

# TEXAS BRAZOS TRAIL

R E G I O N

This travel guide is made possible through the Texas Historical Commission's partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation, Office of the Governor – Economic Development and Tourism, Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas Commission on the Arts.

The Texas Historical Commission, the state agency for historic preservation, administers a variety of programs to preserve the archeological, historical and cultural resources of Texas.

### Texas Heritage Trails Program

The Texas Historical Commission is a leader in implementing and promoting heritage tourism efforts in Texas. The Texas Heritage Trails Program is the agency's top tourism initiative.



*It's like a whole other country.*

For additional copies of this brochure,  
call 866.276-6219.



**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
*real places telling real stories*

[www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us)

P.O. BOX 12276 • AUSTIN, TX 78711-2276  
PHONE: 512.463.6100 • FAX: 512.463.6374  
[www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us)

Funding provided through TxDOT's Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program  
Copyright © 2004, Texas Historical Commission.  
Printed in Texas, No. 7/04- 450M



## EXPLORING THE HERITAGE OF CENTRAL TEXAS

# The Texas Brazos Trail

**H**istory is determined not just by generals and frontier fighters, but by ordinary people living in little-known places. The Texas Brazos Trail Region is filled with legends of proud Native Americans who once roamed this land and courageous Spanish explorers who blazed the way for future settlers. Other stories feature determined men and women driving cattle north along the Chisholm Trail, cotton farmers struggling to get out of debt and townspeople with big dreams that rose and fell with the fortunes of the railroad.



*Railroad and Heritage Museum, Temple*



*Spirit of the Rivers paddleboat with East Terrace House Museum, Waco*

*Patchwork of the Land and its People*

This part of Texas is quietly appealing, a patchwork of farm and town built on a comfortable, human scale. As you drive through the region, you'll see miles of black-earth fields and green pastures bordered by creeks and wooded breaks. You'll cross the Brazos River and its major tributaries — the Bosque River, the Little River, Yegua Creek and the Navasota River.

The dark, rich soil of the Blackland Prairie proved ideal for growing cotton. Like the black gold — oil — that would be discovered later, it attracted a rush of immigrants eager to make a living. Anglo and African



Fantborp Inn State Historic Site, Anderson

American Southerners — and in lesser numbers Germans, Czechs, Norwegians and Swedes — settled here, bringing with them their distinctive cultures that continue to shape the region. After the Civil War, these immigrants transformed the Blackland Prairie into one of the most productive cotton-growing regions in the nation. Most were tenant farmers or sharecroppers who traded their labor — and in the case of tenant farmers, their tools, mules and seed — for a portion of the crop.

While cotton was relatively easy to grow in the Brazos region, transporting it proved a challenge. In the early days, farmers hauled their crop to nearby gins and the cotton eventually made its way to Texas Coastal towns for shipment to eastern U.S. markets. Before the

*...immigrants transformed the Blackland Prairie into one of the most productive cotton-growing regions in the nation.*

advent of river steamers and railroads, cotton buyers employed teamsters to make the overland trek, traversing the Brazos River at ferry crossings. Historical markers throughout the region mark the location of some of these early ferry crossings. By 1830, steamships started traveling the Brazos to ports farther south, making cotton transport easier, but the river was prone to flooding, and sandbars and snags made navigation difficult.



*Mayborn Museum Complex, Waco*

The arrival of the railroad removed those obstacles. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the railroad reshaped the area. Towns like Temple were built by the railroad. Others picked up and moved to be near it. The railroad transformed towns such as Waco and Bryan into booming commercial centers based largely on the shipment of cotton. You'll see that cotton wealth displayed in beautiful antebellum Greek Revival homes in Waco and the stunning commercial buildings of downtown Bryan.

Today, towns appear like scenes from a child's model railroad — a church, a passenger depot and a few shade trees. Visit these communities for a rare insight into a different time. Museums, historic sites, courthouse squares, old theaters and heritage festivals are among the exciting attractions awaiting visitors to the Texas Brazos Trail Region.



