James Webb Throckmorton
A Timeline of his Public Service and Contributions to the Development of Collin County, Texas

by
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Preface

James Webb Throckmorton was born in Sparta, Tennessee, in 1825. He and his family were early settlers in North Texas, arriving in 1842 during the days of the Republic of Texas. The family settled on property north of present-day Melissa. He considered Collin McKinney to be his mentor and in 1848 married Annie Rattan whose sister was married to the frontier statesman’s nephew. By the 1850s he embarked on a 30-year career of public service to the citizens of Collin County which included terms in the state legislature, state senate, Governor and U.S. House of Representatives. At the time of his death, his name was as well-known as Sam Houston’s in Texas and around the country. The ladies of the Federated Women’s Clubs of McKinney, who erected the statue of Throckmorton in 1911, who did not have the right to vote at the time, would have remembered him from childhood as the county’s most esteemed citizen. This timeline, annotated with historical facts, outlines Throckmorton’s contributions to the settlement and development of Collin County.

1840’s

- Moved with his father, a medical Doctor, to an area two miles northwest of Melissa in 1842.
- His father died less than a year after arriving. Throckmorton helped his family settle in and then left to study Medicine from his Uncle in Kentucky.
- Throckmorton returned to Texas in 1847 to serve as a Texas Ranger at the outbreak of the Mexican American War of 1846. He enlisted in Captain Robert Taylors Company of Texas Rangers as a Private in February 1847.
- Kidney disease, that troubled him his entire life, cut short his enlistment after three months and he was reassigned to Major Michael Chevallie’s Company as a Surgeon Assistant and served in Monterrey, Saltillo and Buena Vista. He was medically discharged in June 1847.
- Coming back to Texas to recover, he left for Illinois and married Annie Rattan in 1848. Throckmorton built a home outside of McKinney and began his Medical Practice.
- In an initial philanthropic endeavor, he financially supported the establishment of the Mantua Seminary, a coeducational institution situated near the Collin County Grayson County line 16 miles north of McKinney. This school operated until the 1880’s, when the City of Mantua was deserted and the Populus relocated to present day Van Alstyne due to the development of the railroad.
- In May 1849, Throckmorton was elected Secretary at a Convention in Dallas for a group tasked with settling the many land disputes that were occurring in both the Peters and Mercer Colony’s. This would mark his initial foray into politics. The mismanagement of Land Grants in the Peters Colony by Investors who were located out of state and in England, created tremendous difficulties for the Settlers. Throckmorton advocated for the rights of the settlers that were
drawn here by the promise of free land to settle this part of the frontier. He fought the absentee owners of the Peters Colony Grant and advocated for the Settlers.

1850’s

Note: The population of Collin County in 1850 was 1,950 people with a slave population of 134. The settlers who came here with the promise of land granted to them from the Peters Colony that was mismanaged by largely absentee administrators who were out of state and country.

- In 1851 he was elected in the first of three terms as Representative of the 25th District of the Texas House of Representatives that included Collin and Denton County. He was affiliated with the Whig Party.
- Throckmorton would serve in the Texas House of Representatives until 1857 and during this term, he worked tirelessly to settle the land disputes between the Settlers and the Investors of the Peters Colony Grant. In addition, he advocated for the establishment of free public schools, and the construction of a Statewide railroad network.

Note: Collin County had an abundance of agricultural land, however with no waterways to get Cotton, the primary cash crop of the south, to market. The agricultural economy of Collin County consisted of Yeoman or subsistence farms were food crops of wheat, barley, corn and oats that could be sold locally were grown. Throckmorton saw the railroads as an important infrastructure need to help expand the economic development of the agrarian economy of Collin County and would spend his life advocating for the railroad industry. Ultimately, Collin County’s agricultural economy would benefit and expand after the railroads were established after the Civil War.

- In 1857, Throckmorton was elected to the Texas Senate as a Democrat due to the dissolution of the Whig Party. He became friend and influential confidant to Sam Houston. Throckmorton and Houston were staunch advocates against the Secessionist movement and Throckmorton became a key advisor to Sam Houston who was elected Governor in 1859. Throckmorton attempted to organize a State Union Party in Support of keeping Texas part of the Union.

Note: Southern society and many other areas of east and south Texas were dominated by the wealthy “Planter Class” of Plantation owners who relied on Slave Labor to plant and harvest cotton. In many of these regions where the Planter Class dominated society, they dominated politics of not only the Antebellum South, but of much of the settled areas of east and south Texas.

