

Chapter 5

RECONSTRUCTION AND EDUCATION

The damage to the South as the result of the Civil War had been extensive. If Texas did not suffer the physical damage that states like Virginia did as the result of major battles being fought on its soil, it nevertheless suffered the economic and psychological damage. Texas, during Reconstruction, was a place where lawlessness and turmoil were common, as old Texas and Confederate officials were thrown out of office and too many opportunists moved to fill the vacancies. The role of losers was a new one for Texans whose forebears had tamed early America. Texans themselves had wrestled an unparalleled victory against the mighty Comanches with grit and determination. Now Texans chafed under the heavy yoke of the northern victors. The burden of loss felt staggering. The loss of the war, the loss of a way of life, and the loss of a political ideology held dear were all but intolerable. Might had made right in the eyes of the North. The majority of Texans still felt that states' rights, one of Texas' reasons for fighting, was yet a valid political philosophy. This political belief is held by many Texans to the present day.

The political arena was extremely difficult and would remain so until Reconstruction was over in 1874, and Northern troops were withdrawn. The economic arena was not any better, culminating in the Panic of 1873. Three years before, however, William B. McClellan, had shown a healthy improvement in his financial worth from 1860. In the 1860 census William held real property worth \$4,000 and personal property of \$6,000 for a total of \$10,000. In 1870 he had a drop in real property to \$2,560, but a substantial increase in his personal property to \$10,000, for a total of \$12,560. The increase in personal wealth from 1860 to 1870 occurred despite the loss of the eight slaves William owned in 1860. Considering that financial loss, the increase in personal wealth is even more notable. Possibly the scarcity of merchandise during the war increased the prices at the McClellan Store, resulting in higher profits. This scarcity, however, should have caused increased cost of acquiring the merchandise, so that might not be the entire explanation.

William McClellan was also involved in farming while operating the McClellan Store. The agriculture schedules for Washington County in 1870 listed the McClellan farm as being 180 acres, 70 acres of which was improved. The farm had a value of \$2,160. That year William McClellan paid \$550 in wages, probably to his grandsons William Gilliland, 21, James B. Dunn, nineteen, and Alexander Dunn, 17. The three were listed as farmers on the 1870 census of the William B. McClellan household. The value of the farm production in 1870 was \$1,300, which included 10 bales of cotton weighing 450 pounds each.

The last of William and Juliet's children, William Robert McClellan, had married May 22, 1866, the year after the Civil War ended. William's wife was Louisa E. Ratliff, daughter of Thomas R. Ratliff. Louisa Ratliff and George W. Ratliff, husband of Mary, the youngest McClellan daughter, may be cousins since both of their Ratliff

families came from Jackson, Mississippi. In 1870 William and Lou McClellan were living in the large McClellan household and William was working in the McClellan Store as his father's partner.

It appears that Albert "Ab," the oldest surviving McClellan son, was also farming in Washington County. There is a listing of an "A. McClellan," whose farm was 222 acres, of which 22 acres were improved. The farm had a value of \$2,200 and had \$1,445 in farm production. This included 12 bales of cotton, again each weighing 450 pounds.

By now the little community at McClellan's Store Settlement had a schoolhouse where children had attended school during the war. It was here in the schoolhouse that a small group came together March 4, 1876, to organize a church, perhaps a deeply felt need in a difficult time. The people of the community had probably been holding religious meetings for years, first outdoors in arbors, later in homes or schools. Circuit riding preachers and ministers tended to the people as frequently as possible in the area of sparse population. Now there were probably enough members of the Christian Church to organize a formal church. Among the seven people meeting at the schoolhouse that day were W.B. and Juliet McClellan. In one year the membership grew to 85, while the church continued to meet at the schoolhouse. A church building was completed in 1879 and the new church was named Bethany Christian Church.^[434] One McClellan descendant wrote that William B. McClellan built the church building and presented it to the congregation and that Juliet McClellan gave the church bell and the chandeliers.^[435] Services were held on a monthly or bi-monthly basis for many years. When railroads came to Washington County, the population of the county shifted to be close to the new source of transportation. Tiny communities like McClellan's Settlement disappeared. Eventually Bethany Christian Church moved to the nearby community of Burton where it became First Christian Church.