*Pioneer Village, Lexington*

## Explore the Texas Brazos Trail Region and you'll find many hidden treasures waiting to be discovered:

- ★ Visit railroad museums housed in restored passenger depots
- ★ Sample world-famous barbeque
- ★ Tour gracious historic homes
- ★ Step back in time at pioneer log cabin villages
- ★ Experience the life of a president at the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum
- ★ Explore military history at Fort Hood
- ★ Leisurely stroll around quaint courthouse squares



*Kolache Festival, Caldwell*



*Fort Parker State Park, Mexia*

TxDOT

*George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, College Station*





## 1 ANDERSON

While the picturesque Grimes County Courthouse is at the heart of this quaint rural community, Anderson offers more than what travelers see on busy Highway 90. It is home to the Fanthorp Inn State Historic Site. The white two-story clapboard inn was built in 1834 by English immigrant Henry Fanthorp and is an extraordinary example of architecture from Texas' pre-Republic era. You can almost hear the footsteps of travelers arriving exhausted after a long day in a stagecoach as it lurched over muddy, potholed roads. For \$1.50 a night, they would get a bed and meals. Supper usually consisted of beef or pork with mashed potatoes or grits, peas or beans in season, cornbread to sop up the gravy, and sweet potato or apple pie. Notice the "shoo-fly" flaps suspended above the dining room table, which a servant would pull during the meal to keep flies off the food. Be sure to check out the cherry-red 1850 Concord stagecoach in the barn. Horse-drawn stagecoach rides are offered the second Saturday each month.

## 2 BASTROP

The shops and businesses of this historically prosperous cotton and pine lumber town lie along the Colorado River instead of around a courthouse square. The cultural epicenter of Bastrop

County in the 19th century, the town boasted a fashionable private academy and a women's literary club. The Bastrop Opera House hosted a Shakespeare Society, poetry readings and even touring shows from New York City. Today, the renovated 1889 structure offers theater performances throughout the year. The Bastrop County Historical Society Museum displays county memorabilia in a home decorated with elegant period furnishings.

Twelve miles south of Bastrop near Rosanky, the Central Texas Museum of Automotive History has an impressive display of more than 100 vintage cars, from a 1933 Duesenberg Roadster with rumble seat to an American icon, the '57 Chevy convertible. East of town, Bastrop State Park offers hiking, biking and camping in the "Lost Pines" — a remnant of loblolly pines far removed from the vast pine forests of East Texas. The park's roads, trails and cabins were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Their fine craftsmanship is particularly reflected in the refectory building, designed in the rustic style favored by the National Park Service.



*Central Texas Museum of Automotive History, Rosanky*



*Fanthorp Inn State Historic Site, Anderson*



*Bastrop County Historical Society Museum, Bastrop*

### 3 BELTON

Founded in 1850, Belton grew as a trading center for nearby farms and ranches. Its merchants made the city a favorite rest stop for cowboys herding Longhorns up the Chisholm Trail. Today, visitors are drawn to the charming town square anchored by the magnificent Bell County Courthouse. Just off the square is the award-winning Bell County Museum, housed in a restored Beaux-Arts-style facility. Originally built as a Carnegie Library, the structure now features exciting, interactive exhibits that document the county's settlement and ranching history. The museum also features exhibits on two famous Bell County natives: acclaimed choreographer Alvin Ailey and Texas' first female governor Miriam A. "Ma" Ferguson.



*Bell County Museum, Belton*

### 4 BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION

Bryan's long, broad downtown commercial district features beautifully preserved historic buildings. An essential stop is the Greek Revival-style 1903 Carnegie Public Library, which houses a local history and genealogy center. Behind the library, the Children's Museum is a worthwhile stop if you're traveling with youngsters. Children can put on a puppet show, make crafts and climb through a tri-level "spaceship." Four miles from downtown Bryan, the Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History has a mural depicting the now-extinct mastodons, mammoths and saber-toothed cats that once roamed Texas. Check out the Pleistocene-era armadillo — a creature that would do serious damage to a pick-up truck. A fascinating exhibit chronicles the transport of cotton by ox cart, riverboat and rail. Also on display is a replicated chuck wagon, a mobile kitchen invented by cowboy Charles Goodnight that could feed a 10-man trail crew for 30 days.



*George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, College Station*

College Station offers first-class museums on the campus of Texas A&M University. The George Bush Presidential Library and Museum is an interactive, child-friendly facility. Visitors can trace the life of George H.W. Bush from his first steps as a toddler in Kennebunkport, Maine, to West Texas, where he became involved in the oil business, and on to Washington

*Children's Museum, Bryan*



D.C. Before becoming the nation's 41st president, he served as ambassador to the United Nations, Republican Party chair, chief liaison to China, director of central intelligence and vice president of the United States. A dramatic film clip shows Bush being rescued by an American submarine after his plane was shot down over Chichi Jima during World War II. An interactive light-up map and documentary dramatize the events that unfolded after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf War, both of which occurred during Bush's presidency.

