

3-2009

Wheat Farmers in the Secession Crisis: The Imprint of the Upper South on Northeast Texas Politics

John R. Lundberg

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj>



Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

Tell us how this article helped you.

Recommended Citation

Lundberg, John R. (2009) "Wheat Farmers in the Secession Crisis: The Imprint of the Upper South on Northeast Texas Politics," *East Texas Historical Journal*: Vol. 47: Iss. 1, Article 8.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj/vol47/iss1/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by SFA ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in East Texas Historical Journal by an authorized administrator of SFA ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu.

WHEAT FARMERS IN THE SECESSION CRISIS: THE IMPRINT OF THE UPPER SOUTH ON NORTHEAST TEXAS POLITICS

By John R. Lundberg

At the behest of Governor Sam Houston, on January 28, 1861 the Texas Legislature gathered in Austin only to legitimize, to the governor's dismay, a pending convention to consider secession from the Union. Some in the legislature, such as Representatives James Throckmorton of Collin County and James H. Taylor of Fannin County, voiced their disapproval of the convention, but to no avail. On the floor of the House Taylor rhetorically asked, "In this new Cotton Confederacy, what will become of my section, the wheat growers and stock raisers?"

Taylor's outburst in the House of Representatives gave voice to very real fears felt by many in Texas, but primarily North Texans, as to what their fate would be under the new government. The voters of the State of Texas faced an extremely visceral political question in 1861 – whether or not to secede from the Union and join the nascent Confederacy. The question particularly divided those settlers in the northernmost part of the state, and pitted them politically against the rest of the state. Why did these northern counties vote against secession while the rest of the state, with the exception of some central Texas counties, favor secession?

Historians have pointed to several possible answers, most prominently the position of these Texans on an exposed frontier and their anger directed at Sam Houston (who opposed secession) for his failure to protect them from Indian raids, coupled with the fear of a loss of Federal protection against the same raids. The "frontier" thesis is so prominent, that one of the leading studies on secession in Texas states "a pragmatic view of its unique local conditions seems to have been almost entirely the dominant force behind the frontier's decision to support or oppose secession."

Pragmatism regarding location certainly played a part in the voting on the secession issue, but the emphasis has been largely misplaced. Rather, the emphasis should lie in a much more idealistic and economic context, that of the Upper South versus the Lower South. Most of the settlers in the northern Texas counties hailed from the Upper South; the slaveholding states north of the cotton belts of Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia and South Carolina. As such, they shared a different political ideology and economic system than did most of the rest of Texas, many of whom came from the Lower South.

Upper Southerners were far less dependent on slave labor to raise and harvest their crops, which consisted primarily of wheat, rye, corn and oats, compared to cotton which dominated most of the remainder of the Texas economy. Such activity made for a clear distinction between the different farmers, who

held fewer slaves and depended on different markets for their crops than the heavily slave and cotton-dependent regions of central and east Texas.³

Politically, many of the settlers in Northeast Texas, and especially their leaders, shared a common Whig ideology derived from their political background in the Upper South. In the Upper South, a healthy two-party rivalry between the Whigs and Democrats remained vibrant far beyond the point when Democrats became the dominant party in the Deep South. As such, many of these North Texans looked with suspicion and distrust on the cotton interests of the Lower South, and chose instead to follow men like Sam Houston and James Throckmorton, who began to oppose the more strident secessionist interests in Texas' Democratic Party in the 1850s.⁴

Despite their roots of Whig ideology, North Texas voters behaved largely like the rest of the state in elections leading up to secession, but when the visceral question of secession arose, they followed their leaders, including politicians and editors, in voting against disunion.⁵

In the populations of Cooke, Collin, Denton, Fannin, Grayson, Montague and Wise Counties anywhere from fifty to seventy percent of the residents hailed from states in the Upper South. Not coincidentally, the counties also registered the highest percentage of the vote against secession of any counties in Texas.⁶

Table 1: The Population of Northeast Texas⁷

Counties	Number of Voters	Percentage of Voters Hailing from the Upper South	Number of Voters Hailing from the North or Europe	Percentage of Voters Hailing from the Lower South	Number of Slaveholders and Percentage of the Total Population	Number of Slaves and Average Holding Per Slaveholder
Cooke	879	65%	18%	17%	74 (8%)	369 (5)
Collin	2,140	70%	19%	11%	240 (11%)	251 (1)
Denton	1,266	68%	18%	14%	87 (7%)	251 (3)
Fannin	1,928	69%	14%	17%	308 (16%)	1,721 (6)
Grayson	1,449	69%	15%	16%	236 (16%)	1,292 (5)
Montague	208	50%	36%	14%	13 (9%)	35 (3)
Wise	747	54%	31%	15%	53 (7%)	128 (2)
State Totals	101,219	32%	39%	28%	21,878 (21%)	182,566 (8)