1860’s

Note: The influx of pro-Union Abolitionists into north Texas, still a part of the frontier, and the rebellion of the Planter Class that resisted the abolition of Slavery set the stage for the most turbulent of decades in American History. Texas politicians, influenced by the Planter Class, staunchly resisted abolition and the Secessionist Movement dominated Texas Society. Throckmorton along with Sam Houston stood against Secession and supported keeping Texas part of the Union. In truth, Throckmorton, who owned one slave, was not idealistically supporting abolition, his concerns were based on the protection of the settlers of Collin County and north Texas from marauding bands of hostile Native Americans due to the abandonment of Federal Forts. Furthermore, the Yeoman Farms that existed in Collin County benefitted from the sale of their crops to these forts. In 1860, Collin County had a population of 9,364 people with 933 slaves, making up for 9% of the total population. The Planter Class of Slave owners were not
prominent in Collin County. In other regions of Texas, such as east Texas where the Planter Class dominated society, the Slave population exceeded 30% in those areas

- Throckmorton was a staunch advocate for the Union and stood against Secession.
- On February 1, 1861, Throckmorton was one of only seven of the 174 delegates in the Secession Convention in Austin to vote against Secession. His stance put him at odds with the “Planter Class” who were strong advocates for Secession based on their need to maintain economic dominance that slave labor afforded them. Throckmorton's ideals were predicated on his desire to support the economic growth and development of Collin County and the Texas frontier that was reliant on Federal Troops to protect the Settlers from Hostile Native Americans and his desire to bring transportation infrastructure via the railroads to the region to expand the opportunities of the land locked agrarian community that was the major economic engine for Collin County. He made a dramatic speech proclaiming “Mr President, in view of my responsibility, in the presence of God and my country and unawed by the wild spirit of revolution around me, I vote No” as he announced his vote in the Secessionist Convention.

- Immediately following this Convention, Throckmorton went on a speaking tour of North Texas advocating against Secession ahead of a statewide referendum by the citizens. The statewide vote took place on February 26, 1861. Collin County voted against Secession by a margin of 70%. Only two districts, Plano and Maxwell (Murphy area), voted in favor of Secession. Grayson, Fannin and Cooke counties, areas where Throckmorton’s oratorical skills were used to persuade the Populus, also voted against secession. Statewide, 60,900 votes were cast and the Secession won with 76% of the voters favoring abandoning the Union.

- After the Statewide vote in March, 1861, Governor Sam Houston refused to take the oath of Office as Governor of the Confederate State of Texas. He advocated for a return to the Republic. He remained neutral to both the Union and the Confederacy and drew harsh criticism from both sides. Throckmorton on the other hand, joined the Confederacy. His motive was loyalty to the State and the need to protect the frontier and Settlers in north Texas from Hostile Native Americans. Those who supported the Union were classified into three Groups: 1) The Radical Unionists noted for their uncompromising stance and their flight from Texas to support Union Federal troops against fellow Texans. 2) The Wait-and-See Unionists who remained neutral and did not support the Confederacy. Sam Houston was a notable Wait-and-See-Unionist, and the 3) Conservative Unionists, who joined the Confederacy out of a desire to defend their State. Throckmorton has been defined as a Conservative Unionist.

- Throckmorton decided to join the Confederacy after President Lincoln called for the arming of 75,000 state militia volunteers to crush the rebellion. While Houston was considered a coward by the Radical Unionists, Throckmorton was considered a traitor.

- April 12, 1861 marked the first skirmish of the war when Rebel Secessionists attacked Fort Sumpter in South Carolina.

- On April 27, 1861, Throckmorton attended a convention of local Collin County Secessionists at the courthouse in McKinney but was denied entrance due to their concern of him being a spy. Throckmorton avoided interacting with the Pro-Unionists.

- In May, 1861, Throckmorton joined the confederate Frontier Regiment of Colonel John Young where he was elected as a Lieutenant Colonel. Their duty was to reclaim Federal forts in Washita, Arbuckle and Cobb. These forts were in Oklahoma and his efforts were directly associated with
his desire to protect the Settlers on the frontier from hostile Native Americans. Throckmorton resigned from this company in a letter to Governor Clark, the Confederate Governor that replaced Sam Houston, stating “The Company which I command, in the Regiment of Young, when they ascertained they were not in the services of the Confederate States...disbanded.”

• In September 1861, Throckmorton joined the 6th Texas Cavalry in Fort Bartow near Dallas. He was commissioned a Captain of Company K and joined Ben McCulloch’s army at Camp Jackson in Arkansas. Throckmorton lead his men in battle against Creek Indians in the Battle of Chustenahlah in northwest Oklahoma, in December 1861.

• Throckmorton then accompanied McCulloch’s troops and participated in the Battle of Elkhorn Tavern (also known as the battle of Pea Ridge) where General McCulloch lost his life. From there Throckmorton travelled to Corinth Mississippi but upon his arrival in May 1862, he became ill with his recurring Kidney disease and was forced to return home to Collin County to recover.