The building of railroads in Texas had just begun when the Civil War put an abrupt halt to construction. After the war, construction resumed and soon reshaped Texas, providing reliable transportation for the first time. It would be hard to overstate the importance of railroads to Texas. Railroads offered the first reliable transportation for goods and people. Texas rivers had never lived up to expectations as sources of transportation, and long distances to markets thwarted economic development. The era of railroads would be a source of employment for many of the McClellan descendants, either directly or indirectly.

In one way the orphaned McClellan grandchildren, left in the wake of the Civil War, were very fortunate. First, their McClellan grandparents, who entered their seventies in 1874, were alive and able to provide a home, especially for the Gilliland, Dunn and McCain children of their deceased daughters. Second, the children's grandparents believed in education and had the financial ability to provide them with schooling. This is not to say that the children were not expected to contribute what they could. Young James J. McCain, age 15, left his grandparents' home early to work as a cowboy and later with a government surveying group in the Indian Territory. With this money he was able to help pay for his cost for attending Add-Ran College.

Add-Ran was founded in 1869 in Fort Worth by Addison and Randolph Clark, brothers who were Disciples of Christ ministers. In 1873 the school moved to Thorp Springs in Hood County, southwest of Fort Worth. Still later, after a short stay in Waco, it was moved back to Fort Worth and

in 1902 renamed Texas Christian University (TCU).^[436] Add-Ran, like most schools of the day, offered a variety of educational paths for its students. The first of the McClellan grandchildren attended Add-Ran in 1873, and a school catalog from 1879–1880 offers a glimpse of what the school probably offered throughout this period.

The catalog for school year, 1879–1880, described a Primary Course and five other courses of study. The first, the Preparatory Course, which included mathematics, science, languages, composition and forensics, was for the basic education levels. This course had arithmetic for the mathematics, geography for the science, grammar and English analysis for the language, letter writing for the composition and debating for the forensics. The second course of study was the Teacher's Course, which was the same as the Preparatory Course, with the addition of some more difficult courses. The third course was the Scientific Course, including algebra and higher for the mathematics, botany and higher for the sciences, Latin grammar and Reader for the languages, essays and the History of England for composition, elocution and rhetoric for the Forensics. The fourth course was the Classic Course, offering such courses as mental philosophy, Latin, Greek, lectures by the student, and the usual Forensics. The fifth course was the Bible Course, which was the same as the Classical but with the addition of Inspiration, Hermeneutics, Reason and Revelations and other similar courses.

While the courses of study are somewhat self-explanatory, the catalog described them in detail. The purpose of the Primary Course is less clear, but it appears that this is where students enrolled to eliminate their educational deficiencies. Add-Ran stressed that “patient, vigilant and experienced teachers” would staff the department. The Preparatory Course was to “give a well grounded rudimentary training, sufficient for the ordinary work of life, and preparatory to entering upon the Scientific or the Classic Course.” This would be comparable to undergraduates in present educational hierarchies. The Teacher's Course was to train students as teachers, while the Bible Course was to train “young men preparing to preach the Gospel.” The description of the Classical and Scientific Courses stated that there “are no new ‘departures’ in the arrangement of these courses. A certain amount and quality of mental discipline are essential for all the practical and noble purposes of life. Short-cut, bread and butter, so called *practical* courses of study are practical humbugs.”

The cost of this education for a session of seven months included \$12.00 for boarding, “including lights, fuels, etc” and \$1.00–\$1.50 for washing. The students had to furnish their towels and sheets. Tuition was \$31.50, except for the Primary, which was \$2.00 per month. For \$100 a four year “Scholarship” could be purchased.

The catalog stressed the advantages of the school's location in Thorp Springs, Hood County. Noting the area's “pleasant hills and dales, and sparkling, running brooks,” the catalog stated that the school was “in a fine health giving atmosphere, away from the alluring vices of a city.”

By 1883 the students were required to wear school uniforms. The girls wore a dress of “light weight gray woolen goods, and a heavy weight suit of everyday to be worn with check gingham aprons.” On their heads they were to wear bonnets of check gingham. For Sundays the girls wore black woolen goods with an apron and a hat. The boys were to wear “Gray Janes or Cassimere Black Hats



(first suits to be purchased at Add-Ran for proper shades of color).” Two years later uniforms were no longer required.

The school was very conscious of the needs of its student body. It had lengthened the school term at one point to nine or ten months. The students were not able to work enough to earn money for their tuition and the school changed to a two-session system with two commencements.[\[437\]](#)

This school was to be an important source of education for many of the McClellan grandchildren, and sometimes for their children and grandchildren in turn. The first McClellan grandchildren shown on the 1873 Add-Ran records were “Charlie” Dunn, Albert Gilliland (who “matriculates”) and J.J. McCain, all from Burton, Washington County.