The J. Wayne Stark University Center Galleries, located in Texas A&M's Memorial Student Center, offers rotating exhibits from the university's permanent collection of art. The works are mostly American with a strong Texas emphasis. In the same building, the MSC Forsyth Center Galleries has a beautiful collection of Tiffany glass vases, iridescent gold Art Nouveau Steuben vases, and French and English cameo glass.

For generations, the uniformed and leather-booted cadets have been an icon of Texas A&M. Photographs and memorabilia on display at the Corps of Cadets Center offer a sometimes moving, sometimes humorous look at the rituals of cadet life. Culture shock is visible on the faces of the fish (freshmen) as they are taught to leave self-interest behind — along with such luxuries as telephone and TV privileges — to embrace the new values of self-discipline and unity. The museum also features a vast antique firearms collection that includes 19th-century Colt pistols and early flintlock revolvers.





*Bosque Memorial Museum, Clifton*

## 5 CALDWELL

Known as the Kolache Capital of Texas, this 1850s town was located along Old San Antonio Road, a major artery for travel into Texas. Many of the state's Czech immigrants settled in Burleson County and each year, hundreds of people descend on the town to celebrate their heritage at the Kolache Festival, held in September. The rest of the year, visitors can explore local culture at the Burleson County Czech Heritage Museum. The museum displays folklore items and has a traditional Czech kitchen equipped with the necessities: a cabbage slicer for making sauerkraut and bottles of Pilsner. The Burleson County Museum, located in the basement of the Burleson County Courthouse, explores the county's history and displays artifacts of early settlers. Visitors can also stop by the newly opened Caldwell Visitor Civic Center, which features exhibits and a video documenting the town's history.



Fort Worth Star-Telegram

*Norwegian heritage abounds in Clifton*

## 6 CAMERON

A beautiful historic county courthouse with perfectly manicured grounds welcome guests to this charming community. For a glimpse into the past, explore a miniature model of Cameron, circa 1940, on display in the county clerk's office. For a more in-depth look at county memorabilia, visit the Milam County Historical Museum, which occupies the old county jail and a historic building on the square. The castle-like Romanesque-Revival structure, complete with gloomy cells and gallows tower, was restored as a jail and sheriff's living quarters. Just down the street, an old department store is home to the museum's impressive collection of county artifacts, including a compelling series of letters from soldiers during the Civil War, one describing the Battle of Antietam.



*Milam County Courthouse, Cameron*

## 7 CLIFTON

Nestled on the Bosque River in an area of shady creeks and limestone cliffs, Clifton is known as the Norwegian Capital of Texas. The first Norwegian settlers arrived in 1854, the year the county was established. Clifton's 1923 Bosque Memorial Museum preserves the community's distinct heritage with artifacts from Norwegian pioneer Jacob Olson. The descendants of those early settlers — with such names as Aars, Bakke and Orbeck — still fill the Lutheran churches of Clifton, and the tiny nearby communities of Norse and Cranfills Gap preserve their traditions. Norwegians gather from far and wide for the annual smorgasbord in Norse and the lutefisk dinner at Cranfills Gap. The Norwegian Country Christmas Tour is another cultural tradition in Clifton. The event, held every December, features a tour of homes, churches and museums. During the festivities and throughout the year, visit the Bosque Conservatory, which highlights Clifton's strong artist community through live performances and art exhibits.

## 8 DIME BOX

A quiet little country town, Dime Box (pop. 250) was originally called Brown's Mill after the local gristmill that gave the settlement its start. The U.S. Post Office requested the name change because it thought "Brown's Mill" would be confused with "Brownsville." One resident suggested the name Dime Box because of the custom of leaving a dime in a box for the person who carried mail and packages from Giddings. Dime Box moved from its original mill site to be near the old highway, El Camino Real (now Highway 21). When the railroad came through, the town picked up and moved again. The settlement left behind became Old Dime Box. The Dime Box Heritage Museum displays artifacts donated by local residents, including German and Czech quilts and a miniature Czech First Communion book.