• In October 1862, there was a great hanging of 42 pro Union Sympathizers in Gainesville in Cooke County. Some of the those who were executed accused guards at the Sherman militia armory of supplying weapons to pro Union Sympathizers in the area. Twenty one men were accused, and while five of them were lynched before Throckmorton could get involved, Throckmorton intervened with the District Court in Sherman by arguing for due process of the accused and spared the lives of 16 men who were on the verge of being lynched due to their suspected pro Union sympathies. These men were transferred to Tyler and later acquitted of the charges.

• In late 1862, Throckmorton rejoined Confederate forces in Louisiana but had to return home again due to his kidney ailment and was elected to represent Collin and Grayson County in the State Senate. He advocated for economic development and was concerned about growing crime.

Note: In addition to the threat that hostile Native Americans posed to the settlers and citizens of Collin County, a general state of lawlessness also began to develop in Collin County. This lawlessness evolved from deserters of both the Confederate and Union armies, known as Bushwhackers, that hid out in the remote areas of Collin, Grayson and Fannin County. In addition, there was an influx of over 400 outlaws from Kansas and Missouri that were allied with William Quantrill. Most, if not all, of the men of these counties were away serving the Confederacy because military service was compulsory. The elderly, women and children, were vulnerable to the outlaw opportunists that came into this area. Collin County’s own Sheriff James Read and former Chief Justice (County Judge) JM McReynolds were driven out of the county by these outlaws affiliated with William Quantrill in 1864 and later apprehended by confederate bounty hunters and executed in Tyler after being tried in a Kangaroo Court on accusations of being Jayhawkers and on false robbery charges. Law and Order was to become a major problem in this region as a result of the Civil War.

• In March 1863 Throckmorton was elevated in rank to Brigadier General of Frontier District 3. This duty was in line with Throckmorton’s interest in protecting the settlers by providing security for the frontier.

• In October, 1864, Throckmorton was placed in command of the 1st Frontier District. He helped develop self-sufficient units that would engage both hostile Native Americans and the outlaws that migrated into North Texas. Throckmorton would remain in this duty until March 1865 when he was commissioned to negotiate treaties with Native Americans with hope they would side with the Confederacy. Known as Old Leathercoat, by the Indian tribes, he successfully negotiated a peace treaty with 20,000 tribesmen representing the Choctaws, Cherokees, Seminoles, Creeks,
Osage, Comanches, Cheyenne’s, Caddoes, Arapahoe’s, Lipan’s, Kickapoos, Kiowas and Sioux, in May, 1865. He was able to secure an agreement that promoted friendly relationships between the tribes and the Settlers. Unfortunately, once the frontier forts were abandoned on wars end, hostilities resumed.

- After the War, Throckmorton gained notoriety for his service to the State of Texas, the protection of the Northern Frontier, his success with negotiating with Native Americans and his leadership in a time of crisis. He still had his distractors who questioned his loyalty to the Confederacy.
- Texas was officially occupied by federal troops on June 19th, when General Gordon Granger issued Order #1 that made the emancipation proclamation the law in Texas and freed the Slaves.

NOTE: Reconstruction began and its important to understand Throckmorton’s view of the fate that awaited the fall of the Confederacy. In a letter that he wrote to his friend Ben Epperson Throckmorton before the fall, he stated:

> I presume Mr. Davis already knows what terms we will have to subscribe to get foreign aid; the abolishment of slavery is the fist sacrifice and is the base of all other terms. I will remain faithful to the Confederacy and the State until the people determine another course, but I feel if the Ship of State is compelled to founder that duty and patriotism requires every effort be made to save the crew. If there is no chance for foreign help, we should make terms while we are in a condition to demand living ones, and not postpone it until the chains of slavery are riveted upon a helpless people.

Clearly Throckmorton was dedicated to serve his state and advocated the abolition of slavery as a means of securing peace. Upon wars end, Reconstruction created a host of issues and required political leadership that was immune to the uncompromising positions that led to the war in the first place. Throckmorton was then thrust back into politics. Radical Unionists and Radical Republicans were resented by Throckmorton and he resented that Texas lost a war he did not support in the beginning. He believed that extremists on both sides were the catalysts that led to the war in the first place. Note his comments about the radical Unionists and Republicans:

> [Those who] drew their swords against their country; who led armies to sack and pillage their own state; who rejoiced in the ruin of their native and adopted land; who shed no tears of sympathy over the utter degradation of their fallen countryman; who rejoiced in the deaths of thousands of their fellow citizens; [and] who laugh at the broken hears of the orphans, daughters and mother of their own land.

Andrew Jackson Hamilton was appointed the Provisional Governor by President Andrew Johnson. Hamilton was a Radical Unionist who fled Texas and took up arms against his former fellow citizens. He was resented which made leading the state as Governor problematic for him.

