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CHARLES DEMORSE: PIONEER EDITOR
AND STATESMAN

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty

The University of

ment of the

For the

DOCTOR

A. A., M. A.

(ms)

Austin, Texas

June, 1948

ABOVE:
CHARLES DEMORSE,
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER
of the
NORTHERN STANDARD

CHARLES DEMORSE: PIONEER EDITOR
AND STATESMAN

BELOW:
PAGE OF THE
KANSAS CITY STANDARD

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas in Partial Fulfill-
ment of the Requirements

For the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

Ernest Wallace, B. A., M. A.

(Lubbock, Texas)

Austin, Texas

June, 1942

ABOVE:
CHARLES DEMORSE,
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER
of the
NORTHERN STANDARD

BELOW:
HOME OF THE
CLARKSVILLE STANDARD

PREFACE

Exactly one hundred years ago a restless young man of twenty-six years travelled five hundred miles from the capital of the young Texas Republic to the frontier village of Clarksville and established there the first newspaper to appear in Northeast Texas. In his six years in Texas, that young man already had served as a member of President Mirabeau Lamar's official family, and had associated with Austin, Houston, Burnet, Hemphill, Rusk, and others whose names were closely connected with Texas history during the early days of the republic. His acquaintances and his experiences colored his newspaper. The young man was Charles DeMorse; the newspaper he founded was the Northern Standard. DeMorse and his newspaper became one and inseparable in the minds of Texans. Both became a part of Texas, and Texas is what she is today in part because of them. Theirs was a great period in the history of Texas--Texas in the making--, and DeMorse and the Standard were builders. No one service of DeMorse has great magnitude, but the myriad of services which he performed should place him among those whose life's records, so closely interwoven with that of the history of Texas, should be preserved. His most important service was as a journalist, but as a statesman he ranks high. His statesmanship, however, is to a great extent the result of his journalistic abilities. DeMorse lived at a

Gift of Author

JUL 14 1942

time when the editor was a person of no little importance in molding public opinion. More than a half century has passed since the death of DeMorse and his newspaper. Although the Standard has become a source for the study of Texas for the period to which it belonged, no one has attempted a study of the "Father of Texas Journalism" and his role as a pioneer journalist and statesman. Meanwhile, the need for such a study has become more and more apparent. The study of the Standard is secondary to that of DeMorse. The issues selected for study are chosen because of their major importance in the minds of the editor and the people of the state, and because they reveal DeMorse in a true perspective against the background of his time.

In the preparation of this manuscript I have become indebted to many people, notably to Walter Prescott Webb, Professor of American History at the University of Texas, under whose guidance this study was made; to S. S. McKay, Professor of American History at Texas Technological College, under whose inspiration this study was first begun, for his interest in the progress of the preparation of the manuscript and the many valuable suggestions aiding in its preparation; to O. A. Kinchen, Professor of History at Texas Technological College; and to Dr. E. C. Barksdale of the University of Texas, for reading parts of the manuscript and offering suggestions for its improvement. I am also grateful to Miss Isabella DeMorse Latimer of Clarksville, grand-daughter of the subject

of this study for information that otherwise might not have been perpetuated; to Miss Harriet Smither of the Texas State Library for assisting me in locating materials; and to my wife, Ellen Wallace, whose many sacrifices sped the completion of the work.

To all those who have helped me, I express my sincere gratitude.

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Ernest Wallace

THE UNIVERSITY
OF TEXAS

CHAPTER I

EARLY CAREER
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With the life and career of Charles DeMorse is closely interwoven much of the little known and significant history of Texas. Charles Denny Morse (Charles DeMorse) was born in the cotton manufacturing village of Leicester, Worcester county, Massachusetts, January 31, 1816. His was the hardy stock of the

CHAPTER I

EARLY CAREER

In the front yard of an old home in Clarksville, a little town in the edge of Red River bottom, stands a historical marker which in part reads:

HOME OF
COLONEL CHARLES DEMORSE
(1816-1887)

PIONEER SOLDIER, STATESMAN AND PUBLISHER

FOUNDER AND EDITOR OF THE

NORTHERN STANDARD

One block from that commemorative inscription on the site of the newspaper office in which DeMorse worked is another granite memorial which in part reads:

ON THIS SITE STOOD THE HOME OF

THE NORTHERN STANDARD

A PIONEER TEXAS NEWSPAPER EDITED
AND PUBLISHED FROM AUGUST 20, 1842,
TO OCTOBER 25, 1887 BY COLONEL
CHARLES DEMORSE (1816-1887). A LOYAL
STATESMAN AND A FINISHED SCHOLAR
OFTEN REFERRED TO AS "THE FATHER
OF TEXAS JOURNALISM."

With the life and career of Charles DeMorse is closely interwoven much of the little known and significant history of Texas. Charles Denny Morse (Charles DeMorse) was born in the cotton manufacturing village of Leicester, Worcester county, Massachusetts, January 31, 1816. His was the hardy stock of the

pioneers--strong men who left their native homes in England for the new continent. There seems to have been seven persons by the name of Morse (or Morss) who came to New England soon after its settlement had begun. Three of those, Anthony, William, and Robert, were brothers, who were born at Malborough, Wiltshire, England. Anthony and William came to New England and settled at Newbury, Massachusetts, in 1635. By 1644 Robert had joined them at Newbury, but in 1647 he moved to New Jersey.¹ One of these

¹Isabella DeMorse Latimer (grand-daughter of Charles DeMorse), Clarksville, to Ernest Wallace, November 18, 1941; "Samuel F. B. Morse," in Dictionary of American Biography, XIII, 247.

brothers was aide to General James Wolfe, and was at his side when that gallant officer fell on the Plains of Abraham.² De-

²W. S. Speer, Encyclopedia of the New West, I, 259. Speer does not say which brother. On the same page he says that from the three Morse brothers who came from England to New England are descended all the families in America who spell their names as Morse, Moss, or DeMorse. Evidently, this is an erroneous statement.

scended from Anthony was the Reverend Jedidiah Morse, who gained notoriety by his intense opposition to Thomas Jefferson. Jedidiah Morse was the father of Samuel F. B. Morse of telegraph fame. He was also the author of several works. One of the works, Geography Made Easy (1784), was the first geography published in the United States. To him also we are indebted for the first

One of the descendants of John Denny of Combs, Suffolk

gazetteer published in America.³ From the third of the three

³"Samuel F. B. Morse," in Dictionary of American Biography, XIII, 247.

brothers who settled at Newbury was descended Charles DeMorse's father, Aaron Morse of Leicester, Massachusetts, a man of fine character and much esteemed.⁴ Aaron Morse "kept" the hotel

⁴Speer, Encyclopedia of the New West, I, 259. All accounts consulted are vague regarding Charles DeMorse's ancestry. Miss Latimer has made an unsuccessful attempt to trace DeMorse's ancestry more fully. Latimer to Wallace, November 18, 1941.

opposite the Meeting-house in Leicester.⁵

⁵Emory Washburn, Historical Sketches of the Town of Leicester, Massachusetts, 356.

The oldest marked grave in the cemetery at Leicester was claimed by DeMorse as that of a maternal ancestor. It bears the inscription: "Who was born in the County of Essex, in England, arrived in New England 1714, and departed this life, April 16, 1760." Leicester dates from 1686.⁶

⁶Charles DeMorse, in the Standard (Clarksville), August 10, 1872. DeMorse's writings do not reveal the name of a single ancestor.

One of the descendants of John Denny of Combs, Suffolk

England, was Colonel Samuel Denny of Leicester, Massachusetts. Colonel Samuel Denny's son, William Denny, married Patty Smith of Spencer on October 26, 1788. To this couple was born Charles DeMorse's mother, Mary Denny, on March 4, 1795. Before Mary was two years of age her mother died. She received, however, a good education, and became noted for her amiability, her domestic taste and industry, and was regarded with great esteem.⁷ On May

⁷Christopher C. Denny; Genealogy of the Denny Family, 89, 104, 141; Speer, Encyclopedia of the New West, I, 259.

1, 1815, she married Aaron Morse. To them were born four children. Charles Denny [Charles DeMorse], the oldest, was born January 31, 1816, and was the only one to reach maturity. Martha was born in November, 1817, and died January 29, 1820; William was born in December, 1819, and died February 1, 1820; and Martha Elizabeth was born January 9, 1821, and died August 10, 1828.⁸

⁸Denny, Genealogy of the Denny Family, 141.

In April, 1824, young Charles' mother died, and he was placed in the care of his father's sister, Mrs. Harriet Newhall.⁹

⁹Denny, Genealogy of the Denny Family, 104; Latimer to Wallace, January 10, 1940, and November 18, 1941.

regiments When Charles was seven years of age he saw Leicester the last time until he visited there in 1850. His father moved to New Haven, Connecticut, where for the next five years he was a hotel keeper. Subsequently, he went to New York, where he kept the Tontine Coffee House at the foot of Wall Street. Charles received a good academic education in New Haven and in New York and became a persistent reader and an excellent student. His habits of study and fondness for reading became life-long characteristics. Having completed his academic preparation, young DeMorse began the study of law in the office of the law firm of Inglis and Van Wyck in New York. He was a fine student and made rapid progress, but his youthful spirit was imbued with a desire for adventure, so after a year he gave up the study of law for a taste of adventure.¹⁰

¹⁰Galveston News, October 27, 1887.

Van Wyck was a brother-in-law of Samuel A. Maverick of Texas. It was doubtless through this channel that young DeMorse's interest in Texas was first aroused. When the Texas Revolution began, tales of wrongs perpetrated upon Texas by Mexican authorities were spread within the United States for the purpose of arousing sympathy for the Texans and of securing aid in her behalf. Although the government of the United States maintained a position of strict neutrality, the people did not. It was not difficult to find ways of evading the neutrality law of the United States. Entire companies, battalions, and

regiments were raised within the borders of the United States and went to Texas as "immigrants," but upon landing in that republic were immediately and technically organized into fighting units. Such a battalion was organized in New York in the autumn of 1835, under the command of Major Edwin Morehouse, a Texan.¹¹

¹¹C. A. Ogsbury to the Galveston News, December 1, 1887; John Henry Brown, History of Texas, II, 48.

DeMorse had heard some of the stories concerning Texas, and he wanted to assist the cause of the Texans. Thus, when the opportunity came, he joined Morehouse's battalion and with 173 other volunteers sailed for Texas on the brig Matawomkeag on November 21, 1835.¹² Among the group were several students from

¹²"Sketch of the Life of Charles DeMorse," in the Standard, November 3, 1887; Brown, History of Texas, II, 48.

West Point, including Major James H. Perry who served as Volunteer Aide to General Sam Houston at San Jacinto.¹³ A. P. Thompson

¹³Brown, in his History of Texas, II, 48, says that Perry did not remain long in Texas, but returned to New York, where he served as a pastor of a church.

also arrived in time to participate in the battle of San Jacinto. He was one of the first to mount the Mexican breastworks.¹⁴

14Ogsbury to Galveston News, December 1, 1887.

Louis P. Cooke afterwards became secretary of the Texas navy. William H. Loring, then only seventeen years of age, later distinguished himself in the United States army and then in the Confederate army, and still later in the army of the khedive of Egypt. Charles A. Ogsbury distinguished himself not only as a soldier in 1836-7, but also later as editor for about a quarter of a century of the Cuero Bulletin, in the campaign against the Cherokees in 1839-40, and as a soldier in the Confederate army. John J. Ogsbury, the seventeen-year old brother of Charles A. Ogsbury, died in the autumn of 1836. Among the others who composed Morehouse's battalion were James C. Allen, afterwards judge of Refugio county; Richard Owings, later of Victoria; and John H. Woods.¹⁵

¹⁵Brown, History of Texas, II, 48; Ogsbury to the Galveston News, December 1, 1887.

On the trip to Texas the adventurous spirit of DeMorse was fully gratified, for the journey provided one long chapter of excitement. After various minor episodes, the Matawomkeag was captured December 9, 1835, by the Serpent, a British brig of war of eighteen guns under the command of Captain Nepean, and carried to Nassau, New Providence, Bahama Islands, where it and its entire crew were held on suspicion of piracy. After being detained more than a month the prisoners were tried in a British

court and honorably acquitted of all charges on January 15, 1836.¹⁶

¹⁶"Sketch of the Life of Charles DeMorse," in the Standard, November 3, 1887; Ogsbury to the Galveston News, December 1, 1887.

It was while a prisoner at Nassau that young Charles' name was changed involuntarily. He gave it to the British officer as Charles D. (D. standing for Denny) Morse, but the officer misinterpreted the sound, and enrolled it as Charles DeMorse. Charles was told by his friends that the latter name sounded better than his own and was urged to adopt it. He was not adverse to the suggestion. In accepting the change he was influenced also by the fact that he was incorporating a part of his mother's family name (Denny) with that of his own.¹⁷ At his request the

¹⁷Galveston News, October 27, 1887; Dallas Morning News, October 26, 1887.

Sixth Texas Congress by a special act, approved January 17, 1842, changed officially the name of Charles Denny Morse to Charles DeMorse.¹⁸

¹⁸H.P.N. Gammel, Laws of Texas, II, 714.

On February 16, 1836, DeMorse with Morehouse's battalion sailed from South West Pass, Bahama, for Texas on the steamer Shark. They were detained at Balize, at the mouth of the

Mississippi River, for supplies. Information relative to DeMorse from this time until after he arrived in Texas is very meager. DeMorse and several of the others, including Perry and Thompson, left the main group either at Balize or New Orleans, hoping to sail on another vessel and arrive in Texas sooner than if they remained with the main group. It was during his stay in New Orleans that DeMorse experienced a new type of adventure. He and a young man named Tileston became involved in some controversy. DeMorse was challenged to a duel. He accepted and in the exchange of shots which followed, Tileston was wounded. The difficulty was then adjusted and a reconciliation took place.¹⁹

¹⁹"Sketch of the Life of Charles DeMorse," in the Standard, November 3, 1887.

Soon after the duel DeMorse sailed for Texas and landed on or about March 2, 1836.²⁰

²⁰Latimer to Wallace, January 10, 1940. In an address delivered before the Texas Veterans' Association in Houston, May 20, 1874, published in D.W.D. Baker, Texas Scrap-book, pp. 204-218, DeMorse leaves the impression that he first saw Texas at Matagorda Bay. Morehouse, in a letter relating his military activities during March and April, 1836, wrote that he [Morehouse] first reported at Velasco, March 5, where he was ordered to Matagorda Bay. Edwin Morehouse, "Account of Military Movements in March and April, 1836," in Charles A. Gulick, Jr., and Katherine Elliott (Editors), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, III, 272-274.

Many years later DeMorse recorded his first impressions and sights of Texas. The strange wild beauty of the land

aroused emotions of wonder. The wide prairies and clear running, narrow streams, fringed with trees to the water's edge, excited his sense of the beautiful. He saw the herds of wild horses, moving a little away, and facing about and scanning his movements. He saw great herds of deer feeding in the open prairies within two or three hundred yards, and heedless of his presence. He saw the sleek cattle nearly everywhere. But most attractive of all, and differing from all elsewhere, was the fact that he found the latch-string to every cabin door hung upon the outside. There were no locks to the dwelling, or meat-house, or corn-crib; every comer was welcome to the primitive hospitality—cordial, not passive hospitality. He noticed that no man feared robbery or wayside danger, but camped out anywhere that fuel could be found, turned his horse on the abundant grass, cooked his meat on a stick, and his hoeecake in the ashes; and that the little camp coffee pot behind his saddle furnished him the facility for an invigorating beverage. He was impressed with the ease with which life could be sustained. He noticed that the deer were everywhere, the cattle almost as numerous, and that the salt marshes bordering the bays were covered with myriads of wild fowl; that the plover, the killdeer and the prairie chickens would hardly keep ten steps away; that small fish might be drawn from the bays and bayous almost as fast as one would drop a line and leisurely withdraw it; that the great red fish might be stranded at Galveston by circling around them in shallow water; that the islands of the bays furnished gulls' eggs by the bucketful;

and that the margins of the creeks abounded with pecans and grapes. To him Texas was a land of plenty and a paradise of beauty; a land where friendships were warmer and purer.²¹

²¹"Speech of Colonel Charles DeMorse," May 20, 1874, in Baker, Texas Scrap-book, 204-218.

After landing in Texas, DeMorse started out immediately across the deserted country to find General Sam Houston and the Texas army. At the San Bernard River he met S. Rhodes Fisher, secretary of the Texas navy, Branch T. Archer, William L. Cazneau, Captain William A. Hurd, Arthur Robinson, Captain Charles Hawkins of the schooner Independence, and others who were retreating before Santa Anna's army toward Galveston Island. They advised him to turn back. Hawkins offered DeMorse an appointment as first lieutenant of marines. The offer was accepted and the commission was duly received from President David G. Burnet.²² Meanwhile, DeMorse accompanied Captain

²²"Sketch of the Life of Charles DeMorse," in the Standard, November 3, 1887.

Hawkins to Galveston and entered upon his new duties with the Texas navy.

The Texas navy was just in the process of creation. On November 27, 1835, Governor Henry Smith approved two ordinances, one for granting letters of marque and reprisal, and

one for establishing a navy.²³ Under this authority three armed

Franklin brought news of the Texas victory at San Jacinto.

²³Gammel, Laws of Texas, I, 592.

The capture of prizes created a necessity for a court of Admiralty to adjudicate questions arising under these vessels were secured for the Republic by the spring of 1836. Franklin, who served as a private in the battle of San Jacinto, One of these three was the schooner Independence, with six side guns and a nine-pounder pivot amidship, to which on March 12, Charles Hawkins was assigned as the captain in command.²⁴ On

²⁴Hawkins was commissioned commodore, April 21, 1836. He was the first to reach that rank in the Texas navy. Andrew Jackson Houston, Texas Independence, 276-7.

The crew of the Independence were the first on Galveston Island. The Independence DeMorse became first lieutenant of marines. On March 21, the Independence touched on Galveston Island which DeMorse reported uninhabited. From Galveston Island the Independence sailed down the coast to the Brazos Santiago. With a force of only fifteen men including officers, seamen, and marines, the Independence served in keeping the coast clear. From the field of San Jacinto the army divided Santa Anna's treasure with the men in the navy for their worthy service.²⁵ DeMorse

²⁵"Speech of Colonel Charles DeMorse," May 20, 1874, Baker, Texas Scrap-book, 215-18.

and the Independence were at Galveston Island with President Burnet, vice-president Lorenzo de Zavala, some of the members of the cabinet, and many of the women and children from east of

the Brazos, when Captain Robert J. Calder and Benjamin C. Franklin brought news of the Texas victory at San Jacinto.²⁶

²⁶The capture of prizes created a necessity for a court of Admiralty to adjudicate questions arising under these captures. To meet this situation President Burnet appointed Franklin, who served as a private in the battle of San Jacinto, judge of the district of Brazos, including Galveston Island, and clothed him with Admiralty jurisdiction. He was the first to hold a judicial commission under the Republic. Brown, A History of Texas, II, 86; and also the Standard, January 7, 1871.

The crew of the Independence were the first on Galveston Island to hear the news. It had been some time since those at Galveston had heard from the army, and the news of the Texas victory was a joyous occasion. President Burnet seemed to have been rather upset at first because Calder and Franklin had not informed him officially of the battle until everyone on the island had heard the news.

DeMorse had become acquainted with President Burnet and some of the other members of the government, and was often with them. Writing of that acquaintance much later, DeMorse said that President Burnet did not then impress him as a great man, but as a "good and pure man, and a true Patriot." He did not think that Burnet's personal presence had the electric power conveyed by Rusk, Houston, and Lamar.²⁷

²⁷Standard, January 7, 1871.

Upon learning the news of San Jacinto, Burnet, de Zavala, and the other members of the government at Galveston left for the Texan camp, arriving there on April 28. On May 5, the president and his cabinet, General Houston, Santa Anna, and his suite proceeded on the Yellowhouse to Galveston Island. At that time there was but one small house on the island, an old shell of a Mexican custom house on the outer beach. On May 8, therefore, the heads of the Texas government with the Mexican prisoners sailed to Velasco on the Independence.²⁸ As an officer

²⁸Standard, January 7, 1871; Houston, Texas Independence, 279.

of the ship it fell to the lot of DeMorse to guard Santa Anna. Influenced both by the popular resentment that pervaded Texas during those exciting days, and by his contact with the Mexican, DeMorse developed a bitter and undying hatred for Santa Anna.²⁹

²⁹DeMorse expressed his attitude on this subject on numerous occasions. See the Standard, January 7, 1871, for an example.

While at Velasco the Texas government signed a treaty with Santa Anna on May 14, which among other things provided that Santa Anna should be sent to Vera Cruz. Consequently, on June 1, in compliance with the terms of the treaty, Santa Anna and his suite went on board the Texas naval vessel Invincible immediately afterwards the Independence sailed for New Orleans, where it arrived June 18, carrying James Collinsworth

sailing by adverse winds for two days and DeMorse, with the Texas navy at Velasco, was given the opportunity of sharing in some of the most exciting events of Texas history. He saw Memucan Hunt and J. Pinckney Henderson set foot on Texas soil for the first time. From the same vessel he saw Thomas J. Green and about 250 volunteers arrive from New Orleans. He witnessed the opposition made to the release of Santa Anna. He heard the speech of "Old Mirabeau" [Lamar] demanding that Santa Anna and suite should be landed and executed, and noticed its effect upon the citizens. The newly arrived soldiers demanded that Santa Anna should be held a prisoner. DeMorse witnessed the scenes when President Burnet gave the order for Santa Anna's removal from the ship. He stood on the beach as the Invincible brought up the captive president of Mexico. He saw Henderson, Hunt, Bailey Hardeman, and Ben Fort Smith bring him ashore. They walked close to him as a protection. The angry volunteers crowded the bank, and it was momentarily expected that some one would avenge the wrongs of Fannin and his men by shooting the self-styled "Emperor of the West" as he stepped on shore. DeMorse noted that as he came on shore, Santa Anna looked very pale and nervous, but preserved dignity and presence of mind as he was landed at Quintana and placed under guard.³⁰

Galveston on their return to Texas.³¹

³⁰Standard, October 11, 1856, and January 7, 1871.

³¹Houston, Texas Index, 1871.

Immediately afterwards the Independence sailed for New Orleans, where it arrived June 13, carrying James Collinsworth

and Peter W. Grayson as commissioners sent by Burnet to Washington.³¹

³¹Houston, Texas Independence, 281 July 20, 1836, in Eugene C. Barker (Editor), The Austin Papers, III, p. 393, in the Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1926.

In June, while DeMorse was on the voyage to New Orleans, rumors of a second Mexican invasion spread over the country, causing much excitement and re-arousing the people of Texas to military activity. General José Urrea was placed in command of the retreating Mexican army with orders to halt in the retreat, and await new reinforcements preparatory for a new invasion of Texas. DeMorse, returning from New Orleans to almost died. A good constitution triumphed and he went to Velasco in July, found Thomas J. Rusk calling for volunteers to repel the threatened advance of the Mexicans. DeMorse decided to leave the navy and to throw in his lot with the army which at the time seemed to offer more opportunity for action and advancement.³²

³²Standard, October 10, 1857.

³²Standard, January 7, 1871

Colette, Rusk appointed DeMorse to the rank of captain. Sidney Johnston, later to become famous in the Civil wars, succeeded Rusk in command of the army. Rusk was appointed secretary of war. DeMorse was appointed to Galveston on their return to Texas.³³ On July 20, Stephen F. Johnston had graduated from West Point.

³³Houston, Texas Independence, 281.

DeMorse received his instruction in the art of war from Johnston in organizing and drilling the militia. Austin records in a private memorandum that he went to Velasco

to meet Wharton and Archer for the purpose of receiving a report of their mission to the United States as commissioners.³⁴

³⁴Stephen F. Austin, "Memorandum," July 20, 1836, in Eugene C. Barker (Editor), The Austin Papers, III, p. 393, in the Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1926.

³⁷Standard, November 3, 1857; Dallas Morning News, October 28, 1857; Galveston News, October 27, 1857; Spicer Envelope. During the rainy weather in August DeMorse with Austin, William H. and John A. Wharton, Archer, and Cazneau set out to join Rusk, then stationed on the Colette creek between Victoria and Coliad.³⁵ Rusk's call drew about 2,500

³⁵On the way Archer, ill from exposure on the trip, almost died. A good constitution triumphed and he lived to become secretary of war under Lamar. Standard, October 11, 1856.

men to the banks of the Colette.³⁶ Upon his arrival at the

³⁶Standard, October 10, 1857.

Colette, Rusk appointed DeMorse to the rank of major. Albert Sidney Johnston, later to become famous in the Mexican and Civil wars, succeeded Rusk in command of the Texas army when Rusk was appointed secretary of war by President Houston. General Johnston had graduated from West Point in 1826, and had been a lieutenant in the United States army. From Johnston DeMorse received his instruction in the art of war. He assisted Johnston in organizing and drilling the army, and served as

assistant inspector-general. Most of the time he was stationed on Lavaca Bay and at Navidad. In July, 1837, DeMorse, together with most of the army, was furloughed by President Houston,³⁷ a furlough preliminary to final discharge.

³⁷Standard, November 3, 1887; Dallas Morning News, October 26, 1887; Galveston News, October 27, 1887; Speer, Encyclopedia of the New West, I, 260.

The army before its disbandment had come to be a problem to the civil authorities. False alarms of Mexican invasions were of frequent occurrence and served in some degree to overcome the inertia incident to camp life. In those days the soldiers of Texas had little use for camp tools, and scorned labor as beneath the dignity of a soldier. But volunteers idle in camp are prone to restlessness and are subject to be influenced by those who have schemes for personal aggrandisement. The Texas camp was no exception to the rule. Pent-up enthusiasm or ambition found vent in wild suggestions, among which was a contemplated invasion of Mexico. President Houston regarded such an undertaking as likely to meet disaster. Since the government was severely taxed for the subsistence of these idle, and often unruly men, and since there seemed no prospect of the successful Mexican invasion of Texas, President Houston gave orders to the secretary of war in May, 1837, to furlough the majority of the soldiers.³⁸

³⁸H. Yoakum, History of Texas, II, 215; Standard,

September 17, 1886. In infancy: the eldest, Charles DeMorse, born December 12, 1832, and the fourth child, born

The army having been disbanded, DeMorse went to Matagorda, where in 1838, after having been admitted to the bar by the district court, he set up practice. William H. Jack was one of the members of his examining committee.³⁹ In

³⁹Galveston News, October 27, 1887.

December, 1838, while still practicing law at Matagorda, DeMorse met and married Miss Lodiska C. Wooldridge, the daughter of Colonel Thomas Wooldridge, a native of Spartanburg, South Carolina. Wooldridge was the first American consul at the port of Matagorda, having been appointed by President Andrew Jackson. He had been a large planter in both Alabama and Mississippi, and had been defeated by Henry S. Foote for Congress in Mississippi by six votes. Mrs. DeMorse's mother before her marriage to Wooldridge was an Anderson, and was closely related to the families of Floyd, Preston, Slaughter, and Garland of Virginia. Mrs. DeMorse was a charming woman, a member of the Episcopal Church, conscientious, and well educated. She graduated with first honors from the Female College at Clinton, Mississippi.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Speer, Encyclopedia of the New West, I, 260; Latimer to Wallace, September 11, 1934.

Isabella, was sent to a girls' finishing school. Five children, two boys and three girls, were born to

the union. Two died in infancy: the eldest, Charles DeMorse, Jr., born December 12, 1839, and the fourth child, born December 26, 1846. The second child, Leslie Cazneau DeMorse, was born in Austin, August 18, 1841. He served through the Civil War in the Confederate army, most of the time under his father, and in 1874 represented Bowie county in the legislature. He was for many years the "big" merchant in Texarkana, and operated a private banking business in partnership with W. H. Hakes. He married Mary L. Smith, daughter of Sterling Smith, a wealthy planter of Bowie county. The third child, Ida, was born September 10, 1843. She married M. C. Harris, but died a year later, leaving an infant, Charles, who later lived with his grandfather, Colonel DeMorse. The youngest, Isabella, was born January 3, 1848. She married Lamartine R. Latimer, son of Senator L. R. Latimer. Mrs. Latimer and her family lived with her father, and continued to live in her father's home after his death. Mrs. Latimer's daughter, Isabella DeMorse Latimer, was living in the old home in 1942.

The children of DeMorse received all the advantages of a good education. They not only received the benefits of the schools existing at that time, but also were given instruction by private tutors. They had the advantage of an almost unlimited supply of good reading material because their father's library was considered to be one of the best personal libraries in the state at that time. The youngest child, Isabella, was sent to a girls' finishing school in New Orleans

to complete her education.⁴¹

⁴¹Most of the information concerning the children of DeMorse was obtained from Miss Latimer, September 11, 1934, and January 10, 1940. The record of the births was taken from the family Bible in possession of Miss Latimer. Rollin W. Rodgers, Sr., of the law firm of Rodgers and Rodgers, Texarkana, Arkansas-Texas, is authority for the information concerning the business of L. C. DeMorse. Rodgers and Rodgers were attorneys for L. C. DeMorse. Rodgers and Rodgers to Wallace, November 29, 1941.

DeMorse's wife died February 6, 1849, at the age of twenty-nine years and twenty-one days. Thus DeMorse was left with the responsibility of rearing four children. The following editorial published in the Northern Standard (Clarksville), four days later throws some light upon the character of DeMorse:

GONE! is the associate of ten years of wedded happiness! And although her commonest clay is eulogized into something worthy of record, yet we cannot refrain from paying a brief tribute to the memory of one, in whom graces of person and deportment, were but the outward indices to intelligence, goodness, and unvarying purity, seldom, we fear, found unalloyed, in this world. Poor indeed, is the power of languages, frequently misapplied as it is, to do justice to a character, such as seldom attached to mortal mould, and the knowledge of that character, truly, as it existed, will dwell vividly, only with those who knew her best; for of her, it may justly be said: "None knew her but to love her." ... 'Tis true that the departed is in a brighter world but the smiles of her affections, where are they? Our home was once lighted up by her presence, but now all is loneliness. ...

For the stricken consort, who has been left by the providence of God, to the charge of her four little children, there is a dreary vista before, only relieved by the thought that memory, faithful to its office, shall keep enshrined ever, the character of

the departed; and that in caring and providing for her children, true and continued reverence will be evinced for the virtue of the mother. Therefore, with a spirit, which every familiar remembrance of the deceased, disturbs, as the eyes fall upon it, he bears himself to the holy duty which is left for him to perform.⁴²

⁴²Northern Standard, February 10, 1849. When DeMorse founded his paper in August, 1842, he officially entitled it the Northern Standard, but in August, 1852, the word "Northern" was officially dropped from the title. Since DeMorse previous to 1852 always referred to his paper as the Standard, it will be designated hereafter in this study as the Standard.

⁴³Standard, September 23, 1849.

After two years in Matagorda, DeMorse in August, 1839, moved to Austin, the newly established seat of government.⁴³ A

⁴³Galveston News, October 27, 1887. The Lamar administration, and remained a devoted friend of Lamar throughout. The commissioners named to select the location had reported on the present site of Austin in the spring of that same year. The spot chosen was still in the wilderness. It was a bold enterprise to locate the new capital on the border of a land overrun by savages. The choice reflects the faith of the early Texans in the future greatness of their country. In his removal to the new seat of government, DeMorse was only giving expression to that faith.

On November 20, 1839, DeMorse was appointed Stock

Commissioner by President Lamar.⁴⁴ The office at that time

⁴⁷Standard, September 23, 1848.

⁴⁴Latimer to Wallace, January 10, 1940.

While thus engaged, early in the year 1842, all the

carried with it much responsibility as Texas financial matters were in a critical condition. The office paid a salary of only five hundred dollars annually, but did not require his full time.⁴⁵

DeMorse continued the practice of law in addition to supposed to pay about two thousand dollars annually. In addition

⁴⁵Standard, September 23, 1848.

to these of a projected

his work as Stock Commissioner. He was a faithful servant of the Lamar administration, and remained a devoted friend of Lamar throughout his life. During the session of Congress for 1841-1842, in addition to being Stock Commissioner, DeMorse was made reporter for the House of Representatives. It was at this time that he began his work as an editor. In addition to his other duties, he edited a small daily paper, the first in Texas materially sustained by the two houses of Congress.⁴⁶ Altogether,

⁴⁶DeMorse did not state the name of the paper. It may have been The Daily Bulletin. A. C. Gray, in "A History of the Texas Press," in Dudley G. Wooten (Editor), A Comprehensive History of Texas, 1685-1897, II, p. 378, says that The Daily Bulletin was Austin's first daily; that it was a journal of the proceedings of the House of Representatives with a few news items and editorial notes appended.

DeMorse was making about ten dollars per day.⁴⁷

⁴⁷Standard, September 23, 1848.

While thus engaged, early in the year 1842, all the members of Congress from Red River District came to DeMorse with an invitation for him to go to Clarksville and establish a newspaper there. At the same time he was tendered a permanent place as editor of the Austin City Gazette. This position was supposed to pay about two thousand dollars annually. In addition to these offers he was invited to take charge of a projected newspaper in San Antonio, and was offered a position in Austin dealing with mechanical fixtures.⁴⁸ DeMorse, thus, was faced

⁴⁸The name of the San Antonio newspaper and the facts concerning that offer as well as those concerning the position in Austin dealing with mechanical fixtures could not be ascertained because the paper was too badly worn at this point in the story. The article was written by DeMorse in the Standard, September 23, 1848.

with an important decision. There was little doubt that the decision would determine his future career. The Red River members, however, promised him any amount necessary to induce him to go to Clarksville, and offered to bear all his expense while he was getting a paper started. Major J. B. Ransom, who was then at Austin, and who had been a government agent in the Red River District, and who enjoyed some literary reputation, told DeMorse that he had never seen people more eager to have a press established than the people of that section. They had offered

to furnish Ransom an office if he would take charge of it. DeMorse consulted some friends in Austin at the time, and as they agreed with him that the Clarksville offer appeared to have the greatest future possibilities, he accepted it.⁴⁹

⁴⁹Standard, September 23, 1848.

DeMorse made his decision well aware that probably no man who conscientiously desires to be of service to his fellow-man requires a larger range of intellect, more varied requirements, or greater strength of character, than the conductor of a public journal. DeMorse justified his decision, which can be paraphrased in somewhat the following way. No statesman, lawyer, or divine moves in a more extended sphere, or has more occasion for the use of the noble faculties of mind and heart. A journalist stands in immediate contact with the public mind. He aids in the intellectual progress of the people. He gives a tone to public opinion, and is to some extent the guardian and guide of public morals. Hundreds of men, women, and children each morning and evening are moved by his persuasions, are corrected by his rebukes, or are corrupted by his license. The character of each individual reader is in some degree placed in his hands. He may elevate the bad or traduce the good. He can stimulate the worst passions of inflamed times, or give an impulse to wise and beneficent moments. His influence differs from that of others who operate upon the public mind, in that, while theirs is confined to particular and distant occasions, that of

an editor acts incessantly. The orator agitates only while he is speaking; the preacher is hemmed in by the walls of the church; but the editor is perpetually at work. Even while he sleeps his thoughts are diffusing good or evil.⁵⁰

stitutes the most fertile source for the study of the social, and ⁵⁰Standard, October 28, 1843.

scription list is a roll call of the leaders of the movement conquered DeMorse also realized that Northeast Texas was at that time still a wilderness, sparsely settled, and was an uninviting place for a newspaper. He conceived, however, a profound confidence in the future, and did not hesitate to make his home on the border of civilization. He felt, as he himself said, that striking out into the broad prairies, and looking upon the face of Nature, as the Almighty constructed it—viewing elementary rights through elementary mediums, with no cautious conservative expounders, has a strengthening influence upon the intellect. Men learn to measure principles and rights through natural reasoning, unaffected by interested colorings or constrained usages.⁵¹

and through that section it exercised a potent influence on the politics of ⁵¹Standard, February 7, 1852.

DeMorse left Austin for Clarksville in March, 1842. Five months later the first issue of the first newspaper ever to be published in Northeast Texas rolled from his press. Across the front page was inscribed: "THE NORTHERN STANDARD, CHARLES DEMORSE, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER," and the motto: "LONG MAY OUR

BANNER BRAVE THE BREEZE—THE STANDARD OF THE FREE." And "Brave the Breeze" the Standard did until after the death of its editor and publisher almost a half century later.

From the date of its first issue the Standard constitutes the most fertile source for the study of the economic, social, and political life of Northeast Texas. The first subscription list is a roll call of the leaders of the men who conquered the frontier.⁵² The paper wielded an influence in

⁵²Rex Wallace Strickland, Anglo-American Activities in Northeastern Texas, 1803-1845 (manuscript, University of Texas, Austin, Texas), p. 393.

Texas that has been the privilege of few newspapers to exert either before or since;⁵³ wielded a powerful influence in shap-

⁵³"Some of the Writings of Colonel Charles DeMorse," (name of author not given), in the Galveston News, January 7, 1894.

ing public policy and molding public opinion in Northeast Texas, and through that section it exercised a potent influence on the politics of the Republic and of the state.⁵⁴ The history of

⁵⁴Gray, "A History of the Texas Press," in Wooten, A Comprehensive History of Texas, II, 378.

DeMorse from 1842 on is in large part the history of the Standard, for during his long editorial career he stamped that newspaper

with his personality, views, and ideals.

THE STANDARD "BRAVES THE BREEZE"

DeHorse, accompanied by judge John T. Mills, the District judge of Red River district, Senator Robert Potter, and Tom Smith, an outstanding member of the House of Representatives, left Austin for Clarksville in March, 1842. The only travelled road from Austin to Clarksville led by way of Nasog-deches and Marshall.¹ On the way Potter was murdered near the

¹Standard, December 18, 1871.

present city of Marshall by the so-called "Boss gang."

After three weeks of travel, DeHorse reached Clarksville. The town struck him as a "little unattractive village, giving no evidence in its external appearance of being the center of a section of the country that in time was to become very rich and thickly populated, as well as a focus of considerable mercantile business, and in most respects uninviting except to one who could foresee its future prosperity."²

²Standard, September 23, 1848.

The town was indirectly an outgrowth of the Indian migration of 1819-1830. The re-establishment of Fort Totten in 1831 and the arrival of the immigrant Indians furnished the

Jonesboro and THE STANDARD "BRAVES THE BREEZE"

In 1834 a group of whites from Jonesboro and the river valley moved up the Delaware creek and settled on the prairie just above the mouth of the creek. This settlement was the beginning of the town of Clarksville. The only travelled road from Austin to Clarksville led by way of Nacogdoches and Marshall.¹ On the way Potter was murdered near the

¹Standard, December 16, 1871.

present city of Marshall by the so-called "Rose gang."

After three weeks of travel, DeMorse reached Clarksville. The town struck him as a "little unattractive village, giving no evidence in its external appearance of being the center of a section of the country that in time was to become very rich and thickly populated, as well as a focus of considerable mercantile business, and in most respects uninviting except to one who could foresee its future prosperity."²

²Standard, September 23, 1848.

The town was indirectly an outgrowth of the Indian migration of 1819-1830. The re-establishment of Fort Towson in 1831 and the arrival of the immigrant Indians furnished the

settlers of the region with a ready market for corn and cattle. Jonesboro and other settlements arose, flourished, and died. In 1834 a group of whites from Jonesboro and the river bottoms moved up the Delaware creek and began making homes on the edge of the prairie just above the Delaware Indian settlement. That settlement was the beginning of the present town of Clarksville. Isaac Smithers, under the direction of James Clark, constructed the first log house in the summer of 1834—a house which was later to become the home of DeMorse.³

³Mary Gordon, "A Brief History of the Early Days of Clarksville," in the Clarksville Times, May 14, 1909. Rex W. Strickland in his study of Anglo-American Activities in North-eastern Texas, 1803-1845, p. 210, says: "It is hardly likely that Isaac Smithers assisted in its erection as Smithers took an oath before the Board of Land Commissioners of Red River county that he did not come to Texas until the spring or summer of 1836. Had he reached Texas earlier than March 2, 1836, he would have been sure to have said so, since his land quota would have been increased on account of arrival before the date of the Declaration of Independence."

From this modest beginning Clarksville grew in a few years to be a town of considerable importance. The increased population of the uplands necessitated a more convenient trading point than that afforded by Jonesboro. James Clark recognized this need, and furnished stimulus to the growth of the village by giving a lot to any person who would build a dwelling or a store upon it.⁴ In 1837 the territory, which included the

⁴Standard, August 25, 1882.

present counties of Lamar, Hopkins, Delta, Franklin, Titus, Morris, Cass, Marion, and Bowie, was constituted as Red River county, and the following year the county seat was located at Clarksville.⁵ When DeMorse arrived, therefore, the little town

⁵Strickland, Anglo-American Activities in Northeastern Texas, 389; Standard, August 25, 1882.

was a busy minor center of trade, commerce, and government, and was ready for the establishment of a newspaper.

The life of a Texas journal during the early days of Texas was hectic and usually brief. Many newspapers had been established since Austin and his colonists settled on the Brazos. Among the more important newspapers in Texas at the time of the birth of the Standard were the Telegraph and Texas Register (Houston), the Morning Star (Houston), the Galveston Civilian, the Red-Lander (San Augustine), the Austin City Gazette, and the Galveston News.⁶

⁶For an account of the early Texas newspapers, see Eugene C. Barker, "Notes on Early Texas Newspapers, 1819-1836," in Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXI, 127-144; and Gray, "A History of the Texas Press," in Wooten, A Comprehensive History of Texas, II, 369-378.

The first problem confronting DeMorse upon his arrival in Clarksville was that of financial support. He thought that the problem was solved when he found a letter of credit for \$2,500, drawn upon three mercantile firms of the town. The letter

was signed by some "twelve or fifteen" of the most responsible men in the neighborhood. The members of the firms on whom the letter of credit was drawn were then in New Orleans trying to dispose of their cotton. DeMorse immediately started for New Orleans to use his letter of credit in buying equipment. On the way he met his merchant guarantors returning to Clarksville. Because of the poor market, they had failed to sell their cotton, and not wishing to draw on their banks they advised DeMorse to return and attempt to raise the necessary amount by subscription. He accepted their advice and returned to conduct a money-raising campaign.

Much interest was manifested in the proposed newspaper. Men extolled DeMorse's fitness. Almost eight hundred dollars was quickly subscribed and five hundred dollars of this amount was in cash. The largest cash subscription was that of one hundred dollars advanced by T. G. Wright. In addition to the subscription, William T. Montgomery furnished a letter of credit for two hundred dollars.⁷ With his financial problem partially

⁷Standard, September 23, 1848.

solved, DeMorse was ready to attack his second difficulty, the establishment of his plant. The source of his equipment was New Orleans. He went to New Orleans in 1842. There he found no supplies at the regular establishments, but with the assistance of some of the craft, and after much labor, he succeeded

in collecting from three different offices the essentials,⁸ a

upon the Standard, August 20, 1842. Standard was the Western Star,
whose first issue appeared at Clarksville, August 11, 1842.

George Washington hand press and type, forty reams of paper, and office fixtures.⁹ Returning to Clarksville, he set up shop

⁹Standard, September 23, 1848.

in a small building and began to prepare for publication. After some delay the first issue of the Standard, on which almost all the work was done by DeMorse himself, appeared August 20, 1842. It was to continue, edited and published by a single individual, for more than forty-five years. Of the relatively large number of newspapers established in Texas before 1845, only three others survived well into the 1850's.¹⁰

¹⁰These were the Standard, Galveston News, Galveston Civilian, and Houston Telegraph.

For several years the Standard had practically no competition in Northeast Texas, and the publications that did venture forth were usually short lived. However, at the end of the decade of the 1840's and during the 1850's a large number of newspapers began to appear throughout the region of Northeast Texas. Although the mortality was great, yet the fact that other papers existed in the region decreased, no doubt, the

strong influence DeMorse had exercised over the people of Northeast Texas. Probably the paper having the most profound effect upon the editorial policy of the Standard was the Western Star, whose first issue appeared at Clarksville, August 11, 1847. It proposed to "advocate generally the doctrines of the Whig Party of the United States."¹¹

¹¹Standard, August 14, 1847.

The establishment of a Whig organization in Clarksville caused DeMorse to abandon his policy of neutrality in politics, and to don his armor to support and defend the Democratic party and its principles. Although the Western Star did not long survive at Clarksville, DeMorse continued until his death to wield his pen in behalf of the Democratic party.

One reason for the success, influence, and long life of the Standard was the philosophy of its editor as embodied in the content and make-up of the paper and in DeMorse's expressed ideals, policies, and objectives. DeMorse did not hesitate to set forth his personal philosophy in regard to his own position and that of a newspaper. He realized that heavy responsibility rested upon those who write for the public. He felt that they were tutors of the world, and might not lightly assume nor thoughtlessly discharge their duties, lest incurable evil result.¹² He said that the life of an editor was one that

¹²Standard, May 6, 1848.

he adopted with the belief that it would yield him more pleasure than any other in the ordinary course of employments. He appreciated his position as a friend and neighbor of the readers. As editor he hoped to win the sympathy which should exist between the diffuser of useful information, the guardian of the interest of the community, and the many recipients of this information and advice who profit by the attention given their social and pecuniary welfare. He hoped to receive from those among whom he lived the proper place in social and intellectual rank due to an editor. He wished to be received by his fellow craftsmen "as one who desires at all times to deserve that courtesy which is proper among gentlemen, expecting to say what we believe to be the truth." As editor he desired the confidence of his readers and vowed to give them in return trustworthy service. He proposed to watch over his district, guarding at all times the people's interest and letting nothing which occurred at home or abroad escape his attention. The rights of his supporters would be protected and misrepresentations of their views would be exposed. The Standard was to be a newspaper! It was to be more than a mere gleaner of the news or a manufacturer of quibs and reviver of stale jokes. If these were the highest services of an editor, he felt that the Standard would not be justified in appearing. The paper was to be a complete record of the events of the country. It was to keep the foreign subscribers

as fully advised as resident citizens. The majesty of the law was to be upheld, and crime was to be denounced regardless of the perpetrators.

From the first DeMorse made an effort to estimate the value of literature, and encouraged local effort. These contributions, however, had to meet his standard of good form; otherwise they were to be rejected. He felt that "the influence of choice literature upon a community is of a most beneficial tendency and a large space in our column will be devoted to it."¹³ He was

¹³Standard, August 20, 1842.

interested in and made room for statistical, agricultural, and political information.