## 9 ELGIN

Established in 1872 around cotton and the railroads, Elgin is famous for two products it's been making since 1882: reliable bricks and delicious hot sausage. This small community just outside Austin produces 232 million bricks and 3 million pounds of sausage annually. Visitors can sample the famous sausage at any of the community's historic barbeque joints and at annual community celebrations like Western Days in June and the Hogeye Festival in October. The beautifully restored buildings in the historic district are made of locally produced brick dating from the 1890s. The new Elgin Union Depot Museum, in an award-winning restored depot, explores the history of the railroads, agriculture, transportation and the Swedes who settled the Blackland Prairies.



*Elgin Union Depot Museum,  
Elgin*



*Freestone County Historical Museum, Fairfield*

## 10 FAIRFIELD

Surrounded by ranchland and peach orchards dotted with farm stands, Fairfield offers heritage attractions downtown and recreational opportunities at nearby Fairfield Lake. The Freestone County Historical Museum is housed in a 125-year-old, castle-like brick building that used to serve as the county jail. Two log cabins moved to the museum grounds are open to visitors: the two-story Carter log home, a typical pioneer dwelling that contains a number of original furnishings; and the Potter-Watson log cabin.

## 11 GATESVILLE

Rolling farmland with wooded breaks along the Leon River marks the approach to Gatesville. In the town square, the magnificent Beaux Arts courthouse is easily recognized by its soaring cupola with clock and bell tower. The Coryell Museum and Historical Center, located just off the 1897 courthouse square, displays a double-walled log jail and a large collection of spurs, as well as an impressive assortment of memorabilia from the county's churches, schools and businesses.



## 12 GEORGETOWN

Selected as a “Great American Main Street,” by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Georgetown’s charming courthouse square is a favorite location of Hollywood film scouts. In the copper-domed courthouse in 1923, District Attorney (later Attorney General and Governor) Dan Moody prosecuted a decisive case against the Ku Klux Klan. The Williamson County Historical Museum, in the Beaux Arts Farmers Bank Building on the square, houses county history exhibits and archives. The Palace Theatre, with its distinctive Art Deco sconces and zigzags on the interior walls, has been restored and now hosts musical events and plays. Nearby Inner Space Cavern reveals a subterranean world of stalactites, stalagmites and the remains of prehistoric mastodons and wolves.



*Williamson County Courthouse,  
Georgetown*



*Georgetown Square, Georgetown*

Josh Lasserre

## 13 GIDDINGS

Wends, a distinct ethnic people of conservative Lutheran faith, established Giddings in 1872. The town’s historic courthouse and bustling downtown offer interesting shops and restaurants. The Lee County Heritage Center, housed in the 1879 Schubert-Fletcher Greek Revival home on the courthouse square, displays historical photos and other county artifacts.



*Wendish Church, Serbin*

Six miles south of Giddings, visitors can explore the original Wendish settlement of Serbin. Today, all that remains is a feed store and an intriguing old church. Next to the church, the Wendish Heritage Museum tells the story of these determined people, who emigrated here in 1854 in search of religious freedom and economic opportunities. A Slavic people — their language is closely related to Polish, Czech and Slovak — the Wends were a persecuted minority in Germanic Saxony and Prussia. Physically segregated, they were forbidden to own land and were denied admission to professional guilds. Under pressure to abandon their language and culture, 600 Wends gathered their possessions, sailed to America, and made the arduous journey inland by foot and ox cart to Lee County. In the 20th century, assimilation accomplished what political pressure could not: The Wends widely intermarried and dispersed, and today their language is nearly extinct.

*Lee County Courthouse, Giddings*



14

## GROESBECK

Established by the railroad in 1870, Groesbeck is the home of Old Fort Parker. This replica stockade blockhouse fort recalls the day on May 19, 1836, when a band of Comanches and Kiowas attacked the small group of settlers living there. Five men were killed, and five women and children were captured. One of them, 9-year-old Cynthia Ann Parker, grew up with the Comanches and later married Chief Peta Nocona. Recaptured 24 years later with her 2-year-old daughter Prairie Flower, she tried several times to escape. She and her daughter had difficulty adjusting to Anglo life, and they both died about four years later. Her son, Quanah Parker, became the last great Comanche chief. The victims of the Fort Parker raid are buried in nearby Fort Parker Memorial Cemetery.