- In February, 1866 Throckmorton was elected to represent Collin and Grayson Counties for a constitutional convention in Austin. The convention torn between Secessionists and Pro Unionist, elected Throckmorton as its President. Untrusted by the Unionists, Throckmorton was ultimately considered a wise choice due to his ability to compromise. This was a difficult task ahead and the statement below taken from his inaugural speech provides perspective of the difficulty he would encounter as becoming the first elected Governor after the Civil War.
At a time like he present, when we have just emerged from the most terrible conflict known to modern times, with homes made dreary and desolate by the heavy hand of war, the people impoverished, and groaning under public and private debts; the great industrial energies of the country sadly depressed; occupying in some respects the position of a State of the Federal union, and in others, the condition of a conquered province, exercising only such privileges as a conqueror in his wisdom and mercy may allow; the loyalty of the people to the general government doubted; their integrity questioned; their holiest aspirations for peace and restoration disbelieved, malignfed and traduced, with a constant misapprehension of their most innocent actions and intentions; with a frontier many hundred miles extent, being desolated by a murderous and powerful enemy our devoted frontiersmen filling bloody graves, their property given to the flames, or carried off as booty, their little ones murdered, and their wives and daughters carried into a captivity more terrible than death, ...unprotected by the government, supported with troops quartered in the interior where there is peace and quiet; unwilling to send armed citizens to defend the suffering border for fear of arousing unjust suspicious as to the motive...under such circumstances, with such surroundings, when so much depends upon prudence and so great an amount of patriotism and intelligence is required, I feel sadly oppressed with the difficulties which lie before me.

NOTE: Throckmorton was frustrated by the perceived failure of the Union to adequately protect the frontier that Texas joined some 20 years earlier and again during reconstruction. He was further frustrated with the disfranchisement of Texas following the end of the Civil War. The issues that were the front of his concern were the protection of the North and Northwestern Frontier, controlling crime, lowering taxes, developing a public school system, a state University, and providing charitable care for the mentally ill. In contrast to these noble ideals, suffrage for freed slaves, as well as women, was not high on his agenda for leading the State of Texas. It should also be noted that President Johnson, did not mandate voting rights to the freed slaves either.

- Throckmorton was democratically elected Governor on June 25, 1866. His tenure was short-lived but as Governor he was noted for the Championing of the Frontier defense against hostile Native Americans, and his belief that civil authority was superior to the Military rule imposed by the Federal Troops overseeing Reconstruction. While Governor, the Legislature refused to ratify the 13th and 14th Amendments to the Constitution. None of the Senators or Representatives elected by Texans were allowed to take their seats in Washington. Throckmorton complained that the military courts interfered with civil affairs of Texans. Freedman’s Bureaus run by Military rule were a source of his concern. Further, he was also complaining that the military was not doing its duty on the frontier to protect the Settlers.

- Congress enacted the first Reconstruction Act in March, 1867, dividing the south into five Military Districts and making existing governments provisional. Throckmorton disagreed with the Military rule and was dismissed by General Phillip Sheridan four months later in July. Military rulers continued to evict elected officials from government such that by November more than 400 county officials in 57 counties as well as elected officials in San Antonio and Austin were removed from office. Throckmorton was also declared ineligible for future elected office.

NOTE: General Phillip Sheridan who was overseeing the Reconstruction of Texas from his post in New Orleans, Louisiana, removed Throckmorton from the Governorship on August 9, 1865 on the grounds that
“he was an impediment to Reconstruction.” General Sheridan removed the Governor of Louisiana in the same time period and after both of these removals, he was himself promptly removed from his post of overseeing the Reconstruction and reassigned by Federal Authorities. President Johnson who removed Sheridan from his post stated this about Sheridan “His rule has, in fact, been one of absolute tyranny, without references to the principles of our government or the nature of our free institutions."

- The Constitutional Convention of 1868 was convened and for the first-time former slave men were allowed to vote, however women were denied this right. This convention lasted until the winter of 1869 and laid the groundwork for amending the Texas Constitution that would ultimately be approved by the federal government in 1870. Throckmorton was not permitted to participate in this process.
- Although the legislature under Throckmorton prevented the adoption of the 13th and 14th Amendment affected suffrage rights to the freed slaves, it should be noted that President Andrew Johnson did not require Texas to extend constitutional rights such as suffrage to freed slaves. The void of leadership regarding the voting rights of the freed slaves extended far beyond the Texas border to Washington DC itself.