DeMorse wanted the Standard to be an economical and a moral asset to the home. It was, he said, to be a suitable visitor for the most refined families. It was to be maintained on a high plane.¹⁴ It must have a real economic value to the

¹⁴Standard, May 13, 1846.

frontier homes of Northeast Texas; it must be worth more to any subscriber than the price of a subscription. From the columns the reader might learn of swindlers; to know the value of the representatives of money; and, to receive agricultural information worth many times the cost of a subscription.¹⁵

¹⁵Standard, January 21, 1843.

The newspaper might render service by furnishing information upon new discoveries, improvements, and explanations in agriculture, manufacturing, commerce, the arts, and domestic economy. Labor-saving devices, the markets, and health information should find a place in the columns of the Standard.¹⁶

¹⁶Standard, July 24, 1844.

DeMorse believed that a newspaper should be an agency in the education of children. He contended that the intellectual progress of a youth would be accelerated by his having access to a newspaper. He felt that a mind occupied was better able to cope with the problems of life than one not so fortified.¹⁷

¹⁷Standard, May 15, 1844.

"Education," he said, "is a young man's capital; for a well informed, intelligent mind has the best assurance of future competency and happiness. If you leave them [young people] wealthy, you may insure their ruin, at the best you can only leave them that which at any moment may be lost."¹⁸

¹⁸Standard, January 14, 1845.

A definite part of the Standard was set apart for the productions of ambitious poetical aspirants, yet these contributions had to show evidence of merit. DeMorse insisted that it was poor policy to punish an entire community merely to gratify one writer.¹⁹ Frequently the refusal to print unworthy

¹⁹Standard, September 17, 1842.

articles lost him the good will of the would-be authors.

In personal controversy, space was given for the expression of the views of both sides. As an individual, the editor felt free to speak and act as he liked. The honest views of those who differed with the Standard were respected. Correspondents were asked to be original or to give due credit to the source from whence the material was borrowed.²⁰

²⁰Ibid., March 25, 1846.

During the period when the Standard held undisputed leadership in Northeast Texas, DeMorse stated its aims as follows:

The Standard aims at filling the place of a public Journal in its fullest sense. The representative of the region in which it has been so long published, the North District of Texas-- noting its public expressions, its products, its general progress, and assisting so far as it may in its advancement, it is also a compendium of the general news of the day, foreign and domestic, a record of politics, of improvements, agriculture, the fine arts, to all of which is added as space may allow, a

choice selection of literary miscellany.

During the business season, price currents of the New York and New Orleans markets will be kept up.

In politics, the paper is unequivocally and unswervingly Democratic, and opposed to all ultraisms, including Know-Nothingism. Its editor believes to the fullest extent in the toleration of opinions, religious or political; and cannot therefore take part in the proscription of his fellow men for the accident of birth, or of religious culture. His position in this respect does not admit of change, but will induce him to discuss temperately and respectfully, the public issues requiring notice by a public Journal.²¹

²¹Standard, April 26, 1856. This statement of policy was carried for some time in the columns of the Standard.

The Standard, in short, was to be an impartial, comprehensive, source of political, social, moral, and economic information, and an influence for good in all Northeast Texas.

Policy and content were not, however, DeMorse's only problems. The early Texas newspapers had to cope with a great many difficulties in their struggle for survival. The greatest inconvenience was probably that arising from limited transportation and mail service. The Standard was no exception in this respect. In fact, its inland and frontier position accentuated its difficulties.

By a law passed December 20, 1836, the Congress of the Republic of Texas created a general post office to be under the direction of a postmaster general. He was empowered to establish post offices and appoint postmasters at such places as he deemed

Further appropriations were made as follows: 1837, \$15,000; 1838, \$25,000; 1839, \$35,000; 1840, \$10,000. He was given general supervision over the carrying of the mails and was empowered to revoke contracts at discretion.

The letting of contracts was to be preceded by notice in the newspapers. Those notices, appearing four weeks before the contracts were awarded, were to designate conditions of the contract. Awards were made upon the basis of sealed bids.

Private enterprises were permitted to operate as limited mail agencies. They carried papers, packages, bundles, and pamphlets between the places connected by government routes, but were forbidden to carry letters. Private agencies could transport any form of mail if no government conveyance was available.

Postmasters were paid on a commission basis. The postmaster general was permitted to allow a commission of postage on newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets, not exceeding fifty per cent of the value of the publication.

Every newspaper publisher was permitted to send one paper free of postage to every other Texas newspaper published. He could also send and receive from without the state any number of newspapers under fifty, free of postage. All newspapers were to be under cover and a penalty was attached to their opening or detention. The same Congress which created the department made an appropriation of one thousand dollars to its support which, of course, was not enough to sustain efficient service.²²

²²Gammel, Laws of Texas, I, 1226-1238.

Further appropriations were made as follows: 1837, \$10,000; 1838, \$25,000; 1839, \$35,000; 1840, \$10,000.²³ An act of

²³Gammel, Laws of Texas, I, 1352; II, 7, 121, 418, 382.

December 21, 1836, provided that all persons so desiring were to be permitted to accept land in payment of services rendered as mail carriers during the year 1837. The land could be acquired at fifty cents an acre in tracts of 320 acres or more.²⁴

²⁴Gammel, Laws of Texas, I, 1256.

By January, 1841, the financial condition of the treasury was such that resort was made to government promissory notes. Such notes in the sum of \$50,000 were appropriated for the year 1841. In December, 1841, an appropriation of \$40,470 was set aside for the use of the Post Office Department for that year. The law provided, however, that not more than ten dollars (per year) a mile should be paid for the carrying of the mails on any route. In February, 1842, an appropriation was made to take care of the probable deficiencies in the Post Office Department caused by contracts for carrying the mails. By 1843 the amount set aside for the postal service had dwindled to \$12,000. In January, 1844, an appropriation of \$3,742.36 was made to continue the mail service until March 1, 1844. On February 5, 1844, an appropriation of \$12,000 was made to pay for transportation of the mails for the year 1844, and a part of the year

1845; and an additional sum of \$15,000 was appropriated February, 1845, to pay for the carrying of the mails for the remainder of the year.²⁵ Gammel, Laws of Texas, II, 755.

revision ²⁵Gammel, Laws of Texas, II, 582, 679, 828, 1018.

In his message to Congress, December 4, 1844, President Houston said that the amount of money spent on the Post Office Department during the administration of President Mirabeau Lamar was shown to be \$52,970, and that during the three-year period of 1842 to 1844 only \$29,000 had been spent, yet the mail service had been maintained.²⁶

²⁶Standard, December 26, 1844.

A hasty glance at the above figures leads one to assume that the postage rates must have been comparatively high. The rate of postage changed from time to time. When the Standard began circulation in 1842, the following rates were in force. For each letter composed of a single sheet of paper, and conveyed not exceeding fifty miles, twelve and one-half cents; over fifty and not exceeding one hundred miles, eighteen and three-fourths cents; over one hundred miles and not exceeding two hundred, twenty-five cents; over two hundred miles, thirty-one and one-fourth cents; on all double letters, double the above rates. The rate on each newspaper conveyed over one hundred miles was two cents; books and pamphlets were carried at news-

paper rates.²⁷ These rates were considerably increased under a more densely populated regions. The first Congress of the

Republic of ²⁷Gammel, Laws of Texas, II, 756. a mail route from Nazardoches by way of Robertson's Ferry on Sulphur to Jansboro.

revision which became effective March 31, 1843. Under the new law the rate for letters conveyed more than two hundred miles was placed at fifty cents; for newspapers conveyed more than one hundred and fifty miles, three cents.²⁸ A revision of the rates

Another route ²⁸Ibid., II, 836. Red River county in 1839, when mail connection was made between Clarksville and Shelton.²⁹

in January, 1844, reduced the postage on letters somewhat. The rates for newspapers conveyed no more than one hundred miles was placed at one cent; more than one hundred miles, two cents. The postage was to be paid in gold, silver, or exchequer bills.²⁹ carrying the mail to each county seat. It was to be a weekly

mail, and ²⁹Ibid., II, 952. were to be established as would render a revenue equivalent to one-fourth the cost of transportation.

The postage rates on letters were reduced again on April 1, 1845, but remained the same for newspapers.³⁰

³⁰Ibid., II, 952.

³⁰Ibid., II, 1098.

from Boston, Texas, to Boston by way of DeKalb, Clarksville, Paris, and The meager appropriations made by the Republic of Texas made the establishment of a sufficient number of post routes for the convenience of the people impossible. The Standard suffered from this inconvenience probably more than the

other newspapers of Texas, because of its remoteness from the more densely populated regions. The first Congress of the Republic of Texas passed a law establishing a mail route from Nacogdoches by way of Epperson's Ferry on Sulphur to Jonesboro, in Red River county, thence to the seat of Justice in Fannin county. Over this route one trip per week was to be made.³¹

³¹Gammel, Laws of Texas, I, 1439.

Another route was added to Red River county in 1839, when mail connection was made between Clarksville and Shelton.³²

³²Ibid., II, 831.

By an act of January 27, 1844, a law provided for carrying the mail to each county seat. It was to be a weekly mail, and such other routes were to be established as would render a revenue equivalent to one-fourth the cost of transportation.³³ Accordingly in January, 1845, a route was established

³³Ibid., II, 952.

from Boston, Texas, to Bonham by way of DeKalb, Clarksville, Paris, and Honey Grove. The mail was to be transported weekly over this route. At the same time a route was established from Clarksville to Fort Towson, just across Red River, north of

Clarksville.³⁴ The operation of these routes theoretically gave
 sent to the United States the postage was required to be paid

in advance.³⁴ Gammel, Laws of Texas, II, 1097.
 the postage was paid. The postage on letters from Clarksville

direct and uninterrupted communication from Clarksville to any
 part of Texas and of the United States.

For several years the mails in Texas were irregular
 and the routes frequently were temporarily discontinued. Often
 no provision was made for the carrying of mail over an essential
 route. To meet such emergencies private conveyance was fre-
 quently used. A notice was carried in the Standard in December,
 1842, to the effect that it was necessary for subscribers to
 the mail route from Pine Creek to Fort Towson to register if
 they expected to receive the accommodation of the mails.³⁵ The

³⁵Standard, December 3, 1842.

Standard republished an article by the Red-Lander (San Augustine),
 which stated that the citizens or contractors in the Northern
 counties "have evinced a noble public spirit and kept up the
 mails on several routes regularly. They are even now projecting
 new routes and supporting them by voluntary contributions."³⁶

the way of ³⁶Standard, September 27, 1842. the mail from San Augustine

By this arrangement letters could be sent and received from the
 office of the Standard by paying the United States postage and

the postage from Fort Towson to Clarksville. If papers were sent to the United States the postage was required to be paid in advance at the boundary line. No parcel was delivered until the postage was paid. The postage on letters from Clarksville by this conveyance was three cents each. Under this arrangement the mail rider left Clarksville every Monday and returned every Tuesday morning.

During the decade which followed the establishment of the Standard complaints concerning the irregularity of the mails were numerous. The second issue of the Standard, for instance, gave notice of a suspension of the mail west of San Augustine, and as this was the source of the Southwest mail, exchanges were cut off.³⁷ A few weeks later the Standard

³⁷Standard, August 27, 1842.

informed its readers that the "mails from the West have been discontinued and we have, therefore, no late papers."³⁸ A mail

³⁸Ibid., September 3, 1842.

was "actually received" in December, 1842, "bringing a paper from beyond. It is however, so old that it is worth little in the way of news."³⁹ About the same time the mail from Washington

³⁹Ibid., December 24, 1842.

(Texas), and from Houston to Clarksville failed, leaving no means for the people of the Red River District to keep informed as to what Congress was doing.⁴⁰ In May of 1843, the editor expressed

⁴⁰Standard, January 7, 1843.

his satisfaction at being able to publish South Texas news before newspapers of Georgia or the District of Columbia, a matter which he had not always been successful in accomplishing.⁴¹

⁴¹Ibid., May 4, 1843.

In October, 1843, another interruption of the mail from the interior occurred. Some papers received from New Orleans were a month old.⁴² The newspaper depended to such an extent

⁴²Ibid., October 28, 1843.

upon exchanges that the failure of the mails seriously affected the content of the paper. The Standard recognized that fact, saying: "We present our readers this time a paper but not a newspaper. We have been waterlocked for the last week and are without exchange papers from any direction."⁴³ The editor of

⁴³Ibid., December 2, 1842.

the Standard was informed by letter from Nacogdoches that numbers

fifty-eight and eight of the Standard had been received in the last mail, while in the preceding mail numbers six and forty-three were received. The writer of the letter warned DeMorse that something was wrong between Nacogdoches and Marshall and that the wrong was operating greatly to DeMorse's detriment. Subscribers of the Standard in the Nacogdoches area were requesting that their subscriptions be discontinued because often months elapsed before the Standard was received, and sometimes it was not received at all.⁴⁴ On one occasion the Galveston News compensated those mail contractors who carried the mail during the period from February 16, 1846, until April 1, 1846, and all other contractors who continued until superseded by contractors appointed ⁴⁴Standard, May 8, 1844.

received three copies of the Standard on one mail, the oldest of which had been fifty days en route.⁴⁵ The Houston Telegraph

that those ⁴⁵Ibid., October 9, 1844. He recognized that it required time to determine the routes necessary for the mail pointed out in 1844 that although there had been no rains for some time and no justifiable cause for these complaints the Standard "is generally from three to four weeks reaching Houston."⁴⁶ Standard, June 24, 1844.

⁴⁶Ibid., October 16, 1844.

were injured The people of Texas were in general disappointed in their hope that annexation to the United States would result in fewer irregularities and in more adequate mail service. The

Post Office Department of the United States failed to act promptly. When the contracts made by the Republic of Texas expired, therefore, Texas was left without regular mail service. Many of the contractors, however, continued the mail service until they were superseded by contractors appointed by the United States.⁴⁷

⁴⁷By a joint resolution of April 22, 1846, of the Texas Legislature the United States senators from Texas were instructed to urge the passage of a bill by the United States Congress to compensate those mail contractors who carried the mails during the period from February 16, 1846, until April 1, 1846; and all other contractors who continued until superseded by contractors appointed by the United States. Gammel, Laws of Texas, II, 1424.

DeMorse contended in June, 1846, that Texas, as a part of the United States, was entitled to mail facilities as adequate as those of the District of Columbia. He forcefully suggested that those facilities were not provided. He recognized that it required time to determine the routes necessary for the convenience of the people, but believed that the mail on the main thoroughfares should not have been delayed.⁴⁸

⁴⁸Standard, June 24, 1846.

After annexation the postmaster general suspended a number of authorized routes in Texas. Some of the suspensions were injurious to DeMorse, among them the route from Jefferson to Shreveport, and the route from Clarksville to Hunt county. The Clarksville-Hunt county route suspension necessitated a circuitous

trip of 180 miles by Boston, Daingerfield, and Mt. Pleasant to cover a seventy-mile route. With the suspension the Standard now had to travel eighty-three miles to reach Mt. Pleasant, the county seat of the adjoining county, forty-five miles from Clarksville. In order to reach Gilmer, the county seat of Upshur county and only seventy miles from Clarksville, the Standard had to go through Boston, Daingerfield, Marshall, Nacogdoches, Smith, and Cherokee, a distance of three hundred and fifteen miles; yet at Daingerfield it was only thirty miles from Gilmer. A communication from Marshall, which was forty-five miles from Gilmer, and which was a part of the same county in legislative representation, had to be sent two hundred and ten miles to get to Gilmer.⁴⁹

⁴⁹Standard, June 30, 1847.

As a result of the suspension of mail routes seven or eight counties in the neighborhood of Clarksville were left without mail delivery. In complaining about the situation, DeMorse wrote that "our government (referring to the Republic of Texas) in its extremest poverty, always ran one route through each county; but to have to bear with such outrageous impositions under a government of the magnitude of the Union, is deplorable indeed. There is wretched mismanagement or absence of any management at all, somewhere. In sober truth, we are most

shabbily treated."⁵⁰ A year later little or no improvement had

his patrons ⁵⁰Standard, December 12, 1846.

been made, for DeMorse again wrote that "considering the means, the mail service provided by the Texas Republic was far better than the Government of the Union has given us."⁵¹

⁵¹Ibid., November 13, 1847.

Under the then existing arrangements papers from New Orleans were reaching Clarksville in from three to six weeks. The Post Office Department, through its special agent to Texas, Wm. Tanner, promised that the time would be reduced to eleven days by way of Natchitoches and San Augustine.⁵² DeMorse was

⁵²Ibid., May 19, 1847.

especially insistent in his demand for a direct-mail stage route between Clarksville and Shreveport via Jefferson. At the time much of the mail from New Orleans had to go through Little Rock and Washington, Arkansas.⁵³

⁵³Ibid., December 12, 1846.

Despite Tanner's promises and regardless of the "full power to regulate" given him by the Post Office Department, during

the latter part of 1846 and 1847 complaints continued. They were, however, less frequent. In January, 1848, DeMorse notified his patrons that the bid on the route from Clarksville to Upshur county had been accepted and the contractor had been notified two months previously, but that the "Government Machine" had failed to complete the minor details necessary for the contractor to begin operation.⁵⁴

⁵⁴Standard, January 15, 1848.

DeMorse said The situation was greatly improved during the succeeding months. On August 14, 1848, David S. Kaufman, Congressman from the East Texas District, informed the editor of the Standard that Congress had just established twenty-nine mail routes in his Congressional District. Those which were of most aid to the Standard were: Woodville to Beaumont; Tyler to Palestine; Galveston to New Boston; Clarksville via Tarrant county to Buffalo where it connected with other roads from there to Austin, Corsicana, and elsewhere; and Paris to Pine Bluff in Red River county. Mail service between Clarksville and Natchitoches via Mt. Pleasant and Marshall was to be semiweekly.⁵⁵

Standard.⁵⁵ Ibid., September 30, 1848.

The new mail routes were of importance to the Standard in securing news and in the distribution of the paper to subscribers. The new arrangement, however, did not give satisfaction,

and occasionally required twenty-four days for mail to reach Austin from Clarksville when only eight days should have sufficed. DeMorse admitted that the people were somewhat to blame because they did not build adequate bridges, but he insisted that the greatest fault lay in the failure of the government to provide proper connecting routes and the failure of the contractors to carry all the mail.⁵⁶ Some mail which

⁵⁶Standard, January 19, 1850.

DeMorse addressed the Standard from Austin required three and one-half months to reach its destination, although the semi-weekly mail service was presumed to be in operation.⁵⁷

⁵⁷Ibid., March 2, 1850.

Further complaints regarding the irregularity of the mails, however, were rarely heard. During the early part of the summer of 1854, the Standard informed its readers that Clarksville was to have tri-weekly coach service from Little Rock, Arkansas, to Austin, passing through Clarksville, Bonham, Dallas, and Waco. That service was unquestionably an important advantage to the Standard.⁵⁸

⁵⁸Ibid., June 24, and July 1, 1854.

Beginning February 20, 1858, and continuing for six

weeks, nearly all the outside pages of the Standard were devoted to the official advertisement of mail routes in Texas, to be let for the next four years. The main line east and west through Clarksville was to be daily. Time from Clarksville to Austin was to require seven days; from Clarksville to Marshall forty-two hours. This line gave Clarksville inter-oceanic communication. DeMorse was greatly pleased with the new schedule.⁵⁹

and St. Louis, Missouri. The Texas and Pacific Railroad building for ⁵⁹Standard, February 20, 1858.

reached De The people of Clarksville were not immune to the "railroad fever" that swept over the South during the years preceding the War between the States. In 1848, when work on the Memphis branch of the Charleston and Ohio Railroad was in progress, a large number of citizens from Clarksville and vicinity attended a railway meeting hoping that, with the help of Arkansas citizens, they might induce the officials to extend the road across Arkansas to the Red River.⁶⁰ Naturally, DeMorse

⁶⁰Ibid., September 30, 1848.

was one of the most interested of the group. He was interested again in 1860 in the prospect of getting a railroad and informed his patrons that "the Memphis and El Paso was no longer a myth."⁶¹

by boat. Until after the Civil War, the best way to travel was by boat. ⁶¹Ibid., March 3, 1860.

Any prospect for a railroad for Clarksville for several years, however, was interrupted by the Civil War. The Houston and Texas Central, which had begun construction in 1853, had completed only eighty miles when the Civil War interrupted. Shortly after the war construction was resumed. The road reached Denison in 1873, where it connected with the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas road, thus forming a direct-rail communication between Houston, Texas, and St. Louis, Missouri. (The Texas and Pacific, which had begun building from Shreveport in 1858, reached Marshall in 1859, but no further progress was made until after the Civil War. It reached Dallas in 1873, a short time after the Houston and Texas Central. A northern branch of the Texas and Pacific was completed between Sherman and Texarkana by way of Paris and Clarksville, in December, 1876, thus bringing a satisfactory solution to the problem of transportation and mail service in Northeast Texas.⁶²

⁶²Louis J. Wortham, A History of Texas, V, 217-218.

Not only did the lack of sufficient and prompt communication adversely affect the obtaining of news and the circulation of the Standard, but it created an equally serious problem of supply. It was difficult to keep any adequate supply of paper and other necessities, since most of the supplies were obtained by boat. Until after the Civil War, the Red River was the principal artery of trade for Clarksville and Northeast Texas. The complete story of the boating trade could be traced from the

columns of the Standard. Even this trade was not satisfactory as it could be used only during high water periods. The length of time the river was navigable depended of course on the amount of rainfall in its upper region. Light draft steamers could reach Fort Towson, near Clarksville, for about four months of the year.⁶³ Transportation on the Red River would have been very

⁶³R. B. Marcy (Captain of the Fifth Infantry, United States), Explorations of Red River of Louisiana in 1852, p. 97.

simple had it not been for the Great Raft.⁶⁴ The Great Raft was

⁶⁴Standard, June 16, 1855.

an obstruction caused by the accumulation of trees and dirt, which had been going on sufficiently long for much of the timber to decay, and for forest to grow at places over the river. It began a few miles above Natchitoches and extended up the river for a hundred miles. It was a continuous obstruction but was interspersed by open water. Although it was commonly reported that the raft was a complete barrier, this was not entirely true because, during high water, the boatman was able to leave the river at the lower end of the raft by way of Loggy Bayou (Daichet) and then follow Lake Bistineau, Red Chute, Lake Bodceau, and Willow Chute back to the river above the raft.⁶⁵ The first

⁶⁵Strickland, Anglo-American Activities in Northeastern Texas, 33-34.

steamboat to ascend the river above the raft was Benjamin Milam's Enterprise in 1831. It was not until the removal of the raft, that steamboat navigation became common on the upper Red River. Captain Henry Shreve began to clear the raft as early as 1830, but discontinued his work after a short time for the lack of funds, although he had not removed more than fifty miles of the obstruction.⁶⁶ He resumed his work in 1833, and continued for

only the ⁶⁶American State Papers: Military Affairs, IV, 595. In Louisiana.⁶⁹ In the autumn of 1849, the publication of the five years, but the task was not completed. Although steamboats were especially designed and constructed for use on the upper part of the river, transportation could not be maintained regularly.⁶⁷ It had to be suspended for several weeks because of a

four-month delay in receiving paper ordered from Philadelphia.⁷⁰

⁶⁷Standard, January 3, 1852.

⁷⁰Ibid., December 26, 1849.

The navigation situation forced DeMorse to order large amounts of paper and other supplies far in advance of the time that they would be needed. The Standard was forced to suspend publication for nine weeks in the spring of 1845, because of failure to receive a supply of paper, although material had been ordered and shipped from New Orleans nearly four months before (February 24). The subscribers were assured, however, that they would receive fifty-two numbers--the loss in each case being expected within a week. The warehouses at Alexandria were filled with produce awaiting shipment, and the boats had been ordered to

DeMorse's.⁶⁸ A twelve months' supply of paper ordered from

⁶⁸Standard, January 3, 1852.

Boston in January, 1846, arrived in Clarksville, August 13.

DeMorse had found New Orleans to be a poor source of supply; he had learned that he could not depend upon New Orleans for paper and had found that the paper obtained from Philadelphia was not only the size ordered but was superior in quality to that obtained in Louisiana.⁶⁹ In the autumn of 1849, the publication of the

⁶⁹Ibid., August 15, 1846.

Standard again had to be suspended for several weeks because of a four-month delay in receiving paper ordered from Philadelphia.⁷⁰

⁷⁰Ibid., December 28, 1849.

Typical of the seriousness of the navigation problem was the failure of 1855. The river was low. Provisions of all kinds, consequently, became remarkably scarce. The last barrel of flour was sold in Shreveport for twenty dollars. At the same time there was not a barrel of flour for sale in Marshall, scarcely two sacks of coffee, a very limited supply of sugar, and not a pound of bacon. Supplies, however, were optimistically expected within a week. The warehouses at Alexandria were filled with produce awaiting shipment, and the boats had been obliged to

to unload most of their cargoes on the banks because it was impossible for them to proceed. The Standard raised a cry to have the channel around the raft opened, but all efforts to do so were for a time futile. The navigation problem was solved only by a rise of the river.⁷¹

⁷¹Standard, June 16, 1855.

In order to avoid suspension of the Standard, DeMorse at times resorted to wagon transportation of supplies. A supply of paper ordered from Philadelphia left that city June 30, 1858, and left New Orleans, September 4. It arrived in Alexandria at the lowest stage of the river. Despite the almost prohibitory cost of \$3.50 a barrel, DeMorse had it freighted from Alexandria to Shreveport. He sent ox wagons to receive it at Shreveport and haul it to Clarksville.⁷²

⁷²Ibid., November 27, 1858.

By the end of 1858 conditions had improved and were to continue to improve thereafter except for the interruption due to the Civil War. Like all newspapers, the Standard was confronted with the problems of business management, finance, circulation, and chartering, and the methods of meeting these problems adequately and efficiently. The Standard first appeared as a four-page weekly paper, seventeen by twenty-two inches, five columns to the page. During the first few years the size sometimes

varied because of the scarcity of paper. The subscription price was five dollars per year. Advertisements were received and inserted at the rate of one dollar per square of eight lines for the first insertion and fifty cents for each subsequent insertion. Announcements of candidates for office were published at ten dollars each. Classed as advertising, and charged for accordingly, were obituary articles. Personal disputations, when admissible at all, were charged double the regular rate.⁷³

⁷³Standard, August 10, 1842.

It was DeMorse's intention to maintain the paper on a cash basis. During the first year, however, adherence to that policy was impossible. In addition to his duties as editor, DeMorse carried on the practice of law, limiting it, however, to criminal cases and the collection of foreign debts. His law practice required his attendance at the district courts and furnished an excellent opportunity to collect the amounts due for subscriptions and advertising as well as an opportunity to solicit new patrons. His itinerary covered practically all the counties from Bowie to Tarrant. Due notice was given through the editorial section of the Standard of the editor's scheduled attendance upon the courts, and the delinquents were urged to pay up, for it was the only means by which the Standard could be

⁷⁷Ibid., May 13, 1843.

maintained.⁷⁴ Money was always preferred. Because of its scarce-

⁷⁴Standard, March 21, 1843. Similar notices appeared regularly until the interruption due to the Civil War.

ness, however, DeMorse informed his readers that he would accept commodities of produce. Though he reduced subscriptions to four dollars in cash, he charged the old price of five dollars in produce. If not paid until the end of the year the subscription price was to be seven dollars.⁷⁵ Exchequer bills were to be

⁷⁵Ibid., October 30, 1844.

received at par for subscriptions. DeMorse expressed disappointment that the subscription list was no more than half as large as he had anticipated, although it had steadily increased.⁷⁶

⁷⁶Ibid.

In 1845 the Standard began the publication of a larger paper. At the same time the editor told his readers that the Standard "now contains as much reading matter as any other in the Republic, at a price of one dollar less than any other its size."⁷⁷

⁷⁷Ibid., May 13, 1845.

DeMorse labored faithfully to serve his section, striving always to improve his paper. In August, 1846, he opened a branch office at Bonham. The Standard was to be published simultaneously at Clarksville and Bonham. The purpose of establishing the Bonham office was to furnish the people of that area a paper, free of postage, which would advance the interest of their section.⁷⁸ Because "expense was too great for the

⁷⁸Ibid., February 18 and November 2, 1846.

⁷⁸Standard, August 23, 1846.

During the year 1844, some four thousand dollars was resulting profit," the Bonham project proved a failure, and was discontinued eight months later.⁷⁹ At the same time that the by wagon, was a power press of cylinder type, from which could be obtained ⁷⁹Ibid., April 29, 1847. per minute.⁸⁰ The only other

Bonham branch office was established, the Standard office in November 17, 1846. Clarksville was removed to a new building and the edition was again enlarged.⁸⁰

power press in Texas at the time was that of the Galveston News,

⁸⁰Ibid., October 17 and 31, 1846.

⁸⁰Ibid., November 17, 1846. During the 1850's DeMorse made an effort to increase the number of subscribers and to keep the Standard equal in quality and content to any other paper in Texas. The price was reduced to two dollars and fifty cents a year in 1852. In 1859, that it involved a greater investment of capital than any other in East or North East Texas. The building in which the paper was

it was raised to three dollars.⁸¹ Official agents were secured

⁸¹Standard, July 24, 1852, and December 18, 1858.

not only in Texas, but as far distant as New Orleans, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston.⁸²

⁸²Ibid., February 18 and November 2, 1854.

During the year 1854, some four thousand dollars was expended upon the establishment for additional room, machinery, and type. The new press, which had to be hauled from Shreveport by wagon, was a power press of cylinder type, from which could be obtained twenty-two impressions per minute.⁸³ The only other

⁸³Ibid., April 1, July 1, October 28, 1854, and November 17, 1855.

power press in Texas at the time was that of the Galveston News, which was propelled by horse power.⁸⁴ After the improvements were

⁸⁴Ibid., November 17, 1887; a reprint of "Special Correspondence to the Galveston News," dated May 26, 1880.

completed DeMorse informed his readers that the Standard equipment was one of the "fullest and costliest in the State." He said that it involved a greater investment of capital than any other found in most issues for several years in East or North East Texas. The building in which the Standard

was housed was the first of brick construction in Northeast Texas.⁸⁵ In 1856 it was valued at approximately eight thousand

generally ⁸⁵Standard, November 17, 1887; a reprint of "Special Correspondence to the Galveston News, " dated May 26, 1880.

dollars.⁸⁶

⁸⁶Ibid., January 6, 1855, November 17, 1855, and April 26, 1856.

The improvements were an important factor in increasing the circulation of the Standard. Immediately after their installation, DeMorse, during a three weeks' attendance of the courts, secured nearly one hundred subscribers.⁸⁷ Throughout most of the

⁸⁷Ibid., April 28, 1855.

decade of the 1850's the Standard claimed that its circulation was larger than that of any other newspaper in Texas east of the Trinity, and was equalled only by that of one other paper in the state. Its circulation in Northeast Texas, comprising Bowie, Red River, Tarrant, Collin, Hunt, Hopkins, and Titus counties, "is almost exclusive, being as ten to one over any other public Journal in most of those counties."⁸⁸

⁸⁸Ibid., February 18, 1854. A similar statement is found in most issues for several years.

Circulation and advertising were not the Standard's only sources of revenue. In 1843 the office began job printing. Hand bills, forms, circulars, cards, bill heads, and fine work, generally executed in black or fancy colored ink, added to DeMorse's income. The Standard notified its readers that its stock of paper included "every desirable variety; fine book paper, colored paper of various tints, folio-post, foolscap, and a large stock of cards, enameled, porcelain, and colored; also various kinds of colored inks and bronzes, and an extensive variety of type, large, small, and ornamental. We think we hazard nothing in saying that we can do work in our line, in a style that cannot be surpassed in the West. Our supply of materials is probably unequalled in the State."⁸⁹ Four years

⁸⁹Ibid., December 22, 1849.

⁸⁹Standard, February 23, 1850.

later the Standard asserted that it was "prepared to execute printing of any size, in a style unsurpassed in the Southwest. We have sixty different styles of type in the office including a full supply of book type as well as a variety of cuts and borders."⁹⁰

⁹⁰Ibid., February 18, 1854.

The Standard was one of the journals selected for the official publication of the Acts and the Resolutions passed by the first and second session of the Thirtieth Congress of the

United States.⁹¹ It was also selected occasionally as a medium

⁹¹Standard, April 29, 1848, and September 29, 1849.

for the official advertisements in connection with the carrying of the United States mails in Texas. Such advertisements continued in each case for several weeks and covered approximately one-third of the space of the paper.⁹² DeMorse at times secured

⁹²Ibid., February 18, 1854, and February 20, 1858.

contracts for state printing,⁹³ and also did the official county

⁹³Ibid., December 28, 1849.

printing "far and near" for many years.⁹⁴

⁹⁴Ibid., November 17, 1887; a reprint of "Special Correspondence to the News," dated May 26, 1880.

The Standard, in common with the other journals of the South, suffered during the Civil War. During the absence of DeMorse, who served as colonel of the Twenty-ninth Cavalry, John R. Woolridge was DeMorse's authorized agent for the transaction of all business.⁹⁵ The issues of the Standard were irregular at

⁹⁵Standard, August 2, 1862.

times and were greatly reduced in size. With full faith in the cause of the Confederacy, however, the Standard continued to defend the cause of the South. When DeMorse returned to Clarksville in June, 1865, he announced that, with fortune favoring, the moderate dimensions of the Standard would "ere long be larger."⁹⁶

⁹⁶Standard, June 10, 1865.

The bitter days of the Reconstruction forced DeMorse to look elsewhere than to the Standard for his livelihood. He purchased a full line of merchandise and combined commercial pursuits with editorial labors. The commercial undertaking was short lived. Although DeMorse received signal recognition for his ability as a newspaperman in April, 1873, by being made the first president of the Texas Press and Editorial Association,⁹⁷

⁹⁷Texas Press Association, A History of the Texas Press and the Texas Press Association, 109-110.

he retired in the autumn of that year to his farm nine miles south of Clarksville, and turning from his pen to a pruning hook, began to grow vines and fruit trees.⁹⁸ He had fought the political

⁹⁸The last issue of the Standard on file before the office was closed is dated November 15, 1873.

battles of the state, and impressed his varied views through the

columns of the Standard for more than thirty years. But he was not to remain long in seclusion. Some men are born for public service. As we shall see it was during this period of retirement from editorial pursuits that DeMorse rendered great service in helping frame the Texas Constitution of 1876. In November, 1879, his friends called him back to his paper. He purchased a Campbell press in New York for one thousand dollars, installed it in the old Standard building, and again began publication.⁹⁹

May Our Banner Brave the Breasts--The Standard of the Press.

⁹⁹Standard, November 17, 1887, a reprint of "Special Correspondence to the Galveston News," dated May 26, 1880.

The first number of volume one of the new Standard appeared November 16, 1879. The subscription rate was reduced to two dollars per year.¹⁰⁰ In the last issue of the second volume DeMorse Standard, December 18, 1887.

¹⁰⁰Standard, December 12, 1879.

in commenting on the success of the re-establishment of the Standard said that "While the success is not remarkable, it is as much as we anticipated when we started. ... Our subscription list, at home, has steadily and slowly increased."¹⁰¹ Although

¹⁰¹Ibid., November 4, 1881.

the Standard never regained its former position of dominance in Texas, it was respected throughout the state. DeMorse again

forcefully and vigorously defended his views on the important questions of the day. One of the most important of those fights was made in defense of the masses against capital and corporations, but this part of the story will be told in another place.

Editorially as pungent and crisp as ever, the Standard continued until the autumn of 1887, when its venerable editor handed the printers "30" and fell into the wakeless slumber of death. The Standard had certainly fulfilled its motto-- "Long May Our Banner Brave the Breeze--The Standard of the Free."

The story of the Standard after the death of DeMorse can be told in a few words. It was DeMorse's wish that his newspaper should be continued, and that it should remain in the hands of the family.¹⁰² Its management passed to his daughter, Mrs.

¹⁰²Standard, December 15, 1887.

Isabella DeMorse Latimer, who gave notice that the Standard would continue to fight the same battles that it had fought since the War.¹⁰³ In September, 1888, the Standard denied the rumor that

¹⁰³Ibid., June 28, 1888.

it was not to continue and pointed out that it had a larger circulation than ever before; that the building and machinery were owned by the management; and that it was independent enough to

express "our opinion regardless of whom it hurts."¹⁰⁴ Neverthe-

¹⁰⁴Standard, September 20, 1888.

less, the last issue to be found is dated December 6, 1888. The only hint that the end had arrived is a notice urging those in arrears to pay as "We must settle the business of the office by January 1, 1889."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵Ibid., December 6, 1888.

It has been more than half a century now since the last issue of the Standard rolled from the press. Clarksville still remains an unpretentious village; but the quaint, old two-story brick home of the Standard is no more. More than one generation has come and gone, and many who walk daily across a certain spot on First Street will probably never realize its past significance. But the "Old Timer" has not forgotten; he points with interest to an occasional piece of type or to a small piece of printing machinery still to be found on the old lot as a relic of by-gone days. He remembers the Standard and its slogan appearing on every issue:

LONG MAY OUR BANNER BRAVE THE BREEZE--
THE STANDARD OF THE FREE

CHAPTER III

THE STANDARD AND THE ANNEXATION OF TEXAS

The policy of a newspaper from 1830 to 1890 was the policy of the editor. The period was the golden age of the editor and the editorial.¹ The Standard and Charles DeMorse

¹See Lucy M. Salmon, The Newspaper and the Historian, 251.

were typical of the age. The political policy of the Standard truly reflects the ideas and beliefs of its editor. To understand the one is also to understand the other. Since the Standard was the only paper of importance in North and Northeast Texas, it exerted much influence on the views of the citizens of the region. At the time of the appearance of the first issue the attention of a great part of the world was being attracted to Texas because of the fate of the Santa Fe expedition. Other events were soon to occur that would lead in turn to the annexation of Texas by the United States, to the Mexican War, and to the Whig settlement of the Western boundary of Texas in 1850. It will be impossible to consider here all the political issues discussed by the Standard during this period, but an examination of certain major issues should prove adequate to an understanding of the political policy of the new publication and its editor. Following the withdrawal of the Mexicans beyond the Rio Grande after the battle of San Jacinto, President David G.

Burnet issued a call for an election in September, at which (in addition to the ratification of the constitution adopted by the convention at Washington on the Brazos in March and the election of designated officials) the voters almost unanimously expressed their desire for annexation to the United States.

Anticipating a vote in favor of annexation, Burnet appointed James Collinsworth and Peter W. Grayson as commissioners to the United States, with instructions to obtain recognition of Texas' independence from the older American republic, and to inform the authorities at Washington that the "annexation of Texas to the United States as a member of that confederacy, would be for many weighty reasons highly acceptable to the people of this country." Burnet then outlined the terms upon which entrance into the Union would be acceptable.²

²For the complete instructions see Burnet to Collinsworth and Grayson, May 26, 1836, in G. P. Garrison (Editor), Texan Diplomatic Correspondence, I, 89-91; published in the Annual Reports of the American Historical Association, 1907, II.

The negotiations were continued by William H. Wharton after Sam Houston became president. It was, however, only after prolonged effort that recognition was obtained, and a decade passed before annexation was accomplished. Jackson, in ill health, and soon to retire from the presidency, did not wish to take any step that might embarrass the succeeding administration. It was not until his last day in office that Jackson was prevailed upon to take advantage of a "rider" in the appropriation beginning in December, 1837, attempts were made to secure

bill and to name a minister to the Republic of Texas."

Memucan Hunt, Wharton's successor, on August 4, 1837, submitted to the state department the proposal that Texas be annexed by the United States.³ After three weeks of waiting,

³Hunt to Irion, August 10, 1837, in Garrison, Texan Diplomatic Correspondence, I, 252.

Hunt received a reply from John Forsyth, secretary of state, not only rejecting the proposal but even refusing to consider such a step. Forsyth went so far as to impress Hunt with the idea that this refusal was final.⁴

⁴Hunt to Irion, September 18, 1837, in Garrison, Texan Diplomatic Correspondence, I, 258. Forsyth wrote to Hunt on August 25.

Refusal of the president to negotiate a treaty of annexation turned attention to the possibility of obtaining the same result by means of an act of Congress. Instructions to this effect had been given, December 31, 1836, by J. P. Henderson, acting secretary of state for Texas, to Memucan Hunt, who was leaving to join Wharton in Washington.⁵

⁵Henderson to Hunt, December 31, 1836, in Garrison, Texan Diplomatic Correspondence, I, 252.

During the regular session of the Twenty-fifth Congress, beginning in December, 1837, attempts were made to secure legisla-

tive action on the subject. A vote on a joint resolution offered in the House by Waddy Thompson, of South Carolina, "directing the President to take the necessary steps for the annexation of Texas to the United States, as soon as it can be done consistently with the treaty stipulations of this Government,"⁶ was forestalled

ation was ⁶Congressional Globe, 25 Congress, 2 Session, 451.

by a filibuster led by John Quincy Adams. Proponents of annexation accepted temporary defeat. The attempt to secure annexation had placed the new republic at a disadvantage in seeking recognition from European powers. The people of Texas grew cold toward the idea of annexation, the success of which appeared more and more remote. Secretary Irion wrote Hunt, December 31, 1837, that the refusal of the United States had caused a change in sentiment so much that "it is probable should the vote be again taken at the next September election that a majority would vote against it." Hunt was instructed to proceed cautiously with the subject as the attempt was seriously hindering the progress of diplomatic relations with England.⁷

⁷Irion to Hunt, December 31, 1837, in Garrison, Texas Diplomatic Correspondence, I, 279.

Under such circumstances Texas reversed its official policy, and by direction of President Houston the offer of

annexation was formally withdrawn, October 12, 1838. Houston's action was approved and ratified by a joint resolution of the Texas Congress, January 23, 1839.⁸ Thus the question of annex-

⁸Gammel, Laws of Texas, II, 75.

ation was closed for more than three years.

It was the news of the ill-fated Santa Fe Expedition and the retaliatory Mexican raids into Texas, together with the growing uneasiness of the authorities at Washington concerning the establishment of the new relations between England and Texas, that led to a renewal of the annexation project. The renewed overtures came from the United States.

The treaty with Santa Anna, May 14, 1836, among other things, provided for the conclusion of a subsequent treaty by which the limits of Texas were to be fixed, but were not to extend beyond the Rio Grande.⁹ On December 19, of the same year,

⁹Niles' Register, LXIX, 98; see also H. H. Bancroft, North Mexican States and Texas, II, 270.

the Texas Congress approved an act declaring the Rio Grande from its mouth to its source the boundary between Texas and Mexico.¹⁰ Texas, However, did not follow the act by the estab-

¹⁰Gammel, Laws of Texas, I, 1193-1194.

ishment of actual jurisdiction to the Rio Grande. The Mexicans continued in control of the left bank of the river.

Mirabeau B. Lamar, who succeeded Houston in the presidency, in 1838, was an imperialist. Acting without the sanction of his Congress, Lamar made an attempt in 1841 to extend the jurisdiction of Texas to the Rio Grande by means of the Santa Fe Expedition. He hoped that the expedition would result in closer commercial and political relations between Texas and New Mexico.¹¹

¹¹M. B. Lamar, "Address to the Citizens of Santa Fe," June 5, 1841, in Charles A. Gulick, Jr. and Katherine Elliott (Editors), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, III, 488-495.

In June a force of 270 men set out for Santa Fe. After many hardships and much suffering the expedition reached Santa Fe, only to be captured. Two of the members were executed, and the others were marched to Mexico, where they were held prisoners. Some of them who were not Texans were released upon the intercession of their respective governments; while others were set free by an order of President Santa Anna, June 13, 1842.¹² Less than two months later, DeMorse, who had been a

¹²For details of the expedition, see G. W. Kendall, Narrative of the Santa Fe Expedition.

member of Lamar's political family, founded his newspaper.

The first issue of the Standard, August 20, 1842,

announced the "Glorious News" that the Texan Santa Fe prisoners had been released. Editorially DeMorse defended Lamar for dispatching the expedition to Santa Fe, and extolled the men who participated in it.¹³ The Texans who went to Santa Fe

¹³Standard, August 20, 1842.

upon a trading expedition, were entrapped and made prisoners, and were "marched over mountains and through valleys for 2,100 miles, barefooted and dependent upon the natural kindness of women and children for subsistence and covering. Even their clothes were taken from them. At last they were put to work upon the streets of the City of Mexico like malefactors of the worst description," he wrote.¹⁴

¹⁴Ibid., August 20, 1842.

Texas.¹⁵ The Standard maintained that Santa Anna had released the prisoners upon learning that sentiment in their behalf was growing and that foreign indignation would be aroused against Mexico in case they were not freed. In reference to their release the Standard commented that "Our readers will know that the Dictator of Mexico, has thought proper, at last to liberate the Santa Fe prisoners. We do not credit him for an act extorted by the animadversion of the civilized world. His course has been such a requittal as might have been expected for the weak and timorous policy which preserved him from the

gallows." The editor attempted to expose duplicity on the part of the Mexican president. He said that Santa Anna was actuated by selfish policy in releasing the prisoners, because the people of the United States were becoming interested in Texas. He pointed out that Santa Anna desired to avoid bringing about a rupture between the United States and Mexico.¹⁵

¹⁵Standard, August 20, 1842.

The prisoners themselves attributed their release to the efforts of Waddy Thompson, the United States minister to Mexico. Their appreciation was expressed by letters in which they made it plain they felt that their release had not been due to the government of Texas. In announcing the arrival of the majority of the unfortunates at Galveston, the Standard expressed its sincere appreciation of the United States consul at Vera Cruz for providing means for their transportation to Texas.¹⁶

¹⁶Ibid., September 10, 1842.

in June. Although the prisoners had been released before the establishment of the Standard, interest in the expedition remained. DeMorse, consequently, decided that an account of the Santa Fe Expedition would be welcomed by his readers. The story of the expedition, as told in the Standard, was based upon the series of articles written by George W. Kendall and published

originally in the New Orleans Daily Picayune. In April, 1841, Kendall decided to make a tour of the western prairies with the object of regaining his health and obtaining first hand information of the Indian country. He subsequently joined the Santa Fe Expedition and was one of the ill-fated prisoners. The first of Kendall's articles concerning the expedition appeared in the Picayune soon after his return to New Orleans.¹⁷

¹⁷Daily Picayune, June 1, 1842.

The Standard, on the exchange list of the Picayune, was entitled to republish these articles. It began the publication in its second issue.¹⁸ The proportion of space and the

¹⁸Standard, August 27, 1842.

location of the articles in the paper leave little doubt that the Santa Fe Expedition was a subject then paramount in the minds of editor and patrons. Altogether eighty-four columns were devoted to the Santa Fe Expedition, the greater part being the narrative of Kendall. The Kendall articles were discontinued in June, 1843, since public attention had become centered on other affairs. The Standard also published an account written by Wm. G. Cooke, who had accompanied the expedition as one of the commissioners. This account was published because Cooke lived in Clarksville, and the story would thus be of interest to

a majority of the local readers.¹⁹

¹⁹Standard, August 27, 1842.