With 63.5% of the voters in Northeast Texas hailing from the Upper South, one might assume that non-slaveholding Upper Southerners would dominate the politics and political offices of the counties, but such was not the case. As with the rest of the South, economic power translated into political power, and the economic and political power rested in the hands of the slaveholders, most of who came from the Lower South. For instance, in Cooke County in 1861, the Chief Justice, sheriff and three out of four county commissioners owned slaves. These slaveholders enhanced their power through fraternal orders such as Masonic lodges and the Odd Fellows, both of which turned community activism into influence by building schools and other public buildings.⁸

Despite the slaveholders' grip on the political machinery of these counties, Upper Southern practices of agriculture still dominated the region. All of the counties in the study produced in 1860 less than ten bales of cotton per one hundred inhabitants with the exception of Fannin County, which produced between ten and twenty-four bales. However, this still contrasts sharply with counties that contained primarily Lower Southerners, who averaged thirty-seven bales of cotton per one hundred inhabitants throughout the rest of the state. At the same time, Northeast Texas led the state in wheat production. With the exception of Montague (less than one) and Fannin Counties (one to two) the rest of the counties in the study produced at least three to six bushels of wheat per capita in 1860. Collin and Grayson County led the way with thirteen to nineteen bushels and Cooke County lagged not far behind with seven to twelve. In three sample counties twenty-seven percent of wheat farmers were born in Tennessee, followed by Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, Missouri and Arkansas. Clearly, Northeast Texas followed the practice of planting wheat and other subsistence crops as opposed to cotton, further identifying themselves as an enclave of the Upper South.⁹

In November, 1860 the election of Abraham Lincoln sent shock waves through the South. Within such an atmosphere, many who had threatened secession if a Republican should be elected president began to take action. The course of the secession movement in the Upper South took part in three distinct, chronological waves, and Northeast Texas proved no exception. The first wave involved secessionists taking the lead and essentially "stealing a march" on their less-organized Unionist opponents. The second wave occurred when voting actually took place on secession, by which time Unionists had time to organize an effective resistance. Finally, the third wave that engulfed the Upper South took place after the firing on Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for volunteers, which pushed even the most ardent Unionists into the arms of the Confederacy.¹⁰

On 23 November 1860, secessionists called a public meeting at Whitesboro in western Grayson County to consider the current state of affairs. John R. Diamond, brother of James Diamond, chaired the meeting while Louis Hunter served as secretary. At the outset, James Diamond, who had returned from Baltimore, explained the purpose of the meeting and the participants nominated a committee of fifteen to draw up resolutions. The committee presented a resolution stating that the election of a "Black Republican candidate for President and an emphatic endorsement of a platform of principles in violent opposition to Southern interests and Southern institutions, afforded abundant proof that the several states of the Union cannot long live together in peace...."¹¹

The gathering then debated the resolutions, with James and John Diamond in support and others such as A.H. Lattimer against. In the end, the meeting adopted the resolution with just four dissenting votes.¹²

On December 13 James W. Throckmorton, the outspoken Unionist and Collin County attorney, had the opportunity to address a gathering at Plano on

the question of secession. The leadership of the meeting, including the Reverend T.J. Malone, favored secession and intended to draw up resolutions to forward to the legislature expressing their support for secession. Despite this, the leadership still asked Throckmorton to speak, and Throckmorton suggested that the Southern states should hold a general convention to formulate a cooperative plan of action, forcing the federal government to address the South's grievances within the Constitution. The gathering voted on whether or not to include Throckmorton's ideas in their resolutions, and overwhelmingly rejected the idea. By the time Throckmorton had finished speaking, a committee had drawn up the resolutions, which stated that Texas must secede. At the meeting, Throckmorton cast the only vote against these resolutions.¹³

Throckmorton forms the perfect paradigm for studying the Whig ideology that motivated many Northeast Texas leaders to oppose secession. Throckmorton felt that the only way to protect the Texas frontier lay with Federal protection inside the Union. Despite his concerns about the frontier, Throckmorton's primary concern lay with the nationalist ideology of the Whig Party in enhancing the interests of their citizens through internal improvements and protecting the interests of the small wheat farmers of Northeast Texas against the interests of the large cotton planters. In the environment of the secession crisis, Throckmorton's views can be viewed as a microcosm of Northeast Texas views as a whole. While concerned about frontier security, Northeast Texans worried most about their place in the economic hierarchy of a cotton Confederacy and their nationalist Whig leanings both stemming from their origins in the Upper South.¹⁴

Cooke County held a town meeting at the county seat of Gainesville a few weeks later on 15 December 1860, in which James Diamond again served on the steering committee.¹⁵ James G. Bourland, a wealthy planter from South Carolina, chaired the meeting. Bourland, a fifty-nine year-old veteran of the Mexican War, had by 1860 established a plantation with twenty-one slaves on the Delaware Bend of the Red River in far northeast Cooke County and as such became a community leader. Bourland and Diamond supported secession at this meeting while their opposition came from an unusual quarter. William C. Young, a planter from Tennessee and the largest slaveholder in Cooke County vociferously opposed secession while John E. Wheeler, a former Tennessee legislator and also a large slaveholder, backed Young. When Bourland and his allies introduced a resolution favoring secession, Young, Wheeler and their supporters angrily expressed their opposition.¹⁶

