still believed in maintaining **supremacy**, or supreme authority and power, over them. Texas also began to rely on tenant farmers rather than slaves to support its growing cotton industry.



## Reconstruction in Texas

The period after the Civil War is called **Reconstruction**. The term refers to the federal government's plan to bring the Southern states back into the Union. Reconstruction lasted until 1876.

After the Civil War, people in the North disagreed on how to treat the Southern states. President Andrew Johnson carried out Lincoln's plan for Reconstruction after Lincoln was killed. President Johnson set out certain steps that each state had to take to rejoin the Union.

In 1866, a Texas convention agreed to meet these conditions in a new constitution. The delegates said that it had been illegal for Texas to secede. They agreed to end slavery. They also gave African Americans some rights, though not the right to vote or hold public office. In June 1866, Texas voters adopted the new constitution and elected new state legislators. Meanwhile, the national government had set up the Freedmen's Bureau. Its job was to help the newly freed slaves adjust to their new lives.

Not everything changed in Texas, though. The new Texas government passed laws called "black codes." These laws put **restrictions**, or controls and limits, on African Americans' rights.

The U.S. Congress did not like the way Reconstruction was going in Texas and elsewhere. It felt that former Confederates should not be able to serve in new governments. It also disliked the fact that Texas did not approve two **amendments**, or formal changes, to the U.S. Constitution. These amendments were meant to ban slavery and make African Americans U.S. citizens. In 1867, the U.S. Congress put the South under the control of the U.S. Army.



In 1868, Texans met to write a new constitution. It gave African Americans the right to vote. With the new constitution, approved in 1869, Texas was able to rejoin the Union in March 1870.

The state constitution of 1869 had made the governor very strong. The people of Texas did not like strong central government, though. In 1876, they approved a new constitution. It made the governor weaker.

The economy of Texas became more productive in these years. Farms grew more cotton than before. The **sharecropper** system replaced the use of slave labor. Sharecroppers were farmworkers who worked land owned by someone else. They paid for the use of the land by giving half the value of their crops to landowners.

Also during this time, factories arose in many cities. Railroad lines were built that connected Texas to other parts of the country. Still, most people in Texas worked their own farms, which were small.

## RECONSTRUCTION IN TEXAS