Early in March, 1842, a Mexican force commanded by General Rafael Vasquez, in retaliation for the Santa Fe affair, occupied Goliad, Refugio, Victoria, and San Antonio. The Texans were entirely unprepared for hostilities and by the time the Texan force had begun to gather at San Antonio, the Mexican forces were believed to have re-crossed the Rio Grande.²⁰

²⁰Frank W. Johnson (Eugene C. Barker and Ernest Wm. Winkler, Editors), A History of Texas and Texans, I, 474.

DeMorse nevertheless expressed his condemnation of the Mexican expedition in an early issue of the Standard.

Thank God! These dastardly miscreants have at last set foot upon our soil, and the people of the West will at last have the opportunity so long anxiously hoped for, wreaking vengeance upon them for the injuries and villanies they have perpetrated. We predict, from a sufficient knowledge of the character of the combatants, that fifteen hundred of the militia will at any time drive five thousand Mexicans from any fortified place.²¹

²¹Standard, September 10, 1842.

Fearing that Austin would be attacked, President Houston, after the Mexicans had occupied San Antonio in March,

1842, removed the government to Houston. DeMorse later attributed the cause of his own bitter hatred for Houston to this act.²² The first issue of the Standard was begun in undisguised

²²By 1850 DeMorse thought that Houston had changed for the better. He had, by that time, put away much of his irregular habits, DeMorse believed, and was "a true friend to Texas." DeMorse explained his position in regard to Houston in an editorial in the Standard, November 9, 1850.

political hostility to Houston. DeMorse had just voted for Houston for president of Texas, but when the latter moved the government from Austin and diverted an appropriation for the defense of the frontier to the expenses of moving munitions of war away from the frontier, DeMorse came out in open opposition.

To deal with the Mexican crisis Houston called a special session of Congress to meet at Houston on July 27. He recommended a counter-invasion to "impress the Mexicans with the calamities which have thus far been incident to us alone, and create in them a desire for peace which would be mutually advantageous to both parties." He pointed out that unless continued and permanent protection were given to the frontier inhabitants, the settlements would recede, and discontent and distrust would be aroused. The Standard carried the message on its front page and editorially approved the president's suggestion of a counter attack.²³ Congress voted for a declaration of war

²³Ibid., August 20, 1842; also see Sam Houston to the Texas Congress, June 27, 1842, in Amelia W. Williams and Eugene

C. Barker (Editors), The Writings of Sam Houston, III, 116-124.

and appropriated ten million acres of land to meet the expense, but Houston vetoed the bill as he considered the appropriation insufficient.²⁴

²⁴Sam Houston to the House of Representatives, July 22, 1842, in Williams and Barker, The Writings of Sam Houston, III, 116-124.

In September, a second Mexican expedition under the command of General Adrian Woll penetrated as far as San Antonio. After occupying the city from September 9 to 20, Woll withdrew, carrying with him several prisoners, among whom were the district judge and other officials. The Standard now assumed an aggressive attitude. It published in full General Woll's letter of August 20, 1842, and commented that "He [Woll] must have no ordinary share of brass to attempt to palm off his little detachment of paltry troops upon the people of Texas, as the van of a formidable invading army. This ridiculous appeal to his doughty Mexicans, to be 'great as the desert is vast,' has doubtless been as effectual as the attempt of the frog to swell himself to the size of the ox."²⁵

²⁵Standard, October 15, 1842.

The Standard advocated in strongest terms a policy of retaliation against the Mexicans. The reader was made to under-

stand that Santa Anna intended to wage a predatory war upon the frontier of the Republic. DeMorse contended that the Texan army should levy contributions of money and stock upon the state of Chihuahua, and urged an expedition for that purpose. DeMorse believed that two hundred thousand dollars might be obtained from the city of Chihuahua alone, if an expedition of five hundred men could be sent to that locality.²⁶ There is no doubt that the

²⁶Standard, October 29, 1842.

Standard would have supported any expedition which had for its purpose the invasion of Mexico. DeMorse made an urgent appeal for men to enlist, for the people of Texas to act. Appeals made by those living on the frontier ought not to pass unheeded, "Texas demands it--humanity calls for it--patriotism ought to obey that call," DeMorse wrote in an appeal to the youth of Northeast Texas to enlist with General Edward Burleson.²⁷

²⁷Ibid., November 5, 1842.

The volunteers collected at San Antonio. In November about 750 men under the command of General Alexander Somervell started for Laredo. After the capture of Laredo early in December, part of the force returned home. The remainder moved down the Rio Grande. On December 19, when General Somervell ordered a retreat, some three hundred of the men refused to obey, elected Colonel W. S. Fisher to lead them, and marched to Mier.

They engaged in a battle on Christmas day and the day following, and surrendered. On February 4, 1843, the Standard published a review of the movements of the Texan force from the time it started until the surrender of Colonel Fisher, but at the time made no editorial comment.²⁸

²⁸Standard, February 4, 1843.

As further accounts continued to come in, DeMorse abandoned his earlier policy of insisting on the reliability of an article concerning the Mier prisoners and gave space in the Standard to almost any report pertaining to them. Rumors of all sorts were printed, but the paper usually stated the source from which the information was obtained. After a few weeks of editorial silence concerning the fate of the prisoners, DeMorse turned to the defense of the expedition. He maintained that the adventure was justified and that all honor was due to the small band for striking a blow in the defense of the new republic. He told the readers of the Standard that "to have longer suffered the depredations of the Mexicans without retaliation, would have lessened our reputation, as it would have injured our settlements."²⁹

²⁹Ibid., March 2, April 13, and 20, 1843.

In all the articles in which the justice of the invasion of Mexico was considered, the Standard appealed to the

patriotism of the people of Texas. The paper condemned the action of the Mexican government in the strongest terms and urged the Texans to take measures of retaliation. Horrible scenes of the Texas Revolution were often recalled in order to arouse the citizens to action.

Bitterness of DeMorse toward the Mexican government was increased, no doubt, by the treatment accorded M. C. Wing, one of the Mier prisoners. Wing had accompanied DeMorse to Clarksville, where he was to be associated with him in the publication of the Standard. Turning his back upon an editorial career, Wing joined the volunteers for the invasion of Mexico, and was among the seventeen Mier prisoners who drew a black bean and who were to be executed as punishment for their attempt to escape.

Writing of the cruelties suffered by the Mier prisoners, DeMorse predicted that:

Some day patriotism might not be considered a crime in Texas. Some day perhaps, reeking in the blood of the accursed minions, who now indulge their petty spite and tyranny over their helpless condition . . . they may work out their own vengeance. The blood of Fannin and Cameron and their compatriots yet sends up its deep cry for vengeance. The earth which drank their blood smothered their cry, and a day will dawn bloodier than San Jacinto. On that day many a victim will pay the debt of his race.

DeMorse believed the Texans were in part to blame for the situation. They should have executed Santa Anna while he was yet in their power, so that he might never have lived to renew

his barbarous massacre of Texas citizens.³⁰

³⁰Standard, August 14, 1844.

As time passed and no prospect of release for the Mier prisoners appeared, DeMorse said in the columns of the Standard that the government of Texas was making little effort to secure their freedom. Criticism of President Houston's course, although unfair and severe, probably would have been still more extreme had it not been for the fact that many readers of the Standard were admirers of Houston and supporters of the administration. After the return of the prisoners, when the facts concerning the expedition became more fully known, DeMorse changed his attitude in regard to the course pursued by the president and offered an editorial apology, being satisfied that Houston's course of action was justified by the turn of events.³¹ The Standard published several accounts of the Mier

³¹Ibid., October 30, 1844.

Expedition, including one by Colonel Fisher, as well as a lengthy communication by Houston in his own defense. Some of the accounts severely criticised President Houston's policy; others expressed approval. DeMorse published them without

In January, 1843, James W. Robinson, who had been

editorial comment.³²

³²Standard, July 5, 1845, January 14, and 21, 1846.

On June 28, 1842, a treaty with England was ratified, by the terms of which England agreed to urge upon Mexico the recognition of Texas.³³ Mexico, however, rejected the over-

³³Hamilton to Jones, February 18, 1842, in Garrison, Texan Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 945; see also "Proctocol of Conference held at the Foreign Office, June 28, 1842, between the Plenipotentiaries of Texas and Great Britain," in Ibid., 996-997.

ture.³⁴ After the retreat of General Woll from San Antonio,

³⁴J. L. Worley, "Diplomatic Relations of England and the Republic of Texas," The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, IX, 11-16.

President Houston again appealed to outside powers to bring pressure on Mexico either to recognize the independence of Texas or to make war according to the custom of civilized nations.³⁵

³⁵Washington (Texas) correspondent to the Standard, January 17, 1843, in the Standard, February 4, 1843.

The only effect of this act was an increase of interest on the part of both the United States and England in Texas.

In January, 1843, James W. Robinson, who had been

captured by General Woll at San Antonio, in order to get out of prison, persuaded Santa Anna that the people of Texas were tired of war and confusion, and would be willing to reunite with Mexico. Thereupon, Santa Anna appointed Robinson as a commissioner to open negotiations with Texas for peace on these terms. He was to submit several proposals to the Texas government. The rebellious state would acknowledge the sovereignty of Mexico. A general act of amnesty was to be made for past acts in Texas. Texas would become an independent department of Mexico, and be represented in the general Congress. Texas would initiate all local laws and regulations, and no Mexican troops, under any pretext, were to be stationed within its borders.³⁶

³⁶James W. Robinson to the Editor of the Times, (place of publication not given), March 27, 1843; published in the Standard, April 27, 1843.

Commenting upon the proposals the Standard urged an immediate rejection. Texas had battled too long for independence to yield at the first "treacherous" proposition of compromise. DeMorse had no faith in the sincerity of the Mexicans. The Texas banner with its single star had been reared upon the field of many a "hot little fight," and had cheered on the spirits of men who could not exchange their fealty lightly and abruptly.³⁷ He

³⁷Standard, April 13, 1843.

wrote:

A union with Mexico would be a union between freemen and slaves, in which there would be no affinity of thought or feeling and consequently no permanency—it would be the union of intelligence and ignorance, productive of disgust, and internal dissension of vigorous youth with decrepitude and disease, in which the growth of the one, however irregular and untrained, would certainly jar and accelerate the rapid and diseased decline of the other. There could be no unity; no similarity; no fellow feeling....We must be free, uncontrolled master of our own actions—or if annexed to any other power, it must be to one with similar political sentiments and education.³⁸

³⁸Standard, April 27, 1843.

Houston, playing for time, proclaimed on June 15, 1843, a truce with Mexico, and appointed commissioners to meet the Mexican representatives and arrange terms for an armistice and a permanent settlement. DeMorse expressed the opinion that the truce afforded a gleam of hope for termination of the difficulties with Mexico, and that it threw more light upon the policy the president was pursuing. He felt that a wise and honorable peace could, with the intervention of the great powers, be made. He did not believe that the United States, Great Britain, and France would longer tolerate the conditions that had prevailed. They would require either an immediate subjugation of Texas or an acknowledgement of its independence. He believed that if the independence of Texas were acknowledged immigration would increase, the valley of the upper Trinity would overflow with new agricultural settlers, and that with some commercial

arrangement with the United States, Texas within five years would show such a state of improvement as to evoke the admiration of the civilized world.³⁹

³⁹Standard, July 6, 1843.

News of the conditions in Texas again had aroused the interest of the people of the United States. Demands for and opposition to annexation were expressed. In December, the Standard published a speech made by John Quincy Adams at Braintree, Massachusetts, September 17, 1842. Adams reviewed the relations between the United States and Texas, and contended that the pro-slavery South had been plotting to secure Texas in order to enlarge the slave holding area.⁴⁰ DeMorse refuted these arguments

⁴⁰Standard, December 10, 1842.

one by one. He said that no immediate prospect of annexation was promised the readers, nor was there any expression of a desire to that effect.⁴¹

⁴¹Ibid.

In February, 1843, the Standard was informed by its Washington correspondent that Isaac Van Zandt, the Texas minister to Washington, had informed President Houston that annexation was being urged by some members of the United States

Congress.⁴² The Standard, however, during the early part of

⁴²Standard, February 4, 1843.

1843 showed no editorial inclination to advocate annexation but desired only the security of the Republic. Aroused by the Texas-Mexico truce and by rumored Texas agreement with England, public opinion in the United States veered toward a renewal of annexation negotiations in the summer of 1843.⁴³

⁴³See the correspondence of Smith to Van Zandt and Jones, in Garrison, Texan Diplomatic Correspondence, III; also, Senate Documents, 28 Congress, 1 Session, No. 341, p. 18.

DeMorse expressed himself editorially on what he believed to be the motives of England toward Texas. He did not expect pure philanthropy from that power. He could attribute only to selfish motives the interest of a power which had witnessed the partitioning of Poland without one effort to save her. He believed that Britain wished to contract some sort of an alliance with Texas, which would yield ready access to the new republic as a source of raw cotton for the Lancashire factories, since cotton growing in India had proved a failure. DeMorse was certain that England did not wish to be dependent solely upon the United States for cotton. He warned that England would like to have a controlling influence over Texas, to liberate its slaves, and to draw upon the ever-increasing supplies of raw cotton. Such a project would render slave labor in the South

unprofitable and afford an asylum to Southern runaway slaves. There were very few Texans, he felt, upon whom allegiance to England would not "grate harshly." He, for one, would never consent to any agreement with that country that would in any way affect the sovereignty of the new republic. He thought that the people of Texas preferred an alliance with or annexation to them over any other political arrangement that could be made. But since the United States had spurned the proffers from Texas, when the latter was in need; and as England could offer peace, prosperity, and protection in return for the abolition of slavery, he feared that a majority of his fellow citizens would probably consent.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Standard, November 25, 1843.

There were other evidences of England's interest in Texas. On January 25, 1843, Ashbel Smith, the Texas minister to England and France, wrote Van Zandt that in July, 1842, someone connected with the British government had inquired of him (Smith) whether Texas would be willing to abolish slavery if equivalent advantages were offered by England, and whether it might be possible to divide Texas into two states, one free and one slave. The Colorado River was proposed as a dividing line.⁴⁵

⁴⁵Smith to Van Zandt, January 25, 1843, in Garrison, Texan Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 1105.

By the autumn of 1843, President John Tyler had reached the conclusion that the best way to discourage British influence in Texas would be to annex the republic. On October 16, 1843, he opened negotiations with Van Zandt for the annexation treaty. Van Zandt replied three days later that he had written his government for instructions.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Senate Documents, 28 Congress, 1 Session, No. 341, p. 37.

When news of this action reached the Standard, it reported to its readers that the United States government had fully awakened to the importance of intervening in the negotiations now going on relative to the independence of Texas, and that it was taking the steps dictated by a sense of self-preservation before the final ratification of a treaty which would bar any interference on her part. It pointed out that upon no other grounds than self-preservation could the people of Texas have expected the exhibition of any active operative interest in their behalf. It warned that even under pressure of self-preservation, abolitionism and fanaticism might be so predominant and controlling in the United States as to counteract the views and movements of that government.⁴⁷

⁴⁷Standard, November 18, 1843.

Houston assumed an attitude of indifference toward

annexation. In a "confidential" letter dated January 29, 1844, Houston informed Van Zandt that the instructions to suspend negotiations on the subject of annexation would be revoked, "leaving the matter open as it had been before." Van Zandt was directed to open negotiations should indications on the part of Congress of the United States justify the course. He was to proceed cautiously, for if the United States should "not be willing to consummate the policy of annexation, it might with other nations prove greatly prejudicial to our future negotiations with them."⁴⁸ Regardless of the advantages to be

⁴⁸Sam Houston to Van Zandt, January 29 and February 15, 1844, in Williams and Barker, the Writings of Sam Houston, III, 538-542.

derived from annexation, Houston believed it was necessary for Texas to proceed with caution. It was not until he had received assurances of security from the United States that he was willing to risk the "consequences which might possibly result from rejection, regarding our present and future safety against Mexico."⁴⁹

⁴⁹Sam Houston to Van Zandt, January 29 and February 15, 1844, in Williams and Barker, the Writings of Sam Houston, III, 538-542. For Donelson's instructions in this regard, see Calhoun to Howard, September 10, 1844, in Senate Documents, 28 Congress, 2 Session, No. 1, p. 38.

The United States government agreed to place its navy and army in position to protect Texas against Mexico in case of

invasion by that country during the time of negotiation, and to guarantee the independence of Texas should the negotiations fail. Thereupon, the treaty was signed, April 12, 1844.⁵⁰

⁵⁰Tyler to the Senate of the United States, May 15, 1844, in James H. Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, IV, 316; Niles' Register, LXVI, 230-233.

The Standard had published exchange articles both for and against annexation. Resolutions adopted by the various state legislatures were reported. By March, the Standard, in a short comment announced that it had received assurances of the certainty of annexation,⁵¹ and by April it felt that the "vexed

⁵¹Standard, March 27, 1844.

question will soon be settled, and there appears to be but little doubt of its being in favor of annexation."⁵²

⁵²Standard, April 10, 1844.

Because of the problem of obtaining paper and other difficulties to which reference has been made, the Standard suspended publication on April 10, and did not resume publication until May 1, 1844.⁵³ Upon resumption the Standard announced the

⁵³For problems relating to the mails and the suspension of the Standard, see pages 44-66 of this study.

terms of the treaty which had been concluded between the governments of Texas and the United States, April 12, 1844, and at the same time predicted that the treaty would fail. In an editorial DeMorse wrote that "The President and Mr. Calhoun have determined to try the fate of this measure before the Senate. What that fate will be, we think may safely be predicted. ... There are members of the Senate who, under different circumstances and at another time, might probably go for annexation, but who will oppose it now."⁵⁴

⁵⁴Standard, May 15, 1844.

Following the publication of Henry Clay's "Raleigh letter" of April 17, the Standard published without editorial comment the arguments against annexation as set forth by Clay. With the publication of Martin Van Buren's letter of April 20 in regard to annexation, the Standard (correctly) predicted that it "may very possibly prevent his obtaining the Democratic nomination for the presidency."⁵⁵

⁵⁵Standard, June 5, 1844.

Having learned the arguments of Clay, Van Buren, Thomas H. Benton, and others as to why Texas should not be annexed to the United States, DeMorse summed up the advantages and disadvantages that would accrue both to Texas and to the United States, after which he explained his own personal position.

He said that Benton thought the "fruit" was not ripe enough to be plucked but looked upon annexation as one of those things certain from the geographical situation of the two countries, the necessary posture of future events, and sympathies, affinities, and interests of the people. DeMorse answered that the people of Texas desired immediate annexation, and warned the opponents of annexation within the United States that should Texas become rich and powerful the United States would not then be able to obtain the consent of Texas to annexation. He was, he wrote, well acquainted with feeling in Texas. The great impulse for annexation was due to a sympathy for the institutions, the political heritage of the fatherland, and a belief that immediate immigration and revived business prosperity would result from the arrangement.

DeMorse felt that the majority of the citizens of Texas were confident that the prosperity of Texas would be better promoted if it retained its sovereignty and managed its own great resources. However, most of the people of Texas had been born in the United States and were deeply interested in every movement which affected the welfare or honor of the land of their birth. They would have desired to see people from the United States swarming in upon the rich lands of Texas. They would like the profit of increased population and the comfort which springs from the exertions for subsistence; the consequent results of annexation.

On the other hand, should Texas remain independent, its natural interests would be well-protected. Texas had the

cotton, sugar, grain, stock raising, and commercial resources. As the population increased grain growing and stock raising interests would increase. Commercial activity would thrive since the exports had already exceeded the imports.

Having neither the diversity of interest nor the great distances between the extremes of territory, Texas would never have the violent parties, the eternal cry of disseveration of the Union, nor the exchange of defiance and insult prevalent in the United States. Texas had sufficient rivers to carry the products of every section to the sea. She had plenty of coast line with three fine harbors, and timber for naval use. She possessed fertile territories and a mild and healthy climate. She could raise the southern crops, cotton, sugar, and tobacco as well as the northern crops of wheat, and oats.

"Do not all these more than counter-balance the advantages of annexation to the United States which are accompanied by party strife and sectional jealousy?" asked DeMorse. He thought that it was only natural that under such conditions the president of Texas should show a disposition to favor the preservation of the sovereignty of his state. The welfare of the majority in Texas was opposed to future territorial aggrandisement. Their interests being personal, they longed for comfort and tranquillity.

It would be disadvantageous for the United States to reject Texas, since to do so would be to throw away forever an offer which would strengthen her strategic position. To reject Texas would leave the southwestern possessions of the United

States at the mercy of future inhabitants of Texas. If at some future time sufficient inducements were offered for the abolition of slavery in Texas, the water courses and the imaginary line between Texas and the United States could hardly restrain the movement of the slaves of the South to the "land of promise." It was, thought DeMorse, only the part of wisdom to foresee possible dangers and prevent their occurrence. The Rio Grande, he pointed out, would be a much safer boundary for the United States than the parts of two rivers, one of which penetrated far into the United States, and an imaginary line of several hundred miles. DeMorse then proceeded to explain his own personal position in regard to annexation. He favored it if it could be consummated in a reasonable time, but did not wish it, should such action be postponed to some distant date. "If unassisted we are to work through our difficulties, after they are surmounted let us reap all the benefits," he wrote, "rather than share them with those who are willing to profit by our prosperity, but think it unadvisable to assist us out of trouble."⁵⁶

⁵⁶For the complete editorial on annexation written by DeMorse, see the Standard, June 19, 1844.

The vote on annexation was taken in the United States Senate June 8, 1844. In announcing the measure had failed by a vote of thirty-five to sixteen, the only comment of the Standard was that it was lost by a "larger vote than we had

anticipated."⁵⁷ The explanation of the defeat of the treaty

⁵⁷Standard, July 5, 1844.

apparently is to be found in the party politics of the time. In the campaign of 1844 which followed, a major issue of the successful Democratic party was the "re-annexation of Texas." The Standard centered its attention on that campaign, as it believed that annexation would depend upon the results of that election.

Rightly or wrongly, the election of James K. Polk, the Democratic nominee, was interpreted by the country as a demand for annexation. President Tyler interpreted the outcome of the election as a mandate and when Congress met in December, 1844, he recommended immediate annexation by joint resolution.⁵⁸

⁵⁸"President Tyler's Message to the Second Session of the Twenty-eighth Congress," in the Standard, January 9, 1845; also in Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897, IV, pp. 334-352.

In reference to Tyler's recommendation, DeMorse said that the prospects for Texas in the field of international relations had brightened during the recent months. He refused, however, to take a definite stand, either for or against annexation, until Congress should act on the subject.⁵⁹

⁵⁹Standard, January 16, 1845.

own policy. In 1844, the young republic had elected a new president. The election was naturally of much interest because upon the new executive probably would fall much of the responsibility for the future of Texas. As early as February, 1844, the Standard vigorously advanced the name of Judge John Hemphill for the presidency. Hemphill, however, refused to be considered because of ill health, whereupon the Standard gave its support to General Edward Burleson in preference to Anson Jones, the administration candidate.⁶⁰

⁶⁰Standard, February 24, 1844.

After Jones had been elected president of the Republic of Texas, but before he assumed office, he sent to Ashbel Smith, Texas minister to England, a communication which was designed as the "Alternatives." Jones said that as he saw the question, there were only three things from which to choose, first, annexation to the United States; second, the adjustment of the difficulties with Mexico by the assistance of some friendly power; or third; if peace was not concluded within a reasonable time, Texas must cross the Rio Grande and carry the war into Mexico.⁶¹

⁶¹Ibid.

Juan N. Alvarado, in his farewell address said, "The United States have spurned her [Texas] twice already. Let her, therefore, maintain her position firmly, as it is, and work out her

own political salvation."⁶² In his inaugural address Jones did

⁶²The address was published in the Standard, January 16, 1845.

not refer directly to annexation but left the impression that his policy would be the maintenance of Texas as a separate nation.⁶³ Jones had written Ashbel Smith before the inauguration

⁶³The inaugural address of President Jones was published in the Standard, January 9, 1845.

to ascertain what offers, if any, Britain and France would make to Texas in return for an advantageous reciprocal commercial arrangement between either or both of them and an assurance from Texas that she would maintain her unity.⁶⁴

⁶⁴Jones to Smith, July 14, 1844, in Garrison, Texan Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 1156-7.

On March 13, the Standard, because of the paper shortage, suspended publication. When publication was resumed, May 13, important events had happened in rapid succession. The joint resolution had passed Congress, February 28,⁶⁵ and was signed by

⁶⁵Congressional Globe, 28 Congress, 2 Session, 358-362; Juan N. Almonte to John C. Calhoun, March 6, 1845, in William R. Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3570, pp. 699-700.

President Tyler on the following day.⁶⁶ The president of the

⁶⁶Almonte to Calhoun, March 6, 1845, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3570, pp. 699-700; Gammel, Laws of Texas, II, 1228 and 1303.

United States was given the option of negotiating for Texas instead of submitting the resolutions as an offer to Texas.⁶⁷

⁶⁷Gammel, Laws of Texas, II, 1303-4.

President Tyler preferred the second method rather than run the risk of another setback at the hand of the United States Senate. He immediately dispatched Andrew Jackson Donelson as a special representative to Texas with the offer of annexation. Donelson was directed to "proceed at once to Texas," and to "urge speedy and prompt action as not a day ought to be lost."⁶⁸

⁶⁸Calhoun to Donelson, March 3, 1845, in Senate Documents, 29 Congress, 1 Session, No. 1, p. 32.

Upon arriving in Texas, Donelson found direct evidences of renewed negotiations and intrigue. The British and French ministers were offering their offices in an attempt to secure Mexican recognition of Texas independence. Jones accepted their offers, and a preliminary draft of a treaty was drawn up and signed March 29, 1845, by the representatives of the governments of Texas, Great Britain, and France.

On May 19, the Mexican government accepted the Texan proposals.⁶⁹ As soon as President Jones learned of the action

⁶⁹Worley, "Diplomatic Relations of England and the Republic of Texas," in The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, IX, 34.

of the Mexican government he proclaimed a cessation of hostilities.⁷⁰ Thanks to the delay of the Mexican government, this

⁷⁰Proclamation of June 4, 1845, in Senate Documents, 29 Congress, 1 Session, No. 1, p. 81.

proclamation came too late to have any effect.

It was annexation and not recognition by the Mexican government that the people of Texas wished. The Standard declared that the news of the annexation resolution was hailed in Texas with a "burst of enthusiasm by our citizens that was never exceeded. The news of the victorious battle of San Jacinto scarcely excited such general and enthusiastic rejoicing."⁷¹ In

⁷¹Standard, May 13, 1845.

the "Memorandum" of March 29, however, the Texas government had agreed to wait ninety days before entering into any proposal to annex itself to any other country. Jones, therefore, delayed for a time to take any action.

So while Donelson was exerting every possible effort to

get Texas to take action on the proffered resolutions, the public was becoming aroused at the delay of the president. The people became convinced that Jones and his cabinet were opposed to annexation and were negotiating with England and France. Mass meetings were held to endorse the terms of the resolution and to demand action either by Congress or by a convention. Such a meeting was held in Clarksville, March 29. General Thomas J. Rusk explained the object of the meeting and moved the appointment of a committee of ten to draft resolutions. This committee, of which DeMorse was a member, after short deliberation, presented the following resolutions: (1) that Texas should accept the proposals of the United States for annexation; (2) that due to the anxiety of the people of the state, the executive should be petitioned to place the matter before the Texan Congress as soon as practicable; (3) that a copy of the resolutions be forwarded to the executive of Texas; and (4) that the citizens in the various counties of the Republic should be requested to voice their sentiments at their earliest convenience. All of the resolutions offered by the committee were unanimously adopted.⁷²

⁷²Standard, May 13, 1845.

Following the action of the citizens of Clarksville, similar meetings were held throughout the state. At some of these

meetings the Clarksville resolutions were adopted in toto.⁷³ At

⁷³Standard, May 13, 1845.

several of the mass meetings the citizens voted to take steps to secure early action on the annexation resolution should President Jones oppose it. In such a meeting at Brenham, April 11, after declaring unanimously for annexation, the people recommended that all the counties elect representatives to a convention if President Jones did not convene Congress on or before the fourth Monday in June. At the Brazoria meeting, April 14, 1845, the citizens adopted resolutions expressing an immediate desire for annexation, with or without the consent of the Jones administration. Members of Congress were instructed to meet at Washington the third Monday in May and assume conventional powers, and to issue a call for a convention. The resolutions, in the form of a circular letter, were sent to other counties.⁷⁴ By April 12,

⁷⁴Ibid.

almost every county of Texas had held a meeting or had issued a call for one. The people were almost unanimous in their demand for prompt action. Ashbel Smith had written President Jones from Galveston on April 9 that "an immense majority of the citizens are in favor of annexation ... and that they will continue to be so, in preference to independence, though recognized in the

most liberal manner."⁷⁵

⁷⁵Anne Middleton, "Donelson's Mission to Texas in Behalf of Annexation," in Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXIV, 273.

Under pressure of such unanimous action on the part of the people of Texas, President Jones decided that the question could no longer be delayed with safety. Accordingly, on April 15, he issued a proclamation calling a special session of Congress to meet at Washington (Texas), June 16, to "consult and determine on such measures as in their wisdom may be deemed necessary for the welfare of Texas."⁷⁶

⁷⁶Ibid., 276.

Red River county was entitled to three delegates to the convention. DeMorse announced himself a candidate for one of the places. The results of the election showed Judge Mills the third ranking nominee, having polled twenty votes more than DeMorse. However, Judge Mills was forced to withdraw because of ill health; whereupon an election was ordered to fill the place. This time DeMorse lost to B. C. Bagley by eighty votes.⁷⁷

⁷⁷Standard, June 7, 1845.

Despite the fact that DeMorse had served as mayor of Clarksville, having been elected soon after his arrival in that

city in 1842, and was Congressman-elect to the Republic of Texas,⁷⁸ he had failed to be elected a delegate to the convention.

States. ⁷⁸This Congress never convened because of the consummation of annexation.

The race in Red River county was not fought over the question of annexation as there was no candidate opposing the step. DeMorse was an ardent Texan. No better representative could have been found to sit in the congressional hall of an independent Texas, but for a delegate to consider annexation, voters preferred to cast their ballots for men who had never written articles portraying the advantages that might accrue to a free and independent state. Rumors had been circulated to the effect that DeMorse was an opponent of annexation; thus it is only natural that efforts of the editor to state the advantages and disadvantages that might accrue to Texas from both possible procedures may have given rise to an honest misunderstanding of his true policy on annexation. During the contest he announced that he was unconditionally in favor of annexation as it was offered. "I am opposed to any considerations of the propositions from England, France, or Mexico," he wrote.⁷⁹

⁷⁹This statement was dated June 26, and appeared in the Standard, June 28, 1845.

When Congress met its members were found to be of one mind. They wanted annexation on any reasonable terms as quickly

as possible. The Texas Congress approved President Jones' call for a convention, unanimously passed a joint resolution giving its consent to annexation on the terms offered by the United States. The joint resolution was approved by President Jones, June 23, 1845.⁸⁰ Thus, the way was cleared for the convention

⁸⁰Gammel, Laws of Texas, II, 1200-1202.

to complete the work in Texas.

The convention met at Austin on July 4, as designated by the president in his proclamation of May 5; and on the same day accepted the resolutions as offered by the United States with but one dissenting vote, that of R. Bache of Galveston, great-grandson of Benjamin Franklin. Bache affixed his signature to the resolutions after it was adopted by the convention.⁸¹

⁸¹Standard, August 2, 1845; Gammel, Laws of Texas, II, 1230.

The convention then proceeded to the task of drafting a state constitution. The document was submitted to the people, who, on October 13, ratified it with only a few dissenting votes.⁸² On December 29, President Polk signed the bill approving

⁸²"Proclamation of Anson Jones," in the Standard, November 26, 1845.

the new constitution, and on February 16, 1846, the state govern-

ment was formally installed.⁸³

⁸³House Misc. Documents, XIX, No. 45, pp. 122-4; Jones to Polk, February 16, 1846, in Garrison, Texan Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 415-6.

At a meeting in Clarksville in which DeMorse took part, a meeting held for the purpose of approving annexation, the following resolutions were adopted: "That as Americans and Republicans we hail this intelligence with enthusiastic joy, as a consummation devoutly to be wished, because it is a harbinger of future prosperity and happiness, and a guaranty of the national greatness and glory. That we regard the successful issue of the annexation question as a most signal triumph of popular rights in this hemisphere, and as a death blow to the grasping ambition and arrogant pretensions of trans-Atlantic monarchs, who had hoped to engraft a scion of royal despotism on the tree of American liberty."⁸⁴

⁸⁴"Resolutions" of the Clarksville meeting on annexation, published in the Standard, January 14, 1846.

And with such attitudes the people of Texas became a part of the American Union despite the threats of the Mexican government that annexation would be a cause for war.

policy of Jackson resulted in a break in the relations between the two countries. Van Buren as President began a result a convention was concluded on March 2, 1845.

CHAPTER IV

THE MEXICAN WAR AND AFTERMATH

Upon learning that the final step in the annexation of Texas had been completed, Mexico immediately severed diplomatic relations with the United States. There is evidence to indicate that the Standard anticipated this after 1843. G. P. Garrison in his Westward Extension summarizes the causes of the war with Mexico under four heads: (1) claims of the United States citizens on the government of Mexico; (2) assistance given the Texans by the people of the United States; (3) violation of Mexican territory by American forces; and (4) the annexation of Texas.¹

¹For the complete discussion of the causes, see G. P. Garrison, Westward Extension, 188-227. Bancroft, in The North Mexican States and Texas, II, 394, says that the Mexican War was "a result which the United States was really playing for."

The relations between the United States and Mexico had been difficult to adjust since Mexico had become independent. Citizens of the United States held claims against the government of Mexico dating back to 1816. President Jackson had taken an aggressive attitude toward Mexico in an effort to get her to take some action relative to an adjustment of these claims. This policy of Jackson resulted in a break in diplomatic relations between the two countries. Van Buren took up the matter, and as a result a convention was concluded on April 11, 1837, "for the

adjustment of claims of citizens of the United States of America upon the Government of the Mexican Republic."² In cases of dis-

²Buchanan to Slidell, November 10, 1845, in William R. Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3250, pp. 172-182.

agreement the ultimate decision was to be left to the Prussian minister at Washington. The convention settlement, instead of removing the cause, only prolonged the friction. Mexico failed to pay the claims approved by the commission.³ On January 30,

³The Board of Commissioners were not able to complete the examination of all claims in the time allowed. The Commission, without reference to the umpire, allowed principal and interest, \$439,393.82. The amount, principal and interest, subsequently allowed by the umpire was \$2,026,139.68. Claims to the amount of \$928,627.88 were pending before the umpire when the Commission expired. Ibid.

1843, a new convention was signed providing for a settlement.⁴

⁴By this convention it was agreed that Mexico should pay the interest on the whole to April 30, 1843. The principal and the accruing interest were to be paid within five years in equal installments every three months until twenty payments had been made. Ibid.

Under this new agreement the claimants received only the interest up to April 30, 1843, and three of the twenty installments. Whatever willingness Mexico may have had to pay was destroyed by the growing friction over Texas. The situation rapidly drifted into an even worse stage than existed in 1839. In the summer of 1846,

the Standard reported the claims against Mexico at \$7,135,673.37.⁵

⁵Standard, August 22, 1846. The amount of the unadjusted claims was officially put in December, 1845, at \$6,465,464.00. House Executive Documents, 30 Congress, 1 Session, VII, No. 60, p. 40.

Friction between the United States and Mexico was increased because of the sympathy of the people of the Union for the Texans. This sympathy manifested itself in material assistance during the Texan Revolution. Mexico declared this to be a violation of neutrality. In fact the people of the United States were not neutral, but the government endeavored to observe a position of strict neutrality.

Another incident that increased hostility was the violation of Mexican territory. Commodore T. A. C. Jones of the American navy was led to believe that England had purchased California and that the United States was at war with Mexico at the time. He occupied Monterey, on the California coast, in October, 1842. Becoming convinced the next day that he had acted on incorrect information, he withdrew from Monterey.⁶

⁶For correspondence relative to Jones' occupation of Monterey, see Bocanegra to Thompson, December 19, 1842, and Thompson to Bocanegra, December 27, 1842, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Documents 3483 and 3484, pp. 525-532.

The main cause of the war and the immediate occasion of the break was the annexation of Texas. With the renewal of the

annexation question President Santa Anna in the summer of 1843, through his secretary of state, Bocanegra, notified the United States minister, Waddy Thompson, that the Mexican government would consider the incorporation of Texas by the United States as equivalent to a declaration of war against the Mexican Republic.⁷

⁷José María de Bocanegra, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, to Waddy Thompson, United States Minister to Mexico, August 23, 1843, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3505, pp. 555-557.

In July, 1844, the Standard declared that the Mexican government had informed Almonte, its minister at Washington, in the most emphatic terms that Mexico would "never assent to the annexation--that the government and the nation are immovable and determined to resist the project, and reject all proposals for its consummation, whether accompanied or not by offers of compensations."⁸

⁸Standard, July 24, 1844; see Bocanegra to Benjamin E. Green, United States Charge d'Affairs ad interim at Mexico City, May 30, 1844, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3529, pp. 587-591.

After the presidential election of 1844, Santa Anna, in a letter to Rejon said, "I have just learned of the election of Polk to the presidency of the United States, so we must prepare

March 23, the rupture was made complete when the Mexican

for war with that Republic."⁹ On learning that annexation had

⁹Standard, June 7, 1845.

been approved by the United States, Almonte protested on March 6, 1845, that it was an "act of aggression, the most unjust which can be found recorded in the annals of modern history." He said that it would rob Mexico of her rightful territory; that Mexico would maintain and uphold her rights by every means in her power; and that in obedience to the instructions from his government his mission at Washington would cease. At the same time he demanded his passports.¹⁰

¹⁰The protest was published in full by the Standard, June 7, 1845; see also Almonte to Calhoun, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document No. 3570, pp. 699-700.

To this protest Buchanan replied on March 10, that the admission of Texas was "irrevocably decided" and that "nothing but the refusal of Texas to ratify the terms and conditions on which her admission depends, can defeat this object." He held that the United States was justified in accepting annexation since Texas had already achieved and maintained independence.¹¹ On

¹¹Buchanan to Almonte, March 10, 1845, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3245, p. 163.

March 28, the rupture was made complete when the Mexican govern-

ment notified the United States minister in Mexico that diplomatic relations between the two countries could not be continued.¹²

¹²Luis G. Cuevas, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, to Wilson Shannon, United States minister to Mexico, March 28, 1845, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3574, p. 705.

On August 9, 1845, DeMorse in an editorial stated that it was almost certain that Mexico would declare war against the United States; furthermore, he was hopefully looking forward to that act. In this regard he declared that "There is nothing we so hope for, after the general prosperity of our country, as that 3,000 United States troops may meet 10,000 or 12,000 Mexicans. The first battle would be but a portent of the contest. 25,000 men can easily raise the flag of our country over the National Palace of Mexico."¹³

¹³Standard, August 9, 1845.

The information that American troops were on the point of moving into Texas in July, 1845, aroused the Mexican government to action. On July 21, the Minister of Foreign Affairs recommended to the Mexican Congress that as soon as the "government ascertains that the department of Texas has united itself to the American Union, or that the troops of the latter have invaded it, it shall declare that the nation is at war with the United States

of North America."¹⁴ Congress, however, refused to take favorable

¹⁴George L. Rives, The United States and Mexico, II, 59.

action on the recommendation.

On September 16, President Polk and his cabinet, under the impression that the Mexican administration was then more favorable to an amicable solution sent John Slidell to Mexico to settle all existing differences by negotiation, provided the Mexican government showed willingness to restore diplomatic relations with the United States.¹⁵

¹⁵James K. Polk, The Diary of a President, 1845-1849, September 16, 1845, (Allen Nevins, Editor), p. 9; Buchanan to Black, September 17, 1845, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3248, p. 167.

Slidell was notified to be in readiness should the Mexican government agree to receive an envoy. The American consul in Mexico City was immediately instructed to ascertain whether the Mexican government would receive a minister if he were sent, "entrusted with full power to adjust all the questions in dispute" between the two governments.¹⁶ On October 13, Black, the

¹⁶Buchanan to Black, September 17, 1845, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3248, p. 167.

United States Consul in Mexico City, inquired of the Mexican

minister of foreign affairs whether an envoy from the United States would be received to adjust all matters of dispute between the two nations. Assurance was given that if Mexico so desired the envoy would be sent at once.¹⁷ Two days later the

¹⁷Black to Manuel de la Peña y Peña, October 13, 1845, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3622, pp. 761-762.

Mexican minister replied that "although the Mexican Nation is deeply injured by the United States through the acts committed by them, in the Department of Texas, which belongs to this nation, my Government is disposed to receive the commissioner of the United States, who may come to this Capital with full powers from his Government to settle the present dispute, in a peaceable, reasonable, and honorable manner." In order that his reception might appear to be absolutely frank and free and without coercion, the United States government was requested to withdraw its forces which lay in sight of Vera Cruz.¹⁸

¹⁸Manuel de la Peña y Peña to Black, October 15, 1845, in Ibid., Document 3623, p. 763; President Polk's Message to the First Session of the 30th Congress, published in the Standard, January 7, 1846. The vessels were withdrawn a few days later.

As soon as the news reached Washington, instructions were sent to Slidell. The first subject which was to demand his attention was the claims of American citizens on Mexico. As the settlement of the boundary between Mexico and Texas was reserved

to the United States by the annexation resolution, the boundary might be adjusted in such a way as to place the debt due to American claimants on the government of the United States. An attempt was made to show that the Rio Grande was the proper line. For the Rio Grande as a boundary and the province of New Mexico Polk was willing to pay all just claims of American citizens against Mexico and five million dollars in addition. There was some reason to believe that Great Britain had designs on California. To prevent that territory from falling into the hands of Great Britain, Slidell was instructed to pay twenty millions of dollars for a boundary commencing at any point on the western line of New Mexico and running due west to the Pacific so as to include the bay and harbor of San Francisco. For a line running west from the southern extremity of New Mexico to the Pacific or any other line running due west to the Pacific so as to include Monterey, Slidell was authorized to offer a maximum of twenty-five millions of dollars. The farther south the line could be placed, the better. If Mexico would agree to the boundary claimed by Texas, the United States would assume the payment of all the claims of its citizens against Mexico.¹⁹ The

attention.¹⁹ Buchanan to Slidell, November 10, 1845, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3250, pp. 172-182; Buchanan to Slidell, November 10, 1845, in Senate Documents, 30 Congress, 1 Session, VII, No. 52, pp. 71-80.

immediate acquisition of California seemed very necessary as the Oregon boundary question with Britain had reached an acute stage.

Slidell reached Vera Cruz November 29, 1845. He was informed by the Mexican government that it expected him to be commissioned to settle in a peaceful and honorable manner "the questions relative to Texas," and since he had not come commissioned as such he could not be admitted in the character with which he appeared invested.²⁰ The Standard expressed the con-

²⁰Peña y Peña to Slidell, December 20, 1845, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3640, pp. 787-789.

viction that the Herrera government apparently was willing to enter into diplomatic relations with the United States but did not dare lest it be overthrown.²¹ In commenting upon the situation

²¹Standard, December 21, 1845.

in Mexico, the Standard expressed the opinion that Mexico was not likely to molest the United States soon, but that "the recovery of Texas is a thing certain to be commenced as soon as she finds herself in condition to attempt it." The Herrera government was occupied with internal administration which required all its attention. The Standard warned that if the deplorable condition of Mexico continued the "Anglo-American race, in its ceaseless progress westward, shall pass over her as Time passes over Creation, quietly but surely, effacing the features of the past with the footprint of the present. The usurpation will be successfully and gradually continued until it embraces the whole

Republic and Mexico, with so many elements of abundance and of greatness, will disappear from the number of independent nations."²²

²²Standard, November 12, 1845.

On the night of December 29, most of the Mexican army pronounced in favor of the revolutionists, and on the following day President Herrera resigned. On January 4, General Mariano Paredes took the oath of office as President of the Mexican Republic. Slidell had information that led him to believe he would be received by the new government.²³

²³Slidell to Buchanan, January 14, 1846, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3647, pp. 808-810.

On March 12, the Mexican government informed Slidell that he could not be received in his designated official capacity. The rights of that government had been violated. It had regarded from the first the annexation of Texas as a casus belli. Mexican territory had been invaded, and the government of the United States, having consented to negotiate on the Texas question alone, was attempting to introduce other subjects.²⁴ The rejection of

²⁴Joaquín M. de Castillo y Lanzas, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, to Slidell, March 12, 1846, in Ibid., Document 3654, pp. 818-823.

Slidell was greeted by a great part of the American public and press as evidence that drastic action toward Mexico must be substituted for forbearance. The Standard regarded it as a signal for the beginning of hostilities.²⁵ Responding to public

²⁵Standard, May 6, 1846.

opinion, Polk now assumed an aggressive attitude toward the Mexican government.

As one of the requirements before agreeing to consider the question of annexation, Texas had been assured by the United States that it would receive protection in case of invasion by Mexico. Consequently, General Zachary Taylor was ordered to hold his troops in readiness to march into Texas. Then on June 15, he was ordered to advance into Texas and to occupy a convenient point "on or near the Rio Grande." He was to limit himself to the defense of the territory of Texas, and to avoid any attack on posts actually held by the Mexicans.²⁶ In July,

²⁶House Executive Documents, 30 Congress, 1 Session, VII, No. 60, p. 7, and pp. 79-82.

Taylor took up a position on the west bank of the Nueces River. On January 13, 1846, when it was learned that Slidell would not be received by the Mexican government, Taylor was ordered to ad-

by Taylor was attacked on the east side of the river.

The report of the conflict between the two armies

vance to the Rio Grande.²⁷

²⁷House Executive Documents, 30 Congress, 1 Session, VII, No. 60, p. 90.

On March 11, 1846, the army moved out of Corpus Christi and on April 8, arrived at the Rio Grande just opposite Matamoras, where it encamped. The Mexican government up to this time had made no distinction to its claim on the territory east of the Rio Grande but regarded annexation as an act of war. The Mexican newspaper, El Siglo, as early as November, 1845, declared that no further declaration of war against the United States was necessary; that it already existed and was wholly defensive on the part of Mexico.²⁸ On April 12, General Pedro de Ampudia,

²⁸This statement from an undated issue of the Mexican newspaper, El Siglo, was quoted in the Standard, November 12, 1845.

in command of the Mexican forces at Matamoras, notified Taylor that unless he retired beyond the Nueces within twenty-four hours, force of arms would decide the question.²⁹ The expected

²⁹Standard, June 10, 1846; House Executive Documents, 30 Congress, 1 Session, VII, No. 60, p. 140.

hostilities began a few days later when a party of men sent out by Taylor was attacked on the east side of the river.