The town meeting reveals an interesting trend in how those from the Upper South and the Lower South viewed the conflict. James Bourland and William C. Young had much in common; both owned large plantations and many slaves (seventy-four between them) and their properties both abutted the Red River in northeastern Cooke County. Yet Bourland, from South Carolina, favored secession while Young, from Tennessee, opposed secession. Next to whether an individual hailed from the Upper or Lower South, slaveholding very often went the farthest toward determining how an individual felt about

secession, and yet even this consideration did not dissuade Young and Wheeler from their loyalty to the Union. Furthermore, Indian raids and depredations appear to not even enter the discussion in these meetings, with both Young and Bourland having the most to lose, given the location of their plantations. Exchanges such as this seem to indicate that whether someone hailed from the Lower South (Bourland and Diamond) or the Upper South (Young and Wheeler) greatly influenced their stance on secession.

Five days after the tumultuous meeting at Gainesville, representatives of South Carolina met in convention and voted to secede from the Union. Despite pressure from state newspaper editors, Governor Houston refused to give into the secessionist impulse. Directly following the election of Lincoln, Texas state leaders began debating the best method for separating Texas from the Union. Shortly after the election, Attorney General George Flournoy, John S. Ford, George R. Baylor, and others met at Flournoy's office to discuss tactics. They needed the legislature to call for a special convention on secession, but constitutionally only the governor could call a special session of the legislature. Governor Houston certainly had no intention of calling on the legislature, hoping that secessionist sentiment would cool as the year drew to a close.¹⁷

In the face of such a conundrum, Judge Oran M. Roberts, John Ford, and other members of the legislature decided to issue a call for a convention independent of the legislature. The secession leaders printed notices in all the major state newspapers on December 3, calling for the election of delegates to a secession convention set to meet in Austin on 28 January 1861. They set the elections of delegates for January 8 and for each house district, the secessionists instructed the voters to elect two representatives to the secession convention. Despite the questionable legality of such measures the secessionists had gained the upper hand over Houston and his supporters.¹⁸

Northeast Texas elected eight representatives to the Texas Secession Convention. Two representatives came from Collin County, Judge Samuel Bogart and attorney James Throckmorton. Born in Tennessee in 1825, Throckmorton grew up in Sparta, where his father had established a medical practice. In 1841 James Throckmorton first visited Texas and purchased land near the East Fork of the Trinity River in Collin County northwest of what is now Melissa. After service in the Mexican War, he returned to his family in Collin County where he established a medical practice before turning to the study of the law. Beginning in 1851 he represented Collin County in the state legislature. With his background as a Whig, Throckmorton opposed secession. After the election of Lincoln, he wrote to his business partners "Certainly the people of the North have a constitutional right to elect Mr. Lincoln in a constitutional manner just as much as we had to elect Mr. Breckinridge, but according to the doctrine of some of our friends if we elect Mr. B we will fight to sustain the constitution and if Mr. Lincoln should be elected we will fight to violate the constitution. This seems to me utterly wrong and in addition great injustice to our millions of friends who have battled so nobly and so generously for us and our constitutional rights at the North." As a former Whig

and community leader, Throckmorton stood second only to Sam Houston as a prominent Unionist in the state, and as such won election to the convention.¹⁹

Despite Throckmorton's election, the other seven delegates mainly represented the interests of the Lower South. The other exception to this rule proved Judge Samuel Bogart, an outspoken Unionist. At sixty-five years old, Bogart, the other representative from Collin County, hailed from Tennessee and listed his residence at Montgomery in Collin County. On 5 January 1861 he wrote his children, "I am opposed to leaving the Union till an effort to have our rights respected is made in the Union. If this fails I hope the Southern states go out in mass. I hope the ___ government will not attempt to coerce a single state for that would involve the nation in civil war which is more to be dreaded than pestilence and famine." Before the Secession Convention, Bogart fell ill and was unable to travel to Austin.²⁰

Even as these representatives prepared to travel to Austin, under extreme duress Governor Houston consented to call the legislature into special session for January 21. To the governor's dismay, the legislature quickly legitimized the secession convention and then hastily adjourned because many of the legislators also held seats in the pending convention.

On Monday, January 28 the Texas Secession Convention came to order. The delegates elected Judge Oran M. Roberts president of the convention, and decided to reserve many of the more important decisions for the next day. The next day the convention voted to consider secession.²¹ On January 30, the Chairman of the Committee on Federal Relations Thomas J. Chambers read aloud the Ordinance of Secession adopted by his committee. The next afternoon the convention decided to hold a vote on the Ordinance the following day, 1 February 1861.

The following day the Secession Convention convened amid much fanfare and anticipation from the citizens in the gallery and Governor Houston, who sat with his arms folded, watching the proceedings. President Roberts read aloud the Ordinance and then began down the alphabetical roster of delegates. As Roberts called on each member of the Convention, they stood and registered their vote. By the time James Throckmorton rose to vote, 159 of the 174 delegates had already cast their ballots and the count stood at 155-4 in favor of the ordinance. Despite this vote, Throckmorton, when called upon, rose, glanced around at his fellow delegates, surveyed the noisy galleries and said: "Mr. President, in view of the responsibility, in the presence of God and my country – and unawed by the wild spirit of revolution I see around me, I vote 'no.'" As Throckmorton took his seat the galleries of the Texas House of Representatives erupted in jeers. After the restoration of order, Throckmorton once again stood and said: "Mr. President, when the rabble hiss, well may patriots tremble."²² The final tally stood 166 for secession, 8 against. Even Northeast Texas delegates voted 6-1 in favor of secession.