The various McClellan grandchildren compiled an impressive record in respect to education. Haynie and Janie Gilliland’s twin sons attended Add-Ran.. One of the twins, Albert Gilliland, “Burton, Washington Co.” attended Add-Ran College 1873–1874 for its then seven month course. His twin brother, Sam Gilliland, “Ledbetter, Fayette Co.” attended in 1883–1884 and met his future wife, Linnie Rawlins, a “local” student. By local the school records meant a student who lived in Thorp Springs.

Mattie and Charles H. Dunn’s son, Charles E. Dunn, graduated from Add Ran in 1881, a rare accomplishment then; the graduates for that year only numbered five. Only a couple of years usually qualified a young student to teach, the goal

of many. Armed with their teacher's certificates, they were deemed sufficiently educated to teach in the small rural schoolhouses. Other students attended as they were able to pay the tuition, a situation that resulted in few completing a full course of study.

James J. McCain, the son of Susan and Abram McCain, was determined to get his education. As previously stated, he worked to get money for his education, but he was aided by the estate left by his parents. There are numerous notations of money paid out by the estate to provide James (listed as Jack) with "wearing apparel" and "tuition and board"^[438] from May 1879 to May 1881. James was able to attend Add-Ran long enough to get his teacher's certificate. Teaching school in Washington and Lee counties for the next twenty years, James studied law in his spare time. Finally in 1895 he was admitted to the bar in Washington County. It was a remarkable accomplishment and a testament to his determination that James achieved so much. He later practiced law in Somerville, county seat of Burleson County, just to the north of Washington and Lee counties.

William and Juliet's oldest surviving son, Albert G. McClellan, may have sent three sons to Add-Ran during the eighth decade of this century. Albert G. McClellan's son, Albert B. McClellan, first attended Add-Ran in 1873. While some school records are missing, there are records for Albert B. in 1880–1881. Unfortunately Albert died in the summer of 1882. There are records of a J. T. McClellan and a G. P. McClellan, "locals" attending in 1883–1884. These may have been Albert's sons, but there is no way to know for sure as they were living in Thorp Springs. Since they lived in Thorp Springs the school considered them to be locals and listed them that way in the catalog. No other hometowns, therefore, are available.



Samuel H. McClellan, another of William and Juliet's sons, may have sent his son, John McClellan, to Add-Ran in 1880–1881. John's cousin, Albert B. McClellan, also attended the school in 1880–1881. Both students have "Burton, Washington County" listed as their hometowns. The John McClellan listed, however, could possibly have been a son of Bennett McClellan, William B. McClellan's deceased brother. John McClellan also attended in 1883–1884.

Daughters sometimes received more advanced education although less frequently than the sons. D. T. Gilliland wrote that he remembered his father, Albert G. Gilliland, saying that his McClellan grandparents sent his sisters to be educated in Huntsville, Texas. In 1879 the first state supported institution for the preparation of teachers opened its doors in Huntsville, Texas, as Sam Houston Normal Institute. To gain acceptance as "state students" applicants had to pass an exam in "reading, spelling, writing, geography, arithmetic, English composition, and the history of the United States." A large part of the first student body consisted of these state scholarship students. Room and board at the school was "\$14 a month for young men, and \$15 for young ladies."[\[439\]](#) A search of the early catalogs of Sam Houston State University, the school's present name, did not turn up any records for Judy Gilliland. In rare instances, however, students' names were not listed in the catalogs. There is a record for a "J. I. Collier" in 1897–1898, which may be Jennie Gilliland. Jennie, 44, could have attended the school after her divorce from her husband. Her attendance at the school was long after her McClellan grandparents' death, and it is likely that Jennie was a state scholarship student.

After a rocky start, the last 20 years of the nineteenth century were good economic years for Texas. Railroads and the resulting reliable transportation system encouraged the development of markets, bringing a golden age of farming. Cities, centers of commerce, began to grow and attract people from the surrounding areas. McClellan sons were farmers, but relatively few of the McClellan grandchildren were farmers after this time. Some went to West Texas and were ranchers, while others went to the growing cities and became salesmen, carpenters, postal workers, and employees of the railroads in various jobs.