The report of the conflict reached Washington Saturday

evening, May 9. In a cabinet meeting that same day it had been unanimously agreed that if the Mexican forces committed any act of hostility Polk should immediately send a message to Congress recommending a declaration of war. All members of the cabinet except one had agreed that Polk should send to Congress a message recommending a declaration of war the following Tuesday, May 12.³⁰

³⁰Polk, The Diary of a President, 1845-1849, May 9, 1846, pp. 81-84.

With the receipt of the news of the conflict on the Rio Grande, Polk revised his message to declare as a cause of war, that "Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon American soil."³¹

³¹"Polk's Message to Congress," May 11, 1846, in the Standard, June 10, 1846; Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, IV, 422.

A bill to declare war passed the House that same day, and the Senate the following day.³²

³²Polk, The Diary of a President, 1845-1849, May 11 and 13, 1846, pp. 86-92.

The Standard was jubilant in its attitude toward the declaration of war. DeMorse expressed himself in part as follows:

At last we have a real "sure enough" war on hand; something to warm the blood, and draw out the national enthusiasm. It seems that the

"Magnanimous Mexican Nation" has at last come out of its chapparal of wordy diplomacy, treachery, meanness and bombast, and concluded for a little while, only a little while, to act like white people. There is at last--our pulses beat quickly with the thought--an opportunity to pay off a little of the debt of vengeance which has been accumulating since the massacre of the Alamo.

We trust that every man of our army, as he points his rifle and thrusts his bayonet, will think of his countrymen martyred at the Alamo, at Goliad, and at Mier, whose blood yet cries aloud from the ground for remembrance and vengeance, and taking a little closer aim or giving a little stronger thrust, will give his blow in his country's cause and an additional "God speed."³³

³³Standard, May 13, 1846.

The Standard immediately issued a call for volunteers. It pointed out that the pay of a volunteer in the army was more than many young men were earning who were struggling hard for a daily living. Promise was made of quick transportation to the theater of war. The editor hoped that it would not be necessary for any "dastardly" drafting in "Old Red River County." The county had few idle men--perhaps fewer than any other section of Texas of an equal extent. Nevertheless, the Standard was certain that there would be plenty of brave young men who would answer the call to "honorable service." Red River district was too remote from the frontier to participate in the sudden and short border conflicts, but now that a regular war had set in, the Standard was confident that it would show its patriotism. DeMorse closed the appeal thus:

Stand forth! men of the true stamp--all you whose domestic ties do not necessarily restrain movement until the last necessity arrives --stand forth! Your country calls upon you; and it is far nobler to go forth to the onslaught eager for honorable service than to wait the progress of compulsion.³⁴

³⁴Standard, May 27, 1846.

From the beginning of the war the Standard was an agency for dissemination of information concerning the movements of the armies. Preference was given war news over any other. Five or six accounts of the same engagement sometimes appeared. The major movements were described in detail. The paper expressed confidence from the beginning that American arms would prevail. Several stories were printed, no doubt, to encourage young men to enlist in the United States Army and to arouse more enthusiasm for the support of the war in this country. Typical of such stories is the following account concerning the Mexican soldier:

The soldiers of the Mexican army were generally collected by sending out recruiting detachments into the mountains, where they hunt the Indians and bring them in chains to the barracks; scarcely a day passes on which droves of these miserable and more than half-naked wretches are not seen thus chained together and marching through the street to the barracks. There they are secured and then dressed in a uniform made of linen cloth or serge, and are occasionally drilled, which consists of teaching them to march through the streets. Their military bands are good, and the men learn to march indifferently well. They put their feet down as if feeling for the place and do not step with that jaunty, erect and graceful air which is so beautiful in well-drilled troops. There is not one in ten of these soldiers who has ever fired a gun before he was brought into

the barracks. In particular emergencies the prisons are thrown open, which always contain more prisoners than the army numbers, and these felons become soldiers and some of them officers. Their arms, too, are generally worthless. Their powder is equally bad; in the last battle between Santa Anna and Bustamente, which lasted the whole day, not one cannon ball in a thousand reached the enemy; they generally fell about half way between the opposing armies. I do not think that the Mexicans are deficient in courage; or it might be more properly said that they are indifferent to danger or the preservation of life, which is really so worthless to most of them.³⁵

³⁵Standard, September 5, 1846.

Polk and his advisors labored at first under the false impression that a vigorous invasion of Mexico would end the war without the necessity of pushing it far into the interior. The resistance of the Mexicans, however, was more desperate and prolonged than was expected. The Standard, opposed to any lenient or half-hearted method, continually insisted on a vigorous prosecution of the war. It consistently maintained that the only way to deal with the "yellow whelps" was by vigorously prosecuting the war and thereby bringing it to an early termination. The liberal conditions offered by Taylor at Monterey were censured. After an interview on November 6, 1846, with the Hon. A. J. Russell, who had just returned from the scene of action, the Standard regretted that General Taylor received the capitulation of the Mexicans upon any other terms than as unconditional prisoners of war. The Standard realized, however, that it was not familiar with the motives that governed

General Taylor, and therefore would lay no blame on him. As "Old Zac" was not a Texan the blood of Goliad and the Alamo had not "printed the deep reflection of its color upon his heart as it has of every true Texan of '35 and '36," and for that reason he had not had his men pick off the "mulatto whelps" with their rifles, to make them pay dearly for the "long arrears of vengeance and years of unforgotten perfidity and villainy."³⁶

³⁶Standard, November 7, 1846.

When in the autumn of 1846, Polk decided to prosecute the war more vigorously by having General Winfield Scott lead an expedition from Vera Cruz against Mexico City, the Standard, favoring aggressiveness, was delighted at the change in policy. The readers were told that the war would not be lost in profitless attempts at negotiation. Attempts at negotiation, DeMorse thought, would no longer impede Polk's direct action in dealing with the "contemptible" enemy. DeMorse approved the change in policy because, he thought, that change better "befits our national character." Aggressiveness would be rewarded with a rapid succession of victories and captures such as would soon leave the enemy no ground upon which to sustain his "ridiculous pretensions." The Standard regretted that the Mexicans had not been completely overwhelmed at the beginning of the war. Defeats had not been severe enough to prevent them from retreating and preserving the larger portion of their forces. Such a situation had left the Mexicans as "vain and boastful as ever."

The Standard explained that the failure of the Americans to follow up and deal the Mexicans a completely crushing blow was due not only to the policy of Polk but also to the lack of a sufficient number of men in the United States army.³⁷

³⁷Standard, November 13, 1847.

The Standard contended that Polk had a clear field in Texas in regard to his aggressive foreign policy. Then turning on the critics of the president the editor remarked:

There are here [in Texas] no silkstrung gentry who love their enemies from pure humanity, and give aid and support to the murderers of their friends. There are here no "Peace Society" men, who love peace better than honor, security and quiet, even if purchased by national and individual degradation. Texans know something of this race of semi-barbarians, faithless, treacherous, contemptibly cowardly.... The President needs no defense here ...; our sympathies ... are all with our own countrymen; and holding clearly that the war was necessary to our honor-- that it should have taken place years ago had not mistaken pity for our sister Republic prevented; now that it has begun from their own hostile act, it should be pushed.... The President will here find sustenance and troops. These are our individual sentiments, and no doubt the sentiments of the whole people of the state.... About questions of internal policy opinion will differ in all communities; but in the defense of our national rights and honors, and the protection of our citizens abroad, there should be no difference and there is none here.³⁸

³⁸Ibid., January 16, 1847.

There was much opposition to "Polk's War" with Mexico, not only from the Whigs but even in his own party ranks.

As for the charge that Polk unnecessarily started the war and than called upon Congress to recognize it, the Standard declared that there was no sound basis. It pointed out that by the acts of Congress, based upon the expression of the people of the Union, Texas was annexed. Texas when annexed claimed, and had claimed for a number of years, the Rio Grande as the boundary. It was well known at the time of annexation that the validity of this contention would be questioned by Mexico, but the territory had been occupied by Mexico and Texas alternately, and the president had placed troops upon it "to uphold whatever rights to the territory the United States may have acquired. No opposing force was found in the territory, but one came subsequently and attacked our army, and this the enemies of the president called involving the country in a war." The Standard declared that to have kept American troops out of the territory would have been an argument that the territory was Mexican.³⁹

³⁹Standard, August 28, 1847.

Answering the criticism of the Whigs directly, the Standard averred that it was satisfied with the existence of the war, and only regretted that it had not been commenced in General Jackson's time, and that it had not been more vigorously prosecuted since it did begin. It believed that the president allowed himself from the outset to be affected by the clamor raised against the war by the Whig leaders who only wished to embarrass him, and then hold him responsible for a lack of vigor

in the prosecution of it. The Standard thought that it was due to this Whig clamor that the president stopped to tender peace to the foe after each success of American arms. The Standard argued that rather than offer peace, the president should tender the Mexicans fire and sword so long as "there was a man in our armies to wield them until the solicitation for peace came from the mean and treacherous foe," who had misconstrued leniency for hesitancy and fear. The only error the Standard laid at the door of the president was his failure at the outset of the war to order out every man of the fifty thousand first authorized by Congress, and have them press upon the Mexicans like an "avalanche of destruction." DeMorse was not sympathetic toward the president's policy of offering the Mexicans peace before they were completely conquered.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Standard, August 14, 1847.

Polk's desire to negotiate for peace lead him to promote Santa Anna's return from exile to Mexico. As soon as Santa Anna was back in Mexico an offer to renew negotiations was immediately made, but was declined by Mexico.⁴¹ The offer was

⁴¹Buchanan to Minister of Foreign Affairs, July 27, 1846, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3257, p. 193; Polk, The Diary of a President, 1845-1849, July 26, 1846, p. 131.

renewed at the beginning of the Vera Cruz campaign, but again

was practically declined by making it a requirement that the invading armies should be withdrawn as a preliminary condition.⁴²

⁴²Monasterio to Buchanan, February 22, 1847, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3706, p. 896.

The Standard again opposed the peace offer. It declared that the southern republic would not treat for peace until she was completely conquered; that the people and the church were bitterly opposed to the American invasion, and that the quickest method of obtaining a peace was to conquer one. It saw no hope of a speedy peace through means of negotiation with the rulers of that "unfortunate country," since the war had become national with the Mexicans. The war cry which overturned the administration of Herrera and completed the downfall of that of Paredes would be fatal, it declared, to any other that turned a deaf ear to it.

The Standard warned its readers that the masses of the Mexican people were aroused against the United States. The military classes desired to continue the war because peace would subject them to a severe reckoning at the hands of the people, who had regarded the army as the great curse of the country.

The war had been pronounced by some Mexican leaders as a war of races, one which must have occurred sooner or later, and might as well be encountered then as at any other time. The Standard believed that Santa Anna in his letter to General Taylor of November 1, 1846, echoed the sentiments of the Mexican people

when he said that "neither Congress nor any Mexican will ever listen to proposals of peace until the national territory is evacuated by the troops of the United States." It felt that if the United States should withdraw its forces to the east side of the Rio Grande, the Mexicans would believe they had brought that result by the force of justice of their case as well as by force of arms, and advance their demands. What those demands would be, it thought, could be judged from a declaration published by La Opinion Nacional in Mexico City. The editor of this newspaper, after expressing himself as being in favor of the war, declared that it would result in the United States making proposals of peace which "must not be received except on the other side of the Sabine, and there, our armies face to face with each other, the national standard raised alongside the cannon, a lasting treaty of peace shall be written on the tops of the drums in clear and precise terms, this, or a similar inscription: 'The Sabine shall be a perpetual boundary to divide forever the United Mexican States from the United States of the North.'"⁴³

⁴³Quoted by the Standard, March 13, 1847, from the La Opinion Nacional, Mexico City, date not given.

The Standard declared that whether the Sabine was to become the boundary line between Mexico and the United States was a question to be answered by the Congress of the United States and not by the Congress of Mexico. It believed that the Mexicans would profit by a prolonged warfare. It was suited to

their character, at once obstinate and indolent. Delay on the part of the United States, therefore, would aid Mexico in her plan of warfare. Regardless of whether Polk was responsible for beginning the war, it had become a reality, and the Standard warned, might prove a serious one should there be needless delay either because the country as a whole did not support it or for want of action of Congress. Time, to Mexico in the war, was a treasure beyond all price. Even if it were admitted that Congress did solemnly enact a disgraceful falsehood in proclaiming to the world that the war originated on the part of Mexico, the Standard argued that there was no alternative left but to make the best of it by prosecuting the campaigns with the utmost vigor. It pointed out that the war could not be terminated at the option of the United States.

Having presented such an argument in favor of a vigorous prosecution of the war, the editor of the Standard declared that the enemy ought to pay the cost of the conflict. There could be no reason, the Standard declared, for not forcing Mexico to pay the cost of the war, for she had refused to listen to any overtures of peace, although her only hope of success rested on the expenditures to which she might subject the United States.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Standard, March 13, 1847.

The Standard encouraged men to respond to a new call for volunteers. It pointed out advantages of the short period of six months which volunteers could enlist. A typical appeal

to the patriotism of the young men of Northeast Texas read:

"The honor of the State is at stake. Men are needed now, and the shortened term leaves no excuse for holding back."⁴⁵ In its

⁴⁵Standard, April 1, 1847.

appeal for volunteers, the Standard was successful. Four days after the appeal, with eighty names upon its roster, a company was organized at Clarksville, with Samuel W. Sims as captain and John W. West as first lieutenant.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Ibid., April 8, 1847. This company never saw active service. After reporting in San Antonio, it started for Monterey, May 13, 1847. On reaching the Nueces it received an express from General Taylor ordering the company out of service. Ibid., July 3, 1847.

Meanwhile, Scott was going ahead with his Vera Cruz campaign. Early in March he had landed his troops near Vera Cruz, and on March 29, 1847, captured that city without serious difficulty.⁴⁷ A few days later the march to Mexico City was begun.

⁴⁷Scott to Marcy, March 29, 1847, in Senate Documents, 30 Congress, 1 Session, I, No. I, pp. 229-238.

Santa Anna failed in an attempt to check Scott at Cerro Gordo, leaving the road open to Mexico City. After a series of battles near the City of Mexico, the city was captured and the Mexicans

forced to terms.⁴⁸

⁴⁸For excellent secondary accounts of the relations between the United States and Mexico and the Mexican War, see George L. Rives, The United States and Mexico, I and II; and Justin H. Smith, The War with Mexico, I and II.

When Vera Cruz fell into the hands of the Americans, President Polk decided it would be well to send along with the army a commissioner who would be on hand to offer terms of peace when Mexico should be willing to treat. N. P. Trist, chief clerk in the department of state, was selected for the task. His instructions were similar to those which previously had been given to Slidell. Trist was instructed to offer up to thirty millions of dollars for a boundary that would include New Mexico, Upper California, Lower California, and a transit across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. He could offer up to twenty millions of dollars for New Mexico and Upper California without the route across Tehuantepec; five million additional could be offered for these two provinces with the Tehuantepec route included. The extension of the boundaries over New Mexico and Upper California for a sum not exceeding twenty millions of dollars was to be a sine qua non of any treaty.⁴⁹

⁴⁹Buchanan to Trist, April 15, 1847, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3274, pp. 201-207.

When Trist arrived at Scott's camp there followed a

quarrel between the two as to the powers of the commissioner. They reconciled their differences, however, and afterwards worked in harmony. Santa Anna, on August 24, accepted Scott's proposal for an armistice, but the Mexican commissioners refused to treat on the terms proposed by Trist. Consequently, Scott gave notice on September 6, that the armistice would terminate the next day.⁵⁰

⁵⁰Scott to Santa Anna, September 6, 1847, in Senate Documents, 30 Congress, 1 Session, No. 52, p. 346.

Scott advanced to the attack on September 8, and after winning victories at Molino del Rey and Chapultepec, occupied Mexico City on September 14. Santa Anna abdicated and the new government immediately appointed commissioners to negotiate with Trist. Trist had been recalled but the Mexicans urged him to continue with the negotiations as they had no official notice of his recall. Trist decided to act in disregard of orders from Washington, and as a result the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, February 2, 1848.⁵¹

⁵¹Standard, April 1, 1848; Trist to Buchanan, January 25, 1848, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, VIII, Document 3749, pp. 1034-1059.

When the provisions of the treaty became known in the United States, there appeared to be a fairly strong minority who were opposed to it. Part of the opposition came from those,

including Secretaries Buchanan and R. J. Walker, who desired the annexation of more Mexican territory. Some argued that Mexico should be required to bear the total cost of the war; others that all of Mexico should be annexed to the United States. Part of the opposition came from Northern Whigs, who objected to the addition to the Union of so much territory which might be thrown open to slavery. The Standard strongly opposed the treaty on grounds that Mexico should have to bear the total cost of the war. It argued that the claims should not have been surrendered in view of the "large sum" paid for New Mexico and California. It recognized and admitted that California would be a valuable acquisition both strategically and commercially, but contended it was not sufficient payment for the "blood of fallen American troops." It expressed the hope, at first, that the treaty would be rejected by the Mexican Congress, and refused to accept the first information concerning its provisions until documentary proof had been obtained. A part of the Standard's comment in this regard follows:

however, reporting said that congratul in DeVorse's att
 We the conquerors upon all the battle fields-- we who have poured out the blood of some of the noblest of our citizens to maintain high name and honorable positions, and protect the rights of our people, are at last conquered; outwitted; out-managed, as the Machiavelian would out-manage the barbarian-- we, who boast of our national shrewdness, have become the victims of a conquered foe, and that for these most contemptible of all the human race who makes pretension of civilization.

fear of confirmed
 It is so! We will not believe it, never until documentary proof shall force the unwelcome conviction, will we believe that our Government, President and Senate have bowed themselves to crafty scheming, and blindly walked into the

toils of the contemptible "Mexican Nation." Faugh! We have not certainly made stout declaration of our rights and our earnest determination to preserve them-- poured out troops upon a foreign strand to die under the fangs of disease more insidious and relentless than even our mean and treacherous foe-- encountered their legions amid rocky dells and almost inaccessible precipices, passed them all, foiled the guerrillas, stormed their cities, done all this nobly as like has never been done before, mindless of what we have sought in the outset, fearless of results and looking only to the abstract justice of the claim. Even the Whigs who professed to desire the energetic prosecution of the war after its commencement, cannot have consented to this.

We cannot agree to give a hundred million in expenditure already made and to be made, and say "satisfied" for all the noble blood which drenches that foreign soil, the life yielded up....

"Indemnity" cannot certainly have been overlooked in a childish desire for mere peace, unless it were an honorable peace, and therefore, we shall rely upon it that it is an honorable peace, until we are forced to believe otherwise.⁵²

⁵²Standard, April 15, 1848.

By the time the treaty came to a vote in the Senate, however, the Standard had modified its position somewhat. In reporting ratification by the United States Senate, DeMorse said that despite the treaty's defects, the country was to be congratulated upon its acceptance. The reason for the change in DeMorse's attitude toward the treaty is to be found in his fear of the Whig party. The editor of the Standard was a confirmed Democrat and was bitterly opposed to Whig doctrines.

He feared that if the treaty were rejected and the war prolonged a factious majority in the House might embarrass the administration in its prosecution of the war by failing to vote supplies, and possibly compel the army to withdraw from Mexico. The Standard would have preferred almost any alternative to the "disgrace of a premature retreat" before a defiant Mexico.⁵³

⁵³Standard, April 1, 1848.

The Senate, after making some minor amendments, ratified the treaty, March 10, 1848, by a vote of thirty-eight to fourteen.⁵⁴ In accepting the treaty President Polk probably

⁵⁴Polk, The Diary of a President, 1845-1849, March 10, 1848, p. 314.

failed to realize how soon the brewing storm which was threatening to split the nation asunder was to break over the acquisition of the new territory. Besides acquiring new territory for the United States and settling the question of the claims, the Mexican War made a president and returned the Whigs to power. It was the Whig party which was temporarily to settle the issues arising from the war and to postpone the sectional struggle for another decade. On two of the major questions arising as an aftermath of the Mexican War-- the election of 1848 and the western boundary of Texas-- the Standard took a firm and decided

stand.

The enthusiasm aroused by the military successes of 1847 brought unusual interest to the presidential campaign of 1848. Soon after the war had begun, General Taylor's name as a possible candidate was suggested by several groups. After the battle of Buena Vista, a movement in his favor swept over both the North and the South. DeMorse, through the columns of the Standard, attempted to check the tide and turn it in favor of Lewis Cass of Michigan. As early as December, 1847, in a lengthy editorial entitled "The Next Presidency," DeMorse urged the Democrats to nominate Cass. It seemed to him evident that the Whigs would nominate General Taylor. In case Taylor should become the nominee, the voter would be forced to choose, he said, "between a man and a principle." "Democracy is principle," he wrote, "bending itself to no caprice, serving no temporary purpose, regardless of men, where measures are to be carried. Taylorism is man-worship-- the lowest of all devotion. The two are incompatible. The Whigs are running Taylor in an effort to make military chieftainship displace principle." The readers were informed of the advantages of having a civil magistrate instead of a military hero. They were reminded that courage was a common commodity in the Union at that time and that to have faced the enemies of the country in the battle field, although creditable, was not in itself a passport to the presidency.⁵⁵

⁵⁵Standard, December 4, 1847, and July 1, 1848.

The Whig National Convention met at Philadelphia, June 7, 1848, and nominated General Taylor on the fourth ballot. In addition to his military prestige, Taylor had the advantage of being a slave-holder from Louisiana. He had more than once asserted that he was not a Whig candidate and that he would run regardless of whether or not he was nominated by that party.⁵⁶

⁵⁶Standard, July 1, 1848.

The nomination of Taylor, who had neither political experience nor party principles, drew from the Democratic press outspoken ridicule. The Standard, upon receiving the news, made the following comment:

Hung be the Heavens in Black. General Taylor is nominated for president; Milliard Fillmore is nominated for vice-president. The nomination of General Taylor is a disgrace to the convention, and an insult to the intelligence and virtue of the American people. Mr. Fillmore is a good man and would have been a thousand times better selected than General Taylor.⁵⁷

⁵⁷Ibid., August 12, 1848.

The Standard declared that the Whigs had nominated a military hero only to impress the popular mind. DeMorse said that the Whigs were afraid of the lack of appeal of their party principles. He contended that the party nomination of Taylor was a confession of Whig inability to elect a bona fide

party member.⁵⁸

⁵⁸Standard, July 1, 1848.

When the Democratic National Convention met, the favorite, Cass, was nominated on the fourth ballot, despite opposition from the New York Barnburners. Cass was a popular leader in the Democratic party. His support of the doctrine of squatter sovereignty had made him popular in the West. Like Webster and Clay, he regarded the preservation of the Union as more important than the protection or the suppression of slavery. The platform denied the power of Congress to interfere with the domestic institutions of the states, and condemned all efforts to induce that body to deal with the question of slavery. It asserted that the Mexican War was begun by Mexico and was, on the part of the United States, "A just and necessary war;" condemned opposition to it; declared it to be a duty to support the administration in carrying on the war if the treaty was rejected by Mexico; and congratulated the president on the brilliant success with which the war had been conducted.⁵⁹

⁵⁹Edward Stanwood, A History of the Presidency, 234-236.

DeMorse, despite the fact that Northeast Texas was strongly Whig, continued his editorial support of Cass. Three of the four Whig journals of Texas were in that district;⁶⁰

that the ⁶⁰The journals were in Red River, Cass, and Fannin county respectively.

and since the Standard was the only Democratic publication circulating extensively over the area, DeMorse felt it his duty to challenge the Whigs and to defend the Democratic party.⁶¹

⁶¹Standard, January 6, 1849.

DeMorse thought that regardless of a Texan's former political predilections, he was indebted to the Democratic party for his privileges and immunities as a citizen of the United States. He was obligated to the Democratic party for the defense of his home; and it was to that same party he must look for the ultimate adjustment of his territorial rights.⁶²

⁶²Ibid., January 29, 1848.

The Whig party, on the other hand, DeMorse reminded his patrons, had steadily opposed the admission of Texas into the Union. Only the anti-slavery group of the Whigs should have opposed annexation from a natural impulse. The hostility of the Whigs began when Clay announced his views in the "Raleigh Letter," and from that moment "all good Whigs had followed the lead of the embodiment, and opposed the admission." Whig hostility toward Texas had never fagged for an instant, and had shown

itself upon all convenient occasions, DeMorse pointed out. Now that the war had ended, the Whigs opposed a fair adjudication of the Texas boundary problem. DeMorse further reminded his readers of the fact that when a vote was taken on the establishment of certain post routes in Texas every Whig vote had been cast against Texas. Their only reason for so voting was their implacable hostility to the state. DeMorse added that the Whigs were intending to establish a free territory on the western border of Texas as a refuge for runaway slaves. That argument, regardless of how much or how little truth there might have been in it, was a powerful club against the Whigs and added validity to DeMorse's contention that "Every man who votes with the Whig Party necessarily votes to reduce the limits of Texas to the Nueces."⁶³

⁶³Standard, September 16, 1848.

Reminding his readers of the importance of voting in the last issue before the election, DeMorse wrote:

Let no vote remain uncounted in behalf of the candidates, who representing the great principles of the Democratic faith, represent also your peculiar interest. It would be ungrateful to stand back now, when those who have proved themselves your friend call on you for your help. It would be treasonable to the interests of your state, to let her enemies gain, by the defection of even one vote which can be polled in behalf of Lewis Cass and Wm. O. Butler.⁶⁴

⁶⁴Standard, October 28, 1848.

When it became apparent that the Whigs had won, DeMorse, in announcing the fact, declared that "the plain banner of principle had been pressed out of the field by the followers of military glory, manworshippers, money changers, and fanatics." He had hoped that the scene of 1840 would not be repeated. Military glory, he lamented, still had a mighty power over the fancies of the people, drowning the calm action of sober judgment and leading men captive to their own injury and that of their country. The editor felt, however, that he had no right to complain. He believed in the judgment of the people. His confidence in the destiny of his country was too great to be affected seriously.⁶⁵

⁶⁵Standard, December 2, 1848.

In referring to the election DeMorse condemned the selection of a president by the electoral college. He felt that the choice should be made directly by the people. Throughout his entire career he showed an unswerving belief in the sovereignty of the masses.

DeMorse, however, found some consolation in a Democratic defeat in the fact that Texas, voting for its first time in a presidential election, had been true to the Democracy. His state had won the Democratic banner, he wrote, and will keep it, because the "reign of the false prophets is but brief."⁶⁶

⁶⁶Ibid., January 6, 1849. The vote in sixteen

counties of Northeast Texas, in which the Standard had a large circulation, was Cass, 2,906; Taylor, 1,180.

The Standard continued its opposition to President Taylor until his death. The following typical editorial, appearing shortly before Taylor's death, denounced the president's use of the spoils system:

This was one of the numerous electioneering phrases used by General Taylor during the late presidential canvass. "No friends to reward and no enemies to punish," said the old gentleman. What disinterested patriotism said the Whig Party, together with a large number of wishy washy Democrats. Hurra for the hero of Buena Vista said the Whig papers--hurra for Old Rough and Ready, said the greedy half-starved office seekers--elect me, said the portly gentleman himself, and I'll be the president of the whole people, and the people believed these things. But in what position does this party president stand before the people at the present time; this president who had no friends to reward and no enemies to punish? Let the 3,500 Democrats whom he has removed from office in one year, answer this question. These Democrats, too, were removed simply because they did not support a man for president in whom they had no confidence either as to capacity or honesty. We have never seen a Taylor man who did not curse against General Jackson for his "relentless proscription." In eight years General Jackson made 491 removals; on the 4th of March, 1841, when Harrison came in there were in the different departments in Washington, 224 Democrats and 276 Whigs. These are facts--well for wishy washy Democrats in Texas who supported Taylor to read them attentively. Does not the blush of shame mantle your cheeks when you see these direct evidences of Zachary's duplicity? Or are you so case hardened that you cannot blush? There are men in Texas who claim to be Democrats, who voted for this man who had no friends to reward, and no enemies to punish, but we think they have repented in sack-cloth long since.⁶⁷

⁶⁷Standard, June 22, 1850.

The Mexican War made a president. It also created a boundary dispute between Texas and the government at Washington which almost resulted in armed conflict. In its position on the boundary dispute the Standard stood almost alone among the Texas newspapers.

The boundary situation was, on the whole, tortuous and involved. The validity of the Texas claim to the Rio Grande was recognized at the time of the annexation of Texas to the United States. Texas' claim to New Mexico east of the Rio Grande was as good as her claim to the territory lying between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. The argument advanced against the Texas claim to Santa Fe was that Santa Fe had never been within the state of Coahuila and Texas, nor within the Spanish province of Texas, and that the Republic of Texas had never established jurisdiction over it.

The federal government had instructed General S. W. Kearny that, should he conquer and take possession of New Mexico, he was to establish a temporary government.⁶⁸ Kearny

⁶⁸Executive Documents, 29 Congress, 2 Session, No. 19, p. 6.

justified his entry into the territory on the ground that it was a part of the "territory rightfully belonging to the State

of Texas."⁶⁹ At the time of the occupation of Santa Fe by

⁶⁹Senate Journal (Texas), 3 Legislature, 1 Session, 248.

American forces, Governor Henderson of Texas had protested to the American state department. He was assured that the Texas claim to the territory was recognized, and that the newly established government was only temporary.

On January 3, 1848, a resolution was introduced in the lower house of the Texas legislature asking that a special committee be appointed to "report to the House at the earliest practical period, such measures as will be expedient to establish our rights to the said New Mexico territory, and to extend our jurisdiction over the same."⁷⁰ The committee was appointed

⁷⁰House Journal (Texas), 2 Legislature, 197.

and on February 28 made its report. It presented the Texas claim as laid down in December, 1836, in the resolutions of annexation, and in Polk's statement. The committee recommended the creation of a county in the settled portion around Santa Fe, and the establishment of a judicial district. Governor George T. Wood, in a message to the Texas legislature on March 2, 1848, stated that a government had been established at Santa Fe and that steps had been taken to call a convention to form a state constitution preparatory to its admission into the Union. He

had information, he reported, that this action on the part of the people of Santa Fe had the sanction of the United States officers there. He urged, therefore, "the necessity of taking suitable legislative action for the immediate enforcement of our civil and political jurisdiction over that part of Texas including Santa Fe."⁷¹

⁷¹House Journal, 2 Legislature, 465.

In consequence of the recommendation of the committee and the message of the governor, the legislature created the county of Santa Fe and the Eleventh Judicial District within the territory.⁷² A few days later the same legislature passed

⁷²Ibid., 463; Gammel, Laws of Texas, III, 95-96.

a joint resolution to the effect that Texas had never parted with jurisdiction over any part of her territory.⁷³ Judge Spruce M.

⁷³Gammel, Laws of Texas, III, 218.

Baird was sent to Santa Fe to hold court in the newly created judicial district but was prevented from doing so by United States officials who refused to recognize the jurisdiction of Texas. Governor Wood then addressed letters of protest to both Polk and Taylor, but neither responded.⁷⁴

(San Antonio), the Houston Telegraph

⁷⁴House Journal, 3 Legislature, 28.

Governor Wood thereupon threatened force. On November 6, 1849, he sent a bellicose message to the legislature recommending that all the resources of the state be placed in his hands to maintain the right of Texas to her statutory limits. The press of the state in general was on the side of Governor Wood. The Austin State Gazette asserted on December 1, 1849, that "Texas must assert her claim to her whole limits, as defined by her statutes previous to annexation, or she can no longer be entitled to the rank of a sovereign state. The banner of the Lone Star shall be again unfurled; not for offense, but for defense, and those who were foremost to cry aloud for annexation, will be foremost to sever the country from a Union that embraces but to crush and destroy." Again, a few days later it declared that "Rather than surrender to the usurpation of the General Government one inch of our blood-bought territory, let every human habitation in Santa Fe be leveled to the earth, and we, if the necessity of the case requires it, be buried beneath its ruins."⁷⁵

⁷⁵State Gazette (Austin), December 1 and 5, 1849.

Among those who opposed the bellicose attitude of the governor were the Star State Patriot (unlocated), the Red-Lander (San Augustine), the Houston Telegraph, the Dallas Herald, and

the Standard. DeMorse opposed placing the military forces of the state at the command of the executive. He pointed out the absurdity of resisting the power of the United States, declaring in the columns of the Standard that:

The idea that we shall first give notice to the General Government, by an act to place troops at the disposal of the State Executive, that we are about to conquer that territory by force of arms, and then after the General Government is fully notified, that we shall proceed, and wrest it from her; her means of resistance compared to ours of assault, being one thousand to one, we deem somewhat absurd, to say nothing of its unfraternal character on our part.⁷⁶

⁷⁶Standard, February 9, 1850.

DeMorse argued that if Texas was to resort to violence rather than constitutional opposition to the United States, she should withdraw from the Union. He was of the opinion that Texas should wait until it was certain that her rights would not be recognized; "then we should sever a compact, which is imperfect for want of good faith in the performances of conditions, and the recognition of rights, existing anterior to annexation. This thing of establishing a fighting brotherhood will not do--the term is contradictory. We should be the separate and independent Republic of Texas, or we should be one of the United States--united in feeling as in compact."⁷⁷ DeMorse thought the firm,

⁷⁷Ibid., February 9, 1850.

yet moderate and conciliatory position assumed by Governor P. H. Bell much better than the position taken by Governor Wood.

The second attempt of Texas to organize a government over the disputed territory, in April, 1850, was blocked by the United States authorities at Santa Fe.⁷⁸ Governor Bell then sent

⁷⁸Neighbors to Bell, Senate Journal, 3 Legislature, 2 Session, App. 10.

another protest to Taylor, but again no reply was received.⁷⁹ The

⁷⁹Bell to Taylor, Senate Journal, 3 Legislature, 2 Session, App. 50.

governor thereupon convened the legislature in special session and recommended the immediate adoption of such measures as were necessary for the occupation of Santa Fe, and to quell the rebellious spirit there.⁸⁰

⁸⁰Bell to the Legislature, Senate Journal, 3 Legislature, 2 Session, 10.

The Texas boundary question by this time had resolved itself into a sectional matter having to do with the extension of slavery. Because of the influence of the anti-slavery group on the central government, Texas was being opposed in its claim to the eastern part of New Mexico. By the terms of annexation, that part of the Texas territory which lay below 36° 30' could

be organized into slave states. Part of New Mexico lay south of that line. The slave states, therefore, supported the Texas claim, while many of the free states expressed bitter opposition. The controversy, together with other difficulties at the time, attracted world-wide interest.

The London Times declared that the Union was facing its greatest crisis since Washington assumed the presidency, and asserted that the most dangerous of the issues was the Texas boundary dispute. The Times suggested that the Texas boundary question could be settled by the Supreme Court, and warned that the first application of force would produce a fatal crash.⁸¹

⁸¹This article from an undated issue of the London Times was quoted in the Standard, October 12, 1850.

DeMorse insisted that the London Times was in error in thinking that the Texas boundary could be settled by the Supreme Court, but agreed that the first application of force would produce a fatal result.⁸²

⁸²Standard, October 12, 1850.

When Clay's compromise resolutions were referred to the committee of thirteen, with Clay as chairman, in April, 1850, DeMorse was elated. He favored the extension of the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific as a compromise, but was willing

to yield a point in order to effect a settlement.⁸³

⁸³Standard, June 29, 1850.

Realizing the seriousness of the situation, DeMorse went to Washington during the early part of June to be on the scene of action and to report the news first hand to the readers of the Standard. DeMorse, in Washington, was bitter in his condemnation of those who opposed Clay's efforts toward compromise. The president and the cabinet, with but one exception, were, he thought, "perfectly imbecile." Politicians who opposed the bill deserved "to be lashed with thongs at the whipping post." Clay's bill, which "was being held up by demagogues to further their own low projects," would stay the unrest and satisfy the people. Any opposition to that bill imperiled the safety of the Union and was, therefore, censurable and deplorable.⁸⁴

⁸⁴DeMorse to the Standard, July 7, 1850, in the Standard, August 10, 1850.

While DeMorse was in Washington, a convention of the slave-holding states had met at Nashville, June 3, 1850, to consider what action should be taken to meet the crisis. DeMorse, through the columns of the Standard, opposed the convention as an obstacle in the way of speedy acceptance of the compromise

Before the Texas legislature and before President Millard Fillmore, his successor,

resolutions.⁸⁵ The convention adjourned without taking any

⁸⁵Standard, June 29, and November 9, 1850.

drastic action. It may, however, have aroused the people to the dangers inherent in the situation and may have paved the way for compromise.

While DeMorse was in Washington, the acting editor of the Standard suggested that Texas act immediately to settle the boundary question. "Now," he declared, "is the time for prompt and determined action. We must pitch into the greasers, and the United States troops too if they molest us. Texas must learn [sic] the general government a lesson."⁸⁶ He called a mass

⁸⁶Standard, August 3, 1850. On September 14 and again on November 9, notices appeared in the Standard to the effect that the above statement was contrary to the policy of the Standard.

meeting of the citizens of Clarksville for July 29. It was his intention that the meeting be used as an instrument to jar the Texas legislature into definite action. The meeting, however, expressed complete confidence in the judgment of the legislators.⁸⁷

⁸⁷Standard, August 29, 1850.

Before the Texas legislature met President Taylor died. President Millard Fillmore, his successor, adopted a more

conciliatory attitude toward Texas and the compromise. The various proposals comprising the compromise plan were embodied in separate measures, and, one after another, passed Congress. The Texas boundary dispute was settled by the Pearce bill. According to the Pearce bill, Texas was to relinquish all claim to the territory lying north of the Missouri Compromise line and to the territory in controversy lying west of the 103rd meridian. Should Texas accept the proposed boundary, the United States agreed to pay Texas ten million dollars.⁸⁸

⁸⁸Congressional Globe, 31 Congress, 1 Session, 1520.

When the news that the Pearce bill had passed Congress reached the Standard, that journal proposed "three cheers for the ten millions, and three cheers for Texas and the Union."⁸⁹

⁸⁹Standard, September 28, 1850.

DeMorse, after hearing the debates on the bill in the Senate, declared that Senator Thomas J. Rusk had done more than any other man to bring to a happy end the difficulties which had characterized the session. "He had worked after others had departed, crushing pride and taunts. Texas will never find a truer friend, and no man in the Senate has a stronger influence," he wrote.⁹⁰

⁹⁰Ibid., November 2, 1850.

True to its belief in the sovereignty of the people the Standard issued a call for a mass meeting of the citizens to obtain an expression of opinion on the Pearce bill. The meeting was held at Clarksville, October 12. Out of three hundred to four hundred in attendance there were only three dissenting votes.⁹¹

⁹¹Standard, October 5 and 8, 1850.

After Congress had completed the passage of the compromise resolutions, DeMorse hastened home to throw the weight of his influence in favor of the acceptance of the Pearce bill. He did not doubt that the people of Texas would accept the compromise. He thought they were a sensible people, who could not be "hum-bugged" by windy attempts to pervert the truth and raise false issues. He felt that an industrious effort had been made to irritate their pride and excite them without cause. He argued that there was not one sensible reason why Texas should reject the Pearce bill. "The pitiful stuff about the sacrifice of principle, where our claim is so deferred to, and its strength acknowledged in so serious a form as to hold the organization of a territorial government in abeyance until it shall be determined and then accompanying it, the offer of five times the worth of the territory it will relinquish, is idle enough," he wrote. He pointed out that individuals would not consider principle should they receive an offer of several times the value of their land, but would accept such an offer without

hesitation.⁹²

when our ⁹²Standard, November 2, 1850.

safe.⁹³ When Governor Bell was officially informed of the passage of the Pearce bill by Congress, he convened the legislature in a special session. -By an act approved November 25, 1850, it accepted the terms as laid down in the bill for the establishment of our north and west boundaries and thereby relinquished all claim to the territory beyond that boundary which had been a troublesome issue in Texas from the time of her independence.⁹³

⁹³House Journal, 3 Legislature, 51; Gammel, Laws of Texas, III, 832-3.

When it became apparent that the Pearce bill, along with the other compromise resolutions, was to become a reality, DeMorse declared that he "... hoped the convulsion has spent its fury," and that "... the beamy light of peace, will soon quiver and brighten like the sunlight of summer over the country."⁹⁴

⁹⁴Standard, October 5, 1850.

Then again a few days later in the same connection he expressed the sentiments of the people of the country when he declared that "We rejoice that the dawn of the day is at hand when

agitation will no longer command popular attention, and agitators will sink into political oblivion. The period approaches when our citizens can sow in security and reap in peace, with the assurance that our liberty is inviolate and the Union is safe."⁹⁵

⁹⁵Standard, October 12, 1850.

a case in Boston where the officers had been prevented from recovering a runaway slave in the autumn of 1850, the Standard warned that "By all means this law should be enforced without regard to consequences. We had rather have that the waters of Boston run fuller of gore than ever they did of water than to know that this right had been abandoned in respect of the application of any number of fanatics there."¹

¹Standard, December 7, 1850.

DeCoursey thought that the Union certainly would be severed if the North violated the property law. "It supposes that this Union as we understand it is based on the fundamental law upon which it rests as a nation, and that it is under a delusion." The very suggestion of non-resistance, gradation and dishonor; broken faith on the one side and submission on the other. Either would the Union be severed, the compact afford any apology or justification. If the Union might be set aside by one portion, how could it be maintained by another?

CHAPTER V

THE IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT

Those who were optimistic enough to believe that the Compromise of 1850 was a final settlement of the issues between the North and South were soon to be disillusioned. Hardly had the echoes of its debates died out than warnings in the press appeared that its provisions must not be violated. Aroused by a case in Boston where the officers had been prevented from recovering a runaway slave in the autumn of 1850, the Standard warned that "By all means this law should be enforced without regard to consequences. We had rather know that the gutters of Boston ran fuller of gore than ever they did of water than to know that this right had been abandoned on account of the opposition of any number of fanatics there."¹

¹Standard, December 7, 1850.

DeMorse thought that the Union certainly would be severed if the North violated the compromise. "If anyone supposes that this Union can be preserved after a part of the fundamental law upon which it rests is broken, he is laboring under a delusion." The very supposition, he argued, implied degradation and dishonor; broken faith on the one side and abject submission on the other. Neither could the motive for breaking the compact afford any apology or justification. If one article might be set aside by one portion, because it was repugnant to

their sense of right and justice, another might be, because it was against their interest. He believed there were many in the North educated in the glories of the Union who had never realized that the duration of the Union was in danger. He was no alarmist, but believed "the fabric of this Union rests now upon a slumbering volcano, and that day when any attempt is made by the North to repeal or alter the fugitive slave law, or the failure to carry it out, sees the beginning of the end." The South, he asserted, desired no favors but would stand upon its rights. He warned the North to beware of meddlesome interference. The North denounced intolerance when it involved religious principles; the South would not suffer it in matters of government. The national government, he wrote, was as much a creature of the South as of the North, and the South would not permit it to be made into an engine of mischief against the Southerners.²

²Standard, May 24, 1851. apparently, was making a bid

DeMorse believed that the people of both North and South would suffer if the Union were divided. He warned that a division would be a blow to free government and to liberal institutions from which they would never recover.³ There could be

³Standard, December 14, 1850.

no peaceful separation, even in 1850. "We scorn the humbug cant about peaceable secession, for there can be no such thing."⁴

rest to remain as Nebraska.

⁴Standard, January 4, 1850.

ling was under way, and newspapers spread the story that Douglas and the ad For some time after the compromise, the sectional struggle lapsed into quiet, only to flare forth again in 1854, not over the fugitive slave law which had caused DeMorse so much alarm, but over the question of slavery in the territories. Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois, reported on January 4, 1854, a new Nebraska bill looking toward the organization of the territory in the Louisiana purchase above the Missouri Compromise line, with a proviso permitting the territory to enter the Union when it became a state, "with or without slavery." The accompanying report asserted that many thought the Missouri Compromise unconstitutional, and since the principle of nonintervention had been established by the Compromise of 1850, it was advisable to treat all territories as had been done in the case of New Mexico and Utah.⁵ Douglas, apparently, was making a bid existence within the limits of the territory organized.⁶ No

⁵Congressional Globe, 33 Congress, 1 Session, pp. 287-288.

for the presidency. After a conference with President Franklin Pierce, Douglas reported his bill again on January 24, with a proviso expressly repealing the Missouri Compromise on the ground that it was "superseded by the principles of the legislation of 1850." The new territory, therefore, was divided into two parts; that lying west of Missouri to be called Kansas, and the

rest to remain as Nebraska.

The public in the North realized that something startling was under way, and newspapers spread the alarm that Douglas and the administration were attempting to open the territories to slavery and disturb the existing equilibrium. Many Northerners grew extremely bitter in their comments upon the bill. On the other hand, a majority of the press in the South entered the fight on the side of Douglas. Although DeMorse had warned that the Compromise of 1850 must not be disturbed, his democratic political philosophy led him to support Douglas' doctrine of "squatter sovereignty." He declared that the Missouri Compromise had been consented to by the South only to avert a "great evil" to the Union, and that it was unconstitutional. The Missouri Compromise had been superseded by the principles of 1850, which provided that the people, the only true authority under the constitution, should determine for themselves in the organization of territorial governments whether slavery should have a legal existence within the limits of the territory organized.⁶ No

⁶Standard, March 11, 1854.

true Democrat, he asserted, could oppose it upon principle, unless his mind was warped by personal considerations. He predicted that the bill would pass Congress with a fair majority.⁷

⁷Standard, May 27, 1854.

Since DeMorse had supported the compromise in 1850, he now deemed it necessary to explain his change in attitude. He did not consider it sound policy to sustain compromises when there was an opportunity to support principles. He felt that compromises might be assented to for peace to prevent dangerous consequences likely to occur at critical times from their rejection, and that, at best, they were but the waiving of principle for the sake of policy and should not be continued longer than necessity demanded. The Missouri Compromise, he thought, involved yielding a principle to prevent unprincipled agitation; that it was an infraction of the constitution; and an imposition upon the rights not only of the South, but of the people of the territories, and of those who might desire to inhabit them.⁸

⁸Standard, March 25, 1854.

The Kansas-Nebraska bill passed the Senate on March 3, 1854, by a vote of thirty-seven to fourteen. The opposition included Houston of Texas.⁹ DeMorse published the speech of

⁹Standard, April 15, 1854.