According to Section II a vote on the Ordinance of Secession was to be held on 23 February 1861. If the Ordinance passed, Texas would revert to its

independent status on 2 March 1861, exactly twenty-five years to the day after declaring independence from Mexico. Governor Houston promised to abide by the legitimate will of the people expressed at the ballot box on February 23. Meanwhile, Houston and other Unionists such as Throckmorton launched a campaign to defeat the Ordinance and keep Texas in the Union. Throckmorton and other Unionists gave addresses at Bauss Hall in Austin on February 9, before the Collin County attorney returned home and continued his efforts. During this campaign local citizens in North Texas also launched campaigns against secession. In Collin County, ninety-four-year-old Collin McKinney, the namesake of the county and county seat, a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence and one of the state leaders of the Disciples of Christ, lectured his neighbors on the evils of secession. The *McKinney Messenger* and the *Sherman Patriot* courageously echoed McKinney's sentiments.²³

On 23 February 1861 the day of reckoning came. Overall, Texans turned out to support the Ordinance of Secession 46,188 to 15,149. Statewide, with only 56.9% of the eligible male voters participating, the referendum on secession represented the lowest statewide turnout for any of the elections in this study. Still, the people of Texas had voted seventy-five percent to twenty-five percent to sever ties with the Union.²⁴ Evidence of fraud occurred in some places as both Unionists and Secessionists vied to control the vote, but none of the actions truly affected the election.²⁵ Unlike the 1860 presidential election, which yielded similar results between Breckinridge and Bell, Unionism in 1861 was concentrated in two distinct areas. Nineteen out of the 122 Texas counties that reported returns voted against secession. Ten of these counties were in the central Texas area, Austin (Travis County) and the counties immediately surrounding it. One county, Angelina, lay in east Texas, but eight of the counties that voted against secession were located in Northeast Texas.²⁶

In Wise County Unionists took the day by an extremely narrow margin, seventy-eight to seventy-six, with approximately twenty-one percent of the voters turning out, the lowest percentage of any election for the county in this study. This low turnout probably resulted from the fact that secessionists controlled the county political machinery and "discouraged" potential Unionists from voting. Despite the low turnout, Unionists still carried the county, a tribute to the fact that only fifteen percent of the residents of the county hailed from the Lower South, while the other seventy-five percent came from the Upper South or the North. In fact, so many settlers from the Midwest had established themselves in Wise County that some called it "Yankee country."²⁷

In Grayson County the Unionists also carried the day 901-463, an incredible ninety-four percent turnout, indicating the strong Union leadership in the county from Junius Foster and others. Incidentally, sixteen percent of the voters came from the Lower South and sixteen percent of the voters owned slaves, probably a close correlation between the two, but not enough to sway the county from favoring the Union. This came despite the efforts of community leaders such as James G. Thompson to foster secessionist sentiment.²⁸

In sparsely settled Montague County, Unionists also carried the day ninety-eight to fifty, a seventy-one percent voter turnout, about the same turnout as the other elections in the study. With only 14.5 percent of the population hailing from the Lower South, it is not surprising that Unionists carried the county, though the totals indicate that some voters from the Upper South or the North had to have voted for secession, a most irregular result.²⁹

In Fannin County, fifty-eight percent of the electorate turned out to favor Unionism 656-471, or roughly fifty-nine percent to forty-one percent. Despite the fact that a full sixteen percent of Fannin County voters held slaves (tied for the highest in the study), eighty-four percent of the populace came from the Upper South or the North, again, the apparent determining factor in voting for or against secession. The fact that forty-one percent of the votes went toward secession probably indicated the fact that the 308 slaveholders in the county owned 1,721 slaves, a ubiquitous factor in areas favoring secession. Still, the origins of the population overcame the slaveholders to swing Fannin County for the Union.³⁰

Denton County proved the sole holdout in Northeast Texas for secession. In a county that had been shaken by the Texas troubles at Denton and Pilot Point, a mere 46% of the voters turned out to vote 331-256 for secession, 55% to 45%. The fact that the vote was so close, and that the referendum inspired the second lowest turnout in the county for the elections in this study, suggests that fear drove a slim majority of Denton County voters into the arms of the secessionists. With the Texas troubles fresh in their minds, perhaps fear of slave insurrection overcame their loyalty to the United States to bring about the electoral results.³¹

Cooke and Collin Counties are special cases in a study of Unionism in this area, because they are the only two counties for which precinct-level election returns are available. As such, it is possible to pinpoint Unionist versus Secessionist sentiment to specific parts of county and examine the demography of these areas.³²

Because Cooke County played such a central role in the anti-Unionist backlash in 1862 that culminated in the hangings at Gainesville, and because Cooke County abuts the Red River, it is possible to test both the "frontier" thesis, put forward in other secession studies, as a reason for secession and the link between Unionism and roots in the Upper South in the electoral results of the county.

