

Section

3

The Davis Administration

Main Ideas

1. The Davis administration improved education and transportation in Texas but increased the state debt.
2. Reconstruction ended in Texas in 1874 when Republicans lost political power.

Why It Matters Today

Texans during Reconstruction struggled to pay for Governor Edmund J. Davis's programs. Use current events sources to learn about how citizens pay for government programs today.



TEKS: 1A, 1B, 5B, 6A, 17C, 21A, 21B, 21C, 21D, 21E, 22A, 22B, 22C

myNotebook

Use the annotation tools in your eBook to take notes on the Davis administration and the end of Reconstruction in Texas.

Key Terms and People

- Ku Klux Klan
- bonds
- scalawags
- carpetbaggers
- Richard Coke

The Story Continues

The First Texas Cavalry of the Union army was together again. This time they had gathered to celebrate, not to fight. The men, thrilled at their former leader Edmund J. Davis's victory in the governor's race, threw him a barbecue. Many Texans were there—"all the world hereabouts," according to the *Galveston News*. The time for celebration was short, however, as the Republicans turned to the business of rebuilding the state.



The Davis Administration's Policies

Governor Edmund J. Davis had the support of the legislature that assembled in April 1870. It was dominated by Republicans, 11 of whom were African American. Senators Matthew Gaines and George T. Ruby led the legislative effort to stop the widespread crime in the state, particularly the actions of the **Ku Klux Klan**. This secret society had been threatening and murdering African Americans to keep them from expressing their political views. The legislature created a state militia and police force, which soon took action. As the police made arrests, crime dropped, and the influence of the Ku Klux Klan lessened.

The Republicans also tackled an important social issue—education. Davis wanted African Americans to be treated equally by the law. “I do not want to see white or black named in any law whatsoever.” The legislature created free public schools for all the state’s children. Money from public land sales and state and local taxes helped pay for school expenses. A state board of education and a superintendent of education oversaw the state’s schools. Schools had a common course of study, teacher certification, and a central administration. Enrollment grew rapidly, with almost 130,000 students in the public schools during the 1872–73 school year.

The legislature also tried to help Texas recover economically after the war. To improve the state’s transportation system, the legislature set aside money for roads and bridges. The state also issued **bonds** to help pay for railroad lines. Bonds are certificates that represent money the government has borrowed. The administration raised taxes to pay for schools, roads, and the larger central government.

Reading Check Analyzing Information How did Reconstruction affect the state socially and economically?

★ Opposition to Reconstruction

Many Texans opposed these policies. They referred to Texans who supported the Republicans as “**scalawags**,” or “mean fellows.” The few northerners who had come to Texas after the war were sometimes called “**carpetbaggers**” because some carried all they owned in bags made of carpet. An Illinois man explained why he moved to Texas. “I am going to introduce new ideas here in the farming line, and show the beauties of free over slave labor.”

In the political arena, Democrats opposed Edmund J. Davis and the Radical Republicans at every opportunity. They clashed over the state police, the militia, and taxes. Democrats called many of the new laws Obnoxious Acts—obnoxious means very unpleasant. When Democrats complained of the rising state debt, Davis defended the spending. “If you have no government it will cost you nothing. If you have public schools and law and order, you must pay for it.” Democrats also accused the Davis administration of taking money by fraud.

Democrats were also angered when Davis used the state police to guard voters in the 1872 elections. Davis’s opponents claimed he was trying to frighten Democratic voters. In this election the Democrats regained control of the legislature.

Reading Check Drawing Inferences and Conclusions How did the policies of Davis’s administration affect the state’s economy?

That’s Interesting!

Historically Black Colleges

Two of the oldest historically black colleges in the nation are in Texas. Wiley College in Marshall, founded in 1873, is the oldest historically black college west of the Mississippi River. Paul Quinn College, founded in Austin and now in Dallas, was also established during Reconstruction.

Interpreting Political Cartoons

Reconstruction. In this political cartoon, the South is shown carrying President Grant, who rides in a heavy carpetbag. **How does this political cartoon reflect the southern point of view?**



Past to Present

Party Politics

Before the Civil War, the Democratic Party dominated Texas politics. This ended when Radical Republicans rose to power. Supported overwhelmingly by freed people, the Republicans in Texas brought a temporary halt to the Democrats' control. With the end of Reconstruction, the Democratic Party regained control of Texas politics. Both parties are now represented in state government. **How did Reconstruction affect Texas politics?**

★ The End of Reconstruction

In the 1873 election for governor Edmund J. Davis had the support of Radical Republicans. Most white Texans supported Democrat **Richard Coke**, a former Confederate officer. Coke won in a landslide—receiving 85,549 votes to 42,663 for Davis. Democrats also won the legislature. Some Republicans argued that the polls had closed too early. They brought the issue to the Texas Supreme Court, which ruled that the election was unconstitutional. Nonetheless, Democrats demanded control of the government. Davis was unsure what to do. He had been ready to turn the office over to Coke, but he did not want to ignore the court's ruling. Coke, meanwhile, “intended to become governor . . . no matter what it cost him or the state,” according to one observer.

Davis allowed the legislature to meet, but he feared that the Democrats might take the governor's office by force. So he called in armed supporters to guard the first floor of the Capitol. Democratic leaders then brought in armed supporters to guard the legislative chambers on the second floor. When Davis learned that the federal government would not help, he stepped down. He turned the office over to Coke on January 19, 1874. This marked the end of Reconstruction in Texas.

Reconstruction was ending in other parts of the South as the Radical Republicans' power faded. The party was hurt by scandals in President Grant's administration and a financial panic in 1873. In the 1876 presidential election, Republican Rutherford B. Hayes ran a close race against Democrat Samuel J. Tilden. Each candidate claimed to have won. In the Compromise of 1877, Democrats agreed to accept Hayes. In exchange for the Democrats' support, Hayes ended the involvement of federal troops in the South's political affairs. Reconstruction was over.

Reading Check Identifying Cause and Effect What happened in the election of 1876, and how did it affect Reconstruction in Texas?



Section 3 Review



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ONLINE QUIZ

1. Define and explain:

- bonds
- scalawags
- carpetbaggers

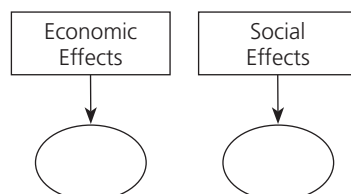
2. Identify and explain

the historical significance of:

- Ku Klux Klan
- Obnoxious Acts
- Richard Coke

3. Summarizing

Copy the graphic organizer below. Use it to show the economic and social effects of Reconstruction in Texas.



4. Finding the Main Idea

- What were the major policies and criticisms of the Davis administration?
- What brought about the end of Reconstruction in Texas?

5. Writing and Critical Thinking

myWriteSmart

Supporting a Point of View Write a short speech for Governor Davis that strongly defends his policies.

Consider the following:

- crime in Texas
- internal improvements in Texas