1870’s and 1880’s

- Allowed to run for public office by the Amnesty Act in 1872, Throckmorton resumed his public service by serving two terms as a Representative of Texas in the US Congress from 1875 to 1879. He made a bid to return to the Governorship in 1878 but was defeated by Judge Oran M. Roberts. He also made a bid for the US Senate in 1881 but lost to the incumbent Samuel Bell Maxey.
- In 1882 Throckmorton was once again elected to the House of Representatives and won reelection in 1884 and 1886.
- Kidney disease that haunted him his entire adult life, forced an end to his political career. While in Washington Throckmorton advocated for the Railroad Industry, for whom he had also been employed. His advocacy proved crucial for the economic development of Collin County,
- Throckmorton came home to McKinney and worked for a Railroad Company. He died in April, 1894, at his home in McKinney.

NOTE: Collin County’s agrarian economy flourished due to the installation of Railroads that Throckmorton so strongly advocated for many decades. Without waterways that other regions had access to, the railroads allowed our economy to grow by providing a means for crops to be shipped to other markets and also allowing for industry to come into the area. Collin County’s population in 1880 was 25,983 and would swell to a peak of 50,087 in 1900 before declining until the 1970’s. Railroads played an instrumental role in the growth of Collin County in that era and James W. Throckmorton was extremely influential in their establishment. The first railroad line was installed in Collin County in 1872 and connected McKinney and Plano southward to Houston. In 1870 there were 907 farms in Collin County with a market value of 3 Million Dollars. By 1920, the total number of farms increased six-fold to over 6,000 with a market value of 83 Million Dollars. Corn production quadrupled and wheat production increased a by a factor of 20 times its 1870 level. The Railroads allowed this growth and Throckmorton’s vision and efforts to build this infrastructure made a lasting impact on the prosperity of Collin County.
From State Representative, State Senator, Governor during a difficult time of reconstructing a divided and war torn State, and US Congressman, no other citizen from Collin County has accomplished as much as James Webb Throckmorton in terms of his public service to our community, county, state and nation. The statue that was erected by women, who like the freed slaves of the Reconstruction era, did not have the right to vote at the time, honors his legacy of public service to our County which as outlined above has yet to duplicated by any other citizen of Collin County.

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James Webb Throckmorton Statue, McKinney Texas
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We are in the midst of a period in this nation and around the world of examining systemic racism and its symbols, particularly those that remain in public spaces today. The militarization of Reconstruction and the Jim Crow Era deepened the divisions in this country which unfortunately continue to this day. The statue known as “Governor Throckmorton” that stands on the northeast corner of the historic Collin County Square in McKinney has been lumped into that group of monuments which were erected during the height of the Jim Crow Era and the Lost Cause Movement by the Daughters of the Confederacy and various Confederate Veterans’ groups. Some in our community recognize that such monuments were erected to intimidate the minority population and are lingering symbols of hatred and racism. The question before the Ad Hoc Committee is whether this statue was really in that group of monuments meant to intimidate. Presented herein are the relevant facts pertaining to the provenance of this statue that was erected in two phases between 1899 and 1911. They shed important light on its relevance to the City of McKinney, Collin County and its intended purpose.

- The base was installed in 1899 by the Throckmorton Memorial Association that was headed by Throckmorton’s former law partner Russell DeArmound. DeArmound passed away in 1906.
- A committee from the Throckmorton Camp 109 of the United Confederate Veterans Association (UCVA) was formed to complete the statue. Throckmorton Camp 109 was name of the local McKinney chapter of the UCVA.
- In 1905, Jake Chamberlain a former slave to the Wilmeth Family passed away at the age of 107 and the Throckmorton Camp 109 of the UCVA erected a visible and prominent monument style tomb stone to honor this local citizen in Ross Cemetery in McKinney.
- In 1906 The Women’s Federated Clubs of McKinney took over the fund raising and completion of the Throckmorton Statue. The Women’s Federated Clubs were focused on building libraries and projects to enhance the welfare of the public. The Throckmorton Camp 109 UCVA failed to complete the project.
- A newspaper article in 1910 stated that the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) became involved in the fund raising of this statue.
- Both the UCVA and UDC were proud organizations that were involved in erecting monuments to honor the Confederacy. In every case of the monuments that they built, they associated themselves with the erection of these statues and monuments and preserved their association by prominently listing their local chapters on the statues or their bases.
- There are no citations or attributions to either the UCVA or the UDC on the Throckmorton Statue. This is an indication that they were not involved in the ultimate erection of this statue.
- In contrast, while there is no reference to either the UCVA or UDC on the Throckmorton Statue, the listing of Throckmorton Camp 109 of UCVA on the prominent tombstone of a former slave in Ross Cemetery clearly demonstrates that financial means were attainable by the Throckmorton Camp 109 of the UCVA.
- A listing of all of the memorials in Texas erected by the UCVA, is provided in this web site reference: https://www.texasconfederateveterans.com/ The Throckmorton Statue is not listed on this reference.
The UDC published a list of over 71 statues in Texas that they erected in this time period. A listing of their monuments by county is provided on this Dallas Public Library reference: https://dallaslibrary2.org/dallashistory/archives/00612.php#. As with the UCVA referenced above, the Throckmorton Statue, and in addition, Collin County are absent from their list of confederate memorials.