Douglas on the bill, observing that it was the "most interesting disputation that has occurred since the palmy days of the Giants who have departed."¹⁰ "Judge Douglas," he declared, "has covered

might have¹⁰ Standard, May 27, 1854.

himself with unfading laurels, more glorious and imperishable than a Bonaparte or a Caesar ever won."¹¹

¹¹ Standard, April 15, 1854.

DeMorse did not condemn Houston for his opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska bill in harsh words and bitter sarcasm as did some of the editors,¹² but set the case very ably before the

¹² During DeMorse's absence from the editorial desk the editor in charge wrote in the Standard, that he hoped Seward, Wade of Ohio, and Houston of Texas, with all the fraternity who agreed with Wade that "a free negro is as good as a white man," would choose their friends and associates among the free negroes. He reminded Seward and others that they could find superior characters for such companionship "especially in Ohio." He presumed that Houston would find in Ohio that congeniality of sentiment which is said to unite and connect souls, for he certainly could no longer expect the support of Texans. Standard (pro tem editor), April 15, 1854. When DeMorse returned to his editorial desk he called the attention of his readers to the fact that the article was not his.

people. He thought that a representative of the South who found himself in concert with bitter enemies of his section, and who found himself standing apart from all his natural allies, might well pause and carefully examine the ground upon which he stood. He was certain that Senator Houston had misrepresented his constituency, and reminded the voters that it was their duty to decide whether to continue to follow Houston's judgment. The

plaudits of the Massachusetts and Connecticut abolitionists might have been pleasant to Houston as they commended his independence and his fair determination to support a compromise which they had always derided and denounced; but that conferring favors upon the enemy who would fire one's dwelling and exterminate his kindred was even more than a Roman virtue, and required great charity and philanthropy to appreciate. DeMorse declared he could hardly imagine a battlefield where the general would leave his own friends and go to the enemy, even should they have the right of principle. The natural sympathies which would carry a man with friends, and the friends of his race, were safer, if not better, than all the sublimated magnanimity which might array him with the enemy. DeMorse did not question Houston's purity of motive in opposing the Kansas-Nebraska bill, but he did not believe that his opposition to that bill represented either the interests or the will of his constituents.¹³

¹³Standard, June 17, 1854.

After a bitter fight the Kansas-Nebraska bill finally passed the House on May 22, by a vote of 113 to 100, and was signed by President Pierce on May 30. In reporting its final passage to his readers, DeMorse announced that "The Bill of Rights has passed." The Whig senators of the South had perceived, in this instance at least, he thought, that the Whigs of the North were not their natural allies. He warned that the only safety for the South lay in the predominance of the Democratic

party.¹⁴ And herein is found the basis for DeMorse's political
 across the rampant Republican party. The great victory of
 slavery a ¹⁴Standard, July 1, 1854.

philosophy for many years to come: to keep the Democratic party
 united and so strong that the people of the South might control
 their own destinies within the Union. DeMorse propounded his
 philosophy so earnestly that the Southern Intelligencer (Austin)
 proclaimed DeMorse "the Father of the Texas Democratic press."
 It said that he looked to the honor of the party; that to him
 the success of principles was the predominant object; that the
 election of any individual was only desirable or subsidiary to
 the end, and merely represented the fact that the principles
 espoused had triumphed.¹⁵

¹⁵Southern Intelligencer (Austin), July 14, 1858, and
 September 7, 1859; also reported in the Standard, July 31, 1858,
 and September 24, 1859, respectively.

Professor T. C. Smith writing of the Kansas-Nebraska
 Act, observes that "No act more fateful in character ever passed
 the Congress of the United States, for it set in motion the
 train of political changes which led straight to the Civil War."¹⁶

¹⁶T. C. Smith, Parties and Slavery, 107.

It was a direct cause of a radical alteration in the complexion
 and make-up of the political parties of the time. The passage

of the bill presaged the death of the Whig party. In its place arose the rampant Republican party. That party proclaimed slavery a "moral, social, and political evil;" denounced the repeal of the Missouri Compromise as "an open and undisguised breach of faith;" and demanded the repeal of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the fugitive slave law.¹⁷ The passage of the Kansas-

¹⁷Smith, Parties and Slavery, 111.

Nebraska Act led, in short, to the formation of the Republican party in the summer of 1854, and to a setback for the Democratic party in the elections of that year.

The first open conflict over Kansas occurred in the autumn of 1854. The territorial governor, appointed by President Pierce to carry the Kansas-Nebraska Act into effect, set November 29 as the date for the election of a territorial delegate. By spring of 1855 the excitement in Kansas had become intense, and when the territorial governor ordered the election of a legislature for March 30, it was felt that the decisive moment was at hand. On election day the Southerners of Kansas supported by the "Border Ruffians" from Missouri triumphed. Kansas was then organized with a territorial legislature of pro-slavery men. When that body convened it proceeded to pass statutes to protect the institution of slavery. On October 23, a convention composed of Freesoil delegates met and drew up the "Topeka Constitution" prohibiting slavery. On December 15, the "Topeka Constitution" was adopted, and on January 15, 1856, a

governor and legislature were elected. The legislature met on March 4 but did not attempt to extend its jurisdiction over the substance of earlier cases, and of the territories, leaving the expressed will of the majority over the number of the constitution, with the President. On January 24, 1856, President Pierce sent to Congress a special message on Kansas, in which he condemned the Topeka movement. Congress immediately entered into a spirited debate upon the subject of Kansas.

Such was the state of affairs when the Democrats convened at Cincinnati on June 2 to select a presidential nominee. The party needed to name only a candidate who would command the Northern Democratic vote. Hence, the convention passed over both Pierce and Douglas, who were too intimately associated with the Kansas affairs, to select James Buchanan, a conservative, a resident of a doubtful state, and a minister to England during most of the Kansas controversy.

DeMorse spoke the sentiments of the South when he said that he had considered for a long time that Buchanan was the strongest man the Democrats could have selected. He would have preferred Rusk, but after him, his first choice was Buchanan. "To say that we are satisfied with the nominee would be but faint praise." Buchanan had been the choice for the presidential nomination in 1852, and he could see no reason to change his preference.¹⁸

¹⁸Standard, June 14 and 21, 1856.

territories. The platform adopted by the convention contained the substance of earlier ones, and asserted the right of the people of the territories, "acting through the legally and fairly expressed will of the majority of the actual residents and whenever the number of their inhabitants justified to form a constitution, with or without slavery."¹⁹

¹⁹Stanwood, A History of the Presidency, 266-268.

The Southern press in most cases was elated with the platform. DeMorse declared that it would be difficult for any Southerner of any party to object to any clause of the platform. Every principle enunciated, he wrote, was positive and clearly expressed. There were no plausible generalities, no empty assertion of truisms that no one controverts; but every paragraph had a meaning, and constituted an obligation to be supported by all true Southerners.²⁰

²⁰Standard, July 12, 1856.

The Republicans met in convention on June 17 and named John C. Frémont for the leading place on their ticket. It was thought that Frémont was sufficiently strong on the Kansas question, and that he would not antagonize any of the coalition elements. The platform made the Kansas issue the basis of the Republican party. It asserted that Congress had no right to establish slavery, but could and ought to abolish it in the

territories, together with polygamy, "those twin relics of barbarism." It demanded the admission of Kansas under the Topeka Constitution, denounced the Missourian invasions and the pro-slavery territorial government, and concluded, "For this high crime against the Constitution, the Union and humanity, we arraign the administration, the president, his advisers, [and] agents, ... before the country and the world."²¹

²¹Stanwood, A History of the Presidency, 271.

There was some alarm in the South at the growing strength of this new party, and the uncompromising stand it had taken. In Texas a Senate committee on state affairs reported a resolution requesting the governor, in case a "Black Republican" was elected president, to call a special session of the legislature on January 1, "to consult upon the state of the Union, the condition of the South, and the duty of Texas under these circumstances."²²

²²Standard, August 30, 1856.

DeMorse assured the citizenship of the state that the legislature was unduly alarmed, since there was hardly a chance that an anti-slavery man could be elected to the presidency. He warned that if the unexpected should happen, the South would do well to consider gravely what the necessities of her condition demanded. It was true that the Republicans would be in no

position to do much harm to the South as long as the Senate was Democratic, but the situation would be dangerous.²³ DeMorse

²³Standard, August 30, 1856.

did not believe the Republicans dangerous at this time. In the midst of the campaign he declared that a Democratic victory was more certain than at any time since 1832.²⁴

²⁴Ibid., July 19, 1856.

As the summer wore on and the Republican prospects grew brighter, the press and leaders of the South announced that in the event a Republican president were elected, the only thing left for the slave-holding states would be to secede instantly. It began to look as if not merely the future of Kansas but the integrity of the Union itself was at stake. Fully aware of the seriousness of the situation, DeMorse warned Democrats not to become overconfident and remain away from the polls, and thereby allow a Republican victory. Shortly before the national election he declared that never since the United States had become a nation, had a more important election taken place. "The permanency of our glorious Union is involved in the contest. Should Frémont be the successful candidate, we have no other notion, than that this would be the death-knell of the Union." He believed a Republican victory would place the South in such a position that it could not in justice to its interests

and institutions submit to the licentious domination of the Northern fanaticism; and the aggressions of abolitionists and Black Republicanism should be met either by separation or civil war. At the same time, DeMorse hastened to add that Frémont could not be elected, and his prophecy proved to be correct.²⁵

²⁵Standard, October 25, 1856.

Immediately after his inauguration, President Buchanan sent Robert J. Walker to Kansas as territorial governor. Buchanan, apparently, was willing to submit the constitution to the bona fide resident voters of Kansas.²⁶ Walker announced in

²⁶Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, V, 431.

his inaugural address, on May 26, 1857, that any constitution adopted would be submitted for ratification by a majority of the then bona fide settlers of Kansas.

The territorial legislature already had set June 15 as the date for the elections of delegates to a constitutional convention. The Free State voters refused to participate in this election, with the result that pro-slavery men were chosen. The convention met at Leecompton and drew up a constitution. The people were to vote "For the Constitution with Slavery" or "For the Constitution without Slavery." If the "Constitution without Slavery" were adopted, the slaves already in Kansas would not be

freed. The Northern press branded such an election as a fraud. Most of the Southern press upheld it, as the vital question had been submitted. Furthermore in a number of other states the constitutions had not been submitted to the voters. DeMorse was among those who branded the Lecompton Constitution and such a referendum as a fraud. He argued that the whole of the constitution should have been referred to the people of Kansas. If there were a majority opposed to the constitution, then that majority had the right to decide on its fundamental law. If a majority opposed the constitution, they would be able to call a convention at a later date and change it in conformity to their wishes. Prevention for a time by adroit political management would only render them active opponents of the Southern institution, he argued. Otherwise, the people of Kansas, having chosen their fundamental law, without interference on the part of the South, would become fast friends and supporters of all the constitutional rights of the South.²⁷ It is true that

²⁷Standard, December 19, 1857.

he did not believe that those who had slaves there already could be coerced into submission to such a constitution as long as the Dred Scott decision remained the law of the land.²⁸ He

²⁸Standard, April 3, 1858.

did not believe any just cause could gain strength by means of fraud. He did not believe the South had a chance to make Kansas a pro-slave state. He declared that the miserable attempt would end in failure, and that the South would have it thrown in her face that her agents tried by fraudulent means and unfair suppression of rights to accomplish that to which she was not justly entitled. He denied that the South had any such object or employed any such means, but that it was the work of individuals who had more zeal than moral principles. The South had clearly defined rights under the constitution, and he believed it unwise to anticipate evil before it came. If a fundamental right of the South were violated, she could and ought to refuse to bear it.

The South, he indicated, could find an outlet for its surplus in a southern direction. Caution should be observed in thinning out the population as the strength of the South might thereby be wasted. Texas alone offered a larger field for surplus slave labor than was needed for many years to come.²⁹

²⁹Standard, March 20, 1858.

DeMorse's interest in the Kansas question was in part due to his desire for a transcontinental railroad. He realized that this project was not likely to materialize as long as the Kansas question remained unsettled. Hence, the disposal of that issue would be a blessing to the country as a whole.³⁰

question ³⁰Standard, March 20, 1858.

Buchanan. When President Buchanan in his annual message upheld the Lecompton Constitution as legal, Douglas assumed the lead in the opposition. In opposing it he remained true to his doctrine of "popular sovereignty." This situation placed DeMorse in a difficult position. He felt that Douglas had virtually gone over to the "Black Republicans" in opposition to the administration. He hoped that Congress would approve the Lecompton Constitution, although such an adoption was contrary to his own political doctrine of allowing the people to be final arbiters. He was still of the opinion that the correct procedure was to settle the question in Kansas and not make a battle-field of the legislative halls. It would then become the duty of the president to accept the verdict of the people.³¹

³¹Standard, January 9, 1858.

The question was further confused by events in Kansas. At the election on the Lecompton Constitution in December, many of those who opposed it remained away from the polls with the result that it was adopted with only a small minority opposition. Meanwhile, the territorial legislature had provided for another vote on the constitution, in which ballots might be marked not only as in the December election, but cast also against the constitution. At this election the pro-slavery

men remained away from the polls, on the ground that the question had been settled. Thus all but a small minority expressed themselves as opposed to the constitution. President Buchanan, believing the Federal Constitution protected slavery in the territories, recommended the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution. After a prolonged struggle, Congress referred the final decision to the voters of Kansas, who in turn rejected the Lecompton Constitution.

The Kansas question alarmed DeMorse for the future of the South. When Congress referred the question back to Kansas for settlement, DeMorse warned the South that it was time to contemplate the dangers threatening it, so that it might not be sleeping when the inevitable crisis arrived. He warned that the Republicans were expecting to secure a majority in the House, to elect a president and vice-president in 1860, and to return a majority in the Senate in 1863. They would then abolish slave representation, alter the fugitive slave law, and admit no more slave states. The South, he urged, should guard against every attempt to divide its interests. United it would stand in no danger.³² The principle of the Black Republicans,

³²Standard, May 22, 1858.

he warned, was "war to the knife" against the extension or continuance of slavery. He urged the Southern press to awake to its perilous position, for the unanimous voice of the South would be heard in language "which the North will not dare to

disregard."³³

³³Standard, October 30, 1858.

The truth of the Standard's assertion was brought to bear upon the South in a very impressive manner by Republican gains in the elections of 1858. DeMorse explained the Republican gain as due to the administration's yielding to the "Lecompton fraud." He declared that the acceptance of the Lecompton Constitution by the administration was a "virtual disregard of the expressed principle of the Kansas-Nebraska Act issue, upon which we went before the people and triumphed." By allowing the Kansas constitution question to come before Congress, the administration had brought doom upon itself and played into the hands of the Republican party.³⁴ The Democratic party had too

³⁴Ibid., November 27, 1858.

many aspiring members, who were looking to their own advancement, "rather than to the furtherance of principles, in whose support they profess to be laboring," he charged. For this reason the people of Kansas had not been allowed to exercise a fundamental principle of the party.

Although DeMorse had placed the Standard squarely behind Douglas in regard to "squatter sovereignty," it must not be inferred that he used his publication to support Douglas. He was suspicious of Douglas's relations with the Republicans

during the days when the Kansas question was exciting the nation. He looked upon Douglas' election as a triumph over "Black Republicanism;" but doubted that it would add anything to the strength of the Democrats. He was fearful that Douglas' position might have serious consequences as to the future unity of the Democratic party. As for himself, he looked upon the Democrats as the bulwark of the Union.³⁵ Although his party

³⁵Standard, October 9, November 6, and December 18, 1858.

was certainly liable to errors of conduct, he believed its basic principles were eternally right. He was not one who would defend the party when it was wrong, but he would support no one who denied his allegiance to the principles of democracy.³⁶

³⁶Standard, January 22, 1859. This editorial appears to have reference specifically to Houston. However, it seems that DeMorse foresaw the approaching danger to the Democratic party in 1860, and was attempting to prevent such a disaster.

DeMorse declared that "with the National Democrats we are, regardless of victory or defeat, expecting no honors or compensations, and asking none."³⁷

³⁷Standard, September 24, 1859.

The tension between the two sections was further increased by John Brown's seizure of Harper's Ferry on the

night of October 16, 1859. The anti-slavery zealots hailed Brown as a martyr to a great cause, but throughout the South and among the sober thinking people of the North, the act sent a thrill of horror. For many Southerners it confirmed their worst fears of the intentions of the "Black Republicans."

DeMorse expressed fairly accurately the attitude of the entire South toward Governor H. A. Wise of Virginia for his handling of the situation. He declared in the Standard that Governor Wise deserved the thanks of his countrymen for the efficient manner in which he had discharged his duty.³⁸ DeMorse was fearful that

³⁸Standard, December 10, 1859.

the episode would disturb the session of Congress which was just beginning. He foresaw a long and stormy session, the most exciting the nation had ever witnessed. It was absolutely essential, he urged, that the Democratic and American party congressmen unite to prevent the election of a "Black Republican" as speaker of the House. Otherwise, the approaching presidential campaign would prove disastrous to the South.³⁹

³⁹Ibid., December 10, 1859.

The seriousness of the presidential election of 1860, as previously indicated, had been foreshadowed as early as the campaign of 1856. The members of Congress which met on December 5, 1859, soon left no doubt as to their own position and that of

their respective sections in the coming contest. M. J. Crawford of Georgia declared on the floor of the House that his state would never submit to the inauguration of a "Black Republican" president.⁴⁰

⁴⁰See the Congressional Globe, 36 Congress, 1 Session, 163-164.

Meanwhile, DeMorse had indicated as early as April, 1859, that Douglas had placed himself in a position impossible for the planting interest to support. He urged the Democrats to nominate a conservative and patriotic Southern man of sound judgment. He concluded that John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky was the best fitted to fill all the requirements. DeMorse pointed out that Breckenridge was "pure," talented, and prudent; that he had fine personal appearance, great speaking capacity, and native elements of popularity unsurpassed. He believed Breckenridge could carry as many votes in the Northwest as Douglas, and more elsewhere.⁴¹ DeMorse worked untiringly for the nomination and

⁴¹Standard, April 23, 1859.

election of Breckenridge. Many years later he claimed that he was the first journalist of the South to nominate him for the presidency.⁴² It is not to be inferred from the foregoing that DeMorse

⁴²Standard, August 5, 1871, in answer to a charge of

the Paris Examiner.⁴²

had become a secessionist. At a political mass meeting held in Clarksville in the autumn of 1859, for the purpose of expressing the sentiments of the citizens of that area, a resolution was adopted which expressed DeMorse's position. The resolution follows:

We profess to be conservative National Democrats. We believe our political rights and prosperity best preserved within the Union as recognized by the Constitution, and we shall adhere to this until we are forced to a different course by a positive outrage of legislation. That our political faith is in substance the faith of Jefferson as followed out by successive Democratic statesmen. That we believe in the plainly intended non-intervention principles of the Utah, New Mexico, and Kansas bills.⁴³

⁴³Expression of a political mass meeting held in Clarksville, which DeMorse accepted as his in the Standard, November 26 and December 10, 1859.

In an editorial entitled "The Beginning Perhaps," DeMorse clarified his position somewhat. He thought it quite possible that the South might be required to "draw a line" and defend it, especially if the people of the North could be induced to follow their leaders. The South, he thought, should wait until oppressed before taking any decisive step. He avowed his adherence to the Union until unsupportable aggressions from the North drove the people of his section from the Union. If it did become necessary for the South to leave the Union, DeMorse hoped it would remain strictly on the defensive and not stir up

a fratricidal war.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Standard, February 4, 1860.

Democratic party leaders in Texas, in common with those of other Southern states, were determined not to submit to the leadership of Douglas and the Northern Democrats. On the other hand, the Democrats of the North were equally determined to nominate Douglas for the presidency. The Texas Democratic Convention was scheduled to meet at Galveston on April 2, 1860. The chief business of that convention was the selection of delegates to the National Democratic Convention to be held at Charleston, South Carolina, on April 23. Much interest was centered in the selection of candidates to the Galveston Convention since the seriousness of the situation was well understood in Texas. In this connection, DeMorse declared that upon the maintenance of the unity of the Democratic party depended the preservation of the Union from anarchy. This was no time for inconsiderate action or expression on the part of the delegates; nor was it a time to press hobbies or personalities. He urged the South to be ready to accept the nominees of the Charleston Convention, even though others were preferred. At this stage, he warned, it was essential to refrain from denouncing any Democrat having the confidence of the large masses.⁴⁵ He foresaw a contest

⁴⁵Standard, March 10, 1860.

⁴⁶Standard, May 12, 1860.

between the nominee of the Charleston Convention and the "wagers of the irrepressible conflict." Should any Southern faction, under whatever name, nominate any other candidate, it would mean the success of the "Black Republicans." Only by a united front could the Democrats expect victory. Though not a Douglas supporter, to avoid a national crisis, he wished Northern and Southern Democrats to unite in order to preserve once more the constitution and the Union.⁴⁶ In the light of later events, the

⁴⁶Standard, April 28, 1860.

wisdom of his position can hardly be denied.

When the Democrats assembled at Charleston on April 23, two platforms were presented for their choice. One, the majority, declared unequivocally for the right to take slave property into the territories, under protection of the federal government, and denied the power of Congress or the territorial legislatures to exclude slavery from the territories; the other, the minority, simply declared that the Democratic party would abide by the decisions of the United States Supreme Court on the question.⁴⁷ DeMorse believed the majority report unobjection-

⁴⁷Stanwood, A History of the Presidency, 282-284.

able to the South.⁴⁸

⁴⁸Standard, May 12, 1860.

The majority report at Charleston being defeated, some of the Southern delegates withdrew from the convention. The remaining delegates then adopted a declaration to abide by the decisions of the Supreme Court. Unable to agree, under the two-thirds rule, on a nominee, the convention adjourned to meet at Baltimore on June 18. The Southern bolters held a short session at Charleston, adopted the original Charleston majority report and adjourned, to meet again at Richmond on June 10. DeMorse favored a platform that would guarantee Southern rights, and upon which the conservative Democrats of the North could stand. The platform of the Charleston majority report, was, he declared, the only one that the South could have adopted or ought to have adopted, as it embraced the sentiments of this section upon the slavery question. He was confident that had a candidate been nominated by the Charleston Convention upon that platform, all would have been well.⁴⁹

⁴⁹Standard, May 19, 1860.

The Republicans met at Chicago on May 16, nominated Abraham Lincoln for president on a platform that declared slavery could not legally exist in the territories, denied that Congress possessed power to legalize it, and asserted that "the Union of the States must and shall be preserved."⁵⁰ The South, regarding

⁵⁰Stanwood, A History of the Presidency, 290-295.

the nomination of Lincoln as a challenge, began preparation for the defense of their rights in case of his election. Upon learning of Lincoln's nomination, DeMorse avowed in a vigorous editorial that "it is now that the irrepressible conflict will be waged, and the issue will be put to a test whether North or South shall rule." He declared the only hope lay with the Baltimore convention as the last arbiter of peace to stretch forth its protecting hand to deliver the country from anarchy.⁵¹

⁵¹Standard, June 2, 1860.

DeMorse, nevertheless, announced that should Douglas be nominated by a two-thirds majority of all the delegates, the Standard would support him.

When the Democratic bolters met at Richmond on June 11, they were of the opinion that no selection should be made until after the nominee of the regular convention was known. They accordingly adjourned to await the action of the Baltimore convention. When the latter convention met, it refused to admit some of the delegates who had withdrawn, and who now wished to be reseated, and proceeded to nominate Douglas under a rule requiring only two-thirds majority of those present. When the Southern delegates were denied admission, the remaining delegates from the Southern states withdrew, joined the ranks of the bolters, and nominated John C. Breckenridge for the presidency with the majority report of the Charleston Convention as a platform.⁵²

⁵²Stanwood, A History of the Presidency, 285-288.

The very thing had happened that DeMorse had endeavored to prevent. The Democrats were split into two groups: the "squatter doctrine" group led by Douglas, and the "non-inter-ventionists" led by Breckenridge. Since other Southern delegations had joined the Charleston bolters, whose choice had devolved upon the candidate preferred by DeMorse, he concluded to support Breckenridge. In announcing his intention to support Breckenridge, DeMorse claimed that the Standard was the only paper in Texas, and among the first three or four in the Southwest, to place this candidate's name at its mast head.⁵³ But he did

⁵³Standard, July 7, 1860.

not approve the secession at Charleston either at the time or later. He declared that he would not have supported a nominee made by the original seceders; but since they had been joined by the other Southern delegates, he would lend the full support of his pen and the Standard to the election of the Southern ticket.⁵⁴

⁵⁴Standard, July 14, and August 4, 1860.

Still another group, who called themselves the Constitutional Unionists, held a convention on May 9, nominated

John Bell of Tennessee, and drew up a platform declaring for the Union, the Constitution, and the enforcement of the laws. The importance of this action was to divide still further the Southern vote.⁵⁵

⁵⁵Stanwood, A History of the Presidency, 288-290.

With the split in the Democratic party and the Constitutional Unionists to detract the Democratic votes, the election of Lincoln appeared more and more imminent as the campaign progressed. As the certainty of Lincoln's election increased, so did the determination of the South not to endure it. "It is evident that the election of Lincoln would precipitate immediate difficulty, the end of which no man can foresee. ... There is a determination among a considerable body of Southern men not to submit to it, and it is idle to shut our eyes longer to a danger which is encroaching and extending its proportions," declared DeMorse.⁵⁶

⁵⁶Standard, September 22, 1860.

Up to this time DeMorse had hoped that the Union could be saved. He hoped the Democrats might keep control of the government, and if any secession was to take place, let it be the New England states. He would have consented to their leaving the Union in peace. In fact, he felt that the Union would be better without them.

repealed. Having come to the conclusion that Lincoln would be elected, DeMorse began to consider the practicability of Texas assuming her independent status once more. The possibilities, however, did not offer as great a future as in the days before annexation. The territory west of Texas to the Pacific had fallen into the hands of the United States since that time. Without a water front on the Pacific, Texas would always be limited in her trade. Then, too, there was a feeling of national brotherhood between the people of this state and those of the other Southern states. DeMorse soon decided that the fate of his state was so closely interwoven with that of the other states of the South that it would be unwise and impracticable for Texas not to act with them. After the other states began to secede, the people of Texas could not have been persuaded to consider seriously any proposal of an independent nationality.⁵⁷

⁵⁷Standard, January 26, 1861.

Even before the election, steps had been taken in South Carolina looking to secession. Upon receiving word of Lincoln's election, the legislature, having remained in session for the express purpose, issued a call for a state convention.⁵⁸

⁵⁸Unfortunately some of the issues of the Standard at this critical time are missing.

On December 20, 1860, amid intense excitement, that body formally

repealed the Act of 1778 ratifying the constitution, and "dissolved" the "Union now subsisting between South Carolina and other States, under the name of the 'United States of America.'"⁵⁹

59A. B. Hart, American History Told by Contemporaries, IV, 185.

Other states soon followed the lead of South Carolina.

Governor Houston was determined to do everything possible to prevent the secession of Texas. A resolution had been adopted during Governor H. R. Runnel's administration authorizing the governor to call an election whenever he deemed proper for the purpose of naming delegates to meet in convention with delegates from the other slave-holding states to consider means of preserving their equal rights within the Union. Acting under this authority, Houston proposed a Southern convention, and set the first Monday in February as the date in Texas for choosing delegates. DeMorse vehemently opposed Houston's proposal. He declared that it was already too late for "patchwork treaties," termed compromises. "The Union is dissolved--today there is no United States of America as but lately known." The Union was past hope and a crisis could be expected soon, he maintained.⁶⁰

⁶⁰Standard, January 19, and 26, 1861.

Meanwhile, the people of Texas had taken matters into their own hands, and fixed January 8 as the date for an election

of delegates to meet in convention on January 28 at Austin to consider the question of secession. Seeing that the situation was beyond his control, Houston approved the convention on condition that it submit the question of secession to the people. On February 1 the convention adopted the ordinance of secession with a proviso that it must be ratified by the voters of the state. The election was set for February 23.

Most of the members in the convention who opposed secession were from North Texas. As the most noted journalist of that section, DeMorse assumed the responsibility of converting that region to the support of the South. On the following day after the convention had adopted the ordinance, DeMorse wrote in the Standard that Texas must "go out of the Union," and take part with her "natural associates."⁶¹ In the following issue he

⁶¹Standard, February 2, 1861.

claimed that there was no longer any hope to remain within the Union and secure a fair response from the North. Secession was the only recourse. To recede from this would be not only "dastardly and despicable in appearance, but it would be futile. We had as well write Fool across our skull caps, and take seats which would render it convenient to spit upon us," DeMorse declared in an effort to carry the vote of Northeast Texas in favor of secession.⁶²

⁶²Standard, February 9, 1861.

Just before going to the polls, DeMorse wrote that he was no extremist or disunionist; that he still hoped that the glories and benefits of the Union would be perpetuated, but that it was a hope which dimmed the vision. "We should go out, we will go. We can do well in a Southern Confederacy. We shall mourn, even though we approve severance as a stern necessity."⁶³

⁶³Standard, February 23, 1861.

With such feelings toward secession, DeMorse cast his vote for secession with an overwhelming majority of other Texans.

Meanwhile, delegates from the six seceded states had met in Montgomery, Alabama, on February 4, and four days later adopted a constitution for the provisional government of the Confederacy. Jefferson Davis was inaugurated as president on February 18, and on March 11, the permanent constitution was adopted. When DeMorse received news of this action, he dropped the United States flag from his editorial column, and substituted the Lone Star flag with the explanation that the Confederacy was a reality and would be perpetuated. The only salvation for the Union now, he claimed, was for the North to adopt the constitution of the Confederacy. He believed that the government adopted by the Confederacy was in spirit and legislation a half century in advance of the old government of the United States.⁶⁴

⁶⁴Standard, March 23, 1861.

that all Upon one point, however, DeMorse bitterly condemned the policy of the newly established Confederate government, the failure to submit its permanent constitution to the people for ratification. In this regard, he was true to his life long philosophy that the people are the true and only sovereigns. He charged that ratification of the constitution without reference to the people was a gross usurpation and an insult to the intelligence of the Southern voter. He maintained that he had never known a more barefaced act of political impudence than the assumption by the members of the convention that the people were unworthy of notice. He had sustained the hasty action of the convention in the promulgation of the provisional constitution, but he did not think the necessity so urgent as to extend to a hasty and unauthorized adoption of a permanent constitution. It was an outrage upon popular rights, and upon the rights of individuals as a constituent part of the sovereignty. He was determined that no oligarchy should be erected over the rights of the people as freemen, without an attempt to embody resistance by all proper means and concert of action with those who feel that they are independent white men, born free and determined to remain so.⁶⁵ Then becoming oratorical, he challenged his

⁶⁵Standard, March 30, 1861.

countrymen not to forget that "power steals noiselessly from the many to the few: eternal vigilance is the price of Liberty. The first infraction is the proper point of resistance. We say

that all men who value their primary rights, as citizens of a free government, should demand that the legislature refer the Montgomery Constitution to the people for their action of approval or disapproval."⁶⁶ DeMorse was in favor of the con-

within the ⁶⁶Standard, April 6, 1861.

stitution, but being a Democrat he opposed the undemocratic manner by which it was adopted. He disliked to hear those who claimed to be Democrats argue in defense of action which deprived the people of their sovereignty. The amendments to the Texas constitution, making her a member of the Confederacy, he maintained, were in truth void and of no force.⁶⁷ Though correct in

government ⁶⁷Standard, April 20, 1861.

theory in regard to true American principles of democracy, DeMorse's cry of alarm went unheeded, for even in democratic America it has been the tendency for centralization of powers to increase during critical periods.

In his inaugural address, Lincoln declared that beyond what might be necessary in order to hold, occupy, and possess the property belonging to the government, and to collect duties and imposts, there would be no invasions, and no use of force against or among the people anywhere. DeMorse informed his readers that the address showed moderation, but that if Lincoln attempted to do only what he proposed collision would ensue;

that he must abandon or remove Federal property from the seceded states at once to avoid a conflict.⁶⁸ As to the Federal forts

⁶⁸Standard, March 23, 1861.

within the borders of the Confederacy, DeMorse urged that no re-enforcements be permitted. If the Federal government would be quiet, he was of the opinion that the South could afford to do so, not otherwise.⁶⁹ This was the position taken by the

⁶⁹Standard, March 30, 1861.

Confederate government.

Upon learning that Lincoln had served notice on the government of South Carolina of his intention to reprovise Fort Sumter and had ordered a relief expedition there, DeMorse declared that regardless of whatever differences of opinion upon the policy of late events, there would be from that moment universal brotherhood in the South.⁷⁰ In announcing the news

⁷⁰Standard, April 20, 1861.

that Major Robert Anderson had been compelled to surrender Fort Sumter, DeMorse reported that Lincoln did not have even the moral support of an act of Congress in beginning the war, and that the mass of people in the North would not support an offensive war against the South.⁷¹

call for men; (6) that the citizens deprecated any political parties with a view to produce dissension; and (7) that they would give their government all the moral support within their power.

Upon learning that the war had begun, DeMorse issued a call in the Standard for a mass meeting of the citizens of Red River county to obtain an expression of sentiment. He wrote the resolutions and introduced them at the meeting. In presenting the resolutions, DeMorse urged their adoption. There was a time, he said, when sacrifices should be made, and that a time of war, when no man knows when his household would be attacked or his brother shot down, was such a time. If ever such danger appeared imminent, he would be willing to take up arms in support of the South. He pled for united resistance against aggression, and for full faith in the state and Confederate governments as then organized. He voiced an appeal that similar mass meetings be held in every community throughout the South as an expression of confidence and loyalty to the cause of the Confederacy. Such meetings might prove a means of arousing a new spirit of opposition. They portray vividly the feeling as it existed at the time in North Texas. In substance they were: (1) that the citizens of Red River county were thoroughly united in defense of their liberties against aggression; (2) that the citizens of Red River county were "enlisted for war" in support of the existing Confederate and state governments; (3) that they were opposed to any attempt to divide the state; (4) that they pronounced the war unnecessary, and that it was forced upon the South by Lincoln; (5) that Red River county would respond to the

call for men; (6) that the citizens deprecated any political parties within their midst as calculated to produce dissension; and (7) that they would give their government all the moral support within their power.⁷²

⁷²Standard, May 4, 1861.

As to the war aims of the Confederacy, DeMorse declared that the South was fighting to accomplish no mercenary purpose, and was actuated by no motive of aggrandizement; but that she was simply defending her own firesides, household gods, the symbols of liberty, and the inherent right of self-government which had been transmitted by a "patriotic ancestry to a no less worthy posterity."⁷³

⁷³Standard, May 25, 1861.

One of the problems faced by the South at the beginning of the war was a lack of currency. One means by which she attempted to offset this deficiency was by selling long term bonds. DeMorse became an authorized agent for receiving subscriptions for Confederate bonds. The planter signified that he would deliver a certain number of bales of cotton to a designated commission merchant in New Orleans or elsewhere, and in payment would receive bonds of the Confederate government. The bonds were to be convertible currency anywhere within the Confederate states and were to be accepted at par.⁷⁴

⁷⁴Standard, July 13, 1861.

DeMorse did not serve long, however, in the capacity as agent for the Confederacy, for by autumn he had become convinced that the struggle was to be of much greater proportion than anyone at first had surmised. He began to devote his energy toward placing the full strength of the man power of the South behind the government. In one rousing editorial after another, he attempted to bring the men into the service of their country. The following editorial is fairly typical of his patriotic appeals to service.

Then rally young men of Red River County. 'Tis your country calls you to the field, to fight for a glorious heritage, and the dearest rights of Freeman! The war is being waged against us by an enemy, who will leave nothing undone to deprive you of the rights so long enjoyed as a free and independent people. Go forth and meet the stern invaders, repel them from your soil, as a people that when the tocsin of war sounded throughout the land, were foremost in defense of their rights.⁷⁵

⁷⁵Standard, October 12, 1861.

Not content with his attempt to induce white man to enlist in the army, DeMorse advocated and urged the conscription of negroes. He maintained that it was monstrous that a white man should be taken away from his family and put into the field, not only to fight but to do menial service as well, while a strong sleek negro remained at home in comfort. The negroes might

be required to do much of the labor in the army camp, thereby releasing more white men for fighting purposes. Then too, the seriousness of the negro problem back home with so many owners away would be reduced. There was no excuse, he insisted, for the exemption of classes, and it must not continue.⁷⁶

⁷⁶Standard, January 22, 1862.

Having become convinced that the Confederacy would need every available man, DeMorse was not satisfied to remain at home in comfort and away from danger while others were risking their health and lives. He concluded to lay aside the pen and to take up arms in support of his state and his section. DeMorse's services to the Confederacy as a soldier, while distinguished and adequate, were not his most important contribution to his state. His military career may, therefore, be dismissed with a brief survey of his activities during the war.

DeMorse felt during the early days of the war, as many others in both North and South did, that the war would not be of long duration. When he decided otherwise, he announced in the Standard, on February 8, 1862, that if within the next sixty days events did not turn for the better he intended to secure authority and raise a regiment. For his regiment he wanted men, like himself, who were mature, had families, and possessed property. He had in mind, he said, a regiment patterned somewhat after the model of Oliver Cromwell's "Ironsides."⁷⁷

⁷⁷Standard, February 8, 1862.

On February 21, DeMorse left for a tour of Northeast Texas to determine whether his "ideal" regiment could be raised. He did not limit himself, however, to a regiment of his own, but tried to arouse every able-bodied man in Northeast Texas to action. "He who is a laggard in the cause now is no true man," was typical of the statements he made from the platform and in his newspaper. He recruited in Lamar, Hunt, Grayson, Wise, Cooke, Hopkins, Fannin, and other counties.⁷⁸

⁷⁸DeMorse to the Standard, February 27, 1862, in the Standard, March 1, 1862; Standard, March 29, 1862.

DeMorse used the Standard as well as public meetings to encourage men to volunteer. His efforts were aided by the fall of New Orleans and the passage of the Confederate conscript law. The Federal occupation of New Orleans drew from him the following appeal:

We are all ready! will come from all men. Let's hear no excuses. Let's make up our organization at once, heedless of age; let's not defer the contest longer. If we all turn out we can beat off the oppressor. This war is too lengthy and too tardy. ... The want of men is our deficiency. Texas can do more-- she has done well. The field is before us and invites us to action. Are we men? Now is the time to show it. The writer of this will not stay here to write many more articles, and would like to have company in the field of action.⁷⁹

⁷⁹Standard, May 5, 1862.

Standard, May 12, 1862.

The conscript law terminated all authority to raise men as volunteers after May 15, 1862. In his call for volunteers, DeMorse gave publicity to the law. He pointed out that after May 15 all conscripts would have to go on foot, and would have no choice in the selection of officers. He quoted the Houston Telegraph as reporting that conscription had begun already in Texas, and warned that the law would soon be in operation in Northeast Texas, and that it would be an advantage to volunteer while there was still opportunity to make a choice of service and of officers, and to secure a bounty.⁸⁰ He urged men to aid

⁸⁰See the Standard, March 29, and June 9, 1862.

in the defense by bringing double-barrel shot guns, hatchets, and pistols.⁸¹

⁸¹DeMorse to the Standard, March 24, 1862, in the Standard, May 12, 1862.

On March 23 DeMorse received authority from the secretary of war, dated March 8, to enlist volunteers for a term of three years or for the duration of the war, into a regiment of cavalry, not to exceed ten companies, each to comprise not less than sixty nor more than 125 privates.⁸² DeMorse was to serve

Standard, October 13, 1862.

⁸²DeMorse to the Standard, March 24, 1862, in the Standard, May 12, 1862.

as colonel, and the regiment was to be known as the Twenty-ninth Texas Cavalry.

DeMorse found it necessary to go to Richmond, Virginia, to complete details of organization and to secure supplies and equipment. He had no difficulty in having his regiment accepted as cavalry, and in obtaining commissions for his staff.⁸³ On

⁸³DeMorse to the Standard, August 24, 1862, in the Standard, September 13, 1862.

the other hand, he encountered great difficulty in securing supplies and equipment. It was only after enlisting the aid of President Jefferson Davis and after searching through most of the Confederate states, that DeMorse was able sufficiently to equip his men.⁸⁴ While in the East DeMorse visited the battlefields

⁸⁴See DeMorse to the Standard, August 24, September 14, 17, and 24, 1862, in the Standard, September 13, October 13, 18, and 4, 1862, respectively.

in the vicinity of Richmond and made a study of plans of military strategy used there.⁸⁵

⁸⁵DeMorse to the Standard, September 14, 1862, in the

Standard, October 13, 1862.

The regiment was trained northeast of Clarksville and at Camp Sidney Johnston near Paris, and remained in Texas until the spring of 1863 to protect the settlements against the increased activities of the wild Indians to the west.⁸⁶

⁸⁶In this connection see General William Steele to General J. B. Magruder, March 23, 1863, in Official Records, War of the Rebellion (hereafter cited as the Official Records), Series I, XXII, pt. II, p. 805; DeMorse, "General Order, No. 1, July 20, 1862, and "Attention to Orders," January 19, 1863, in the Standard, July 26, 1862, October 18, 1862, and January 22, 1863, respectively; "A Soldier of the Twenty-ninth" (evidently DeMorse) to the Standard, February 28, 1863; and Steele to D. H. Cooper, April 13, 1863, and Steele to DeMorse, March 12, 1863, in the Official Records, Series I, XXII, pt. II, pp. 817 and 803, respectively.

In March of 1863, when the danger of Indian raids had subsided, DeMorse was ordered to Fort Gibson in Indian Territory, in preparation for a Confederate offensive in the region.⁸⁷ It

⁸⁷"A Soldier of the Twenty-ninth," March 30, 1863, in the Standard, April 25, 1863.

was the Confederate plan in the spring of 1863 to drive the Federals from the line of the Arkansas river in order to keep that region open to Southern commerce.⁸⁸

⁸⁸"Report of Brigadier-General William Steele of Operations in the Indian Territory in 1863," February 5, 1874,

in the Official Records, Series I, XXII, pt. I, pp. 28-36.

12, 1863. After moving into Indian Territory, DeMorse spent several days conferring with Indian leaders in an endeavor to secure from them as much aid and cooperation in the offensive as possible.⁸⁹

⁸⁹"A Soldier of the Twenty-ninth," March 30, 1863, and April 6, 1863, in the Standard, April 25, and May 2, 1863, respectively.

After an attempt to force the Federals to abandon Fort Gibson, the head of navigation on the Arkansas, the Confederates took up a position at Elk Creek or Honey Springs about fifteen miles south of Fort Gibson on the Texas highway. They were attacked in this position on July 17, 1863. The engagement was one of the hardest and most important of all those occurring in Indian Territory during the course of the war. On the Confederate side, DeMorse's regiment bore the brunt of the fight. In the engagement DeMorse was wounded severely in the arm--a wound from which he never fully recovered (he had a disabled arm the remainder of his life). General D. H. Cooper in his official report to General William Steele stated that although DeMorse was suffering under a severe wound his conduct had been "all that should characterize a brave man." Cooper also mentioned DeMorse's son, Adj. L. C. DeMorse of the Twenty-ninth, as among those deserving praise.⁹⁰

⁹⁰For an account of the battle of Elk Creek or Honey Springs see, Cooper, "Report of the Battle of Elk Creek," August 12, 1863, in the Official Records, Series I, XXII, pt. I, pp. 457-461; DeMorse to Cooper, and Cooper to Steele, August 29, 1863; in the Standard, September 5, 1863; General James G. Blunt, "Report of the Battle of Honey Springs," July 26, 1863, in the Official Records, Series I, XXII, p. I, pp. 447-448; Colonel John Bowles, "Report of the Battle of Honey Springs," July 20, 1863, in Ibid., p. 449; and the Standard, August 6, and September 12, 1863.

Following the battle of Elk Creek, the Confederates retreated south of the Canadian River. DeMorse remained in the hospital until August 25 when he rejoined his regiment.⁹¹

⁹¹DeMorse to the Standard, August 4, 1881, in the Standard, August 12, 1881.

The winter of 1863-1864 was one of great hardship and suffering for DeMorse and his men. The Confederates, including DeMorse's men, were too poorly clad and provisioned to take the offensive. Desertions were numerous. Most of the members of DeMorse's regiment had homes just south of the Red River. They were alarmed by the Federal advance into the southern part of Indian Territory, and deserted to hurry home and help harvest crops, and to remove their livestock into a safer area.⁹² DeMorse

⁹²Major W. C. Schaumburg to General W. R. Boggs, October 26, 1863, in the Official Records, XXII, pt. II, p. 1049.

advertised for deserters in the Standard, offering at times a

reward of as much as thirty dollars for the arrest of a deserter.

⁹³Standard, July 26, 1863, and other issues throughout the remainder of 1863.

DeMorse asked for permission to move with his regiment from Indian Territory into Northeast Texas. His camp, he said, was miserable; he could not withstand a serious attack; and by crossing the river his men could remain with their command. The deserters in most cases would return to the service in defense of their homes. The morale of the people of Northeast Texas would be bolstered. DeMorse's request was refused on the ground that such a move would cause the Southern Indians to abandon the service.⁹⁴ The essential difference in the two ideas was that

⁹⁴General S. B. Maxey to Colonel S. S. Anderson, February 7, 1864, in the Official Records, Series I, LIII, pp. 963-965.

DeMorse preferred to concentrate the forces in Northeast Texas and to arouse the people of that area in the defense of their homeland. The commanding general wanted to keep the Indians as allies and to defend Northeast Texas, the granary of the Confederacy, by meeting the enemy north of the Red River.⁹⁵

⁹⁵Maxey to Anderson, February 7, 1864, in the Official Records, Series I, LIII, pp. 963-965.

In the spring of 1864, the Federals with the Arkansas

and the Mississippi rivers in their possession, decided to concentrate their forces somewhere on the Red River and use it as a base from which to operate against Texas. A Federal army in conjunction with the navy was to advance from Alexandria on Red River to Shreveport where it would be met by Federal forces advancing from Little Rock. The Texas Brigade, with DeMorse as acting Brigadier-general, was transferred from Indian Territory to Arkansas to prevent the conjunction of the Federal armies.⁹⁶

⁹⁶The Texas Brigade, under the command of DeMorse was composed of the Twenty-ninth Texas Cavalry, the Thirtieth Texas, Welch's Texas Company, and the Texas Battery. See the Official Records, Series I, XXXIV, pt. I, pp. 784-785.