15

## HICO

Originally established along scenic Honey Creek, in 1880 Hico residents moved two miles to the Bosque River to be near the railroad. Today, Hico attracts visitors with its charming, Wild West-themed two-block main street. Country-western music serenades shoppers as they visit the antique and craft shops, some of which sell cowboy art. Frederick's of Hico is a working blacksmith shop that offers demonstrations and classes. The Billy the Kid Museum, located downtown, has intriguing exhibits and a gift shop designed like a saloon.



*Downtown Hico*

*1st Cavalry Division Museum at Fort Hood, Killeen*



16

## KILLEEN

This small farming community changed forever in 1942 when Camp Hood was established here in anticipation of U.S. involvement in World War II. Today, Fort Hood is the largest military base in the world and sprawls over 335 square miles. Two museums on base display the history of Fort Hood's two active divisions. The 1st Cavalry Division Museum explores the history of the division that was formed in Texas in 1921, was converted from horseback to helicopter prior to the Vietnam War, and now serves as an armored cavalry division. The 4th Infantry Division Museum traces the history of a division created to fight in World War I. Forces later landed at Utah Beach on D-Day and fought in the Battle of the Bulge during WWII, and in 2003 captured Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

*The Woodbine Hotel and Restaurant, Madisonville*



17

## LEXINGTON

Grazing horses create a pastoral scene and mark the approach to quiet, out-of-the-way Lexington, the oldest town in Lee County. Settled in 1850, it grew with the arrival of the railroad in 1890. Pioneer Village, at one end of the lovely town square, consists of two authentic log cabins relocated to this spot — a single-room cabin and a dogtrot cabin with a detached kitchen.

18

## MADISONVILLE

Located at a crossroads where State Highway 21 (El Camino Real) meets Interstate 45, Madisonville was named for President James Madison. Just off Madisonville's quiet town square is the newly opened Madison County Museum. Located in a historic bank building, the museum offers a glimpse of the county's past. While in town, relax with a first-class meal and a good night's sleep at The Woodbine Hotel and Restaurant. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the structure was built in 1904 by Russian-born Jake Shapira and his wife Sarah. The Shapiras built the Victorian hotel using two Sears kit houses they purchased at the St. Louis World's Fair and yellow longleaf pine from East Texas.

19

## MARLIN

In 1892, a gusher blew in Marlin — not of oil but of hot mineral water. In a discovery that would change the face of the community, water shot 75 feet into the air. Within three years, Marlin became a spa boomtown. People flocked from all over the country to enjoy the purported health benefits of the mineral waters.

The introduction of antibiotics and other modern medical treatments diminished the need for “taking the waters.” Marlin's grand bathhouses no longer stand, but the artesian wells still spew 48,000 gallons of 147-degree water each day. The geothermal energy is used to heat the chamber of commerce office and the hospital. At the Hot Water Pavilion downtown, visitors can touch the hot water pouring from a marble fountain. Across the street, a 1929 Hilton Hotel, one of the first built by hotelier Conrad Hilton, still stands as a poignant reminder of the



*Pioneer Village, Lexington*

*Hot Water Pavilion, Marlin*





*Public Schools Museum, Mexia*

town's bustling spa era.

20

## MEXIA

Established in 1871, Mexia enjoyed a brief spurt as an oil boomtown. Things got so rowdy that for a short time in 1922, the year of peak production, the town was put under military control.

At the Confederate Reunion Grounds, now a state historic site, Civil War veterans met nearly every year from 1889 through 1933. Their purpose was to preserve the strong bonds they formed during the war, to preserve the memory of their fallen comrades, and to aid the widows and orphans of the dead and the disabled survivors. Attractions include the 1872 Heritage House, an 1893 dance pavilion and a Civil War steel-barreled cannon.

Nearby, Fort Parker State Park offers camping and recreation in wooded areas along Fort Parker Lake and the Navasota River. (See Groesbeck for more information on Fort Parker, the park's namesake.) Inside the park, a shady historic cemetery with crooked tombstones — as well as a constantly flowing spring — is all that remains of the once-thriving city of Springfield, a county seat that had a college and was home to many prominent citizens.

Class pictures, football trophies and other memorabilia from Mexia's former students fill the Public Schools Museum, a family

21 rapbook for the town.