Before the Civil War six main areas of settlement had developed in Cooke County. First, the town of Gainesville served as the county seat near the geographic center of the county, just a few miles south of a large southward bend in the Red River. Second, many settlers chose to live along the Elm Fork of the Trinity River, or Indian, Wolf, or Timber Creeks south and east of the county seat known as the Eastern Cross Timbers area. These residents created several settlements along the creeks, and in 1847 the first school in the county opened along Wolf Creek on land donated by Rama Dye, a prominent Unionist and local land holder. A third area of settlement occurred in the vicinity of

Sycamore Creek and Delaware Bend on the Red River in the northeast part of the county. Here James G. Bourland and his son-in-law A.B. Manion both established plantations. Bourland hailed from South Carolina, and according to the 1860 slave schedule for the county, owned twenty-three bondsmen while Manion owned just six. Southwest of Bourland and Manion, William C. Young had established a plantation in the Horseshoe Bend area of the Red River, where he and his wife owned the most slaves in the county at fifty-three. However, unlike Bourland, Young came from Tennessee and as noted previously opposed secession while his South Carolinian neighbor to the north favored the measure.³³

Northwest of Gainesville, a fourth area of settlement developed when several settlers, including Daniel Montague who had laid out Gainesville and Montague County, resided along Fish Creek near what is now the town of Marysville, while to the north a fifth area of settlement developed in the rich agricultural bottoms of Sivells Bend, where several prominent slaveholders, including Marcus, Rufus and Lewis Cole established large plantations. Finally, southwest of Gainesville a small number of settlers established themselves on Hickory, Blocker and Clear Creeks, along the route of the Butterfield Overland Stage line. The center of activity in this area was Davidson's Station, the home of Dr. John T. Davidson, who established a residence where The Butterfield line crossed Williams Creek.³⁴

Overall, most slaveholders in the county resided in either Delaware, Horseshoe or Sivells Bend, along Fish Creek, or along Wheeler Creek east of Gainesville. Other than this, most of the settlers of the county (92%) owned no slaves and most (83%) hailed from the Upper South or the North. However, as noted previously, Lower Southerners and slaveholders controlled most of the county political machinery, a fact that played a part on election day.³⁵

The results from the polling places indicated the areas where secessionists fared the best. In Gainesville itself 223 voters turned out with 91 for secession and 132 against. With few slaveholders in Gainesville itself and most of the residents hailing from the Upper South, this is not a surprising result.³⁶

At the home of election judge Crawford Yarbrough, twenty-three voters cast their votes for secession and two against. Such a result is likely based on two factors: First, Yarbrough hailed from South Carolina and as such probably favored secession. With the precinct at his residence it would not be hard to manipulate voters. Second, Crawford Yarbrough lived in the far southeastern part of the county, very near the town of Pilot Point in Denton County that became a victim of the Texas troubles. With a reminder of the troubles so close at hand, it is likely that many of Yarbrough's voters again favored secession over the possibility of servile insurrection.

In contrast to Yarbrough's returns, at the home of W.A.J. Finch in the heavily populated and Unionist eastern part of the county, voters rejected secession decisively with thirty-four against disunion and only one in favor. In this area, dominated by leaders such as Rama Dye, a heavy Unionist turnout was all but assured.³⁷

At the home of John T. Davidson in the southwestern part of the county, voters also rejected secession twenty-two to two. Most of the settlers in this area, including Dr. Davidson hailed from the Upper South and some owned slaves, but apparently because of their roots in the Upper South repudiated disunion.³⁸

At James Bourland's residence near Delaware Bend, voters not surprisingly chose fourteen to six in favor of secession. Given the dominance of Bourland and Manion in the area, any other result would have been surprising.³⁹

Finally, at Hiram Faulkner's home in south central Cooke County, voters also voted against secession twenty-five to six. Again, this area had been settled by Upper Southerners, who, though several owned slaves, again paralleled the actions of their home states in voting against secession.⁴⁰

With a total of 41% of the electorate turning out to vote, roughly commensurate with the other elections in the study, Cooke County rejected disunion by a vote of 221-137, about sixty percent to forty percent, a higher than expected pro-secessionist turnout probably due to the fact that Lower Southerners controlled the county political machinery. Four out of six precincts rejected secession, with one, Crawford Yarbrough's residence, due to the nearness of the Texas troubles, and the other, James Bourland's home, due to the overpowering influence of a large slaveholder from the Lower South.

Several trends can be established from the precinct-level voting in Cooke County. First, those areas that contained the most Unionists produced the largest margins against secession. Second, those with the most to lose from frontier incursions by Indians (James Bourland and A.B. Manion along the Red River) favored secession and returned an electoral verdict as such. Third, slaveholding does not solely account for whether or not an individual favored secession. (i.e., William C. Young, John E. Wheeler and Dr. John T. Davidson). Whig ideology and frontier concerns doubtlessly affected the voters of Grayson County, but the only palpable unifying factor seems to be whether or not an individual hailed from the Upper or Lower South.