The Confederates attempted to check the enemy at Poison Springs near Camden, Arkansas, on April 18, 1864. To the Texas Brigade and the Choctaw allies, under the command of DeMorse, was assigned the duty of attacking the enemy. DeMorse estimated at the time that he was outnumbered about four to one. The enemy was put to flight after a four-hour engagement. Their entire wagon train of 168 wagons, 1200 mules, a number of horses, and much of their artillery was captured. DeMorse wrote the Standard that he knew of "no engagement during the war terminating with such happy results to our arms." In his official report of the battle the commanding general, S. B. Maxey, said that great credit was due DeMorse for his "skill, gallantry, and daring" in conducting his command so successfully through such difficulties.⁹⁷

⁹⁷For an account of the battle of Poison Springs, see Maxey, "Report," April 23, 1864, in the Official Records, Series I, XXXIV, pt. I, pp. 841-845; DeMorse, "Report," April 21, 1863, in Ibid., pp. 846-845; Colonel James M. Williams, "Report," April 24, 1864, in Ibid., p. 743; "Casualties," in Ibid., p. 786; and "Private" (DeMorse) to the Standard, April 21, 1864, in the Standard, April 30, 1864. For a secondary account of the Arkansas campaign see, Wiley Britton, Civil War on the Border, II, 253-277.

DeMorse was justified in his statement of the result of Poison Springs. Because of the Confederate victory, the Federals fell back to Little Rock and Northeast Texas was definitely freed from the danger of invasion. Northeast Texas, because of the efforts of DeMorse and others, was saved from experiencing the scenes of desolation familiar to invaded North Arkansas and Southern Louisiana.

After the Confederate victory in Arkansas, DeMorse was ordered to return with his command to Indian Territory. The Texas Brigade, alternately under the command of DeMorse and R. M. Gano, confined its operations in Indian Territory to the interception of enemy supplies. The only engagement of importance in which DeMorse participated after Poison Springs was a raid on one of the enemy wagon trains in September, 1864. In fourteen days from camp the Texas Brigade marched over four hundred miles, engaged the enemy successfully four times, and at Cabin Creek succeeded in capturing or destroying one of the most valuable trains taken during the war. Besides the amount destroyed, the Texas Brigade and the Indian allies returned to camp with 130 wagons, 740 mules, enough clothing to make two thousand men

comfortable, and valuable commissary supplies. The Confederates had captured or destroyed in the fourteen days an estimated total of approximately \$1,500,000 worth of property, bringing nearly one-third that amount back within their own lines.⁹⁸

⁹⁸For an account of DeMorse and the Texas Brigade after its return to Indian Territory, see "Private" (DeMorse) to the Standard, September 29, 1864, in the Standard, October 15, 1864; the Standard, September 24, and October 1, 1864; Gano, "Report," September 29, 1864, in the Official Records, Series I, XLI, pt. I, pp. 788-791; Captain Curtis Johnson, "Report," September 15, 1864, in Ibid., p. 792; General John M. Thayer to Captain John L. Lacy, October 15, 1864, in Ibid.; pt. III, pp. 882-883; and Captain Edgar A. Barker, "Report," September 20, 1864, in Ibid., pt. I, p. 771.

The expedition that captured the wagon train at Cabin Creek was the last and only successful expedition of the Confederates north of the Arkansas River in Indian Territory after that section was occupied by the Federal forces in the spring of 1863. It was also the last encounter for DeMorse and his men. A large area, comprising Western Louisiana, parts of Arkansas, and the whole of Texas, was still untouched by invasion. It seemed probable that a severe struggle would develop in this region when the spring campaigns of 1865 opened. Indian Territory was exhausted of supplies. Most of the men of the Trans-Mississippi Department were stationed in the vicinity of Shreveport during the winter of 1864-65. A large part were in Louisiana near the department headquarters at Shreveport. Several thousand were in Arkansas; possibly fifteen thousand were stationed in Texas, at Galveston, near Houston, at Brownsville, San Antonio, Hempstead,

Sabine Pass, Marshall, and other points.⁹⁹

⁹⁹C. W. Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, 28.

During the winter the army of the Trans-Mississippi Department was being reorganized continuously for a last effort in the spring. In the reorganization, most of the white troops in Indian Territory under the command of General Maxey were transferred to Texas and Louisiana. The Twenty-ninth Texas Cavalry, still under the command of Colonel DeMorse, was stationed at Marshall, in the winter of 1864-65.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰For the organization of the army of the Trans-Mississippi Department, September 30, 1864, and February 27, 1865, see the Official Records, Series I, XLI, p. III, pp. 966-971, and pt. I, p. 1392, respectively. Other changes were continually being ordered as the official correspondence shows.

In the spring of 1865 troops, among them DeMorse's regiment, were needed in Southern Texas to help drive back a threatening expedition of Federals at Galveston. In March, 1865, General H. P. Bee, commanding the First Texas Cavalry Division, was instructed to "proceed with DeMorse's and Wells' regiments of cavalry" to the headquarters of Major-General J. H. Fourney, who was then moving with his division on the route to Houston by way of Logansport, and there to turn over to General Fourney the two regiments.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹P. H. Thompson, Assistant Adjutant-General to

Mississippi Department had been made on Tex. 22. 1865.
Brigadier-General Bee, March 15, 1865, in the Official Records,
Series I, XLVIII, pt. I, p. 1426.

at once to Clarksville.

The end, however, was rapidly approaching. By March there was no ready or safe communication with the Confederate seat of government. All trade was coming to a standstill. In April, came the news of Lee's surrender at Appomattox. Lee's army of Virginia was the mainstay of the Confederacy and with Lee's surrender, the submission of the other armies was only a matter of a few days. When the news of Appomattox reached Texas it first produced consternation, which soon gave way to gloom and anxiety. A desperate and vain effort was made to put forth a bold front and to carry on. The majority of the soldiers, however, were convinced that the war was over, and began to desert by the wholesale.¹⁰²

¹⁰²For the conditions in Texas at this time, see Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, 27-51.

On May 9, General Kirby Smith rejected the Federal offer of a surrender upon the same terms that were granted Lee. The situation, however, was beyond repair. General Smith ordered the evacuation of Galveston. The order was received on May 21. It was a signal that the end had come. When General Smith arrived at Houston on May 29, he found that he was a general without an army. Meanwhile, the surrender of the Trans-

Mississippi Department had been made on May 26. With its surrender DeMorse's military career was ended. He returned at once to Clarksville.

The Civil War left its mark on DeMorse. As far as practical, his military career was ended, the war was to him a life-long experience. It is interesting to note that in all his writings, DeMorse makes no mention of the period preceding the collapse of the Confederate army nor of its breakup and return home. His treatment of the Civil War was in sharp contrast to his study of the period following the Texas Revolution. He continued to refer to the revolution throughout his life. The Civil War had apparently left on DeMorse an impression too deep for words, too vague for discussion.

DeMorse arrived home early in June, and immediately resumed his position as editor and publisher of the Standard.¹

¹Standard, June 17, 1865.

In the dark period following the collapse of the Confederacy, DeMorse demonstrated to the fullest his qualities as a leader. He understood the great problem confronting the Confederate people of Texas. He knew the necessity for a clear and definite course of action. His first editorial after his return, appearing on the same day that General Gordon Granger was ordered to proceed to Galveston, reveals his sentiments and policy.

CHAPTER VI

CONSERVATISM VS. RADICALISM

The Civil War left its scars, physical and mental, on DeMorse. As far as practical, concrete achievement is concerned, the war was in his life a four-year hiatus. It is interesting to note that in all his writings, DeMorse makes no mention of the period preceding the collapse of the Confederate army nor of its break-up and return home. His treatment of the Civil War was in sharp contrast to his study of the period following the Texas Revolution. He continued to refer to the revolution throughout his life. The Civil War had apparently left on DeMorse an impression too deep for words, too tragic for discussion.

DeMorse arrived home early in June, and immediately resumed his position as editor and publisher of the Standard.¹

¹Standard, June 17, 1865.

In the dark period following the collapse of the Confederacy, DeMorse demonstrated to the fullest his qualities as a leader. He understood the great problems confronting the despondent people of Texas. He knew the necessity for a wise and able course of action. His first editorial after his return, appearing on the same day that General Gordon Granger was ordered to proceed to Galveston, reveals his sentiments and lofty ideals.

Encouraging his readers and warning them of the great task ahead, he said in part:

From the fields of glory, for which incense aromatic will arise forever, we may turn our gaze to the homes of the living, and the consideration of their social, and political interest. We may dream of the past-- its remembrance needs no nourishing-- we should do our best for the future, to restore order, the reign of civil law, the progressive interest of the communities who have now to think, and to labor to restore the waste of four years.²

²Standard, June 10, 1865.

Furthermore DeMorse put forth a real effort to set a beginning point in the task of reconstruction, which the more cautious might observe and take heart to follow. It was a bold course for any man to speak out in the first days following the collapse of the Confederacy. He alone, of all the Democratic journalists in Texas, recommended the acceptance of the first proposed plan of reconstruction; and furthermore, began working in earnest to secure a beginning in that direction.³ In the

³Standard, August 5, 1871.

same issue that the editorial quoted above appeared, he told his readers that the aspects of affairs in the South had changed, and that a new order of events, in which each citizen had new duties, was being inaugurated before their eyes. He urged that old political discriminations be forgotten. He

declared that each citizen owed sincere fealty to the de facto government.⁴

⁴Standard, June 10, 1865.

⁴Standard, June 10, 1865.

DeMorse proposed to give the political situation immediate attention, and then suggested a possible procedure. He thought that the people of Texas should change at once the state constitution, substituting the term "United States of America" for the "Confederate States of America." The oath administered to all officers should be changed accordingly. Furthermore, he recommended the immediate election of delegates for a convention to meet in Austin as soon as possible.⁵

⁵Standard, June 10, 1865.

DeMorse realized that political reconstruction was not enough. Economic reconstruction, he pointed out, would be equally important. It was already late for the planting of spring crops, so he urged the extensive sowing of fall crops. Grain crops would produce food; but food was not sufficient. The South had very little specie, and as long as that was true her condition would remain deplorable. To solve the problem of obtaining money, he urged preparation for a large cotton crop the next year. "Cotton is 'not' king," he wrote, "but cotton is the product which will soonest bring an abundance of money to

our midst and relieve the present destitution."⁶

⁶Standard, June 10, 1865.

DeMorse hastened to give action to his plea for an early reconstruction. After consulting some old friends, he called a mass meeting of the people of Red River county, hoping thereby to obtain an expression of opinion, and to set the wheels of reconstruction in motion.⁷ At the meeting, a Com-

⁷Ibid., June 24, 1865.

mittee of Forty was chosen. The members were men of strong Southern tendencies, but men who realized that the sooner the South was reconstructed the better. Despite some opposition to his action both from individuals and from a portion of the Democratic press, DeMorse proceeded toward his goal. Committees of Forty were organized in the nearby counties. With the aid of a single friend, he succeeded in organizing such a committee in Bowie county, although that county was dominated by plantation owners whose pro-Southern sympathies were well known.⁸

⁸Ibid., August 5, 1871.

Led by DeMorse and B. H. Epperson, the people of Red River county made plans for holding an election to name a delegate to a state constitutional convention, even before

President Andrew Johnson appointed A. J. Hamilton provisional governor of Texas.⁹ DeMorse was notified at once that it was

⁹Standard, June 17, 1865.

the unanimous desire of the people of the county, irrespective of old party lines, that he should be a candidate. As there was already a candidate for the place, DeMorse insisted that his own name not be placed on the ticket. He believed that the action of the proposed convention would be legitimate and proper, and that the trial should be made, but doubted if the convention would be able to effect much in relief of the state. He desired to retain the confidence of his fellow-citizens, and was grateful for the expression thereof, but he was under the necessity of making vigorous efforts to maintain his family, pay his own war taxes, and extricate himself from pecuniary embarrassment. It had been with great difficulty that the Standard had survived, and it required his personal attention at that time.¹⁰

¹⁰Ibid., June 17, 1865.

Slavery east of the Mississippi had collapsed as an institution in the presence of the Federal armies. But in Texas, untouched by Federal invasion, it had remained essentially unimpaired until the "break-up" of the Confederate armies. There was considerable belief in parts of the state

that slavery as an institution was neither dead nor doomed to die. DeMorse believed that the chance of maintaining a modified form of slavery in Texas would be more likely to succeed if the people would hasten to provide for some sort of gradual emancipation before the Federal authorities should have time to take action. He urged that delegates meet in a voluntary convention as early as possible, and that they be instructed to face the issue by proposing and passing an ordinance of emancipation, freeing the negroes twenty years old or more within a period of five years, and all men then under twenty when they reached the age of twenty-five, and all women then under twenty at twenty-three years of age. He thought that within that period of time the condition of the negro could be changed and that he could be prepared for freedom.¹¹ Still

¹¹Standard, June 24, 1865. This editorial was written before the news of General Granger's proclamation of June 19, had reached DeMorse.

true to his life-long belief in the sovereignty of the people, DeMorse insisted that the work of the convention should be referred to them for ratification.

On June 17, 1865, President Johnson, in pursuance of the policy adopted in other states, appointed A. J. Hamilton provisional governor of Texas. Hamilton was directed to "prescribe such rules, and regulations as may be necessary, and proper, for convening a convention composed of delegates, ... for the purpose of altering, and amending the Constitution

thereof; and with the authority to exercise within the limits of said state all the powers necessary and proper to enable such loyal people of the State of Texas to restore said state to its Constitutional relation to the Federal government, and to present such a republican form of State government, as will entitle the State to the guaranty of the United States therefor, and its people to the protection of the United States, against invasion, insurrection, and domestic violence."¹² DeMorse

were, he ¹²Standard, July 22, 1865. He urged the people of Texas to exert every energy to improve their condition. "A

took an editorial stand in opposition to the president. He contended that the president was contradicting himself. If the act of secession were illegal the state had never been out of the Union, and therefore there was no need for a new constitution other than to make the changes he had previously suggested.¹³

purview of ¹³Ibid., July 22, 1865. "Before the war, he was an

keep alive Hamilton arrived in Texas on July 21. As rapidly as possible, officers of district, county, and justice courts, sheriffs, tax assessors and collectors, and county commissioners were appointed, and the machinery of government was set in motion. On August 19, Governor Hamilton issued a proclamation providing for the registration of voters and for administering the oath of amnesty, as prescribed in the president's

proclamation of May 29, 1865.¹⁴

held until ¹⁴Standard, August 26, 1865.

On August 24, the organization of civil government began in Red River county. Two days later DeMorse advised the men of that county not to delay, but to go as quickly as was convenient, and take the oath. His own natural inclination was against the oath. But the Southern Confederacy was no more, he reminded the reading public. He urged the people of Texas to exert every energy to improve their condition. "A brave people who have energy never succumb. They seize and combine the elements of prosperity around them and move steadily onward," he reminded them. He did not think the people of Texas were in position to do this without renewing their fealty to the government de facto, for it held military power to compel obedience. He believed the oath to be inconsistent with the powers of the executive, but within the purview of the law of Congress defining treason. He saw no other mode of escaping military rule. The military rule would keep alive old causes of embitterment. Consequently, under such circumstances, he urged the people of Texas to subordinate their feelings to duty.¹⁵

¹⁵Ibid., August 26, 1865.

¹⁶Standard, December 9, 1865; unfortunately the

The order for an election of delegates by the people of the state to a constitutional convention was withheld until the results of the registration should become known. This work, however, proceeded slowly for there were no mails. It seemed to the governor that Texas was not yet in proper condition for the calling of the convention. It was not until November 15 that Hamilton issued a proclamation fixing the date of the election for January 8, 1866. The convention was to meet in Austin on February 7.¹⁶ The majority of the state

¹⁶Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, 85.

newspapers urgently appealed to the citizens to register so that a civil government might take the place of the military rule. DeMorse renewed his plea for every citizen to take the oath of allegiance. He declared that there was absolutely nothing to be gained by delay. Sensible people should not, he believed, nurse impracticabilities, but should act upon realities.¹⁷ "We can never stand firmly upon our feet, as

¹⁷Standard, December 3, 1865.

of old, and command the full rights of free men, until the State is admitted to representation in Congress, and this cannot be until our citizens qualify themselves to vote."¹⁸

¹⁸Standard, December 9, 1865; unfortunately the

issues of the Standard for the period of the convention and during the election that followed are missing.

But, as it later proved, Reconstruction was an early stage. DeMorse worked hard to speed up the machinery of reconstruction in order that the South might avoid as much suffering as possible. As soon as that machinery had begun to function, he united commercial pursuits with editorial labors in an effort to restore his own financial affairs to a sound basis.¹⁹ Only occasionally during his next five

¹⁹DeMorse purchased a full line of general merchandise in Jefferson, Shreveport, and New Orleans, and opened a retail establishment at the old post office corner, north of Mrs. Donoho's Hotel, in Clarksville. See the Standard, September 16, 1865.

years did DeMorse enter the political arena through the columns of his paper. Consequently, the events of reconstruction during those years may be passed over with only a brief summary.

The conservatives not only were victorious in the constitutional convention, but also succeeded in carrying the constitutional amendments and in electing their ticket, which was headed by James W. Throckmorton of McKinney, for governor. The Eleventh Legislature assembled at Austin on August 6, and three days later the governor and the lieutenant-governor were inaugurated. On August 20, President Johnson issued a proclamation that the insurrection in Texas was at an end.²⁰

²⁰Richardson, Messages and Papers of the

Presidents, VI, 434-438.

But, as it later proved, reconstruction was only entering its early stage.

One of the most important tasks confronting the legislature was the selection of two United States senators. For these two places, it named David G. Burnet and O. M. Roberts, both uncompromising secessionists, neither of whom was able to take the test oath.²¹ When they arrived in

²¹House Journal, Eleventh Legislature, 119 ff. For the nature of the test oath, see United States Statutes at Large, XII, 502.

Washington, their seats were refused them. Other states likewise had elected former secessionists to the Washington government. Such action on the part of the people of the South had been seized upon by the Northern radicals to produce the impression that the allegiance of the South was not genuine.

The action on the part of the United States Senate in refusing to seat the accredited agents of the states brought DeMorse temporarily back to the editorial desk in defense of the Southern nominees. The elections, he said, had shown that the people of the South had not lost confidence in their tried men, who in council and upon the battle field had proved themselves true to what were generally conceded to be the interests of the South. The people of the South had not, in the short time that had elapsed since the war had ended, changed

the color of their garments, becoming Federalists instead of remaining "State Rights men." The people of the South were not hypocrites; and having unwillingly accepted and assented to the actualities upon them, however uncongenial, were in good faith determined to act the part of loyal citizens, DeMorse declared. He did not believe that anyone should expect the people of the South to turn and strike at those who had endeavored to carry out their behest. He pointed out that there was very little talent in the South which had not served in the war, and that therefore the people, of necessity, had to choose such men for convention or Congress, or elect persons they never at any time considered qualified to represent them. DeMorse contended that the South was loyal; that it was tired of warfare; that it saw the impracticability of effecting its objects; and that the principal object of contention, the negro, was already free.²²

²²Standard, September 2, 1866.

²⁴Haydell, Reconstruction in Texas, 146.

The Eleventh Legislature adjourned on November 13. In general, it had taken the course it might most reasonably have been expected to take in naming the men it did to the United States Senate, in rejecting the Fourteenth Amendment, and in passing a harsh labor law.²³ Its work, however, as

²³Ibid., November 18, 1866.

well as all the steps taken to regain civil control, was undone by the Reconstruction Act of the United States Congress of March 2, 1867. The purpose of the act was to destroy the existing civil governments in the Southern states, to establish martial law, and to take the matter of reconstruction completely out of the hands of the executive and place it in the hands of the incoming and more radical Fortieth Congress.

The act divided the "rebel" states into five military districts. Louisiana and Texas constituted the fifth district. The act further provided that whenever the people of any state, through a convention chosen by universal manhood suffrage (excluding such persons as were disfranchised), had framed a constitution in conformity to that of the United States, and when ratified by a majority of the legitimate voters of the state and approved by Congress, and when the state legislature had adopted the Fourteenth Amendment, the state should be readmitted to the Union.²⁴ General P. H. Sheridan was made

²⁴Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, 146.

commander of the district of Louisiana and Texas.

The military authorities at once began to assume the power ordinarily exercised by the civil authorities.

On July 19, a supplementary Reconstruction Act became law, bestowing full power of appointment and removal upon the military commanders.²⁵ A few days later, General Sheridan

The conservative papers, in general, were filled with the

gloomiest forebodings as to the future of the state. The Standard told its ²⁵United States Statutes at Large, XV, 14.

issued an order removing Governor Throckmorton from office, and handed that office over to E. M. Pease, a Southern radical.²⁶ The way was clear for the radicals to assume

²⁶For details concerning Throckmorton as governor and his removal from office, see Claude Elliott, Leathercoat, 134-178.

full power.

A small group of ultra-radicals advanced the theory that all legislation of whatever character since March 1, 1861, was swept aside, on the ground that the Reconstruction Acts of Congress had destroyed not only the existing state governments but had rendered their acts null and void. Finding themselves thwarted in this attempted means of gaining control of the government by the moderate policies of Governor Pease and the new military commander, General Winfield Hancock, who had succeeded General Sheridan, the radicals began to clamor for a constitutional convention. At an election in February, 1868, for that purpose, the radicals were overwhelmingly victorious.²⁷

²⁷Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, 195-199.

The defeated whites relapsed into sullen despairing inactivity. The conservative papers, in general, were filled with the

gloomiest forebodings as to the future of the state. The Standard told its readers that the convention would not reconstruct the state the way the people preferred. Nevertheless, it encouraged its readers to hope for the best, and to work with a will for the redemption of the South by practical and peaceful forces, and that they would thereby inevitably triumph. It hoped that even a radical convention would result in bringing military control over the state to an end, and believed that the whites could sooner regain control of the government from the radicals than from the military authorities.²⁸

²⁸Standard, March 6, 1869.

The radical "reconstruction convention" assembled in Austin, on June 1, 1868, and remained in session until August 31. Then, having exhausted the appropriations set aside for that purpose, and unable to obtain additional funds, both the extreme radicals and the moderate or conservative group voted to adjourn. The Democratic press, when it spoke out at all, generally condemned the convention. DeMorse expressed his contempt for the convention when, in announcing its adjournment, he said in part:

This disgusting, trumpery concern, whose Journals we have scarcely had the patience to give more than a glance at lately, has, we are informed, adjourned; not for want of perseverance, nor of their desire to inflict their vulgarisms and crudities upon better people than themselves, but because the hard-hearted Major General commanding, whom they counted on as an ally in niggerism, couldn't see the point of their virtuous endeavors.²⁹

²⁹Standard, September 12, 1868.

Upon only one question confronting the convention, the division of the state, did DeMorse speak out strongly.³⁰ He

³⁰He conceded the reality of negro suffrage as long as the state was in the hands of the radicals, and therefore, made no further fight against it, at least until the whites had recovered control of the government.

opposed any diminution of its size and its historical honor. He was for Texas "one and indivisible," and attempted to arouse public sentiment sufficiently to defeat this measure of the extreme radicals.³¹

³¹Standard, December 12, 1868.

When the convention reassembled in December, the moderates, led by A. J. Hamilton, succeeded in thwarting the Davis faction and in incorporating their views in the new constitution. The majority of the Democratic faction favored the document. The Standard expressed satisfaction with it as the best that could be had under the circumstances. DeMorse, despite his objection to the constitutional provision for negro suffrage, recommended its adoption as a step toward ridding the state of military control, and as the best method of obtaining readmission into the Union.³²

³²Standard, March 20, 1869.

Interest in the election to fill the offices under the new constitution was manifest from the first, but was greatest in the gubernatorial race. The contest for governor lay between A. J. Hamilton, supported by the moderates, and E. J. Davis, backed by the Federal government and the radicals. Most of the Democratic press threw its support to Hamilton. The Standard declared that Hamilton was no Puritan, but that he was a man of ability and natural generosity. Davis, probably a man of fair morals, was, DeMorse said, a "narrow-minded bigot of little capacity and pretensions which have loomed up in the raging waves of revolution, but in peaceful times would have been bounded by a very narrow sphere."³³

³³Standard, August 21, 1869.

³⁵ 1871. With the fraudulent election of Davis to the governorship, the Democrats were silenced. When the Twelfth Legislature met one of its ill-designed acts authorized the governor to designate in each judicial district a newspaper to be the official organ and to do the public printing for that district. No public notice could be legally advertised except in this organ. The governor was thus enabled to reward "loyal" papers. In a few cases Democratic journals were willing to change sides in order to obtain the patronage.³⁴ This action of the radicals

and endurance must have an end." Intelligent people, he argued, refused to be misled by the radical Republicans. Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, 299. For a brief survey of the radical Republican rule, see the following chapter of this study.

in building up a party machine made it very difficult for many of the journals that remained true to the Democracy to survive. The Standard was one of those which placed party principle above price and refused to accept patronage. DeMorse, already having devoted a great part of his time to his mercantile business since the initial steps of reconstruction, now abject and despondent, as were many other leading Democrats, lapsed into editorial silence.

The failure of the two wings of the Republican party to reconcile their differences reacted in favor of the Democrats, who did not hesitate to take advantage of the growing hostility to the radical regime. So strong was the opposition that the Democrats were able to carry through their plans for an effective party organization. On November 22, a call was issued for a Democratic state convention to be held in Austin, on January 23, 1871.³⁵ The call proved to be the signal for a new effort on

³⁵Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, 306.

the part of the Democrats to recover control of the state government. The Democratic press renewed hope, and appealed to the citizens of Texas with the plea that the time had come for action. DeMorse declared in the Standard that "the real people who constitute the organic power, are waking up....;" that "oppression

and endurance must have an end." Intelligent people, he continued would not always allow themselves to be trod in the dirt by ignorant and unprincipled officials who exacted every possible penny from a people's hard earnings in a time of depression.

"Human endurance has a limit, and when that limit is reached oppressed human nature will rise and resist." Resistance must certainly be the case when intelligence and sobriety and industry were wronged in behalf of ignorance and corruption. DeMorse urged the formation of Democratic clubs in every community throughout the state. Organization, free communion, and a firm determination were all the necessary requirements to insure overwhelming Democratic success. In strong and forceful language, he sounded the call to arise and put an end to radical rule throughout the state:

We say the patient beast of burden has been ridden, until now every spurring is likely to induce a kick instead of a forward movement. We shall see ere long. Let every good man who is neither an office holder nor an office holder's chattel prepare to redeem himself from bondage. The negroes were freed long since. LET'S FREE THE WHITE MAN NOW!³⁶

³⁶Standard, January 7, 1871.

When the Democratic convention met it reaffirmed the cardinal principles of Democracy, invited all good citizens to help drive the radicals from power, and laid plans for state and local organizations in preparation for the national elections of 1872.

The Texas Republicans met in convention at Houston in

May, 1872, to nominate candidates for presidential electors and congressmen-at-large, and to select delegates to the national convention of their party. Their platform endorsed President U.S. Grant and instructed the delegates to support him for renomination; denounced the nomination of Horace Greeley by the Liberal Republicans at Cincinnati; and applauded the measures of Governor Davis's administration, especially with regard to public free schools, internal improvements, and the defense of the frontier.³⁷

³⁷E. W. Winkler, Platforms of Political Parties in Texas, 140-143.

Since DeMorse had made such a fervent and prolonged appeal in behalf of the cause of Democracy, it was only natural that the Red River County Conservative Democrats should name him as one of their delegates to the Democratic State Convention.³⁸

³⁸Red River county sent fifteen delegates to the Democratic State Convention. See the Standard, June 29, 1872.

The convention met at Corsicana, June 17-19. It reaffirmed the Democratic platform of the convention of 1871, promised support to the public schools and protection to the frontier, but condemned the granting of money subsidies by the state to private corporations, and denounced the Republican administrations, both state and national. A serious question confronted the convention and required its decision. It was difficult to decide whether the convention should follow its

"time-honored banner" and make nominations of its own, or support the nominations of the Liberal Republicans who were advocating an acceptable policy.

The committee on resolutions, of which DeMorse was a member, went on record as opposed to the policies of the administration then in power, and said it was essential to the peace and welfare of the country and to the preservation of constitutional government to expel all those in power from the office. It expressed its satisfaction with the Liberal Republicans in convention at Cincinnati, and concurred with them in the claim that local self-government, with impartial suffrage, would guard the rights of all citizens more securely than any central power. It then expressed its willingness to abide by the decision of the Democratic National Convention to be held at Baltimore. The resolutions were adopted by the convention, and delegates were appointed to the national convention. DeMorse was named as one of the delegates-at-large.³⁹

³⁹Other delegates named were: John H. Reagan, J. W. Henderson, Washington Jones, G. W. Bryan, J. H. Turner, R. H. Walker, J. L. Camp, M.D.K. Taylor, C. W. Geers, E. T. Broughton, B. H. Bassett, Ashbel Smith, J. W. Down, G. N. Winans, George W. Smith, J. D. Logan, F. S. Stockdale, and John S. Ford. See Winkler, Platforms of Political Parties in Texas, 144-147.

The Liberal Republicans, whose nominees the Texas Democrats had expressed a willingness to support, favored a more generous treatment of their fellow-citizens who had taken the Southern side during the war, and in addition, demanded civil

service reform and tariff revision. They had met at Cincinnati on May 1, 1872, and in their platform declared for civil service reform and home rule in the South, but, because of differences among themselves, were noncommittal on the tariff. They nominated Horace Greeley for president, and Governor B. Gratz Brown of Missouri for vice-president.

When the Democratic National Convention convened at Baltimore, it saw nothing better to do than to endorse the Liberal Republican nominees. DeMorse cast his vote for the nominees of that party, despite the fact that he had no confidence at any time, after he entered the field of politics, in any other than the Democratic party. He was, for the time being, willing to fuse with another party whose declared policy was in the interest of the suffering South.⁴⁰ Greeley, however, was a

⁴⁰Standard, July 6 and 27, 1872. The issue of the Standard in which should have appeared a letter from DeMorse reciting in detail the proceedings of the convention is missing. DeMorse reported that every Texas delegate was present at the Baltimore Convention.

life-long foe of the Democrats and was a protectionist; consequently, many Democrats refused to vote for him, some remaining away from the polls while others voted for a Democratic candidate. Grant was returned to office, and radical rule in Texas was prolonged. In Texas Greeley received an overwhelming majority over Grant. All the Democratic nominees for Congress were successful, and the party secured a majority in the state legislature.

DeMorse remained in the East for some time after the

Baltimore Convention had adjourned. He visited in Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, using the occasion for both business and pleasure.⁴¹ It gave him

⁴¹It is to be recalled that DeMorse found it necessary to buy much of his paper and publishing supplies in large quantities in the East. Jefferson (Jefferson), Brockmorton (Dallas County), Medina (San Antonio), Ireland (Seguin), Adams (Dallas), Hobby (Galveston), Coke (Waco), Moray (Palestine), Pickett (Liberty), Henry (Galveston), Roberts, Winkler (Corsicana), Rogers (Jefferson), A. B. McCallum, a coveted opportunity to study conditions first hand in the North and East, to prepare himself to render better service to his fellow-citizens in the final struggle to regain the government from the radicals. When he returned to Texas he found the stage being set for a final struggle and his own name one of those being mentioned frequently for governor.³⁷³

Meanwhile, Republican rule was collapsing. The Thirteenth Legislature met in January, 1873, and at once began to undo the work of the Republicans. One by one, it set aside or reformed the measures of the radicals. In early spring, it set the date for the next gubernatorial election for the first Tuesday in December. The great cause in which they were engaged,

his report There was no question as to the choice of the Republicans for governor. They held their convention in August at Dallas. Under the domination of Davis, the convention nominated him for September 13, 1873. In this connection see Winkler, Platforms re-election, denounced the acts of the Thirteenth Legislature, and drew up a liberal platform.⁴²

⁴²Winkler, Platforms of Political Parties in Texas, 154-157.

was named president of the convention. After drawing up the

platform. Throughout the summer the Democratic press suggested a very large list of names, representing every section of the state as men well qualified to fill the office of governor.⁴³

⁴³The Galveston News, August 29, 1873, gave the following list of candidates for the governorship: DeMorse (Clarks-ville), Taylor (Jefferson), Throckmorton (Collin county), Devine (San Antonio), Ireland (Seguin), Adams (Dallas), Hobby (Galveston), Coke (Waco), Maxey (Palestine), Pickett (Liberty), Henry (Smith), Roberts, Winkler (Corsicana), Rogers (Jefferson), H.E. McCulloch, H. R. Runnels, C. B. Sabin, and John R. Baylor.

The Democratic Convention was held in Austin early in September. DeMorse was a delegate to the convention.⁴⁴ H. R. Latimer, one

⁴⁴Standard, September 20, 1873.

of the delegates from Red River county, reported that it was attended by about eight hundred respectable and talented delegates, all of whom were patriots who had no aspirations other than the good of their country. It was a "union of hearts that beat in unison in the great cause in which they were engaged," he reported.⁴⁵

⁴⁵H. R. Latimer to the Standard, in the issue of September 13, 1873. In this connection see Winkler, Platforms of Political Parties in Texas, 157-163.

The convention was organized by appointing M. D. K. Taylor as temporary chairman; after which, Richard B. Hubbard was named president of the convention. After drawing up the

platform, the convention began the task of selecting a candidate for governor. It was unnecessary for it to weigh the political platforms of the potential candidates, because all were agreed as concerned the major issues. Theirs was the task of choosing from among the long list of well-qualified men before them, one man who more than any other, could show the greatest strength against Davis for governor.

When the nominations began, the name of DeMorse was presented to the convention by the delegates of Northeast Texas as the one who could most likely deal the Republicans a death blow. DeMorse, however, made no effort to secure his own nomination.⁴⁶ It would be incorrect to say that DeMorse did not

⁴⁶The Galveston News, October 27, 1887; Dallas Morning News, October 26, 1887.

desire the nomination, but it may be remarked conservatively that he placed the welfare of Texas above ambition, and worked for a harmonious nomination. On the first ballot Richard Coke of Waco led by a vote of 304 13/15 to DeMorse 143.⁴⁷ On the second

⁴⁷The remainder of the vote was scattered as follows: Ireland, 118 13/15; Winkler, 102 2/10; Pickett, 41; Baylor, 38; Ford, 19; and 10 votes scattered.

ballot DeMorse gained at the expense of Coke, the vote being 356 to 207 in favor of Coke.⁴⁸ On the third ballot George W. Smith

As the time for the election approached, and the

excitement prevailed, though the outcome was apparent. The Democrats ⁴⁸Ireland, 102; Winkler, 88; Pickett, 53; Baylor, 35.

great majority of the legislators and the assembly of voters drew some of DeMorse's vote.⁴⁹ Immediately after the commence-

appealing to President Grant; but finding himself unsupported by either the ⁴⁹Coke, 390½; DeMorse 189; Ireland, 80; Winkler, 69 ¾; Pickett, 50½; Baylor, 43½; and Smith, 26.

ment of the fourth ballot, the name of R. B. Hubbard was introduced, whereupon DeMorse had his name withdrawn, and threw his support to Coke with the result that the count stood at the end of the ballot, 513 for Coke; 253½ for Hubbard. DeMorse received 11½ votes on this ballot, although his name had been withdrawn. Winkler's name having been withdrawn, the fifth ballot gave Coke a lead over Hubbard, his nearest opponent, by a vote of 559 65/100 to 218. On motion of Hubbard the nomination of Coke was made unanimous.⁵⁰ It is impossible to judge who the final nominee

⁵⁰Sherman Daily Courier, September 10, 1873; republished in the Standard, September 13, 1873.

of the convention might have been had conditions been altered. It serves the purpose here merely to state that DeMorse certainly could have increased the vote for himself had he made an effort--had he been more of a politician and less of a statesman; but whether he could have won under any conditions, it is impossible to assert.

As the time for the election approached, the greatest

excitement prevailed, though the outcome was apparent. The Democrats elected all the new state officials, as well as the great majority of the legislators and the county officers. Davis made a final effort to maintain the Republicans in power by appealing to President Grant; but finding himself unsupported by either the Federal government or the people of Texas, he surrendered the office on January 17, 1874. Coke took possession, and the radical regime was at an end.⁵¹

⁵¹See O. M. Roberts, "A Political, Legislative, and Judicial History of Texas," in Wooten, A Comprehensive History of Texas, 1685-1897, II, pp. 200-207.

The state was once more in the hands of its own people. But one more step remained; the fundamental law of the state was the work of a "Black Republican" convention. The people of Texas would never be satisfied until they had secured a new constitution for themselves. DeMorse had begun already to urge the next legislature to call a constitutional convention for that purpose.⁵²

⁵²Standard, September 16, 1873.

CHAPTER VII

FRAMING THE TEXAS STATE CONSTITUTION OF 1876

An important service to Texas rendered by Charles DeMorse was his part in shaping the Constitution of 1876, a document which is still the fundamental law of the state. The prominent place DeMorse held among a relatively large number of able delegates in the Constitutional Convention of 1875 is attested by the fact that he was a member of eight important committees of that body. As the committee reports became the bases of action in the convention, and as Texas has already continued under the present constitution longer than under the first seven, a detailed story is desirable in order to make clear the role of DeMorse in the formation of the Texas Constitution of 1876. two classes: the "state guard," composed of all volunteers. Texas, in common with other states of the Confederacy, had suffered during the reconstruction period from the policies of the radical Republican party. The changes in the political situation of the preceding decade had given Texas several constitutions. In 1866 she had followed the general trend in the South and adopted a constitution which admitted the abolition of slavery, declared secession illegal, and repudiated the Civil War debt for the state.

But this constitution, formulated under the directing wishes of President Johnson, was not allowed to stand. In the elections of the "Critical Year" of 1866, Congress became radically Republican and forced, thereafter, upon the South the views

of Charles Sumner and Thaddeus Stevens. Congress swept aside the state governments of the South, and ordered new constitutions to be made in which the negroes were to be given the right of suffrage and the ex-Confederates disfranchised.

The election of a radical legislature and a brief period of radical Republican supremacy in Texas were the results of the Texas Constitution of 1869. Several acts of this legislature have been frequently referred to as "obnoxious acts" of the Twelfth Legislature. They aroused great resentment among all except the partisans of Governor Edmund J. Davis, and were largely instrumental in limiting the radical tenure to a comparatively brief period.

According to the terms of the Militia Act all able bodied men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five were to be divided into two classes: the "state guard," composed of all volunteers, enrolled, armed, and drilled regularly in each county; and the "reserve militia," including all men liable to military duty and not enrolled in the state guard. The governor was to be the commander-in-chief of all military forces, and was to appoint the adjutant-general.¹ The police bill authorized the appoint-

¹H. N. P. Gammel, Laws of Texas, VI, 185-190.

ment and support of a chief of police, four captains, eight lieutenants, twenty sergeants, and 225 privates. All sheriffs, deputies, constables, and marshalls of cities and towns were to be considered a part of the state police and subject to the

control of the governor and the chief of the state police.² This

²Gammel, Laws of Texas, VI, 193.

act was criticised severely because of the great expense attached, because of the centralization of power and because of the personnel and the behavior of the police themselves.³ The

³San Antonio Herald, October 19, 1871.

Police Act was a considerable factor in the downfall of the radical Republican regime in Texas. Another of the "obnoxious acts" was the registration and election law. It gave the governor power to appoint a registrar for every organized county in the state. He also appointed for each county a board of appeals, consisting of three men, and members of these boards were also to act as election judges. Registration was to continue ten days prior to the election. Elections were required to be held at the county seats for four consecutive days. Heavy fines were to be imposed upon citizens who intimidated voters, disturbed elections, or bribed voters, and the governor was empowered to call out the militia to preserve order at the polls.⁴

⁴Gammel, Laws of Texas, VI, 302.

One of the most objectionable of all the distasteful acts of the Twelfth Legislature was the law placing in the hands of the

governor the power to fill any state, district, county, or city office made vacant in any way.⁵ It was pointed out by the

⁵Gammel, Laws of Texas, VI, 191.

opponents of the administration that Governor Davis had the appointment of state, county, municipal, and school officials totaling 8,538.⁶ The legislature drew upon itself much criti-

⁶San Antonio Herald, October 20, 1871.

cism by substituting grants of state bonds as subsidies to railroad companies rather than the donation of state land. Grants of state bond subsidies to railroad companies threatened to bankrupt the state and soon aroused much opposition. A return to the land grant policy was accomplished by a constitutional amendment ratified by the legislature in March, 1873.⁷

⁷Gammel, Laws of Texas, VII, 676.

The educational schemes of the Republican regime, although expensive to the state, contained some commendable features. The school law provided that one-fourth of the annual revenue derived from taxation, a poll tax of one dollar on all male citizens, and the interest accruing from the permanent school fund were to constitute the available fund. All children regardless of color were to be compelled to attend school not

less than four months of each year.⁸ These features were

⁸Gammel, Laws of Texas, VII, 676.

generally unpopular with the masses, but apparently the greatest complaint was directed at the extreme centralization of the system.⁹

⁹San Antonio Herald, October 20, 1871.

These "obnoxious acts" of the radical Republican administration drove a great majority of the moderate Republicans into the Democratic party and led to the downfall of radical rule in Texas. Opposition was demonstrated in various and sundry ways. The Democratic Convention held in Austin in January, 1871, denounced the acts, but the best organized opposition was that of the tax-payers' convention which met in Austin, September 22, 1871.¹⁰ So strong had the opposition to the Davis regime

¹⁰Ninety-four counties were represented at this convention. The tax rate had risen from fifteen cents in 1866 to three dollars in 1871. See Austin Statesman, September 26, October 3, and October 5, 1871.

become that, in the general election of 1872, a solid Democratic delegation to congress was elected, and the state legislature

became Democratic.¹¹

¹¹S. S. McKay, Making the Texas Constitution of 1876, p. 40.

The Democrats began a demand for a new constitution immediately after they had gained control of the state legislature in the election of 1872. During the early days of agitation there was a general consensus that the existing Republican constitution was so defective that no argument was required to show that a new one was a necessity. This agitation continued to increase until the calling of the convention three years later. The Democratic Convention of 1873 had gone on record as favoring a constitutional convention.¹²

¹²E. W. Winkler, Platforms of Political Parties, 161.

Governor Richard Coke counselled deliberation in the calling of a constitutional convention for fear of arousing the displeasure of the Grant administration. A bill for calling a constitutional convention was defeated by the legislature in March, 1874.¹³ Acting upon the recommendation of Governor Coke

¹³Senate Journal, Fourteenth Legislature, 55 ff.

the legislature then appointed a committee to draft a constitu-

tion.¹⁴ This work was taken over principally by Senator J. L.

¹⁴Senate Journal, Fourteenth Legislature, 180; House Journal, Fourteenth Legislature, 203.

Camp and Representative W. B. Sayers. Although the Camp-Sayers Constitution apparently contained some excellent features, the House of Representatives defeated it for fear it would look too much like the work of a centralized committee.¹⁵

73-74. ¹⁵Panola Watchman (Carthage), May 13, 1874.

farmers. Before the next session of the legislature convened, Governor Coke had undergone a change of views. The national attitude toward the South was more favorable. In his first message to the second session of the Fourteenth Legislature, he recommended calling a convention.¹⁶ Acting on this recommenda-

leader. ¹⁶House Journal, Fourteenth Legislature, 2 Session, 15.

tion, the legislature passed a joint resolution which ordered the question of calling a convention to be submitted to the people to be voted upon at an election to be held the first Monday in August, 1875. Provision was made for the election of ninety delegates to the convention, three to be elected by the qualified

voters of each of the thirty senatorial districts.¹⁷

its candidate for governor in 1873. In the
 in the mid-¹⁷Gammel, Laws of Texas, VIII, 573-574.

The people showed their desire for a constitutional convention by a vote of approximately three to one. Democrats elected seventy-five of the ninety delegates. Six of the fifteen Republicans were negroes.¹⁸ The convention contained forty-one

¹⁸McKay, Making the Texas Constitution of 1876, pp. 73-74.

farmers, twenty-nine lawyers, and the remaining delegates were listed as merchants, editors, stockmen, and physicians.¹⁹

¹⁹San Antonio Herald, August 5, 1875.

With few exceptions each district elected its strongest leader. One of the ablest members of the convention was Charles DeMorse, representing Red River county. He was now fifty-nine years of age and had a long record of public service behind him. As has been shown already, DeMorse had held office under President Lamar of the Texas Republic, and had been elected a member of the Congress of the Republic of Texas in 1845. He had voted for secession from the Union in 1861. In 1862 he had raised a regiment of Confederate soldiers and had served as its colonel; he had been a delegate to the National Democratic Convention at

Baltimore in 1872. Having been presented by Northeast Texas as its candidate for governor in 1873, he had been second to Coke in the number of votes obtained in the convention. He had become in the same year the president of the first organized press association in Texas. DeMorse was a Granger and a Director of the Agricultural and Mechanical College at the time of the constitutional convention. Few delegates were better equipped for the task at hand than he, and much of the constitution is his handiwork.²⁰

Another well known member of the convention was John H. Reagan. He had had considerable legislative and judicial experience in Texas, and had been a member of the Federal Congress. He had served as Post-master General in the cabinet of Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy. At the time of the convention he was Congressman-elect, due to take his seat in December, 1875.²¹

²⁰Georgia P. Wilson, John Henninger Reagan and the Texas Constitution of 1876 (manuscript), pp. 1-39.

In addition to DeMorse and Reagan, the press suggested a relatively large number of strong and capable leaders. Colonel John S. Ford, delegate from Cameron county, had distinguished himself as a soldier and editor. John Henry Brown was an Indian fighter with a long record of public service. E. L. Dohoney, delegate from Lamar county, was editor of the North Texan (Paris). W. P. Ballinger, delegate from Galveston, was one of the ablest

lawyers of the state. N. H. Darnell, delegate from Tarrant county, had been a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1845. General L. S. Ross of Waco, later governor of Texas, was known as an Indian fighter and soldier. E. B. Pickett, who presided over the convention, had been the Democratic candidate for the United States Senate when General Reynolds was named by the radicals in 1871 to contest the seat held by Morgan C. Hamilton. Other prominent delegates included George Flournoy of Galveston, Sterling C. Robertson of Bell county, Fletcher S. Stockdale of Calhoun county, General J. W. Whitfield of Lavaca county, W. A. Crawford of Marion county, ex-senator Webster Flanagan of Rusk county, Stillwell H. Russell of Harrison county, Robert W. Stayton of Victoria, Judge Charles S. West of Travis county, Jacob Waelder of Bexar, W. P. McLean of Titus, and others.²¹

²¹Dallas Herald, August 21, 1875.