Two of William and Juliet's three surviving sons farmed in the Washington County area in the last part of the century. With the creation of Lee County in 1874, though, Albert G. McClellan found himself in the new county. Albert, who lived a few miles north of Ledbetter, "was a county official on several occasions,"[\[440\]](#) including three terms as Lee County commissioner, 1881–1884.[\[441\]](#) Several members of Albert's family would later move to California.

While Albert and Samuel McClellan lived close to each other and near their parent's home in western Washington County, the three households were in three different counties. The counties, Washington, Lee and Fayette, meet at one corner and this is where the Ledbetter community is located. Samuel McClellan, who lived in Ledbetter, farmed and was a freighter before the construction of the

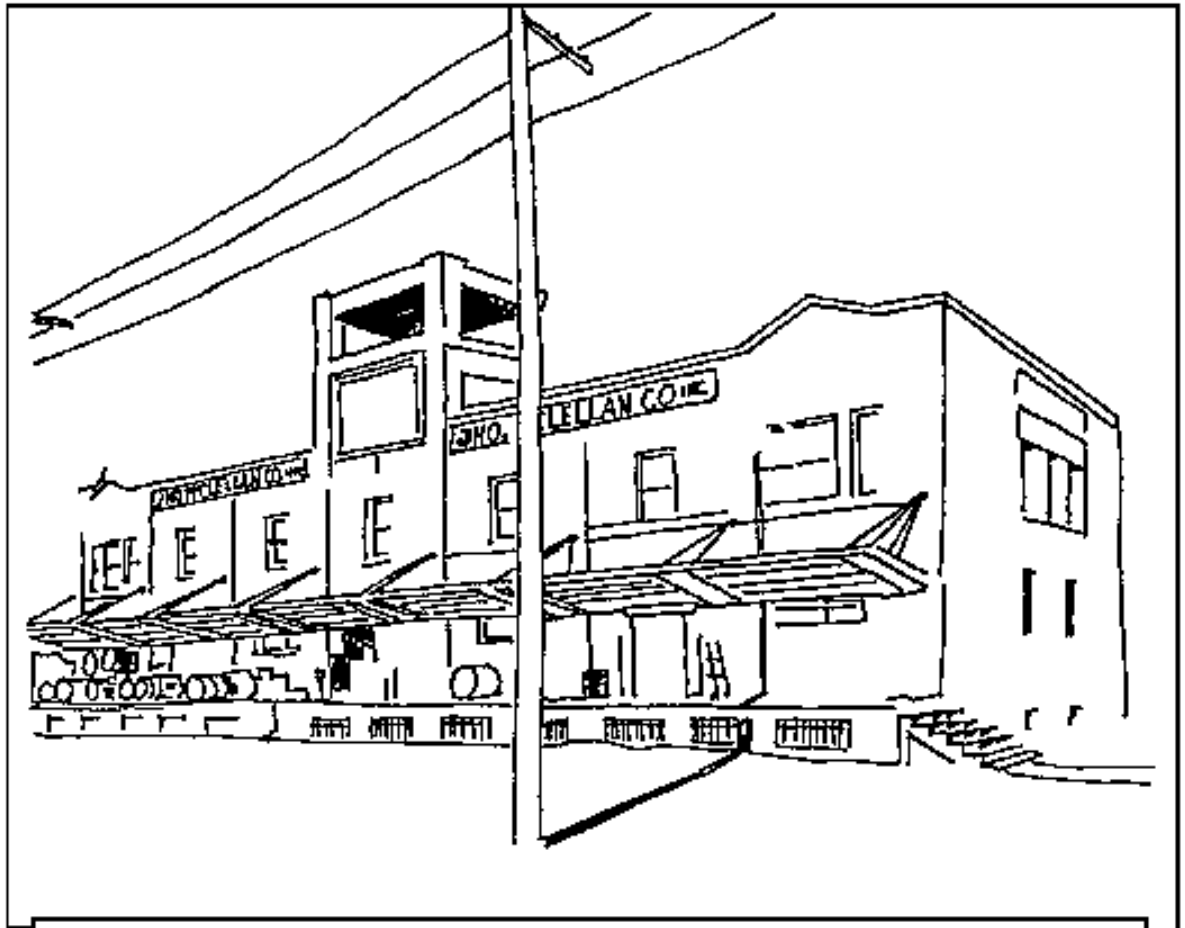
railroads. It was perhaps appropriate that the son of a merchant, who depended on freighters and their wagons to haul the goods he ordered from the Texas ports, would become a freighter himself. In early Texas history freight wagons were the chief means of transportation for goods. Slowed by bad roads, breakdowns and myriad other problems, this means of transportation was quickly supplanted by railroads. Samuel McClellan saw this coming and became a tie and wood contractor to the railroads.