Collin County presented a similar but not exactly parallel paradigm for examining the 1861 election returns. Links to the Lower South, but more importantly slaveholding, seems to have held the greatest sway in the balloting in the county. Collin County had eleven ballot boxes spread throughout the county in 1861. At the center of the county lay McKinney, the main settlement and county seat, where roughly thirty-five percent of the population resided.⁴¹

Next to McKinney, the settlements in the south and southwest parts of the county held the greatest number of voters. At the center was Plano, a small town near Spring Creek. Northwest of Plano, just west of the Old Preston Road, lay Lebanon, and east of Plano residents had settled the town of Millwood along the East Fork of the Trinity River. One ballot box was located at McKinney, one at Lebanon and one at Plano. Other than the other locations, the residents of the southern part of the county voted at the residence of Jacob Baccus, along a branch of Rowlett Creek between Plano and Lebanon.

The sixty-six year-old Baccus was a farmer originally from Pennsylvania with no slaves according to the 1860 slave schedule. Another private resident in the southern part of the county, J.W. Maxwell, had a ballot box located at his residence along Maxwell Creek near the county line. Maxwell was a forty-four year-old native of Tennessee who in 1860 also owned no slaves.⁴²

Directly north of McKinney, in the more sparsely settled parts of the county, voters cast their ballots at the villages of Mantua and Weston. Collin McKinney and James Throckmorton both lived in this area, providing strong Unionist leadership. McKinney resided near the town of Anna south of Mantua and Throckmorton lived south of there, near Melissa, at the fork of McKinney Creek and the Clear Fork of the Trinity River.⁴³

In the far western part of the county along Elm Creek was the town of Farmersville, while north of there two other private residences contained ballot boxes. The first was at the home of George Washington Smith, a veteran of the Texas Revolution and the Mier Expedition. In 1852 he came to Collin County and established a residence just north of what is now Blue Ridge, between Pilot Grove and Desert Creeks. It was here, north of Blue Ridge, that the sixty-four year-old native of Tennessee established the tenth ballot box of the county. Finally, the home of sixty-six year-old Charles Hampton of Kentucky north of the Smith residence served as the last polling place in the far northeast part of the county. Again, neither Smith nor Hampton owned slaves in 1860.⁴⁴

The vast majority of the population of Collin County hailed from the Upper South. Roughly sixty-nine percent of the county's 2,140 voters came from the Upper South, nineteen percent from the North and just twelve percent from the Lower South. The county contained relatively few slaveholders, with 240 owning a total of 1,047 slaves. Of the slaveholders, twenty-one percent hailed from the Lower South, seventy-seven percent from the Upper South and just two percent from the North. Thus, Lower Southerners were almost twice as likely to own slaves, and natives of the Free States far less likely to own slaves than others from that region.⁴⁵

The 1861 balloting largely reflected the breakdown of slaveholders and non-slaveholders. Unionists carried McKinney heavily, 348 to 124, representing thirty-five percent of the ballots cast. With strong leadership like James Throckmorton, who operated a law office in town, this result was not unexpected.

South of McKinney, the areas of Plano, Millwood, and the Maxwell residence all registered high votes in favor of secession. In Plano voters approved the Ordinance of Secession fifty-five to eighteen, at the Maxwell home fifty-seven to four, and at Millwood forty-one to seventeen. Together, the results at these three polling places accounted for almost forty percent of the total pro-secessionist vote in the county. The one aberration in this pattern proved to be Lebanon, where despite having a relatively high slave and slaveholder population, the voters rejected secession seventy-one to fourteen.⁴⁶

The other six ballot boxes all returned results favoring the Union; at Weston Unionists overwhelmed Secessionists 164-31, and at the Hampton residence seventy-four to one. Farmersville voted 106-62, against secession and

at the Smith home Unionism carried unanimously, forty-one votes for. At the Baccus place thirty voters turned out to favor the Union twenty-five to five, and at Mantua, where Collin McKinney probably cast his ballot, the vote was eighty to fifteen against secession. In all, Collin County overwhelmingly voted against secession 948-405, a sixty-three percent turnout. Predictably, where Lower Southerners and their slave culture predominated, at Plano and Millwood south of McKinney, voters ran up high majorities in favor of secession, while the areas that contained more Unionists and Northerners voted against secession⁴⁷

The states of the Upper South also resisted the secessionist impulse in February, 1861 just like their native transplants in Northeast Texas. Despite this stand, the vast majority of Upper Southerners proved conditional Unionists. After the firing on Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for volunteers, most of the Upper South states followed the Lower South out of the Union. The story proved largely the same in Northeast Texas, where anti-secessionists such as William C. Young and James Throckmorton served in the Confederate army. Some unconditional Unionists remained, though, as evidenced in the Great Gainesville hanging of October, 1862.⁴⁸

The conclusion from the political patterns in these seven Northeast Texas counties from the elections in 1860 and 1861 indicate that the deciding factor in how these counties voted turned on whether or not the citizens hailed from the Upper or Lower South. With such an overwhelming majority from the Upper South in this region, it is sometimes difficult to pinpoint and prove these patterns, but the precinct-level returns in Cooke and Collin Counties help reinforce such impressions.