While The City of McKinney Planning Department included a graph from the Southern Poverty Law Center insinuating that the Throckmorton Statue was erected during the height of the Jim Crow era and could be construed as a symbol of hate, the Throckmorton Statue does not appear on the Southern Poverty Law Center’s map of “Public Symbols of the Confederacy.” The web site reference is provided here: https://www.splcenter.org/data-projects/whose-heritage

Throckmorton served in various capacities with the Confederacy and Confederate State Militia of Texas. No representation of his Confederate Service is portrayed on the monument or referenced in the citation inscribed on its base. There is nothing on the statue that honors the Confederacy or Throckmorton’s association of serving in the Confederacy.

The members of the Women’s Federated Club’s did not have the right to vote when they took up the cause of completing this statue. The local population that donated to this statue and the Women’s Federated Clubs members likely knew Throckmorton personally as he was as well-known as Sam Houston during his lifetime. He was the most accomplished public servant from McKinney and Collin County of that era. In fact, no other elected official from Collin County has served in the capacities of James W. Throckmorton since.

If the Throckmorton Statue is truly a confederate memorial or a memorial built by organizations sympathetic to the confederate cause to be used as a symbol of hate, why are there no attributions to the post-civil war confederate organizations or portrayals of his confederate service? It’s clear that the UCVA and UDC do not recognize the Throckmorton Statue as one of their monuments. Furthermore, the Southern Poverty Law Center has not recognized this statue as a symbol of the confederacy in their inventory of monuments that were erected to intimidate Americans of African descent. While newspapers of the day indicated involvement by both the UCVA and the UDC at various times in its construction phase, there are no attributions to these organizations on the monument. This fact stands in stark contrast to every other monument erected in the State of Texas by these organizations. Further, the presence of the attribution by the Throckmorton Camp 109 of the United Confederate Veterans on the large prominent memorial to a former slave on his grave in Ross Cemetery, indicates that there were financial means for that organization to erect memorial markers. This statue was erected by local women of McKinney and Collin County to honor a statesman from our county. The statue itself portrays a man in civilian attire expressing his oratorical skills for which he was known and is symbolic of a statesman not a confederate warrior.

Any effort to associate this statue as a symbol of hate and intimidation is traducing the Goodwill of the Citizens of Collin County and cannot be justified by the examination of the preceding facts. James Webb Throckmorton was the most accomplished statesmen ever to hail from Collin County. The lack of confederate attire, symbols or attributions on the statue or its base by organizations sympathetic to the Confederate cause do not support the contention that this statue was erected to intimidate Americans of African descent or for its intended use as a symbol of hatred.
Mark,

At the bottom of your reply, you made a statement in the form of a question with “It’s fair to say that Throckmorton’s concern was a pure economic one, not one of concern for the end of slavery per se. Am I on the right track with this?”

To address your question, no you are not on the right track. Throckmorton was pro Union. He made his stand, and he supported the Union Position. Throckmorton stood against the Planter Class of Slaveholders. As a member of the Whig Party, he was an ardent supporter of the Union. According to, Kenneth Wayne Howell in his 2005 Doctoral Thesis from Texas A&M, he states “Throckmorton and other like minded Whigs in the Upper South believed that the Federal Government could protect nonslaveholding southerners from the political, economic, and social domination of the planter class. Foremost in the minds of the Whigs, was the belief that if the planter class controlled southern society, the nonslaveowning class would become white slaves to the planters.” The “white slaves” is a powerful statement, but gives insight into the social and political power of the Planter Class and Throckmorton lived his life in total opposition to the Planter Class.

This statement by a student of Throckmorton gives a sense of the time from the opinion of a PhD who studied Throckmorton extensively, but it does not directly address your question. To get a better insight into what Throckmorton thought, we must rely on his own words. Unfortunately I do not have the time to delve into the archives of his writings to capture his thoughts on this subject, however, Howell did provide a quote from Throckmorton that is provided below.

In 1856, Throckmorton saw the dissolution of the Whig Party in Texas. He had but two choices, join the new “American Party” which was known at the “Know Nothing Party,” or join the Democratic party and fight for change within. In the 1857 Gubernatorial convention, Throckmorton who also ran for Senate, supported Sam Houston who ran an anti slavery platform against Hardin Runnels, a secessionist. Houston lost the election, however, Throckmorton won. His platform was focused on railroad development and frontier defense. According to Howell, Throckmorton became “increasingly critical of the fanatical secession position of the Runnells Administration.”