Viewing the whole, we find that ten delegates had had experience in a Texas constitutional convention, nineteen had had experience in the Texas legislature, two had served in Congress, five had served as members of other state legislatures,²²

²²Some accounts place this number at four, but evidently have not included General Whitfield who had served as a member of the Tennessee legislature.

one had served in the cabinet of President Davis, more than a score had been officers of high rank in the Confederate army,

and several had had judicial experience in the higher courts of the state. Considering the entire group, this body of men who met in the Hall of Representatives in the city of Austin at noon on September 6, 1875,²³ was one of the ablest groups that ever

²³Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 3.

assembled in Texas for a political purpose.

DeMorse called the convention to order, and moved that General Whitfield be made temporary chairman. E. B. Pickett, of Liberty county, was elected president of the convention.²⁴

²⁴Ibid., pp. 3, 5.

On the third day the president announced the standing committees. DeMorse was placed on the following: Legislative, Judiciary, Executive, General Provisions, Revenue and Taxation, Printing and Contingent Expenses, and was subsequently placed on the Select Committee in regard to Land Subsidies to Railways and on the Committee on Postponement of the Election.²⁵ He was made

²⁵Ibid., pp. 15-16.

chairman of the Committee on Revenue and Taxation and also of the Committee on Postponement of the Election. These were eight of the most important committees of the convention. Thus, upon DeMorse fell much of the responsibility of framing the fundamental

law of the state of Texas.

The convention was now ready for work. As chairman of the Committee on Per Diem and Mileage, John H. Reagan reported a resolution providing payment to the members of the convention of five dollars per day and mileage not to exceed twenty cents a mile.²⁶ Although this was the beginning of retrenchment, a

²⁶Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 23.

minority report was presented by W. P. McLean providing for further retrenchment. DeMorse supported the majority report. He argued that the committee had considered the question very carefully. He was one of those who had always condemned the waste and expense of useless legislation, but thought that the people of Texas were considerate, and that they did not expect their delegates to set their compensation at a low and inadequate rate. He desired to set the rate at a fair amount so that gentlemen could afford to go to Austin and represent the state, and not because he expected to be a member of some future legislature. The people realized that most of the members were making a sacrifice rather than a financial gain, that although demanding economy, they desired only reasonable economy. He did not take the position that large pay was necessary to secure the services of men of ability, but he did not believe that any man could afford to sacrifice his self-respect when he set the rate of his own services and of those who were to come after him. The

majority report was adopted.²⁷

²⁷State Gazette (Austin), September 9, 1875.

A spirited contest came up in the early days of the convention over the question of printing its proceedings. DeMorse argued that the convention should have the debates printed. He advocated the printing of the debates in condensed form in the newspapers, and urged that the papers containing the debates be placed on the desks of the members of the convention. His idea was to diffuse information among the people. He preferred newspaper reports to the book form. He submitted an estimate showing that the salary of the stenographic reporter and the publication of the reports in newspaper and volume form would not total together more than \$4,500.²⁸

²⁸Ibid., September 17, 1875.

DeMorse was aided in his attempt to have the debates published by Reagan, Stockdale, Flournoy, Dohoney, Ford, and several others. The opposition estimated the expense as high as from fifteen to twenty-five thousand dollars. This was the only objection advanced by the opponents of the plan. The motion to provide for the publication of the convention debates was lost. They argued the danger of the plan.

by a vote of fifty-three to thirty-one.²⁹

²⁹ Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 128.

The proposal which attracted the most interest among the people, and caused the bitterest controversy among the delegates, was the ordinance postponing the election of December, 1875. Early in the convention DeMorse moved the adoption of an ordinance to suspend the election of the legislature until after the action of the people on the constitution to be submitted to them by the convention. The motion was referred to a select committee of seven, all capable men. The president named on this committee DeMorse, Henry, Ballinger, Brown, Reagan, Stockdale, and West.³⁰ DeMorse, Stockdale, West, Brown, and

³⁰ Ibid., 1875, p. 26.

Reagan submitted the majority report which favored postponing the general election of December, 1875. The signers of the majority report argued for postponement because it would save the state some three hundred thousand dollars, would prevent confusion in the election of a United States Senator, and would permit a full and fair consideration of the constitution by the people. Ballinger, Dohoney, and Henry presented a minority report. They argued the danger of the precedent, and that the the legislature, by a vote of three-fourths of

convention had no right to assume so much power.³¹ The majority

³¹Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 176-184; State Gazette, September 22, 1875.

report was adopted by a vote of fifty-six to twenty-five.³²

³²Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 197; State Gazette, September 25, 1875.

The convention discussed, amended, and debated the legislative article several days before adopting one. The majority report, which DeMorse signed, provided for thirty-one senatorial districts and seventy-seven representative districts. George McCormick, of Colorado county, moved to amend that section by retaining the existing plan under the Constitution of 1869, which provided for thirty senatorial districts, each to elect one senator and three representatives. Brown's able defense of the system of local representation in the committee report defeated the substitute offered by McCormick.³³

³³Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, pp. 226-227.

The convention also restricted the power of the legislature in the matter of calling a constitutional convention and in amending the constitution. The committee report provided that the legislature, by a vote of three-fourths of all the members matter unless the proposition was to change the constitution

of each house, with the approval of the governor, might call a constitutional convention.³⁵ Upon motion of Judge Reagan the

³⁵Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 168.

"three-fourths" was changed to "two-thirds."³⁶ The committee

³⁶Ibid., p. 275.

had accepted the plan of amendment provided in the Constitution of 1869. It permitted the legislature, at any regular session, by a vote of two-thirds of all the members of each house, to prepare amendments to the constitution, to be voted on by the qualified electors. A majority of the voters was necessary to ratify the amendments, and it was further provided that two-thirds of the members of each house of the next legislature should ratify the amendments accepted by a majority of the people before the amendments became a part of the constitution. The convention debate centered around the proposal of Judge Ballinger to eliminate the ratification by the legislature of the amendments after they had been accepted by a majority of the voters. Ballinger was supported by Pickett, Reagan, and others; and opposed by DeMorse, Brown, West, and others. DeMorse said that it seemed to him that the proposition of Judge Ballinger was the most dangerous of anything yet submitted to the convention, but that others of them remembered the people seldom noticed the matter unless the proposition was to change the constitution

entirely, or to create a new one. He pointed out that one-half of the people might not take any interest in the amendments submitted to them, and one-half might vote for amendments which might be dangerous to their interests, but under the amendments proposed in the convention the thing was virtually ended and complete. It carried with it no more dignity than a county election. All the fathers had provided safeguards to prevent sudden departure from the organic law. The greatest departure he was willing to make from the established usage was that a majority of the legislature should record the will of the people. He had no fear that the legislature would ever dare to oppose the will of the people, and he looked upon their approval as a mere formality, designed to protect rather than to injure the people. He believed that no harm could arise from a submission of the matter to the people.³⁷

³⁷State Gazette, October 3, 1875.

The legislative article, as finally adopted, provided for a senate to consist of thirty-one members, and a house of representatives to consist of ninety-three members. The membership of the senate was to remain fixed but that of the house might increase until a maximum of one hundred and fifty had been reached. The term of the senators was set at four years. The minimum age of senators was set at twenty-six years; of representatives at twenty-one. The meetings of the legislature were to be biennial for a period of not more than sixty days at full pay.

Special sessions might be called by the governor not to exceed a maximum duration of thirty days. Only measures suggested by the governor in his call might be considered in a special session. Each house was given considerable control over its members. Members were privileged from arrest while attending sessions of the legislature, except in case of felony, treason, or breach of the peace. The maximum compensation allowed members of the legislature was five dollars a day for the first sixty days of each session, and two dollars a day for the remainder of the session. Mileage was placed at "not exceeding twenty cents a mile, the distance to be computed by the nearest and most direct route of travel by land regardless of railways or water routes."³⁸

³⁸ Texas Constitution of 1876, Art. III. The "Constitution of the State of Texas" as adopted by the Constitutional Convention of 1875 may be found in Gammel, Laws of Texas, VIII, 778-834.

The Committee on Executive Department reported on September 30. Not much change was expected in the executive department except a curtailment of the appointive power of the governor. The committee recommended that all the officers of the executive department under the existing constitution should be retained. The office of attorney-general was to be made elective rather than appointive as it was under the existing constitution. The committee recommended the terms of the executive officers at two years. Very little change was recommended by the committee in regard to salaries. The governor was to receive five thousand

dollars annually, the comptroller, the treasurer, and the land commissioner \$2,500 each, the attorney-general two thousand dollars and fees, and the secretary of state two thousand dollars.³⁹

³⁹Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, pp. 228-234.

The debate on executive salaries brought on several spirited contests. The Grangers and the Republicans united in an effort to reduce the salaries. John Johnson, of Collin county, moved to reduce the salary of the governor from five thousand dollars to four thousand dollars. The amendment was lost, but later in the day it was recalled and passed by a vote of forty-four to thirty-two.⁴⁰ The motions of John S. Mills and

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 285-287.

of J. L. German to reduce the salaries of other executive officers failed.⁴¹

⁴¹Ibid., p. 294 ff.

Judge Reagan then moved that the salaries of the comptroller, the treasurer, and the land commissioner be set at three thousand dollars. He said that that was the lowest salary that ought to be offered for such responsible and important

positions and though men might be had for less, it was degrading the laws and glory of the state to reduce these salaries beyond reasonable compensation for the sake of saving \$1,500 a year in these three important offices.⁴²

⁴² State Gazette, October 6, 1875.

DeMorse defended Judge Reagan's position.⁴³ He

⁴³ It is to be noticed that although DeMorse was a Granger he stood for high salaries in opposition to his fellow Grange members.

cautioned the convention in its zeal for retrenchment, not to go as far from a just medium as had previously characterized the other side of the question. He was one of those who gave volume to the cry of reform, and did not fear to go before his constituency and tell them that he did not believe in reducing the salaries of these officers for the purpose of saving a few hundred dollars. He took the same position that he had taken before the committee in opposing these reductions. He had favored then a salary of three thousand dollars as the lowest possible to fix these officers in their homes and maintain them respectably. He found from inquiry that the cost of living in Austin was much greater than at other places in Texas. He had been silenced in the committee by the statement that the incumbent comptroller would be glad to get the office again at two thousand dollars a year, but had learned afterwards, that although that officer

lived three miles from the city and practiced the most rigid economy, he would scarcely make the salary clear his expenses. It would be stated that plenty of men could be had to fill the positions. The question was, he thought, should they disfranchise every poor man in the state? Should they say that no man who was not rich should serve the state in these positions--say to them virtually, "you shall not serve the state; you have not sufficient money, and if you go to Austin, with a salary of two thousand dollars you must speculate at the expense of the people or get into debt? Did the convention propose to disfranchise three-fourths of the people of the state from serving them?" He had come to Austin with the intention of favoring a substantial retrenchment. He was not in favor of that sort of economy, and had no fears that his constituency would fail to support his action, for they were men of common sense and desired only a reasonable economy.⁴⁴ Reagan's substitute failed by a vote of

⁴⁴State Gazette, October 6, 1875.

fifty-five to twenty-one.⁴⁵

⁴⁵Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 296.

The state press was almost unanimous in condemnation of the small salaries allowed executive officers by the convention. The Galveston News pointed out that the convention had

reduced salaries almost to the starvation point.⁴⁶ The Houston

⁴⁶Galveston News, October 13, 1875.

Telegraph suggested that the convention should have provided that only single men might be elected to office in Texas, as it would be impossible for married men with families to live on the salaries specified.⁴⁷ The Austin Statesman was unmerciful in its

⁴⁷Houston Telegraph, October 8, 1875.

ridicule of the low salaries. The following is a characteristic paragraph:

The Secretary of State shall receive for his services an annual salary of two thousand! ! dollars and no more! ! Two thousand dollars! ! What munificence! What compensation! Reform, what contracted and niggardly policies have found shelter under thy mantle? Two thousand dollars! and no more! ! When the amount is realized by many bookkeepers in retail merchant's establishments. Secretary of State! Two thousand dollars! and no more! !⁴⁸

⁴⁸Austin Statesman, October 20, 1875.

The executive article, as finally adopted, provided for a governor, lieutenant-governor, secretary of state, comptroller, treasurer, land commissioner, and attorney-general, to be elected at the same time and places as the members of the legislature. In case of a tie vote for any executive office the

two houses of the legislature in joint session were to choose one of the candidates for the office. The governor must be at least thirty years of age, and a resident of the state for five years immediately preceding his election. He was made commander-in-chief of the military forces of the state, except when they were in the service of the United States. He was given power to call out the militia to execute the laws, to suppress insurrections, repel invasions, and to protect the frontier. He might call the legislature in extra session, and was required to inform the legislators at the beginning of sessions concerning the condition of the state, and to recommend legislation. He was required to cause the laws to be faithfully executed, but was not given the necessary power over minor executive officers to see that the laws were enforced. He was empowered to grant reprieves, commutations of punishment, and pardons, and to fill by appointment all vacancies in state and district offices, except the legislature. A confirmation by two-thirds of the senators present at the executive session was required for the appointments, and the recess appointments were required to be confirmed within ten days after the next legislature had convened. The governor was given power to veto legislation, but the two houses might, by a vote of two-thirds of each house, over-ride the veto. He was given authority to veto one or more items of an appropriation bill, and approve the remaining items.⁴⁹

courts were to have original jurisdiction in all cases

when the ⁴⁹Texas Constitution of 1876, Art. IV.

District judges were to serve six years as judges.

thousand. The duties of the other executive officials were described briefly. The qualifications prescribed for the lieutenant-governor were the same as those for governor. He was to preside over the senate, and in committee of the whole was allowed to debate and vote on all questions, and in case of a tie was permitted to give the deciding vote. In case the office of governor became vacant, he was to act in the capacity of governor, during which time his salary would be altered from that of a senator to the amount received by the governor. Other executive officers were required to "perform such duties as are or may be required by law."⁵⁰

⁵⁰Texas Constitution of 1876, Art. IV.

The Committee on Judiciary labored for six weeks before making any recommendations. No uniformity could be agreed upon. Judge Ballinger and seven others signed the majority report, Judge Reagan and three others a minority report, Lipscomb Norwell and Joe P. Douglas another one, and DeMorse supported an article of his own. The majority report recommended the establishing of a supreme court, thirty-five district courts, a county court in each county, and "such other courts as may be established by law." The Supreme Court was to have five judges, to serve eight years at a salary of four thousand dollars a year. District courts were to have original jurisdiction in all criminal cases when the amount concerned was as much as one hundred dollars. District judges were to serve six years at a salary of three

thousand dollars a year. County courts were to have jurisdiction over misdemeanors and in civil cases involving amounts ranging from one hundred to five hundred dollars. County judges were to serve four years at a salary to be prescribed by law. Justice courts were to be organized by the County Commissioners' Courts. They were to have original jurisdiction in small civil cases, and misdemeanors when the fines assessed would be less than one hundred dollars.⁵¹

⁵¹Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, pp. 406-413.

The Reagan report, accepted by the convention as the basis for action, proposed to relieve the crowded condition of the higher courts by a re-arrangement of the jurisdiction of the courts provided for in the majority report. It increased the jurisdiction of the justice courts in cases where the matter in controversy amounted to two hundred dollars or less, and enlarged the range of jurisdiction in the county courts. Reagan hoped by these means to relieve the higher courts.⁵²

⁵²Ibid., pp. 413-418.

DeMorse's report was identical with that of Judge Reagan, except that it provided for an additional higher court, the Court of Appeals. His report concurred with the others in providing that judicial offices should be elective. DeMorse said

that he considered the majority report a fair one, and considered it immaterial which report was taken as a basis of action by the convention. One of his objects was to relieve the Supreme Court, and the other was to relieve the mass of people from the very heavy burdens which they were carrying, which were plunging them into debt and filling their jails and keeping them filled at the expense of the people of the counties. DeMorse desired a dual supreme court in order that speedy action might be had in criminal cases. Thus, the accused person might be either punished or released and the county relieved of the burden of keeping the prisoner. He claimed superior advantages for his system, as three of the Supreme Court judges would be selected with reference to their ability to act in civil cases, and three in criminal cases.⁵³

⁵³Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, pp. 437-446; State Gazette, November 5, 1875.

The judicial article in its final form reflected the influence of DeMorse's arguments. A supreme court, a court of appeals, district courts, county courts, commissioners' courts, and "such other courts as may be provided by law" were established. The Supreme Court was given appellate jurisdiction over all criminal cases, and over civil cases in which the district courts had original or appellate jurisdiction. Each of the higher courts was permitted to sit at other places than the capital, and was to hold sessions from October to June inclusive.

The minimum age of its judges was fixed at thirty years, and the judges were required to have been practicing lawyers or judges of a Texas court for at least seven years.⁵⁴

⁵⁴Texas Constitution of 1876, Art. V.

Twenty-six district courts were established, but the number might be increased or decreased by the legislature. A district judge must have attained the age of twenty-five, and have been a practicing lawyer or judge in the state for a period of not less than four years prior to his election as district judge. Each county was to have two sessions of the district court annually. The legislature might provide for additional terms if needed. District courts were given original jurisdiction in cases of felony, and in civil cases when the amount involved was five hundred dollars or more. Grand and petit juries were to be composed of twelve men; but nine members of a grand jury might transact business and present bills. In trials of civil cases, and in trials of criminal cases below the grade of felon in a district court, nine members of the petit jury, concurring, might render a verdict. Juries were to be empaneled in civil cases only when demanded by a party to the case, and the jury fees were to be paid by the party demanding the jury.⁵⁵

⁵⁵Ibid.

The county courts were given original jurisdiction over

those misdemeanors in which the original jurisdiction was not given to the justice courts, and in civil cases when the amount involved was not less than two hundred dollars nor more than five hundred dollars. County courts were required to hold sessions at least once each month. Juries were to consist of six men when a criminal case was involved. If a jury was empaneled in a civil case, the party making the demand was required to pay the jury fees.⁵⁶ The justice courts were to handle

⁵⁶Texas Constitution of 1876, Art. V.

the petty criminal and civil cases. There were to be no less than four nor more than eight justice courts in each county.⁵⁷

⁵⁷Ibid.

The question of granting land subsidies to railways threatened to bring a sharp cleavage in the convention. The issue came up under three different headings--legislative article, railroads, and public lands. After 1854 the policy of the state government had been to grant lands for the aid of railroad building. The Constitution of 1869 substituted money subsidies. The abuse of this policy by the Davis administration had caused the people to amend the constitution in 1874 by forbidding money subsidies and permitting land subsidies again.

On motion The first debates on the question came as a result of an attempt by J. E. Armin, of Colorado county, to amend the

legislative article as presented by the majority report. The article forbade the legislature to authorize the making of any grant of public money to any individual or corporation. Armin proposed to amend the article by inserting "public lands" after the word "money."⁵⁸ DeMorse, Reagan, Ford, and others opposed

⁵⁸Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 227.

the amendment. They held that the land subsidy system had developed the eastern, northern, and middle sections, and that the West ought not to be deprived of similar advantages. They thought that the western lands in time would be of great value, and that agitation for the division of the state would continue unless the West had its opportunity to benefit from land subsidies.⁵⁹ Armin

⁵⁹State Gazette, September 30, 1875.

then withdrew his amendment.⁶⁰

⁶⁰Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 227.

The question came up again two days later (October 1) when the majority report of the Committee on Public Lands was read. It contained a clause prohibiting the legislature from granting "any of the lands of this state to any railroad company." On motion of Stayton, it was referred to a select committee of seven who were "to inquire into the expediency of incorporating

a provision in the Constitution, setting apart public lands to certain sections of the state for the purpose of aiding in the construction of railroads."⁶¹ DeMorse was named on the committee.

the passage of the amendment, but would not refuse where the

same land ⁶¹Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 342.

valuable only after railroads were built there and the land was

The committee reported October 12. The members were unable to agree. Four members signed the majority report forbidding future land grants by the legislature for subsidizing railroads. DeMorse and two others presented a minority report favoring a continuation of the land subsidy policy.⁶² During the course of

⁶²Ibid. Journal, November 2, 1875.

the debate Stayton offered an amendment which would have confined future land grants to the aid of railroad building to West and Southwest Texas. He said that one-third of the state had received benefits from the land subsidy policy of the state, and that he thought it only just that the other two-thirds should do so. He thought it would be an act of gross injustice to refuse the thinly settled regions of the state an opportunity to encourage railroad building as the older portions had done.⁶³

passed the article which would have confined the land grants

up to six ⁶³State Gazette, November 9, 1875.

DeMorse supported the Stayton amendment. He argued that it was a question of public interest, and thought that it

made little difference whether those sections which had had the benefit of public land donations had profited or squandered them fruitlessly. His section would receive no benefit from the passage of the amendment, but would not refuse others the same benefit it had enjoyed. The West could be settled and made valuable only after railroads were built there, and the same was true of the Southeast. The pine timber of the Southeast would furnish excellent lumber which was much needed in the North and West, and the entire state would, after all, be benefited by a continuation of the land subsidy policy in the newer sections of the state.⁶⁴ The Stayton substitute confining future land sub-

⁶⁴State Gazette, November 9, 1875.

sidies to the West failed by a vote of twenty-three to thirty-nine, and at the same time an amendment to discontinue all land subsidies to railroads lost by a vote of twenty-four to forty.⁶⁵

⁶⁵Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 624.

Almost all the twenty-three delegates voting for the Stayton substitute represented West or Southeast Texas. In final form as passed the article permitted land subsidies to railroad companies up to sixteen sections for each mile of railroad constructed.⁶⁶

⁶⁶Texas State Constitution of 1876, Art. XIV.

This was a continuation of the old policy inaugurated in 1854. On the question of land subsidies the lines of sectionalism had been clearly drawn. Belief that in the potential possibilities of the West lay the future prosperity and greatness of Texas had lifted DeMorse above the feeling of narrow sectionalism.

DeMorse, chairman of the Committee on Revenue and Taxation, on October 18, reported an article to the convention. The preamble stated that the committee had attempted "to define a system of taxation based upon consideration of natural rights and upon correct principles of political economy, limiting the assessment and expenditure strictly to legitimate objects of government and to so guard the definement as to prevent future variance and abuses."⁶⁷ Much criticism of the article was made

⁶⁷Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 379; see pages 379-383 for the complete article.

because of its great length. The leadership of the defense fell to DeMorse. He said he knew that a general provision could have been made less lengthy, and that he would have no difficulty in drafting one himself. He pointed out that on the article of taxation began the contest between corporate interests and the masses of the people and the rights of those masses. The parties were aligned right there, and the question was whether the people were properly represented, and whether corporate interests should control the convention as they had previously controlled legislatures. He believed that the committee had carefully considered

every proposal on taxation, and had endeavored to reach every class that had hitherto avoided taxation. The article was made purposely lengthy in order to reach all classes and to define all the principles governing taxation and define them justly. He did not believe that there was a single clause nor a single class mentioned that was not necessary to the interest of the people. The report of the committee had the concurrence of every committee member, except on one proposition, and that was the question as to whether taxes assessed on lands should be paid in the county where situated, or whether a non-resident should have the privilege of paying it in the county of his residence, or to the comptroller.⁶⁸ The convention accepted the article by a vote of

It recd. ⁶⁸State Gazette, October 23, 1875.

forty to thirty-two making a few amendments.⁶⁹

⁶⁹Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, pp. 721-726. For provisions of the article as finally adopted, see the Texas Constitution of 1876.

A brief survey of the issues on education, poll tax, and immigration will help clarify DeMorse's position on revenue and taxation, and at the same time show his position in regard to those problems. Although he was not a member of either committee on these subjects, his views relative thereto were pronounced. An unsuccessful effort was made to write into the constitution provision for a liberal system of public free schools.

The old argument that it is unjust and unfair to tax one man to apply toward the education of another's children was used freely. Stockdale and Flournoy, both outstanding leaders in public affairs, could not perceive the wisdom of a system of public free schools, and led the opposition. Even Judge Reagan took the position, at first, that the legislature should give but little money to the schools. Strong arguments in support of public free schools were put forth by DeMorse, Ballinger, Dohoney, and Crawford. Most of the debating on education was done, however, in an effort to determine what fraction of the general revenue of the state might be wisely appropriated for the schools.

The majority report, signed by General Whitfield and eight others, was presented to the convention on September 30. It recommended public free schools, and permitted the legislature to appropriate therefor not more than one-tenth of the general revenue derivable from taxation, and "such poll tax as may by law be levied." Schools were to be maintained for not less than four months.⁷⁰ Four members of the committee presented a minor-

⁷⁰Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, pp. 243-245.

ity report. They held that the education of children was a private duty. They felt that the state had no right to take by taxation a portion of the property of its citizens and apply it system should be established. He wished, on the contrary, to urge that they at least keep some sort of system of a school

to the use of another portion of its citizens.⁷¹

value." ⁷¹Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, pp. 245-246.

Much debate and conflict followed these reports. A multitude of resolutions, amendments, and substitutes were offered. DeMorse offered an amendment to the majority report which would have substituted local taxation of not more than one-fourth of one per cent, the amount to be determined by a majority vote of the taxpayers in each district. The amendment also provided that the interest on the permanent school fund and a poll tax of two dollars were to be distributed among the counties by the comptroller according to scholastic population.⁷²

⁷²Ibid., p. 330.

The amendment formed the basis of the discussion of public schools for an entire day.

DeMorse asked members of the convention for a calm consideration of his substitute, as it was free from all tangible objection. He pointed out that it contained the views he had advocated during the canvass in his district. The difference between it and the report of the committee, he thought, was substantial. The committee said that at some future day a school system should be established. He wished, on the contrary, to urge that they at least keep some sort of semblance of a school

system, and not push it off into the future by saying, "We may establish a system when the school lands shall have acquired value." He admitted that the land endowment was the most magnificent in the world, but he was opposed to the present sacrifice, because the land would be extremely valuable in the future. The system he proposed would at least give the poor boy, who could otherwise get no schooling, perhaps three months in the year.⁷³

⁷³ State Gazette, October 12, 1875.

The convention showed its disapproval of public free education by defeating the DeMorse amendment by a vote of forty-two to thirty-three.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 332.

As finally adopted, the article provided that the legislature might appropriate not more than one-fourth of the general revenue of the state and levy a poll tax of one dollar for the support of the public schools.⁷⁵ On the final vote, DeMorse and the convention who endeavored to establish a public free school

⁷⁵ Texas State Constitution of 1876, Art. VII.

several other prominent Democrats joined the fourteen Republicans by D. A. Hum of Houston, providing that the committee on education be instructed to investigate the propriety of a law to

include in the available school fund a poll tax of three dollars

in opposition.⁷⁶ The debate became rather intense when the majority

⁷⁶Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 616.

⁷⁷Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, pp. 124-125.

The disappointment of the press at the stand on education taken by the convention was almost universal. One well known newspaper said that the state could not recover for a century from the disgrace of not being provided with a school system.⁷⁷ Another regretted that the convention, after "decreeing

⁷⁷Waco Examiner, quoted by State Gazette, October 23, 1875.

universal suffrage, had now also decreed universal ignorance."⁷⁸

⁷⁸Galveston News, October 13, 1875.

Almost all the newspapers commended the Democrats who had joined the Republicans in opposition to the act. The verdict of time seems to have substantiated the wisdom of this minority group in the convention who endeavored to establish a public free educational system for Texas.

The debate on the poll tax clause occupied most of the sessions for several days. The fight started with a resolution by D. A. Nunn of Houston, providing that the Committee on Education be instructed to investigate the propriety of a law to include in the available school fund a poll tax of from two to

five dollars, the payment of such tax to be a prerequisite for voting.⁷⁹ The debate became rather intense when the majority

⁷⁹Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, pp. 191-192.

report of the Committee on Suffrage was read. It proposed to make the payment of a poll tax a prerequisite for voting.⁸⁰

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 238.

Reagan, Dohoney, Stockdale, and others spoke in favor of the poll tax prerequisite. They argued that a poll tax would provide a much needed fund for the schools, would furnish a method of eliminating the ignorant vote, and would deliver the East Texas counties from negro rule.⁸¹ The poll tax prerequisite was

⁸¹State Gazette, October 7, 1875.

opposed by DeMorse,⁸² Ford, Flournoy, Pickett, Brown, G. McCormick,

⁸²It is to be remembered that DeMorse strongly favored a poll tax as an aid to public free education.

and others. They argued that "restriction" was not democratic, that suffrage should be absolutely free, and that such a clause would be in violation of the Federal Constitution. DeMorse said that the mature consideration and experience of thirty years had

led him to take a different view of suffrage from the one he had formerly held. He thought that a "deadly lethargy pervaded the body politic," and a great effort was required to get the voters out. He was of the opinion that if they adopted the clause requiring a poll tax receipt for voting, it would act as a disfranchisement to a very large body of voters. For that reason he was opposed to any restriction of suffrage by a poll tax payment or otherwise.⁸³

⁸³State Gazette, October 7, 1875.

The state press took up the fight and discussed freely and at length the merits and demerits of the plan. The Houston Telegraph argued that those who "pay nothing toward the support of the government should not be made peers with those who do."⁸⁴

⁸⁴Houston Telegraph, October 10, 1875.

The Austin Statesman thought the restriction of suffrage a necessity,⁸⁵ while, on the contrary, the State Gazette considered

⁸⁵Austin Statesman, October 8, 1875.

restriction a menace.⁸⁶ The papers of the eastern part of the

⁸⁶State Gazette, October 8, 1875.

state, where the negro population was centered, almost all favored restriction. In other parts of the state the proposed restriction did not attract so much attention.

During the debate on the education article the poll tax as a prerequisite for voting was lost by a vote of fifty-six to twenty-two.⁸⁷ DeMorse's amendment to the suffrage, which did

⁸⁷Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 308 ff.

not make the payment of a poll tax a prerequisite for voting, was finally accepted by the convention by a vote of fifty-seven to nineteen.⁸⁸

⁸⁸Ibid., 315-316.

Some sharp differences of opinion were found on what should be the policy of the convention in regard to immigration. The constitution then in force in Texas had provided for an immigration bureau supported by the state, and had even permitted appropriations to pay the passage of immigrants to Texas. Most of the argument in the convention centered around the question of retrenchment. The majority report, signed by five members, said that "the people ought not to be taxed for any such purpose," and recommended that the legislature be prohibited from ever

appropriating money for immigration aid.⁸⁹ Waelder, of Bexar

⁸⁹Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 308 ff.

county, and Dr. C. Erhard, of Bastrop, sent in minority reports to the effect that the majority report was against the wishes of the people, and that the costs of maintaining a bureau would be trifling in comparison to the advantages which would be derived.⁹⁰

⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 288-290.

The final action of the convention followed the recommendation of the majority report, and forbade appropriations for immigration aid. DeMorse was joined by twenty-two Democrats and ten Republicans in support of aid to immigration.⁹¹ The debates

⁹¹Ibid., p. 403.

and vote on this article showed a touch of sectional alignment. Again we see DeMorse voting with the West.

Quite a stir was raised in the convention by an article published by the Austin Statesman, charging what it called a "holy alliance" between the Grangers and the Republicans. It charged that the Grangers had bargained with the Republicans to defeat a poll tax prerequisite for voting, in return for Republican aid to put through Granger policies and to elect E. B.

Pickett United States Senator.⁹² These charges were hotly

the action ⁹²Austin Statesman, October 9 and 10, 1875.

discussed and vigorously denied, and a committee appointed to investigate them. DeMorse argued that the whole foolish matter was out of place, and was unworthy of the consideration of the body. He believed that the delegates had been chosen with regard to their honesty and fitness, and not because they were or were not Grangers. He argued that the convention was not duty bound to examine newspaper gossip, and that to do so would give the affair undue publicity.⁹³ Extensive investigation points

⁹³State Gazette, October 10, 1875.

to the truth of DeMorse's statements. Apparently no compact with a serious purpose was entered into by members of the convention. The constitution, when finished, did not by any means meet the approval of the convention that formed it. On its final passage eleven members out of sixty-four present voted against its adoption.⁹⁴ Many of the members voting for it

⁹⁴Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 818.

recorded an expression of criticism of one or more of its parts. J. B. Murphy of Nueces vigorously attacked the action of the

convention in regard to salaries provided for judges of the supreme and district courts. DeMorse signed a protest against the action of the convention in passing an ordinance in the interest of railroad corporations and refusing to submit it to the people for approval, thereby assuming power not granted to them by the people, and "in derogation of the supremacy of the people."⁹⁵ Stockdale issued an attack because of the provisions election, when the adoption of the constitution was also to be

an issue. ⁹⁵Journal, Constitutional Convention, 1875, p. 751.

of the "Articles on Railroads and Private Corporations" were so strict and burdensome upon railroads that future railroad construction would be prevented.⁹⁶ Only one delegate expressed any

vote of 87. ⁹⁶Ibid. The Republican Convention meeting at

great enthusiasm for the document that had been prepared, and that was Judge Flournoy of Galveston, who declared it to be "the noblest instrument ever submitted to the verdict of a free people."⁹⁷ ion of the proposed constitution.

⁹⁷Austin Statesman, November 26, 1875.

Governor Coke was prompt to espouse it, stating, however, that it was not perfect but subject to many criticisms that might be hurled against it. He believed, however, that on Convention by a unanimous vote had endorsed the constitution the whole it was a great improvement over the existing constitu-

tion.⁹⁸ The majority of the state press, although finding much

⁹⁸Austin Statesman, November 30, 1875.

in it to criticize, recommended its adoption.

The Democratic State Convention met in January to nominate candidates for offices, to be voted on at the April election, when the adoption of the constitution was also to be an issue. Some of the proponents of the new constitution undertook to secure an endorsement of the document by the state Democratic convention. Colonel W. L. Crawford, of Marion county, declared that the party was responsible for the new constitution and should endorse it. The opposition was led by Judge Ballinger. The resolution to endorse was voted down by a vote of 674 to 176.⁹⁹ The Republican Convention meeting at

⁹⁹Austin Statesman, January 11, 1876.

Galveston, January 12 to 14, devoted one-half of its platform to opposition of the proposed constitution.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰Winkler, Platforms of Political Parties in Texas, 176-179.

Although the Democratic Convention by a large vote had refused to endorse the proposed constitution, and the Republican Convention by a unanimous vote had condemned it, there was one

force in Texas that was solidly and quietly behind it. This organization was the State Grange, whose membership was probably fifty thousand. The result was that the election returns showed 136,606 votes for the constitution and 56,762 against the constitution.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹House Journal, Fifteenth Legislature, 62.

Judge Reagan, who has been generally considered the most highly respected member of the convention, thought so little of his own success in the work of the constitution that he wrote in his rather lengthy Memoirs only a single paragraph concerning his work on the convention.¹⁰² In contrast we have

¹⁰²Wilson, John Henninger Reagan and the Texas Constitution of 1876 (manuscript), pp. 89-90.

seen that a great portion of the constitution, as adopted by the convention, was either directly or indirectly due to DeMorse. He had favored printing of the debates, higher salaries for legislative and executive officials, a court of criminal appeals to relieve the overworked higher courts, a more liberal policy toward public free education than was adopted, land subsidies to railroads as a means of developing the West, governmental aid for immigration, postponement of the election in order to avoid useless expenditure and subsequent conflicts, and a far-reaching scheme of revenue and taxation that would be fair and

just to all. He had opposed the poll tax as a prerequisite for voting because of the vast number that such a clause would disfranchise. Experience has caused the people of Texas to incorporate into the constitution most of the views of DeMorse that the convention rejected. Looking back over the years that have passed since the constitution was adopted, and reflecting upon the great and unforeseen changes that have occurred during this long period, one is impressed by the fact that it is little short of a miracle that the state could have worked so well under a constitution formed in an era so different from that in which we are now living. An inevitable conclusion is that the convention policies of DeMorse were wise and his influence far-reaching. Conviction of the wisdom of his policies has been strengthened with the passing of years.

In 1873, however, an economic and political crisis of state-wide importance brought the old order crumbling from retirement. The crisis sprang from the public land policy of the state. Since the Civil War, cattle and not cotton had been king in Texas. The long trail drive was making the last round before the advance of the windmill, the barbed wire fence, and the hen. The situation reached a point in 1873 when the legislative enactment of Governor Oran B. Roberts' land bill, which made it possible for individuals or corporations to collect, speculate in, and exploit unlimited quantities of appropriated state lands.² The act of July 14, 1873, known as the "Fifty

²For Roberts' recommendation concerning the public

CHAPTER VIII

DEMORSE AND THE PUBLIC LAND POLICY

Following the Constitutional Convention of 1875, DeMorse returned to his farm near Clarksville. The Standard, as we have seen, had suspended publication.¹ DeMorse was grow-

¹See page 67 of this study.

ing old. The restlessness and vicissitudes of public life no longer appealed to him, and he desired to retire to the quiet and peacefulness of the farm. Except for his membership on the Board of Regents of the Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College, DeMorse exhibited no active interest in public affairs.

In 1879, however, an economic and political crisis of state-wide importance brought the old editor thundering from retirement. The crisis sprang from the public land policy of the state. Since the Civil War, cattle and not cotton had been king in Texas. The long trail drive was making its last stand before the advance of the windmill, the barbed wire fence, and the hen. The situation reached a head in 1879 with the legislative enactment of Governor Oran M. Roberts' land bill, which made it possible for individuals or corporations to collect, speculate in, and exploit unlimited quantities of unappropriated state lands.² The act of July 14, 1879, known as the "Fifty

²For Roberts' recommendation concerning the public

lands, see Governor O. M. Roberts to the Special Session of the Sixteenth Legislature, June 10, 1879, in House Journal, Extra Session, 1879, p. 18.

Cent Law," placed the unappropriated public lands on the market at fifty cents an acre, without limit as to quantity.³ The land

³H. P. N. Gammel, Laws of Texas, IX, 80-81.

act of July 8, 1879, provided for the sale of school lands, in organized counties, in quantities of not less than 160 acres nor more than 640 acres of farming land, and not more than three sections of grazing land, to one person at one dollar an acre.⁴

⁴Ibid., 55-59.

The act of July 8, 1879, was amended by the act of April 6, 1881, by which alternate sections of school lands could be sold to individuals or corporations in quantities not to exceed one section at two dollars an acre if classified as watered, and a maximum of seven sections at one dollar an acre if classified as arable.⁵

⁵Ibid., 211-214.

DeMorse sensed that the land laws of 1879 would result in rampant land and railroad speculation, a destruction of the educational heritage of the children of the state, and would be a death blow to the "little" man's chance of settling the western

part of the state. Opposition to the law demanded a vehicle of expression, consequently, on November 16, 1879, DeMorse re-established the Standard.⁶

⁶See page 68 of this study.

Despite his illness which necessitated frequent trips to Hot Springs, Arkansas, during the following year, DeMorse began and carried on until his death in 1887, a vigorous attack upon the land policy initiated during the Roberts' administration. Pointing out that the Roberts' administration was looking only to the educational needs of the present, DeMorse warned that the land would be grabbed under the existing laws by foreign capitalists and settlement tragically retarded. He preferred the earlier policy of selling land at a higher valuation in small alternate sections, as it would in the "not very remote future" create an educational fund sufficiently adequate to render all taxation for school purposes useless. He argued that by repealing the land laws of 1879 Texas could have a fund with which to establish a school system unsurpassed in the world.⁷

⁷Standard, April 9, 1880.

DeMorse bitterly opposed the acquisition of large tracts by DeMorse consistently advocated that the sale and fencing of tracts should be limited to one section and that the right of the tillers of the soil be protected. He contended that he was the first man in the state to assert in print that

the tillers had the best right to the lands, and that the state should, consequently, sell the public lands in tracts not exceeding 640 acres to actual settlers only.⁸

⁸Standard, September 5, 1884.

DeMorse warned his readers of the ultimate effect of the Roberts' policy. He asserted that the school lands "are the base upon which our system of public free schools has, in the future, to depend largely for sustenance." The fathers of Texas intended, he declared, that the lands set aside should provide amply for the education of the children of the state. Later legislation had tended in the same direction, but with the advent of the Roberts' administration much of the value had been wasted by the sacrifice of the lands at an absurd price. He advised each voter to impress upon the members of the legislature that existing laws should be so modified as to make the land reservation serve to the utmost the purpose for which it was set aside.⁹

⁹Ibid., October 13, 1882.

DeMorse bitterly opposed the acquisition of large tracts by foreign syndicates. "Shall we as freemen permit legislators or others in high station to rob our children of their just and lawful heritage, in order to gratify the avarice or ambition of a few designing men? Shall the land of this State

belong to its citizens, or those who may become citizens, or is it to be owned in common with the Lords, Dukes, and mighty Sirs of Europe?" he asked his reading public. He declared that American democracy and landed aristocracy could hardly exist side by side on the same soil; that the American doctrine that the land of a state belongs to its citizens should and would prevail. DeMorse was confident that the principles enunciated in the Standard would continue to endure when their assailants had been forgotten.¹⁰

¹⁰Standard, July 25, 1884.

DeMorse admitted that corporations and syndicates might be of use in opening new sources of wealth, but he opposed any policy by which they might prevent the spread of population, or wield the necessary power to pile up great wealth for the few at the expense of the many. He maintained that the day when a race of land barons could own the bulk of the soil, and dole out a bare subsistence to the serfs who labored for them had gone forever; that corporations must not and could never be substituted for the rank and file of the hardy sons who had helped make Texas.¹¹

¹¹Ibid., August 17, 1883.

1823-1910, DeMorse expressed his position clearly in 1887 in an editorial occasioned by an article in the Fort Worth Gazette, a

well-known stockmen's and free grass organ. The Gazette, spoke of the way in which the Capital Syndicate, "the largest cattle concern in the world," conducted its business, and gave with relish the details of the stupendous size of the territory held by that corporation. It boasted that the ranch covered a territory of two hundred miles from north to south, and embraced a dozen counties. DeMorse's editorial comment on the article was vigorous and direct.

This is [he said] a grand statement for the financial acumen of the Capital Syndicate, but what about the statesmanship of the executive agents of Texas whose management made such a principality within the State possible; subjecting to the future evils of landlordism a domain 200 miles from north to south and embracing space for twelve counties? What about the stupidity which assented to so great a permanent evil for a slight temporary convenience? And yet we have known numerous editorial asses to praise the statesmanship and financial acumen of those who effected it. It is a matter of comfort to the writer of this to know that he has vigorously denounced and resisted such a policy with all the power he had.¹²

¹²Standard, May 5, 1887.

Despite tremendous land sales, the Roberts' administration could apply less than one million dollars upon the reduction of the public debt. This was less than one-fifth needed.¹³ DeMorse's criticism of the policy a

¹³Reuben McKittrick, The Public Land System of Texas, 1823-1910, p. 87.

"unwise," "unstatesmanlike," "a gross injustice," and "unconstitutional," seems to have been well grounded. Technically, at least, the framers of the constitution, probably never intended that the current expenses of government should be met by a sale of public lands.

Having from time to time denounced the land laws of 1879, DeMorse gave publicity to the defects as set forth by Land Commissioner W. C. Walsh in September, 1882. Walsh contended that one general law should not be applicable to the pasture lands of the West, the timbered lands of the East, and the arable lands of the South and interior. He made numerous other charges. The method of appraising, he said, was a failure. Although more than twenty-five thousand sections had been valued (September 1, 1882), and reports filed in the land office, less than one hundred had been priced above the minimum named in the law. The county surveyor was not prohibited from delaying the sales of lands in his county. The limitation of the amount that could be purchased was not effective. The time allowed between application to purchase and the first payment (ninety days) was too long. The rate of interest was too high. The capitalist could borrow at less than eight per cent and pay the principal in full, while the actual settler, usually a man of limited means, had to struggle under the burden of a high interest rate. The sale of the pine lands at a certain fixed price an acre without regard to the quality of timber was resulting in the sale of only the best at the fixed price, and a reduction of the price would have to be made on the remainder. And finally, there was no

provision made for securing to the school fund any share in the vast mineral resources of the state.¹⁴

¹⁴Standard, October 13, 1882.

The purpose of the law in limiting the sale of public lands to actual settlers was defeated. Millions of acres were bandied about and sales were negotiated in two hemispheres.¹⁵

¹⁵In this connection, see Land Commissioner W. C. Walsh, "Report to Governor Ireland," September 1, 1886, in the Standard, December 17, 1886; also, the Galveston Daily News, May 19, 1882.

Limitations on the amount of land that could be purchased were easily evaded, both legally and in spirit.¹⁶

¹⁶E. T. Miller, A Financial History of Texas, 331.

Governor John Ireland, who succeeded Governor Roberts, favored a change in land policy. Acting upon his recommendation, the Eighteenth Legislature on January 22, 1883, suspended all laws authorizing the sale of public lands,¹⁷ and on April 14,

¹⁷Gammel, Laws of Texas, IX, 308.

1883, passed an act providing for the creation of a Land Board.¹⁸

¹⁸The Land Board is better known as the Land Fraud Board or the Board for the Investigation of Land Frauds and will subsequently be referred to as such to avoid confusion with the State Land Board created by an act of April 12, 1883.

The act authorized the Land Fraud Board to investigate alleged land frauds and institute prosecutions in the name of the state. It was given power to annul purchases which violated the provisions of the land acts of 1879 and 1881; to authorize the confirmation and validation of other purchases made under these acts; and to investigate operations of the general land office and matters relating to the history of certain certificates.¹⁹

¹⁹Gammel, Laws of Texas, IX, 412-415.

Governor Ireland appointed DeMorse, Judge E. F. Hall of Laredo, and Colonel I. A. Patton of Johnson county as members of the Land Fraud Board.²⁰ The members met in Austin early in

²⁰Standard, June 8, 1883.

June. It was decided that a more efficient investigation could be made by sending the three active members separately to the counties where fraud was deemed likely. The board invited the citizens of the state to disclose fraudulent attempts to divest the state of lands in excess of the amount which each citizen was allowed to purchase at the low rate of fifty cents an acre,

or "of any other fraudulent courses by which the State has been divested of the temporary possession of lands, now much more valuable than when filed upon by irregular devices."²¹

²¹Standard, June 8, 1883.

It is unnecessary to trace the work of each member of the board. That of DeMorse was typical. He travelled over a large section of the state, from the Gulf to Red River, and from the eastern boundary to Laredo. On June 8, he wrote the Standard that members of the board were leaving Austin the next day for their work. He was to go first to Galveston and Laredo.²²

²²DeMorse to the Standard, June 8, 1883, in the Standard, June 15, 1883.