## ROUND ROCK

Today, Round Rock is better known for high-tech than history, but this sprawling bedroom community to Austin actually has deep historic roots. Stagecoaches and cattle herds traveling through the area often crossed Brushy Creek near the famous circular limestone rock that marked a safe low-water crossing point. Legend has it that early wheel ruts from the wagons of settlers and cattlemen are still clearly visible on the creek bottom. Downtown, the Palm House Museum displays two furnished rooms of the 1873 home of Swedish immigrant Andrew Palm. The house was moved here from the Swedish Palm Valley settlement east of town. The site also serves as Round Rock's visitor center.

22

## SALADO

The limestone springs and abundance of fish attracted Native Americans, explorers, settlers and cattle drivers to this serene spot on Salado Creek. Today, day-trippers fill the same narrow streets cattle once crowded. Old limestone buildings and handsome historic homes thrive as galleries, shops and restaurants. On a hill overlooking Main Street, a few rock walls are all that remain of the once prosperous Salado College. A bronze statue of Col. E.S.C. Robertson welcomes visitors to the site. Robertson donated the land for the school in 1859. Also downtown, the Stagecoach Inn, now a restaurant with an attached modern motel, has been



*Stagecoach Inn, Salado*



*Palm House Museum, Round Rock*

23erving weary travelers since the early 1860s.

### SMITHVILLE

A tree-shaded, six-block historic district and a Main Street filled with antique stores welcome visitors to this peaceful community. This town was platted in 1829 and later blossomed after the arrival of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas (MKT or “Katy”) Railroad in the 1890s. A quaint park, the Railroad Historical Park and Museum, at the end of Main Street pays tribute to the railroad and showcases its importance to the community.

Smithville’s authentic small-town feel was revealed to the world with the release of “Hope Floats” in 1998. The movie, which features Sandra Bullock, was filmed at various locations throughout Smithville. The antebellum mansion seen in the film and other grand historic homes lie just off Main Street.



*Col. E.S.C. Robertson Statue, Salado*

TXDOT



*Somerville Area Museum, Somerville*

24

### SOMERVILLE

Some Texas towns have the distinct smell of cattle or oil, but when old-timers wax nostalgic about Somerville’s early days, they recall a different scent: creosote, a wood preservative. A tiny railroad town, Somerville once boasted a railroad tie factory (hence the creosote odor) and a roundhouse that serviced steam engines. Travelers could always get a good meal at the passenger depot, which housed a Harvey House restaurant. During the railroading era, these elegant restaurants were found in depots throughout the Southwest. Alas, the Somerville depot is now gone, but its story lives on at the Somerville Area Museum, which is located in a historic building downtown. Visitors can explore the town’s railroad past through historic photographs, memorabilia, military exhibits and pioneer artifacts.





*Burlington-Rock Island Railroad Museum, Teague*

25

## TAYLOR

Established by the railroad in the late 1800s, Taylor quickly became a busy shipping point for cattle, grain and cotton. Today, visitors are attracted to Taylor's bustling historic downtown area filled with distinctive shops and authentic barbecue joints.

The community also features a restored 1887 home that served as the birthplace of Texas' youngest governor, Dan Moody. The home, now the Moody Museum, is dedicated to preserving the life of this successful Taylor native.



*Moody Museum, Taylor*

26

## TEAGUE

A quiet hamlet today, Teague was a major railroad town at the turn-of-the-20th century — the heyday of American passenger travel. As many as six trains a day arrived here, a main destination point between Houston and Fort Worth. The Trinity & Brazos Valley Railway served Teague, as well as numerous other cotton towns, and was nicknamed the “Boll Weevil” line after the pests that fed on cotton. The Burlington-Rock Island Railroad Museum, housed in a stunning redbrick depot with Romanesque arches and an Italianate tower, explains this story and more. The structure, built in the early 1900s as a depot, now pays tribute to the industry for which it was established through railroad exhibits, historic photographs and displayed railcars. The museum also honors local history including exhibits pertaining to churches, schools, merchants and organizations.



## TEMPLE

Temple was built by the railroad, so it's fitting that one of the best railroad museums in Texas is located here. The Railroad & Heritage Museum, on the second floor of a beautifully restored 1910 passenger depot, is dedicated to Temple's booming railroad days. In addition to first-class exhibits, the museum offers wonderful interactive opportunities and a children's playroom. The depot sits on a working railway line and visitors can listen to live dispatches while watching the train traffic from a second-floor viewing alcove.