Texas was a majority-emigrant state during the secession crisis, and the migrants largely behaved politically like the areas from whence they came. Even though many of the Upper Southerners had integrated themselves into the heavily-slaveholding culture that dominated most of Texas, the visceral question of the future of the Union drew a line between the two as stark and defined as the political differences between the Whig and Democratic Parties. In this atmosphere Northeast Texans behaved almost exactly like their brethren in the Upper South in resoundingly rejecting secession.

NOTES

¹Richard McCaslin, "Wheat Growers in the Cotton Confederacy: The Suppression of Dissent in Collin County, Texas During the Civil War," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XCVI, No. 4 (April, 1993), pp. 527-540.

²Walter L. Buenger, *Secession and the Union in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), p. 117.

³For the purpose of this study, north Texas is defined as Cooke, Collin, Denton, Fannin, Grayson, Montague and Wise Counties.

⁴For a further explanation of the Whig Political ideology in the South, see Thomas B. Alexander, "Persistent Whiggery in the Confederate South, 1860-1877" in *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Aug., 1961), pp. 305-329 and Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., "Who Were the Southern Whigs?" in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (Jan., 1954), pp. 335-346.

⁹See Randolph Campbell, *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 244. See also Walter L. Buenger, *Secession and the Union in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984). Also see Walter Buenger, "Texas and the Riddle of Secession," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*. Vol. LXXXVII. No. 2. October, 1983. pp. 151-182.

¹⁰For a further discussion of the differences between the Upper and Lower South, see Terry Jordan "The Imprint of the Upper and Lower South on Mid-Nineteenth Century Texas" in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (Dec., 1967), pp. 667-690. The Upper South is defined by Jordan as Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri.

¹¹The 1860 Census at www.heritagequest.com (accessed April 11, 2006) and Geospatial&StatisticalDataCenter at <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/start.php?year=V1860> (accessed April 11, 2006). Of course it was possible for women to own slaves, making them non-voters, but such slaveholders constituted a very small minority in Northeast Texas. The vast majority of slaveholders were males and hence voters.

¹²Richard McCaslin, *Tainted Breeze: The Great Hanging and Gainesville, Texas 1862*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), pp. 16-17.

¹³Jordan, "The Imprint of the Upper and Lower South," pp. 678-680. Collin County produced the most Wheat in the state other than Dallas County, and Collin County also led the state in Oates. McCaslin, "Wheat Growers in the Cotton Confederacy," p. 529. Texas produced 431,463 bales of cotton in 1860 and 1,431,597 bushels of wheat in 1859. For more on the agriculture of antebellum Texas, see: Richard Lowe and Randolph Campbell, *Planters and Plain Folk: Agriculture in Antebellum Texas*. (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1987).

¹⁴Daniel W. Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), pp. xvi-xvii.

¹⁵A. Morton Smith, *The First 100 Years in Cooke County*. (San Antonio: The Naylor Company, 1955), pp. 29-30.

¹⁶A. Morton Smith, *The First 100 Years in Cooke County*, (San Antonio: The Naylor Company, 1955), pp. 29-30.

¹⁷Kenneth Wayne Howell "James Webb Throckmorton: The Life and Career of a Southern Frontier Politician, 1825-1894," (PhD dissertation, Texas A&M University, May, 2005), p. 156. In the canvassing for and against secession, Plano turned out to be the secessionist stronghold in Collin County.

¹⁸Kenneth Wayne Howell, "'When the Rabble Hiss, Well May Patriots Tremble': James Webb Throckmorton and the Secession Movement in Texas, 1854-1861," in *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*. Vol. CIX, No. 4, (April, 2006), pp. 466-493.

¹⁹John and James Diamond ran Diamond's Station, a stop of the Butterfield Overland Stage Line in the far eastern part of Cooke County. Smith, *The First 100 Years in Cooke County*, p. 26.

²⁰By 1860 Young owned fifty-three slaves and had established a plantation less than ten miles southwest of Bourland near the Horseshoe Bend in the Red River. For his part, Wheeler owned 2 slaves in 1860 and had established a large estate on Wheeler Creek, just east of Gainesville. Interestingly enough, Young served as commander of the Third Regiment, Texas Volunteers in the Mexican War while Bourland served as his second-in-command. McCaslin, *Tainted Breeze*, p. 30; 1860 tax rolls for Cooke County; Smith, *The First 100 Years in Cooke County*, p. 24.

²¹Buenger, *Secession and the Union in Texas*, p. 123.

²²Buenger, *Secession and the Union in Texas*, p. 125.

²³Handbook of Texas Online, s.v. "Throckmorton, James Webb," <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/TT/fth36.html> (accessed January 24, 2006); Buenger, *Secession and the Union in Texas*, 123; According to the 1860 slave schedule for Collin County, Throckmorton himself owned one slave, a twenty-three-year-old male.