Throckmorton worked within the democratic party for change. In 1859 Throckmorton began working to form a “Union Par.” and wrote US Congressman John H. Reagan, who Throckmorton wanted to lead a new Union Party. Throckmorton stating the following in a letter to Reagan “much depends of the course that will be adopted by those who have heretofore and who still assume to speak for the Democratic Party. If those gentlemen who have advocated the slave trade doctrine, and who...have attempted to foster it upon the party as a part of its creed will back down entirely
from that position, and leave the filibustering question to take care of itself, if they will in the next Democratic convention express the will of the people in Texas in opposition to the slave trade, and if they will cease their proscription of Union conservative Democrats...then it may be best that there should be no effort to organize party anew.” It’s pretty clear from Throckmorton’s own writing he was not in support of slavery.

To answer your question, I think this piece written by Throckmorton in a letter to John Reagan clearly shows us Throckmorton’s state of mind regarding the slavery. While it is true that he is on record of owning a single slave, his writings and subsequent vote not to Secede, tell us about his views on Slavery. He was not in support of expanding slave holding rights.

This is a complex matter, that defies the simplification you seek. Throckmorton was in favor of economic expansion of Collin County that the Railroads afforded and he was also a constant champion of protecting the frontier. As he expressed himself to John Reagan, clearly Throckmorton was not a champion of slave holding rights. Also remember, Collin County proudly and overwhelmingly supported the Union in the Secession Vote of 1861. That statistic has a lot to do with Throckmorton’s influence.

Finally, I am in the process of correcting some errors regarding the provenance of the statue itself and will report that to you in a separate paper. I will do my best to be more concise than I was previously. Our challenge is to deal with facts. I have some facts to share regarding the statue itself and of the lives of men of African Decent from our county who have been overlooked and should be honored. I have copied two of my colleagues on the Historical Commission as they have been a great help to me in this ongoing exercise.

Respectfully,

Colin Kimball
Collin County Historical Commission
Sent from Mail for Windows 10

From: Mark Doty
Sent: Friday, August 21, 2020 10:50 AM
To: Colin Kimball
Subject: Ross Cemetery tour

Colin,

Thank you for the phone calls and voicemail. My apologies for just now acknowledging them.

I ran your proposal by the City Manager’s office and City Attorney and while the offer and the intended spirit of a Ross Cemetery is appreciated, there is agreement a cemetery tour was outside the ‘official’ purview of the Advisory Board’s duties and expectations, which are to review Throckmorton and statue information/research and consider the various viewpoints of the community.
However, a tour could be arranged outside the official purview of the Advisory Board and/or it could be presented to Council that they tour Ross Cemetery. That can certainly be a point of discussion when we talk about other city sites/place/etc that need attention/should be reviewed.

Please let me know if you have any other questions or concerns about that issue.

I did have a question/comment about something Throckmorton related. In my attempt to boil down all the Throckmorton information so I can understand it personally, I wanted to make sure I personally understood his reason for voting against succession.

Using your timeline as a basis, Throckmorton voted against succession because he wanted to support the economic growth and development of Collin County and ensure the continued protection of the Texas frontier by Federal Troops. If he also wanted to bring transportation infrastructure via the railroads to the region to expand the opportunities of the land locked agrarian community that was the major economic engine for Collin County, it’s fair to say that Throckmorton’s concern was a pure economic one, not one of concern for the end of slavery per se. Am I on the right track with this?

I’m just wanting to clarify the reason for a ‘no’ succession vote, because I think that is a good point for Council to understand.

Thank you for any additional insight and/or comment.

Mark

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Throckmorton Statue – An Opinion

Colin Kimball

Politicians make poor role models. Statesmen and community leaders are rare. James Webb Throckmorton, began his professional career as a Medical Doctor but grew to love the art of Law and served as a Soldier, Lawyer, Legislator, Governor and US Representative. He became a politician that knew limits of the power that was afforded to him by his electorate. His negotiating skills are legion. He settled complicated land disputes of private landowners and absentee administrators for the Peters Colony. In his last major undertaking while serving in the Confederacy of Texas he negotiated a peace treaty with 20,000 Native Americans, from a dozen or more tribes. And yes, did I also say he served in the Confederacy? He did. Every white man that lived in Texas at the time did. It was compulsory.

Speaking of the Confederate era, Throckmorton is on record as advocating against Slavery in 1859, as he tried to form a pro Union political Party to contrast the will of the people against the pro slavery Democrats that were in control. As a Legislator in the Texas House, he was one of only 8 Legislators that stood and voted against Secession. He famously stated “when the rabble hiss, well may patriots tremble.” His writings demonstrate he stood against slavery and his legislative record clearly shows he stood against the Confederacy, yet, 1860 tax records show James W Throckmorton owned a Slave.

