**DEVINE, THOMAS JEFFERSON**

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**DEVINE, THOMAS JEFFERSON** (1820–1890). Thomas Jefferson Devine, eminent Texas jurist and Confederate diplomat, son of Irish emigrants William and Katherine (Maxwell) Devine, was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on February 28, 1820. He worked for several firms in New York City and at age fifteen clerked for a clothing merchant in Tallahassee, Florida. He read law in Woodville, Mississippi, in 1838, then spent three years studying law at Transylvania University in Kentucky. After receiving his degree and license to practice law, Devine went to La Grange, Texas. He married Helen Elder there on October 31, 1844, and they moved to San Antonio the same year. They were the parents of several children, five of whom, three sons and two daughters, survived Devine.

Devine was appointed San Antonio city attorney and served until 1851, when he was elected district judge, a post he held for ten years. He was a member of the [Secession Convention](https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/mjs01) in 1861 and was appointed a member of the Committee of Public Safety that supervised the surrender of federal troops, supplies, and property in Texas (*see* [COMMITTEES OF PUBLIC SAFETY](https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/mdc06)). He was appointed judge of the Confederate Western District of Texas. In 1864 Judge Devine was appointed by Gen. [Edmund Kirby Smith](https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fsm09) to go to Mexico to settle a dispute involving shipment of cotton from the Confederacy, a mission he accomplished successfully, thereby gaining fame as a diplomat.

At the close of the [Civil War](https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qdc02) Devine returned to Mexico in order to avoid taking the oath of allegiance to the federal government and spent several months there. Upon his return to San Antonio he was arrested by federal officers and imprisoned in Fort Jackson Barracks, New Orleans. He suffered from pneumonia and was released on parole in January 1866 upon his promise that he would not leave the United States.

He was twice indicted for high treason and, with [Jefferson Davis](https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fda42) and Clement Clay, was one of the only three persons charged with treason during the war. He was pardoned without a trial, however, and his citizenship was restored on June 17, 1867.

He was appointed associate justice of the Texas Supreme Court in 1874 but resigned, partly because his wife was seriously ill, before the end of his term. He returned to the private practice of law. In his legal career he achieved a high reputation for intelligence and honesty. At the Texas Democratic convention of 1878, Devine was urged to permit his name to be placed in nomination for governor but declined. In 1881–82 he was a member of the board of regents of the proposed University of Texas.

Judge Devine died at his home in San Antonio on March 16, 1890. Funeral services were held at Saint Mary's Catholic Church, with interment in San Fernando Cemetery Number 1. The town of Devine was named in his honor.

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*Handbook of Texas Online*, Yancey L. Russell, "DEVINE, THOMAS JEFFERSON," accessed August 23, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fde50>.

In the mid 1850’s Judge Devine formed a partnership with surveyor and San Antonio Mayor, Francois Giraud. Together they purchased large parcels of land from John M. Ross, many of the parcels being located in the Canon de los Helotes. They surveyed these large tracts into smaller parcels and sold them to many of the first settlers along Helotes Creek. Giraud sold the 1500 acres to Scots immigtant Dr. George F. Marnoch a portion of which would eventually become the townsite of Helotes.