²⁰<http://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/tx/collin/bios/bogart2.txt> (January, 2006); Marcus J. Wright and Harold B. Simpson (ed.), *Texas in the War*, (Hillsboro: Hill Junior College Press, 1965), p. 175. McCaslin, "Wheat Growers in the Cotton Confederacy," 532. Bogart died in March, 1861.

²¹Interestingly enough, John A. Wharton was a planter from Brazoria County and one of the largest slaveholders in the state. According to the 1860 census he owned \$167,004 in personal property, including 135 slaves.

²²Throckmorton quoted in Harold Simpson, *Hood's Texas Brigade: Lee's Grenadier Guard*, (Waco: Texian Press, 1970), p. 2.

²³Howell "James Webb Throckmorton," 155; Dale Baum, "Pinpointing Apparent Fraud in the 1861 Texas Secession Referendum." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Autumn, 1991), p. 216. Interestingly enough, Collin McKinney hailed from New Jersey, but in 1860 he owned twenty-nine slaves, one of the largest slaveholders in the county. His background as a northerner and member of the Disciples of Christ undoubtedly overcame his slaveholding to convince him of the "evils" of secession. Collin County Slave Schedule, 1860 census.

²⁴Baum, *The Shattering of Texas Unionism*, p. 241. In the 1857 gubernatorial election 66.8% of the population turned out to vote; in 1859 66.2% turned out and in 1860, 61.7% of the electorate turned out.

²⁵For possible evidence of fraud, see Baum, "Pinpointing Apparent Fraud in the 1861 Texas Secession Referendum."

²⁶Because of its geographic location, Angelina County is considered an outlier in this assessment.

²⁷Baum, *The Shattering of Texas Unionism*, 68. In addition, only fifty-three residents of Wise County held slaves, roughly seven percent of the voters.

²⁸It is interesting to note that in this election where virtually everyone turned out, only sixty-four percent favored Unionism, with eighty-four percent hailing from the Upper South or the North. This was undoubtedly due to the influence of Thompson and other prominent secessionists.

²⁹Montague is one of the counties that Dale Baum flags as a location of possible fraud in the election because of the highly unpredictable results of the other elections during the time period. For a further discussion, see Baum, "Pinpointing Apparent Fraud in the 1861 Texas Secession Referendum."

³⁰The 1860 Census at www.heritagequest.com (accessed April 11, 2006) and Geospatial&StatisticalDataCenter at: <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/start.php?year=V1860> (accessed April 11, 2006).

³¹The 1860 Census at www.heritagequest.com (accessed April 11, 2006) and Geospatial&StatisticalDataCenter at: <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/start.php?year=V1860> (accessed April 11, 2006).

³²The results for Cooke County are recorded in the election ledger of the county clerk for 1861, in the archives of the University of North Texas in Denton. The Collin County returns come from the *McKinney Messenger* of March 1, 1861. No other precinct-level returns could be located by the author.

³³McCaslin, *Tainted Breeze*, p. 14; Joe A. Stout, "The River Country of Cooke County" (Presented to Dr. Terry G. Jordan, North Texas State University, December 22, 1977. Unpublished manuscript in the vertical files of the Cooke County Library, Gainesville, Texas), p. 5.

³⁴Smith, *The First 100 Years in Cooke County*, p. 25.

³⁵1860 Census.

³⁶It is likely, given the lack of a polling place in the Sivells Bend area that many of the residents there cast their ballots in Gainesville, accounting for many of the ninety-one votes for secession.

³⁷This is the part of the county where many involved in the "Union League" in Cooke County resided, that resulted in the Great Gainesville Hanging in 1862. Finch's neighbor Rama Dye was one of those executed. McCaslin, *Tainted Breeze*, pp. 198-199.

³⁸Davidson came from Tennessee and on the 1860 slave schedule for Cooke County owned 10 slaves. 1860 Census and Slave Schedule.

³⁹1860 Census; *McKinney Messenger*, March 1, 1861.

⁴⁰1860 Census; *McKinney Messenger*, March 1, 1861.

⁴¹1860 Census; *McKinney Messenger*, March 1, 1861.

⁴²1860 Census; *McKinney Messenger*, March 1, 1861.

⁴³Roy Hall and Helen Hall, *Collin County: Pioneering in North Texas*, (Quanah: Nortex Press, 1975), pp. 218, 277.

⁴⁴Hall. *Collin County*, p. 264. The exact location of the Hampton residence is unknown, but he listed his post office as Pilot Grove, a small town across the county line in Grayson County. 1860 census.

⁴⁵1860 Census and Slave Schedule.

⁴⁶*McKinney Messenger*, March 1, 1861.

⁴⁷*McKinney Messenger*, March 1, 1861.

⁴⁸Young served as colonel of the 11th Texas Cavalry and was murdered in the fall of 1862 in Cooke County, touching off the hysteria that ended in the Great Hanging. Throckmorton served as a brigadier general of state troops in North Texas during the war. For the most complete account of the events at Gainesville in 1862, see McCaslin, *Tainted Breeze*.