Samuel McClellan, 44, died in 1877. His son, Frank, stepped into his shoes and farmed to provide for his mother and siblings. Later, Frank became a gravel producer in the Ledbetter area and, gradually increasing the scope of his business, became a successful businessman in the area. The oldest son of this family, John Albert McClellan, moved to Houston in 1893 and launched a very successful career as a merchant.

Houston was “growing at an unprecedented rate. The devastation of Galveston by the hurricane of 1900 and the discovery of oil at Spindletop near Beaumont four months later ensured Houston’s future as a major trading and business center. Houston’s population almost doubled between 1890 and 1900, and doubled again between 1900 and 1910.” [442] John A. McClellan was able to take advantage of this Houston boom, starting the Houston Crockery House in 1893 under the ownership of John and his partner L. Kaminski. By the next year, the McClellan business was included in a publication boasting the advantages of Houston: “The house at once sprang into prominence in view of the superior quality and character of the wares that it offered to the public. The premises occupied consist of a 2-story brick building 25 x100 feet in dimensions. Here may be seen a remarkably fine display of china, glassware, queensware, lamps, table cutlery, silver plated ware, etc.” [443] John McClellan soon married one of Houston’s socially prominent daughters, Caroline “Carrie” E. Cargill, and became a pillar of Houston’s society himself. In 1907 he was included in the Standard Blue Book of Texas, *Who’s Who*, and was president of the NO-TSU-OH, an organization that put on a large November fete for the city’s elite. By the time John died in 1930, he was a member of several fraternal clubs, an Episcopalian, a member of the Houston Club and the Houston Country Club and many business clubs. [444] His wife, Carrie, was instrumental in founding the Houston Public School Art League, which eventually evolved into the present Houston Museum of Fine Arts. [445] The McClellans lived in the Westmoreland area, on the edge of downtown Houston, and one of Houston’s first planned communities. The McClellan house was torn down later, and now Houston’s Southwest Freeway



JOHN McCLELLAN



<p>EVERYTHING IN CHINA GLASSWARE HOUSE FURNISHING GOODS ETC.</p>	<p>WHOLESALE HOUSE JOHN McCLELLAN & CO. INC. ESTABLISHED 1893. WALNUT & COMTS ST</p>	<p>OVER 22,500 FEET OF FLOOR SPACE.</p>
--	---	---



passes over where the house stood. John and Carrie McClellan had no children, but several McClellan relatives worked for John over the years.

[434] Avis, *History of Burton*, p. 43.

[435] Papers for Pickrell book.

[436] Knight, Oliver, *Fort Worth, Outpost on the Trinity*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1990, p.181.

[437] Texas Christian University Special Collection, Fort Worth, Texas.

[438] Lee County, Texas Probate Minutes, 1874–1881 Book A, 1882–1887, Book B.; Samuel H McClellan, one of the McCain children's uncles, was the first guardian. Later their uncle W.R. McClellan was their guardian.

[439] Estill, Mary S. *Vision Realized, a History of Sam Houston State University*, Huntsville, TX: Sam Houston Press, pp. 2–12.

[440] Johnson, *History of Texas and Texans*, p. 1676.

[441] *History of Lee County*, Lee County Historical Commission, 1974, p. 374.

[442] Houghton, Dorothy Know Howe, Barrie M. Scardin, Sadie Swin Blackburn and Katherine S. Howe. *Houston's Forgotten Heritage: Landscape, Houses, Interiors, 1825–1914*. Houston: Rice University, 1991, p. 46.

[443] *The Industrial Advantage of Houston, Texas and Environs, Also Series of Comprehensive Sketches of the City's Representative Business Enterprises*. Houston: Akehurst Publishing Co., 1911, p. 102.

[444] *The Houston Chronicle*, Wednesday, September 14, 1930, Home edition, p. 1; *Houston Post Dispatch*, Local News Section, Thursday, September 25, 1930, v. 46, no. 174, Midnight Edition.

[445] McAshan, Marie Phelps, edited by Mary Jo Bell. *On the Corner of Main and Texas: a Houston Legacy*.

Houston: Hutchins House, 1985, pp. 133–134.