



The Governor's Hounds: The Texas State Police, 1870'Äì1873 (Jack and Doris Smothers Series in Texas History, Life, and Culture)

Barry A. Crouch, Donaly E. Brice

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In the tumultuous years following the Civil War, violence and lawlessness plagued the state of Texas, often overwhelming the ability of local law enforcement to maintain order. In response, Reconstruction-era governor Edmund J. Davis created a statewide police force that could be mobilized whenever and wherever local authorities were unable or unwilling to control lawlessness. During its three years (1870-1873) of existence, however, the Texas State Police was reviled as an arm of the Radical Republican party and widely condemned for being oppressive, arrogant, staffed with criminals and African Americans, and expensive to maintain, as well as for enforcing the new and unpopular laws that protected the rights of freed slaves.

Drawing extensively on the wealth of previously untouched records in the Texas State Archives, as well as other contemporary sources, Barry A. Crouch and Donaly E. Brice here offer the first major objective assessment of the Texas State Police and its role in maintaining law and order in Reconstruction Texas. Examining the activities of the force throughout its tenure and across the state, the authors find that the Texas State Police actually did much to solve the problem of violence in a largely lawless state. While acknowledging that much of the criticism the agency received was merited, the authors make a convincing case that the state police performed many of the same duties that the Texas Rangers later assumed and fulfilled the same need for a mobile, statewide law enforcement agency.

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