When Texas cast its lot with the Confederate States and seceded from the Union, Throckmorton put aside his pro Union ideals and took up arms to defend his home, his community, his State of Texas. This was his home and where his loved ones resided. That’s easier to comprehend. Owning a slave and advocating against the institution of slavery is not comprehensible, but then again, politicians have been known to say one thing and do another. While serving in the Confederate Army of Texas, Throckmorton, the Lawyer, stepped in and saved the lives of 16 pro Union men in Sherman, who were about to be Lynched due to the rabid confederate sentiment that infected this part of our nation. He stood for due process and the rule of law. These men were ultimately acquitted. Throckmorton saved their lives. That was a noble deed.

Throckmorton ultimately ascended to the rank of Brigadier General of the States Militia and deployed his soldiers to the far west frontier of the State, which by the way was just a little past Fort Worth, to protect the settlers from Indian Depredations that were rampant. This duty culminated into a short lived Peace Treaty he negotiated between the Confederate State of Texas and the Indian tribes. The treaty ultimately dissolved and depredations increased after the Confederate State of Texas ceased to exist in 1865.

Throckmorton was a complicated man. He advocated for the cessation of Slavery, but he wasn’t an abolitionist and he owned a slave. He advocated for the Union of the United States, but he became a Confederate. He advocated for the creation of railroads and sponsored legislation that helped the railroads get established, and he profited personally from those very same railroads. He defended the civil rights of Texans against the over-zealous Unionists that invaded the state during Reconstruction, but as Governor he failed to promote suffrage rights for freed slaves. He was a man with statesman like qualities that served some of the people, but not all of the people of Texas. These qualities interfered with the Marshal Law Imposed in Texas during his brief time as Governor, causing James Webb
Throckmorton to be fired from Office by US Army General Phillip Sheridan who was overseeing the reconstruction of the State of Texas after the civil war.

The statue of James W. Throckmorton on the historic town square in downtown McKinney, was erected by noble charitable ladies of the Women’s Federated Clubs, to honor their friend and most accomplished statesman of Collin County. A man who served in the State Legislature as a Representative and Senator, Governor, an after the granting of amnesty by President Grant, a multi-term US Representative. The statue is not a confederate monument. As for defining his impact on Collin County, the statue states “A slight tribute to a patriot and statesman from his fellow citizens and admirers because of his pre-eminent personal worth and distinguished public services.” It says little of who James W. Throckmorton was and what he did and did not accomplish. Without a description, it also allows people of differing perspectives to ascribe unfair guilt by association attributes to is meaning and significance.

Was James Throckmorton as Statesmen? Clearly he was to some, but for the community of Freed Slaves, his nobility pales in comparison to two freed slaves who were his contemporaries – Charlie Hubbard and Jacob “Jake” Chamberlain. Hubbard and Chamberlain built the first Freedman’s School as it was known with the most minimal of resources. Their hearts guided them to over-come financial, physical, logistical and prejudicial obstacles. They succeeded. Their accomplishment was indeed noble. Their recognition, beyond slight, is clearly absent. That should not stand. In 1918, Jeff Morgan Tucker, answered the call of his nation, made it all the way to France to serve in the Great War only to succumb from the Spanish Flu. In light of the racial prejudice that precluded men of African descent from taking up arms in the Allied Expeditionary Forces in this Great War, his deed was noble and mostly unrecognized. Edward S. Doty, elevated the academic standards of the former Freedman’s School, then known as the Fredrick Douglas School, such that all graduates were automatically granted admission into the historically Black Universities without need for an entrance exam. My personal favorite, Leonard Evans, served in the racially segregated United States Army in WWII and later faced a gauntlet of unwelcoming White Men when he became the first teacher of African descent in McKinney ISD. These aforementioned men accomplished great deeds that elevated others. This was done in the face of adversity with courage, dignity and honor. These men were statesmen of our community and teach all of us lessons. Evans excluded, no monuments or memorials exist to honor these men. That should not be!

James Webb Throckmorton was a complicated man. No doubt, he was a successful Politician. Collin County thrived from the infrastructure (railroads) that he worked tirelessly to establish as our Agrarian based economy grew more than six fold as a result. Throckmorton had Statesmen like moments of defending land ownership rights, advocating for the dissolution of Slavery, standing against Secession and negotiating with waring Indian tribes. Like all politicians, he knew his limits. Unfortunately freed slaves, could not vote for him and he fell short in his efforts to further advocate and legislate for them, especially in his short term as Governor. They were Texans too. Like him or not, he was a son of Collin County and he accomplished much. His statue, that “Slight Tribute,” should remain with an expanded explanation beside it that tells the complete story so it can stand as a benchmark to illustrate the progress we have made. As I said earlier, “Politicians make poor role models,” but our Statesmen, many whom have remained unknown, need to be celebrated so that we may forge a clearer path towards a more perfect Union.