DeMorse took advantage of his official travels to inform his patrons through the columns of the Standard of the geography, history, and general conditions of each of the places he visited.²³ From Edna, Jackson county, he reported the country

²³See letters from DeMorse to the Standard, published in the Standard from June 18 to December 7, 1883.

as rapidly being enclosed in large pastures with barb wire, and that a number of fortunes had been made in that area by cattlemen and sheepherders.²⁴ From Old Brazoria he reported that the most

²⁴DeMorse to the Standard, June 23, 1883, in the Standard, July 6, 1883.

prosperous people of the area were stockmen who had hitherto had free grass.²⁵ At Liberty, he found the courthouse burned for

²⁵DeMorse to the Standard, July 11, 1883, in the Standard, July 20, 1883.

the second time and the records destroyed.²⁶ DeMorse stated

²⁶It was alleged that the fire was the work of Ham, McCullough and Company who had forged land titles and burned the courthouse to destroy the records. The guilty parties were sent to the penitentiary. DeMorse to the Standard, July 7, 1883, in the Standard, July 27, 1883.

that sixteen thousand acres of county school lands on the eastern border of Montgomery county had been "recently" sold to a stockman for seventy-five cents an acre.²⁷ By the end of August, he

²⁷DeMorse to the Standard, August 27, 1883, in the Standard, September 7, 1883. See Land Acts of July 8, 1879, and April 6, 1881, above to determine the extent of the illegality of this purchase.

wrote that he alone "had unearthed already more than enough irregularities to cover the entire cost of the Land Fraud Board to the State."²⁸

²⁸Standard, August 30, 1883. The correctness of this statement, of course, depended upon the extent to which the courts upheld his claim of irregularities.

The Land Fraud Board reported to Governor Ireland, on January 3, 1884. The majority report, signed by all three members, pointed out that time allowed for the investigation was inadequate to the work to be done and the appropriation entirely insufficient had the board as a body sat continuously in Austin. Believing that the work could be more efficiently and less expensively accomplished, the three active members had separately visited the places where fraud was either known or suspected to exist. Power was given to the board to compel attendance, but no power was given it to compel witnesses to testify, or to punish them for contempt. Several persons had been found who refused to testify. Because of lack of time some counties had not been visited where investigations were needed. The examination of the general land office, as authorized by the act creating the board, had been wholly omitted.

The board referred to the attorney general claims to 750,000 acres of land procured by individuals in various parts of the state in violation of the land acts of 1879 and 1881. These claims, the members of the board believed, were recoverable if "due diligence" were used. The report stated that most of the violators pleaded as justification the advice of prominent state officials. The board, therefore, recommended that the legislature authorize the return of the money paid by such

purchasers who should relinquish their holdings voluntarily. The board further reported that much of the land illegally acquired had been purchased by the agents of non-resident speculators and by foreign corporations. It expressed fear that such ownership might create serious internal problems at some future time.

Although a majority of the county surveyors had been found serving as faithful officials of the state, some had permitted evasions or violations of the laws, while others had acted as purchasing agents, and thus received compensation from the state as surveyors and from the purchasers as agents.

Probably the most notorious of the cases investigated was that in connection with the filing of the "John Gibson certificates." Of 555 certificates issued to John Gibson, twenty-six had not been returned to the general land office and were thus barred by lapse of time; only twenty-eight appeared to be regular, while 501 were not regular nor in strict compliance with the requirements of law. The board was not required to investigate the original validity of these certificates.

The case of illegal disposal of lands in Haskell county the board reported as a typical instance of fraud. On November 24, 1881, the commissioner of the general land office addressed a communication to George N. Heifrin, surveyor of Young Land District, who at the time was in Austin, notifying him that his appraisement of the school lands of eleven counties in Young Land District could not be approved until certain errors should be corrected on the records of the surveyor's office of that

district. Two days later, while Heifrin was still in Austin, the commissioner addressed a second communication to him to the effect that his appraisal in the eleven counties above referred to had been "received, examined, and found in conformity to law." On that same day, in advance of any opportunity allowed the general public and before any corrections could have been made on the books of the Young Land District, ten persons were allowed to file at Austin applications for twenty-eight sections of school lands. These applications were recorded by Heifrin upon his return to Young county. The board directed the attorney general to bring suits for the recovery of all lands thus filed upon.²⁹

²⁹ Report of the Board for the Investigation of Land Frauds in the State of Texas, under the Acts of 1879 and 1881, January 3, 1884.

In his supplemental minority report, DeMorse maintained that the "Fifty Cent Act" of July 14, 1879, was unconstitutional because its provisions were in utter disregard of the constitutional interdiction of sales of land at the general land office in larger quantities than 160 acres, and in such quantities only to actual settlers. He held that the constitution was plain on that point.³⁰

³⁰ Article XIV, Section 14, Constitution of Texas, 1876; "No certificate for land shall be sold at the Land Office, except to actual settlers upon the same, and in lots, not to exceed one

hundred and sixty acres."

DeMorse pointed out that previous to the drafting of the constitution in 1875, script in unlimited quantities had been sold at the land office to any purchaser and for any purpose, and that the convention which framed the constitution intended to stop this free sale and the purchase of land in large bodies. It had not been customary for the state to sell its lands elsewhere than at the state land office; and as no provision was constitutionally made for selling the lands belonging to the state elsewhere than at the land office, the "Fifty Cent Act" was therefore in clear violation of the constitution.³¹ He

³¹It should be recalled that DeMorse was in position to know the intent of the framers of the Constitution of 1876, since he was one of the leading members of the convention. See pages 241-286 of this study.

declared that the framers of the constitution never intended that the people "become tenants at will of foreign princes or nobility, and divested of that independence of character which has made the name of Texas representative of that indomitable courage which does not grow up at the firesides of a pauper peasantry, controlled by a rich landed proprietary."³²

³²Report of the Board for the Investigation of Land Frauds in the State of Texas, under the Acts of 1879 and 1881, January 3, 1884.

From time to time during its investigation, the Land Fraud Board directed the attorney general to institute suits to cancel or annul claims of title to lands aggregating 750,000 acres which it believed questionable. The attorney general reported that the board had not furnished sufficient information in many instances, due largely to the amount of work the board had undertaken within the limited time allowed it by the law.³³

³³Attorney General John D. Templeton, Report, 1884, p. 9.

It is very difficult to determine the exact amount of land the state recovered by court action as a result of the recommendation of the members of the Land Fraud Board, since the records show this land along with all other lands recovered in one amount.³⁴

³⁴Bascom Giles, the present commissioner of the general land office, after a careful check, set the amount at 163,200 acres. Giles to Wallace, April 14, 1941.

The amount recovered for the state was sufficient, no doubt, to justify the work of the board.

Although Governor Ireland and his administration attempted to remedy the land problem by the passage of a new land law in the spring of 1883, it was too late to prevent the land policy of the Roberts' administration from resulting in a fence-cutting war of serious proportions in the summer and autumn of 1883. The cattle industry of Texas had grown up on the unfenced years. But by the early eighties the ranges were becoming

open ranges. It was generally assumed that those who exposed themselves to the danger and hardships of the frontier were entitled to the free use of the grass on the public lands, a use that was continued until the land act of 1883. By purchasing a tract of the public lands for headquarters the ranchers would gain access to an unlimited amount of free grass. Many men who owned from five hundred to several thousand head of cattle produced them on the free grass of the state, owning or leasing scarcely enough land on which to round up their herds.³⁵ Many

³⁵A. W. Terrell, Speech Before the Senate, January 21, 1884, p. 9.

grew wealthy from cattle produced on open ranges. J. L. Driskill, of Austin, who, in 1873, owned but eight hundred head of cattle and no land, estimated his wealth in 1884 at eight hundred thousand dollars, all produced on the free grass of the state for the use of which he paid no taxes. Driskill was only one of the many who made such remarkable fortunes on the free grass of the range.³⁶

³⁶Terrell, Speech Before the Senate, January 21, 1884, p. 9.

The "range rights" of many "free-grass men" were very large, embracing many square miles. These "range rights" were bought and sold and were carefully respected for a number of years. But by the early eighties the ranges were becoming

crowded and consequently "range rights" were less respected. Obviously, this crowding process was a factor in bringing about the fence-cutting war.

Another important factor leading to the fence-cutting war, naturally, was the advent of barbed wire. It brought about the disappearance of the open, free range, and led to a violent conflict between "fence men" and "no-fence men," which reached its height in 1883. By the latter year, the sale of wire in Texas amounted almost to a million dollars annually, and the fencing of ranges was becoming an accomplished fact.³⁷ These

³⁷Daniel McArthur, The Cattle Industry of Texas (manuscript), 286-287.

fences extended for twenty-five, fifty, and even a hundred or more miles in length, enclosing whatever might be within the area. The streams and permanent water holes, always an important item in Texas, were closed without regard to ownership.³⁸

³⁸Austin Statesman, March 2, 1884.

At the end of the year 1883, it was estimated that there were eight to ten million acres of school lands fenced by corporations.³⁹ Many open-range men fought to maintain their "rights."

³⁹"Agent John D. Stephens' Report on the School Lands," in the Report of the Land Board to the Nineteenth Legislature,

January 1, 1885, p. 12. Library.

Free grass they demanded and determined to have, if they had to fight for it. were cowboys who failed to find pasture as a result of Contemporaneous with the fencing movement, and often an important factor in it, was the constant pressure of the settler or "nester," as he was contemptuously called by the stockmen. Pushing relentlessly into the range country, selecting most fertile lands along the watered streams, despised by the retiring cattle barons, the "nester" was an important factor in provoking the fence-cutting war of the early eighties. If the "nester" could not be driven out, he was fenced in, shut off from water, and otherwise intimidated. If the small stockman or farmer fenced in his small holdings, he often found his fences cut and his crop destroyed by the cattle of his neighbor rancher.

The ranchmen were not the only ones at fault. Settlers often took unfair advantage of the big pasture men in the absence of adequate laws defining the rights of the bona fide settler and lessee. Cases are on record showing that a settler would purchase a section of public land enclosed within a big pasture and, without erecting fences or improving property in any way, turn loose within the pasture as many as three thousand head of cattle.⁴⁰

⁴⁰See Reports of State Land Agents to the State Land

Board, 1885, Texas State Library.

Two other groups who expressed their discontent by fence-cutting were cowboys who failed to find employment as a result of the increasing construction of fences, and the rustler who found his work more difficult because of the erection of these barriers.

In a letter to the Standard from Gainesville, September 19, 1883, DeMorse noted that the fence-cutting question was dividing the people of the northwestern counties into parties, in which numbers would be very unequal. He pointed out that the small farmers, or "nesters," were certain to side with the poor classes. They considered themselves outraged by being shut off from the world, hampered, and beleaguered by the capitalist, who with his usual arrogance of wealth was forcing the issue. DeMorse placed the blame on the unsound policy of the Roberts' administration, "a policy so stupid that no man having the least conception of statesmanship should ever have favored it for a moment." The situation was so serious, he believed, that it would take the highest efforts of real statesmanship to relieve the calamity.⁴¹ DeMorse repeatedly warned his readers that

Reports from Waco, Corsicana, Austin, Denton, San Antonio,

⁴¹DeMorse to the Standard, September 19, 1883, in the Standard, September 28, 1883.

serious consequences amounting perhaps to revolution would result unless the policy of the state in regard to its public lands was

changed. Having opposed the accumulation of large tracts of land by corporations and by individuals, especially foreign, the fiery editor now insisted that fence-cutting was but the advance guard of popular resentment against landed corporations. He maintained that the lands of the state should belong to its citizens, and that agrarian democracy and landed aristocracy "cannot dwell together on the same soil."⁴²

⁴²Standard, July 25, 1884.

There were probably many justifiable cases of fence-cutting in its early stages, but by the summer and fall of 1883 it amounted to a moral disease. No type of property escaped the ravages of the mobs. Property of the rich and poor, strong and weak, men, widows, and orphans was all attacked alike. Fences enclosing large pastures, small pastures, farms, residence enclosures, and garden plots shared the same fate. Even cemeteries could not produce enough ghosts to frighten the "nippers" away.⁴³

⁴³Austin Statesman, December 5, 1883.

Reports from Waco, Corsicana, Austin, Denton, San Antonio, Clarksville, and from other portions of the state, showed that they were not free from the war on the fences. By far the greatest damage was in the western parts of the state. In spite of the watchfulness of the owners against the cutters, miles of fence went down every night. Actual proof was difficult to

procure, and if obtained it was well-nigh impossible to punish the guilty because of public opinion.⁴⁴ In many counties, local

⁴⁴Report of the adjutant-general to Governor Ireland, December 8, 1883.

authorities were accused of assisting the fence-cutters in their work. In other counties grand juries would not indict them nor would petit juries convict them.⁴⁵

⁴⁵Austin Statesman, January 16, 1884.

DeMorse probably expressed the sentiment of the majority when he said editorially that "We imagine that in most of the cases, a wrong has been committed by enclosing land not belonging to the fencer, or enclosing water to which the public should have access."⁴⁶

⁴⁶Standard, May 23, 1884. DeMorse was in position to speak intelligently on the subject since the above was written after his work as a member of the Land Fraud Board.

The Standard was not alone in expressing sympathy for the fence-cutters and in condemning the laws that permitted such conditions to arise. The Austin Statesman declared that fence cutting was an evil outgrowth of evil conditions, and that the legislature should strike at the root of the evil as well as the branches and remove the cause.⁴⁷ The Galveston News insisted

⁴⁷Austin Statesman, January 5, 1884.

that "The wire fence-cutting troubles are only one of the many evils growing out of the fallacious and dangerous policy of the state in selling off its domain in such large tracts, creating principalities, pashalics and baronates among a few capitalists and arousing a spirit of agrarianism among the poorer classes."⁴⁸

⁴⁸Galveston News, November 20, 1884.

Adjutant-general W. H. King, at the request of Governor Ireland, made a personal visit to some of the northern and western counties. He held a number of public meetings in Coleman county, where there was danger of armed conflict. He found that public sentiment in that country favored the cutters and that there was a deep seated hostility among the "nesters" for big pastures and barbed wire fences.⁴⁹

⁴⁹Report of the adjutant-general to Governor Ireland, December 8, 1883.

The situation in Coleman county was representative of that of other counties of the state. People everywhere were opposed to big pastures and wire fences. Citizens of Wilbarger county protested to Governor Ireland the appropriation of land by speculators and big-pasture men. The protest read:

Texas legislature We the undersigned, bona-fide citizens of Wilbarger County representing as we do the interests of our county, would respectfully submit for your consideration this our protest against the sale of school lands of this county to a few persons who are attempting to purchase lands for no other purpose than for large pastures and for speculation, and we do hereby allege and charge the truth to be that the lands of this county are as a body agricultural lands, and that the classification as made by the different speculators and land grabbers in regard to the lands of this county is false and untrue, and that a better agricultural county than Wilbarger County cannot be found in North-west Texas.⁵⁰

⁵⁰Austin Statesman, January 6, 1884.

Of the 171 organized counties in the state more than half were directly affected by the disturbances before the end of 1883. So serious did the matter become that Governor Ireland, on October 15, 1883, called a special session of the legislature to meet, January 8, 1884, to consider and to provide a remedy for the wanton destruction of the fences, to provide a more efficient system of highways, and to amend the land law by providing a penalty for enclosing public lands.⁵¹

⁵¹"Proclamation of Governor Ireland," October 15, 1883, in Senate Journal, Special Session of the Eighteenth Legislature, 1884, p. 3.

The importance of the work before the legislature was well expressed by the Fort Worth Gazette which observed that the legislature of twenty states had met at the same time as the

Texas legislature, but "none of them had more important work than that of the Texas solons to perform."⁵² So great had be-

⁵²Quoted from the Fort Worth Gazette (date not given) by the Standard, January 11, 1884.

come the interest in the situation in Texas that every leading newspaper in the United States had a representative in Austin to watch the progress of the legislature.⁵³

⁵³San Antonio Express, January 9, 1884.

DeMorse editorially endeavored to impress upon the legislators the seriousness of the situation, and suggested to them a remedy for the crisis. He thought that the true solution was to allow the voters of the counties to determine the extent of the enclosures. A system of road laws should be passed and surveyed in each county, no matter how thinly populated. Having suggested a solution for the crisis, DeMorse expressed further his own political philosophy by calling upon the legislature to remember that "The people who do the labor, and are therefore the basis of all prosperity, and who do the fighting when the State is endangered, are the constituency for whom it is the duty of the legislators to legislate. Distinctions favoring capital and other special privileges are out of date in Texas. Texas did not rise on that sort of base and will not rest on it."⁵⁴

⁵⁴Terrell, Speeches in the Senate, January 21, 1884.

⁵⁴Standard, January 18, 1884.

In his message to the legislature, January 8, 1884, Governor Ireland declared, in defense of his position in the fence-cutting crisis, that there was not, and had not been, necessary means placed at his disposition to meet extraordinary emergencies. He could not employ detectives, for he neither possessed the lawful authority to call up nor the money to maintain such a force. He could not call into active service a single man, except in case of rebellion, insurrection, or invasion. If he should declare fence-cutters outlaws, the country would still be in ignorance as to who were the actual wrong-doers. Rewards had been offered in all cases, bearing some proportion to the punishment affixed by law to the offense, Ireland declared.⁵⁵

⁵⁵Governor Ireland to the Special Session of the Eighteenth Legislature, January 8, 1884, in Sinclair Moreland (editor), Texas Governors' Messages, 490.

Numerous bills concerning free grass, fencing, and fence-cutting were introduced into both houses of the legislature. Members were so hopelessly divided that it seemed for some time that nothing would be accomplished. Some members were either owners of big ranches,⁵⁶ or were too much influenced by powerful

⁵⁶Terrell, Speech Before the Senate, January 21, 1884,

p. 18. abilities to attend properly to the business of the board.⁵⁷

lobbies of land and cattle companies to pass measures opposing the interests of the stockmen.⁵⁷ What suited some districts did

⁵⁷Austin Statesman, February 8, 1884.

not please others.

After a month of uncertainty, the legislature passed a law dealing directly with the problem of fence-cutting. Wanton fence-cutting, along with grass-firing, was made a felony punishable by imprisonment from one to five years. The law prohibited the erection of fences without leaving gates every three miles linear measure. It was made unlawful to fence in the land of another without the consent of the proper authorities. A sum of fifty thousand dollars was made available for enforcing the law.⁵⁸

⁵⁸Gammel, Laws of Texas, IX, 566-604.

Commenting on the work of the legislature, DeMorse said that the body had performed most of the work referred to it, but how well, experience alone would reveal. He believed that most members had made an earnest attempt to succeed, and that the legislature had accomplished much good. He lamented the fact that the State Land Board had not been abolished and its duties placed in the hands of the commissioner of the general land office. The members of the State Land Board had too many

responsibilities to attend properly to the duties devolving upon the board.⁵⁹

⁵⁹Standard, February 8, 1884.

There was one act which DeMorse openly denounced, the act validating purchases of land by clerks in the land office. He condemned it as an act "so gross in its violation of every principle of republican government, as to require from all leaders of public sentiment, or those who assume to be such, distinct reprobation." In passing the act the legislators admitted that the purchases were illegally made. The Land Fraud Board, of which DeMorse had been a member, had condemned the purchases and directed the attorney general to bring suit for recovery of the land. The Supreme Court had decided that the purchases had been illegally made. In condemning the legislature for its action in this regard, DeMorse again revealed the keynote of his political philosophy during the eighties, when he declared in part that:

Our State constitution does not recognize exceptional classes and where the legislature got its authority to recognize, or rather to create a privileged class, we would like to have some profound constitutional lawyer inform us. The Governor, we think, did not include the validating of unlawful land purchase by the clerks of the land office as one of the subjects to be acted upon at the special session.⁶⁰

⁶⁰Standard, February 15, 1884.

As a result of the action taken by the special session of the Eighteenth Legislature fence-cutting rapidly diminished. Governor Ireland in his message to the Nineteenth Legislature, January 13, 1885, reported that "fence-cutting now occurs not more frequently than other crimes."⁶¹ The practice,

⁶¹Governor Ireland to the Nineteenth Legislature, January 13, 1885, in Moreland, Texas Governors' Messages, 508.

however, had not ceased entirely by the latter part of 1886.⁶²

⁶²Dallas News, November 8, 1886.

Altogether the damage done to the state from fence-cutting in the two-year period, when it was at its height, was very great. It was estimated that the destruction of fences involved a loss of more than twenty million dollars, and that the taxable values of the state had decreased more than thirty million dollars.⁶³

⁶³R. D. Holt, "Introduction of Barbed Wire into Texas and the Fence-Cutting War," in the West Texas Historical Association Yearbook, VI, 1930, p. 77.

Governor Ireland's administration succeeded in checking the fence-cutting war; it failed to find a satisfactory solution for the sale and lease of the public lands. The struggle continued, but with press and legislative halls substituted for pliers and fences. In his inaugural address and in his first

message to the Eighteenth Legislature, Ireland advocated the conservation of the public lands. Acting upon his recommendation, the legislature set to work to write a more satisfactory land law. Numerous land bills were introduced into both houses. Some of the members desired a sales policy entirely; others favored a lease only for pasture lands. The advocates of a sales policy claimed that a magnificent available school fund could be built up from the interest on the purchase money and taxes on the land.

While the legislature debated and pondered the future land policy, DeMorse did not allow his pen to remain idle. He proposed a solution. He objected to the sale of school lands, except in small lots to actual settlers, regardless of the price the lands would command. DeMorse did not think the interest accruing to the available school fund from the land sales would be adequate to build up an institution such as the fathers of Texas intended that the state should have. He urged the legislature to provide for a wise and judicious system of leasing the school lands, as such a policy would bring into the school fund a large annual revenue, sufficient for "present uses."⁶⁴

⁶⁴Standard, February 9, 1883.

DeMorse said that the sale of the remaining thirty-three million acres of state school lands, even at two dollars an acre, would not create a sufficient fund for the future education of the youth of the state; that to sell the lands at such a low price

would betray those who had placed the property in trust for educational purposes.⁶⁵

⁶⁵Standard, July 27, 1883.

DeMorse insisted that the cattlemen must make way for settlement. He favored short-term leasing to "Grass Barons" regions unlikely to be settled for some time. Big cattlemen should be required to pay for the occupancy of the land, as the farmer was compelled to do. "Why should the Cattle Barons and foreign corporations be given special privileges?" he asked.⁶⁶

⁶⁶Ibid., June 6, 1884.

Though herding was one of the earliest known occupations, the world had not been created for cattlemen alone. The cultivators of the soil enjoyed recognized rights as well as the herders.⁶⁷

⁶⁷Ibid., October 10, 1884.

The law makers, after three months' effort, passed the land act of April 12, 1883. That act established a new system for the classification, sale, and lease of the public lands, and did away with the necessity of consulting separate laws. The changes made by the law affected the price of the land, the amount purchasable, and the lease of the grazing lands. The law fixed the minimum price of watered agricultural and grazing

⁷⁰For the complete details of the law, see Council.

lands at three dollars an acre, unwatered lands at two dollars, timbered lands suitable for lumber at five dollars, and ordinary timbered lands at two dollars. The maximum acreage of agricultural land that could be bought by an individual was 640 acres; the maximum for unwatered land was seven sections. Agricultural lands could be sold only to actual settlers. Lands of every character, watered, dry, and timbered, might be leased at a minimum of four cents an acre, and no lease was to exceed ten years. All lands leased were subject to purchase for actual settlement.⁶⁸ The stockmen were not pleased with this phase of

⁶⁸Gammel, Laws of Texas, IX, 391-395.

the law. They desired a maximum rental of two cents and a minimum period of twenty years.⁶⁹

⁶⁹Miller, Financial History of Texas, 334.

The law created a State Land Board composed of the governor, the attorney general, the comptroller, the treasurer, and the commissioner of the general land office. The board was given charge of the administration of the public lands. The law left much to its discretion--the classification of the public lands and the determination of a selling and a lease price, with-in certain specified limits. Yet, the board was left without the means of enforcing any measure it might adopt.⁷⁰

⁷⁰For the complete details of the law, see Gammel,

Laws of Texas, IX, 391-395.

An examination of the various acts of the State Land Board reveals that it assumed much freedom in the exercise of the powers granted to it by the law of 1883. Its first definite policy was announced in October. It placed all lands on the market, except watered, unless such areas were occupied by actual settlers prior to January 1, 1883. Under the resolution 1,193,606 acres of dry lands were sold, and 332,205 acres of watered lands were awarded to settlers occupying them before January 1, 1883.⁷¹ Some of these lands were immediately resold

⁷¹C. R. Johns and S. G. Sneed (editors), "Variations in Policies on School Lands," in Texas Review, I, 204-205.

at from two to three times the price the state received. Commissioner Walsh in his Report, September 1, 1886, stated that had the limit specified by the law been retained, the state would not at the time the report was made have had "one acre, except refuse land, to offer homesteaders."⁷² To avoid such a

⁷²Land Commissioner Walsh, Report, September 1, 1886.

situation the board by resolution in February, 1884, removed all watered lands from the market. Lands were to be sold to actual settlers only, in quantities not to exceed one section of agricultural land or two sections of dry land.⁷³ The State Land

⁷³Johns and Sneed, "Variations in Policies on School Lands," in Texas Review, I, 206.

Board again, September, 1884, reduced the acreage that could be purchased to one section of dry land and that could be sold only to the head of a family for homestead purposes. This resolution remained in force until February 4, 1885, when all lands were temporarily withdrawn from the market.⁷⁴

⁷⁴Ibid.

The State Land Board, from the time it put the lands on the market, October 23, 1883, until the meeting of the Nineteenth Legislature, January 13, 1885, sold the following lands:

Free School Lands	1,965,201 acres.
University Lands	14,400
Deaf and Dumb Asylum	58,800
Blind Asylum	22,908
Lunatic Asylum	18,653
Orphan Asylum	50,033
Total	2,129,995 acres.

Up to the same date it had leased:

Free School Lands	1,759,327 acres.
University Lands	42,080
Deaf and Dumb Asylum	640
Blind Asylum	760
Total	1,802,807 acres. ⁷⁵

⁷⁵Governor Ireland to the Nineteenth Legislature, January 13, 1885, in Moreland, Texas Governors' Messages, 501.

The first leasing of the state public lands under the law of 1883, occurred in January, 1884. It soon became apparent that competitive leasing, as contemplated by the law, was a farce. The best lands belonging to the school fund were being leased at the minimum price of four cents, and for the maximum period of ten years. In February, 1884, the board increased the minimum lease price to eight cents an acre, since some of the lands leased from the state were being sub-leased at the latter figure. The action of the board in increasing the lease price of lands aroused the hostility of many cattlemen who demanded the continuation of the policy of leasing the lands at the minimum price of four cents. In one instance the attorneys of syndicates applied for the lease of 3,200,000 acres at four cents an acre. The application was unanimously refused by the State Land Board. Then began a systematic fight of corporations, cattle companies, and their advocates and attorneys upon the whole leasing system.⁷⁶

⁷⁶Land Commissioner Walsh, Report, September 1, 1886.

A group of cattlemen of Nolan, Fisher, and nearby counties, meeting at Sweetwater, adopted resolutions charging the legislature with unfairness to this section while favoring East Texas. They demanded a division of the state. DeMorse condemned the resolutions of the cattlemen at length. He declared that if anyone supposed that this state was to be delivered, hand and foot, to a small clique of cattle kings, or placed

at the mercy of foreign syndicates, he would be doomed to disappointment and might as well turn his attention to New Mexico or Old Mexico without delay. He would have them know that in the future in Texas legislation would be in the interest of the many rather than of the few; in the interest of education of all the children who were to become the future citizens of the state, rather than to the rearing of a small class of idle millionaires. He predicted that agriculture would extend to the western counties; that this vast country would not be condemned to sterility and a sparse population. Its initial occupancy by herds was in accord with the natural order of things, but the herds would in time move westward as they had from the border of Red River. He refuted the contention that the legislature had mistreated the cattlemen. He favored the limitation of all private enclosures to a maximum of 640 acres. He advised the cattlemen that they need not "fume nor fret, threaten nor boast, that they would neither control legislation in the future nor divide the State." DeMorse declared that the East alone could not oppress the other portions of the state, since its strength was to be found only in alliance with North Texas. North Texas had been more often on the side of the West than the East, but in this instance it would stand by the East. "Fort Worth will not be the capital. ... The Democratic Party, the party of the common people, will continue to do the legislating in Texas. It will enact no special legislation for the cattle kings."⁷⁷

it as it was applied by the State Land Board. He felt that it favored the cattlemen. He desired that no lease should exceed

five years, and that at expiration at least one year should
 elapse in ⁷⁷Standard, March 7, 1884.

A deluge of propaganda was spread to the effect that the lease law was keeping out an army of settlers. It was publicized that the West was no farming country, and that "no poor man could get a home in Texas." DeMorse insisted that such assertions were the work of free grass men to prevent the settlement of the new counties. He called attention to the records of the land office which indicated that settlement of the new counties was on the increase.⁷⁸ DeMorse gave publicity to the

by ⁷⁸Ibid., August 15, 1884.

fact that the settler had nothing to fear in encountering a foreign syndicate as his rights were now clearly defined by law, and the power of the state was ready to see that he obtained justice. He called the attention of prospective settlers to the legal provision that persons leasing land were required to give up the lease on any tract purchased by settlers.⁷⁹

endorsed ⁷⁹Ibid., August 8, 1884.

Although DeMorse had advocated the lease system before its adoption by the legislature, he did not entirely agree with it as it was applied by the State Land Board. He felt that it favored the cattlemen. He desired that no lease should exceed

five years, and that at expiration at least one year should elapse in order to give actual settlers opportunity to purchase land in small tracts. He advocated leasing the lands at a minimum price of ten cents an acre rather than at the lower figures set by the board.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, since the lease law

⁸⁰Standard, July 11, and September 12, 1884.

as administered by the board was facilitating settlement of the western counties, he supported it editorially, arguing that it was a "grand improvement on the unrestricted grab-all system of the cattle barons and land syndicates that held the public lands by barbed fences, line riders, and six-shooters a year ago."⁸¹

⁸¹Ibid., October 3, 1884.

along the Governor Ireland, in his message to the Nineteenth Legislature, called attention to the imperfections of the land law of 1883, noting especially the difficulties experienced by the State Land Board in its administration. He proposed that most of the agricultural lands be left open to settlers, but endorsed the leasing of non-agricultural lands in order that state institutions to which they were appropriated might derive immediate benefit.⁸² The Texas Stockmen's Association, meeting

⁸²Governor Ireland to the Nineteenth Legislature, January 13, 1885, in Moreland, Texas Governors' Messages, 502.

in Austin while the legislature was in session, recommended the abolition of the State Land Board and that lands be leased at four cents. The Association claimed that such action on the part of the legislature would bring in a million dollars in the treasury within six months.⁸³

⁸³Standard, January 28, 1885.

The land bill, as finally passed by the Nineteenth Legislature, was not in harmony with Governor Ireland's views on selling and leasing of public lands. Ireland decided that the law of 1883, though faulty, was preferable to the new bill. In his veto proclamation, he pointed out the evils that would result from its operation. The bill proposed to allow any person or corporation to lease any amount of land desired at the low rate of five cents an acre; capitalists would be able to buy the land along the streams and consequently gain control of the hinterlands which were valueless unless water was accessible; and the bill did not provide adequately for the interests of the schools.⁸⁴

⁸⁴"Governor Ireland's Administration; Veto of the Land Bill of 1885," in Texas Review, I, 395-400.

DeMorse's editorial comment concerning the veto message was that "governor Ireland's message is so thoroughly conclusive in its exposition of the enormities and weaknesses of that composition of mutual concessions, without consistency, judgment, or

value as a financial or political disposition of the lands, that it needs no editorial endorsement. A structure with more rotten timbers than that land bill has never been built by a legislature of Texas or even an Arkansas or an Illinois legislature."⁸⁵

⁸⁵Standard, April 24, 1885.

In the summer of 1885, the State Land Board employed several agents to ascertain the amount of school lands illegally enclosed, name offenders, and secure witnesses. Weekly reports of these agents showed abuses greater and violators more defiant than ever before. DeMorse had urged the legislature to give attention to this matter. He informed the public that if the legislature neglected to take action it "wantonly sacrifices great interests."⁸⁶

⁸⁶Ibid., March 6, 1885.

Armed with these reports the State Land Board informed the governor that the land laws "have been and are now being openly violated," and that one hundred thousand square miles was held by about five thousand persons; that a large majority of the owners were non-residents of the state. Timber from these lands was being cut and sold in an open and defiant manner, and actual settlement was being retarded.⁸⁷

important ⁸⁷Commissioner Walsh, Report, September 1, 1886.

When the report became public, DeMorse again determined to arouse the public attention. He pointed out that the report showed that the state was being defrauded of probably a million dollars annually by "free grassers." Many of them, he declared, were non-residents, acting through agents, and this money of which the state was defrauded had to be made up by taxation of "honest people," who were taxed for the support of the schools. He pleaded for a prompt remedy which would "arrest the robbery and bring in the arrearages of rent."⁸⁸

⁸⁸Standard, December 4, 1885.

DeMorse urged the governor, whose duty it was to protect state property, to order the Rangers to drive all intruders off the public lands without delay. "Is it the public property subject to plunder and destruction until a legislature takes cognizance of the despoilment?" he asked.⁸⁹

⁸⁹Ibid., November 20 and 27, 1885. DeMorse had recommended for some time previous to the report of the commissioners that Ireland take such action.

With the failure of the State Land Board to develop a satisfactory policy in regard to the sale and lease of the public lands, it was evident as time approached for naming Governor

Ireland's successor in 1886 that the land problem was to be an important issue in the election. A great many, familiar with the policies advocated by DeMorse, urged that he enter the race for governor. DeMorse, more a scholar than politician, believed that the office should seek the man. In answering an editorial query in the Fort Worth Gazette in June, he stated that he would accept the office only as a representative of the "real people," without the support of the corporations. He did not expect nor wish the support of newspapers representing the interests of capitalists.⁹⁰ Less than a month later, DeMorse consented to

⁹⁰Standard, June 11, 1886.

enter the race on condition that he would not be expected to make any effort in behalf of his own candidacy.⁹¹

⁹¹Sam Stanley (Clarksville) to Ernest Wallace, September 11, 1934.

A small number of newspapers intimated that DeMorse was not well known in Texas. In answer to an editorial statement in the Austin Statesman referring to DeMorse as "somebody they call DeMorse," the San Angelo Enterprise replied that "Not to know DeMorse is to confess yourself unknown, and such flings at the journalist and statesman would be in bad taste for any Texan, but from a man knowing anything about Texas they could not come. The man who penned the remark could scarcely have been in Texas

long enough to have his shirt washed, allowing that he has any."⁹²
 of Texas, 11, 286.

⁹²San Angelo Enterprise (undated), quoted in the Standard, July 23, 1886.

actions.⁹⁵ As the campaign progressed DeMorse, on several occasions, took the opportunity to address the citizenship of Northeast Texas. His platform was most completely given in an address at Linden, Cass county, before an estimated audience of some three thousand citizens. In the address, as in his newspaper, DeMorse advocated in no uncertain terms the expulsion of all intruders from the public lands, the adoption of a policy which would assure the schools a greater income from the sale and lease of the public lands, the prohibition of alien ownership of land, and the sale of not more than 640 acres of the public lands to any person.⁹³

laws on an ⁹³DeMorse in an address at Linden, July 29, 1886, published in the Standard, July 20, 1886. DeMorse also favored strict regulation of railroads and other corporations, reduction of the tariff, and a tax on all annual incomes in excess of two thousand dollars.

titles not to exceed four sections. Public lands were sold to At the Democratic State Convention at Galveston, August 11, 1886, General L. S. Ross, on the first ballot, received a large majority of the votes for governor over all opponents. He was then nominated by acclamation.⁹⁴

⁹⁴O. M. Roberts, "Political, Legislative, and Judicial

History of Texas, 1845-1895," in Wooten, A Comprehensive History of Texas, II, 265.

Governor Ross desired a revision of the state land laws. The public had become convinced of the necessity of such actions.⁹⁵ Consequently, acting upon the recommendation of the

⁹⁵Land Commissioner Walsh's Report, September 1, 1886.

governor and the commissioner of the general land office, the Twentieth Legislature on April 1, 1887, completely revised the land laws of the state. It abolished the State Land Board and placed the whole responsibility for the administration of the public lands upon the commissioner of the general land office, who was directed to have all the lands in demand classified as watered, dry, or timbered. The lands were not to be sold in any case for less than two dollars an acre for dry lands, three dollars an acre for all sections having permanent water, and five dollars an acre for all timbered areas. No tracts in quantities exceeding 640 acres were to be sold, except dry lands in quantities not to exceed four sections. Public lands were not to be sold to a corporation. All sales to a settler were to be made on condition that any subsequent sale or transfer to a corporation would terminate the title. The term of leases was shortened from ten to five years, and the minimum lease price was set at four cents an acre.⁹⁶

⁹⁶Gammel, Laws of Texas, IX, 881-889.

A comparison of the law with the program which DeMorse had advocated is of interest. DeMorse had opposed the sale of public lands in quantities exceeding 640 acres, and the sale of any amount to aliens, corporations, and non-residents. He had urged that all leases be limited to a maximum period of five years; that one year should elapse before re-leasing; and that a higher rate be charged to enlarge the school fund. He had opposed "free grass" since the user paid neither taxes nor rent for its use, and favored using the forces of the state to expel all intruders from the public lands. He had objected to any enclosure exceeding 640 acres. Finally, he had urged the equitable classification and evaluation of all lands belonging to the state.

Since the law was as nearly in accordance with his ideas as he could hope to expect, DeMorse supported it to the best of his ability.⁹⁷ With its passage he foresaw correctly

⁹⁷Standard, February 25, 1871.

that the "Cattle Kings ... are dethroned."⁹⁸ The fight on the

⁹⁸Ibid., July 28, 1887.

land question was DeMorse's last, for before he had time to turn his editorial labors to other problems of public interest, death

intervened to end his public career.

CHAPTER XX

RETROSPECT: SIGNIFICANCE AND PERSONALITY

It is probably just as well that DeHorse was not elected governor in 1866, for the settlement of the public land question marks the close of his public career. He had returned from the Confederate veterans' meeting at Dallas in April, 1866, an ill man. Nevertheless, he pushed through a long fight to secure the adoption of a state public land law. His last public effort was as a petitioner against the Clarkeville shanty before the Senate, and his death occurred before he reached the summit of his life's work.

¹Stephens, December 3, 1867.

7, 1867, he went to Hall's Valley health resort for the winter and for stomach ailment. After that time he resided at Clarksville and remained his editorial duties, feeling that his condition was improving satisfactorily.²

²Ibid., October 13, 1867.

Six days later, however, he was confined to his bed in his final illness. He had formed a close friendship for the Reverend J. A. Leberry, minister of the Methodist Church at Clarksville, and during his last hours he seemed to have visited DeHorse frequently, cheering, sympathizing, counseling, and after-

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¹Standard, November 3, 1887.

7, 1887, he went to Bell's Wells health resort for his rheumatism and for stomach ailment. After four days he returned to Clarksville and resumed his editorial duties, feeling that his condition was improving satisfactorily.²

²Ibid., October 13, 1887.

A few days later, however, he was confined to his bed in his final illness. He had formed a warm friendship for the Reverend J. A. Ashbury, minister of the Methodist Church of Clarksville, and during his last hours this devout man visited DeMorse frequently, cheering, sympathizing, consoling, and after-

wards paying the last tribute to his memory. DeMorse was conscious until a few minutes before his death, and being admonished that death was close at hand, replied that he was ready to meet the summons without fear. DeMorse did not belong to a church because the churches differed among themselves, and he did not feel competent to decide among them. He had lived a long and eventful life, however, and was not afraid to submit his fate to the will of the Creator, and his acts to the criticism of men, with full confidence in the justice of both. In his last hour, DeMorse remembered a few debts, some of which were not yet due. He called his daughter's attention to these obligations and requested that they be liquidated immediately. A messenger was sent at once with the money to his creditors in town; but there was a bill at a paper mill in St. Louis not yet due. He called for a postoffice order blank and filled it out. Though his shaking hand could scarcely trace the lines, he refused help and completed the task himself. A few minutes later, October 25, 1887, he signed "30" to the last chapter of life, and handed it to the Great Printer of all life's stories. He had passed his "allotted time of three score and ten" by one year, eight months, and twenty-six days.

During the next few days the newspapers of the state were filled with tributes to DeMorse and his numerous services. A number of papers printed a brief sketch of his life. The Gate City Guide (Gatesville) proclaimed him:

The noblest Roman of us all ... The Nestor of the Texas Press, ... the tried and true servant

of the public, ... the last link in the chain that united the fathers of Texas to the present actors on the stage of public existence in this state is broken. ... To the great state of Texas, ... he is an irreparable loss. A man of superior intellect, a close student, temperate in habits, good morals, possessed of the broad ideas of statesmanship generally, and with the courage of his convictions, he has in his capacity as a journalist ... wielded a power for good second to none in the state. Independence was a part of his nature and he had no policy except that which comported with his sense of right and duty. He died poor because he was an editor above price. ... He perhaps did as much or more to organize the Democratic Party of the state as any other man of his day. His paper was always aggressive. The ideas editorially expressed were his own; and he never dodged an issue in which the people's interest was involved. He took a deep interest in everything that tended to develop and build up the state. No one loved Texas more devotedly than he. The state never had a truer friend.³

³Gate City Guide (Gatesville), an undated clipping in the possession of Isabella DeMorse Latimer, Clarksville.

The Cass County Sun declared that "Texas Journalism has lost a conscientious, able, and pure writer and the state virtue. Patriotism, his love of Texas, was an ingredient in a citizen who filled with honor and dignity every trust called upon to discharge. To him the people of Texas owe a debt of gratitude; for the ardor of his youth, the flower and vigor of his manhood, and the ripe experience of declining years were all spent in advancing the interests of the state. Coming to Texas of comfort and independence that intelligent labor ought of right when the country was scarcely more than a wilderness, he became allied with all its interests, whether duty called him over sandy plains, through dense and tangled forests, or across vast main-
to enjoy and occupy."⁴

⁴Cass County Sun (Linden), an undated clipping in possession of Isabella DeMorse Latimer.

unpopular The Sherman Herald declared that the "father of Texas Journalism," after a long eventful, and honorable life rested in quiet slumber, beneath the soil of the state he had contributed so much toward making great. It predicted that history would accord him a high position among Texas pioneer veterans and statesmen and soldiers.⁵

⁵Sherman Herald, an undated clipping in possession of Isabella DeMorse Latimer.

The judgment of contemporaries, whether friends or enemies, are premature, but the lapse of half a century should be sufficient to allow a fairly accurate judgment upon an individual's character and his services. In his career of more than half century of public service, DeMorse held many civil and military positions of prominence, and in all the various obligations which they entailed, his one aim was to perform his duty, and to perform it well. Honesty of purpose was his cardinal virtue. Patriotism, his love of Texas, was an ingredient in his composition. To him the people of Texas owe a debt of gratitude; for the ardor of his youth, the flower and vigor of his manhood, and the ripe experience of declining years were all spent in advancing the interests of the state. Coming to Texas when the country was scarcely more than a wilderness, he became allied with all its interests, whether duty called him over sandy plains, through dense and tangled forests, or across vast uninhabited prairies. Whether his line of action was promoting an

unpopular cause, amid the din of battle, on the field of strife, or on the waters of the Gulf, his motive was the welfare of Texas, and his aims were to maintain its liberty, support its interests, and encourage its advancement.

Rarely has there lived a man who in his intercourse with all classes of individuals was more just than DeMorse. "Justice must have her dues if the heavens fall" was his motto. His justice was apparent not only in property matters, but also in his estimates of the motives of others.

He was, likewise, charitable. To this fact all the tramp printers of his time could testify. He fed and lodged all who applied. He was charitable, not only in supplying the needy, but also in spreading a mantle over the imperfections of humanity; proud to find an apology for the intentions of those who inclined to fall, to err, or to do an injury to a fellow-man. This charity extended to religious matters. Though not a member of any church, he had respect and toleration for the beliefs of others. In the scope of his friendship were Jews, Catholics, and all Protestant denominations.

Though DeMorse enjoyed both civil and military honors, his ability as a journalist was his outstanding attribute. He has been consistently referred to as the Father of the Texas Press. As such he was so honored by the editors of Texas when they named him the first president of the Texas Press Association. As a writer he was clear and forceful, his language was elegant and polished, and his diction showed a mastery of the medium of expression; while his vast and varied experiences in

the state and his close observations made his mind an encyclopedia in matters of the history of the state. This knowledge of history gave him a decided advantage over his professional associates who might desire to make a point at his expense. At repartee he was most skillful and when a situation required irony or sarcasm his trenchant pen was equal to the occasion and cut as keenly as any blade.

It has been said of DeMorse that he was theoretical rather than practical. If so his theories were not of the visionary kind, but of a wholesome, confidence-inspiring nature, which, if heeded and acted upon, could result in nothing but good. He was a friend of the laborer, but did not countenance frequent and unprovoked strikes. Above all, he was a life-long believer in the sovereignty of the people.

He had ambition but was so modest and retiring as never to press his claims for public position, nor would he allow his friends to do so in his behalf. "The place must seek the man, not the man the place," was his criterion in these matters. In an address before the Texas Press Association in 1886, A. B. Norton, after reviewing the history of journalism in Texas, paid a tribute to DeMorse. After all his years of toil, he had gained nothing materially except the old newspaper files, Norton said. He worked to make a country in which others occupied exalted positions. Norton thought DeMorse far better fitted for governor by experience, observation and study, and by hard practical sense than those who usually sought and obtained that office. When high offices were to be filled newspapermen were ignored.⁶

~~does not suffer in comparison with the records of those great~~
~~Texas.~~ ⁶A. B. Norton, "A History of the Texas Press," in the
Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Convention, Texas Press Asso-
ciation, May 18, 1886, pp. 126-127.

Charles DeMorse was more than a newspaperman. As editor, publisher, lawyer, soldier, public official, merchant, student, and quiet farmer, he served the people of his state. On all public questions of his time he spoke honestly, courageously, unequivocally. On the annexation of Texas, the prosecution of the Mexican War, the settlement of the western boundary of Texas, the exciting events preceding secession, secession, reconstruction, the Texas Constitution of 1876, and the public domain question, all questions vitally concerning the interests of Texas, DeMorse spoke fearlessly and vehemently. His greatest mistakes appear to have been his Civil War military venture and his early bitter enmity for Houston: the first was a mistake because lack of military knowledge and experience left him much better qualified to have served the Confederacy in a different capacity; the second, because it appears to have cost him political and economic gain at times, since the lines between pro-Houston men and anti-Houston men were sharply drawn for many years.

Yet, his was a profound influence upon the political and constitutional history of his state. For many years his portrait hung in the office of the Standard beside those of his distinguished friends and enemies of an earlier day--Rusk, Houston, Burnet, and Lamar. The record of his less spectacular service

does not suffer in comparison with the records of those great Texans.

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In 1926 he married Ellen Kegans of Trent, Texas. To them was born in 1927 one child, Ernesteen, a daughter. His permanent address is 2604 23rd Street, Lubbock, Texas.

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