

## Section

# 3

## Social and Cultural Institutions

### Main Ideas

1. Frontier Texans depended on schools and churches for education, spiritual guidance, and social events.
2. Newspapers spread word of local events and issues.
3. Many Texans were active in the arts.

### Why It Matters Today

The arts were important to many Texans on the frontier. Use current events sources to learn about a Texas writer or artist active today.

### Key Terms and People

- telegraphs
- Gail Borden Jr.
- Hermann Lungkwitz

## The Story Continues

The Cobb sisters of Galveston were determined to keep their school open. But starting and running a school in a young state like Texas was a challenge, even in an established town such as Galveston. The two struggled throughout the 1850s to find money to keep the school's doors open. Even the local newspaper, the *Galveston News*, tried to help. The paper pleaded with the local community to support the school. "Will Galveston lose another school?" it asked.



TEKS: 4C, 19D, 20C, 21B, 22D

### myNotebook

Use the annotation tools in your eBook to take notes on social and cultural institutions on the Texas frontier.

## ★ Frontier Schools and Churches

Texans in the 1850s supported the idea of education. With Governor Elisha M. Pease's support, the state legislature set aside \$2 million as a school fund in 1854. However, much of this money ended up being used for other purposes. For example, school funds were loaned out to support railroad construction in the state. As a result, there was little state money to build schoolhouses and pay teachers.

Some towns, like San Antonio and some German communities, did build schools. These were often one-room log cabins. Benches and desks, also cut from logs, rested on dirt floors. Some cabins had no windows and were lit by sunlight that came through the large gaps between logs. On dark winter days, children did lessons by the light of torches or lanterns. One student recalled the conditions of early schools in Texas. "Our seats . . . were long, two-foot-by-twelve-foot boards placed on top of two rocks. . . . We used our knees for desks to do our writing."

These early Texas schools combined strict discipline with a broad course of study. Even in the early grades, some schools taught students subjects like ancient world history and languages such as Latin and Greek. As time passed, more students took time off from farm work to attend school. These students often found school a welcome relief from the never-ending work at home.

Many of the early schools in Texas were opened and operated by churches. Texas churches ran schools on every level, from primary schools to colleges. Some churches also opened libraries, which made books—generally scarce on the frontier—available to Texans.

As the Texas population grew in the 1850s, church membership expanded as well. Churches provided spiritual and moral guidance and brought a social aspect to the often isolated lives of rural Texans. The most popular churches in Texas were Protestant denominations. Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians could be found throughout the state. Many Tejanos and European immigrants remained Catholic. Several churches published newspapers to communicate with members. The *Texas Baptist*, the *Texas Presbyterian*, and the *Texas Catholic*, for example, kept people informed of church events.

**Reading Check Summarizing** How did schools and churches reflect aspects of life in Texas?



## BIOGRAPHY

### Gail Borden Jr.

**(1801–1874)** A member of the Old Three Hundred, Gail Borden Jr. worked as a surveyor for Austin's colony. In the 1840s he began experimenting with ways to keep food from spoiling. Shortly before the Civil War, Borden developed condensed milk, which could be safely stored for long periods. The Union army bought all the milk that Borden could produce. The milk soon caught on among the general public as well. Borden made a fortune, much of which he used to help fund education programs. **For what is Gail Borden Jr. best known?**

## ★ Newspapers

For a frontier region, Texas had a large number of newspapers—growing from 36 in 1852 to more than 80 in 1860. The *Telegraph and Texas Register*, first published in 1835, had the largest circulation of any newspaper in the state. Published in Houston, the newspaper was founded by dairy businessman **Gail Borden Jr.** and his partners. Other well-known papers were the *Galveston News*, the *Austin State Gazette*, and the *Dallas Herald*. Spanish-language newspapers were published in San Antonio and Brownsville, and the first German-language newspaper, *Zeitung*, was printed in Galveston. Most Texas newspapers were published only once or twice a week. They contained public notices, editorials, literary features, and information about local events.

Newspapers began carrying more national and world news in the 1850s after **telegraphs** were introduced. The telegraph allowed people to communicate across vast distances by sending coded signals over wires. In 1854 a telegraph line—strung from treetop to treetop—connected Galveston, Houston, Marshall, and several other towns. Texans could now receive news faster than ever.

**Reading Check Drawing Inferences and Conclusions** Why do you think that two major newspapers were based in Galveston and Houston?

## ★ Literature and Art

Besides newspapers, Texans also had access to reading material and information through libraries. Between 1850 and 1860 the number of libraries in the state rose from 12 to 132. Many of these libraries grew out of individuals' private collections. For example, Swedish settler Swante Palm donated his large book collection to the University of Texas.

Although books were relatively scarce in Texas, most families had a Bible or a McGuffey's *Reader* that they could use to teach children to read. Some books by local authors were available too. Thomas Mayne Reid wrote about Texas legends in the *Headless Horseman*. Jane McManus Cazneau published the novel *Eagle Pass*, which described life on the Rio Grande. In it, the main character describes her first view of Texas.

### TEXAS VOICES

"I landed in March, in Texas, and . . . was led captive by the fresh and verdant beauty of the coast region. . . . Already green and laughing spring was holding her revels on a carpet of flowers in the bright sunshine."

—Jane McManus Cazneau, *Eagle Pass*

The first published histories of Texas also appeared in the 1840s and 1850s. Henderson Yoakum published a two-volume history in 1855. José Antonio Navarro later published his own history to refute parts of what Yoakum had written.

Artists were also captivated by Texas. Théodore Gentilz had already become known for his scenes of Texas life. Carl von Iwonski, **Hermann Lungkwitz**, and Friedrich Richard Petri were respected artists of the 1850s. Louise Heuser Wueste and Eugenie Lavender were gifted portrait artists. These artists skillfully illustrated the people and places of Texas.

**Reading Check Categorizing** Identify writers and artists of early Texas.



### CONNECTING TO

## The Arts

### Hermann Lungkwitz

Hermann Lungkwitz was trained as a landscape painter in Germany before moving to Texas. He painted this image of the Guadalupe River in the 1860s. **How do you think immigrant artists influenced life in Texas during the 1800s?**



## Section 3 Review



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ONLINE QUIZ

### 1. Define and explain:

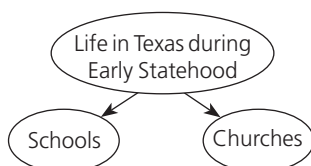
- telegraphs

### 2. Identify and explain the significance of the following in Texas history:

- Gail Borden Jr.
- Hermann Lungkwitz

### 3. Summarizing

- Copy the graphic organizer below. Use it to describe education and religion in Texas during early statehood.



### 4. Finding the Main Idea

- What were some of the challenges faced by teachers and students in Texas?
- What sort of information did newspapers carry during early statehood?

### 5. Writing and Critical Thinking

myWriteSmart

**Analyzing Information** Imagine that you live in Texas in the 1850s. Write a letter to a friend describing how you spend your free time.

Consider the following:

- the availability of books in Texas
- Texas writers and artists