Temple is also the home to the Slovanska Podporujici Jednota Statu Texas (SPJST) Museum. The SPJST is a society dedicated to assisting with the financial, social and cultural needs of its members. The museum is a repository of Czech culture, with handcrafted items on display and a 23,000-volume library and archive.

The Grove (pop. 40), 15 miles west of Temple, is a fascinating turn-of-the-century "ghost town" and live music venue. Established in 1859 and named for the grove of live oak trees surrounding it, this tiny farming community was once one of the most prosperous towns in the county with a post office, three general stores and a two-teacher school. The town's decline began in the 1940s and the last business closed in the early 1970s. A collector then bought the old general store, post office, saloon and blacksmith shop. The general store is filled floor to pressed-tin ceiling with antique farm implements and lanterns, patent medicines and broad axes — artifacts he rents out for films such as "Lonesome Dove" and "The Alamo." This community comes to life on the weekends with spontaneous live music performances and droves of tourists.



*The Railroad and Heritage Museum, Temple*

## Lights of the Blackland

**E**xperience the holiday season in the Blackland cotton country with breathtaking lighting displays set against a backdrop of historic buildings and flowing rivers. Visit the following communities from December 1 to January 1 for impressive decorations and events. For more information, contact the Taylor Chamber of Commerce at 512.365.8485.



Photo Credit: TXDOT

*Christmas time in Taylor*

<i>Bastrop</i>	<i>Granger</i>
<i>Bartlett</i>	<i>Hutto</i>
<i>Coupland</i>	<i>Taylor</i>
<i>Elgin</i>	<i>Thorndale</i>

## The Chisholm Trail

**I**n the mid-1800s, more than six million cattle were herded out of Texas. One popular route brought cattle through the heart of what is now the Texas Brazos Trail Region. Visit historic sites, museums and attractions in the following communities to learn more about this significant era.

Belton	Round Rock
Clifton	Salado
Georgetown	Waco
Meridian	



Situated along the scenic banks of the Brazos River, Waco grew as a result of the cotton industry. After turbulent times during the Civil War, cattlemen helped revive the city with cattle drives along the Chisholm Trail. They moved their herds across the wide Brazos River, using a single-span suspension bridge that was one of the largest of its time. In 1871, the first of three rail lines reached the city, and Waco became a thriving commercial center.

Visitors to Waco can experience its first-rate museums and opulent historic homes beginning with the new Mayborn Museum Complex, a child-friendly natural and cultural history museum housed in a soaring neo-Georgian building on the Baylor University campus. One memorable display describes the flash flood and mudslide that is thought to have trapped the 23 mammoths discovered at the Waco Mammoth Site. Visitors can walk through a limestone cave or tour Waco-area homes, circa 1850: a Waco Indian grass hut, a Comanche teepee and an Anglo settler's log cabin. An outdoor exhibit represents life in an 1890s Texas town. Situated on the Brazos River, the structures were moved to the Mayborn site from Liberty County in the 1980s. Visitors can walk through the old buildings and learn about the hardscrabble lives of cotton growers. Also on the Baylor campus is the Martin Museum of Art, which features contemporary collections.

While in Waco, be sure to visit the popular Texas Sports Hall of Fame, dedicated to Texas sports heroes from George Foreman to Babe Didrikson Zaharias. Down the street, the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum tells the stories of the men and women in one of the oldest law enforcement agencies in the country. Formed in 1835 to protect the frontier, the Texas Rangers historically are a formidable force. The museum showcases this history and inspires an appreciation for this legendary symbol of Texas and the American West.

The Waco Suspension Bridge, a National Historic Landmark created by the designer of the Brooklyn Bridge, remains a centerpiece of the city's downtown. The Riverwalk, extending from the bridge to Fort Fisher Park and the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, offers picnic spots and beautiful views

of the Brazos River. Also downtown is the Dr Pepper Museum, where visitors can order a Dr Pepper float at the soda fountain and learn about the soft drink invented at the Old Corner Drug Store. The museum is housed in a handsome Richardsonian Romanesque building that served as the original headquarters and bottling plant.



*Suspension Bridge, Waco*

*While in Waco, be sure to visit the popular Texas Sports Hall of Fame, dedicated to Texas sports heroes from George Foreman to Babe Didrikson Zaharias.*



*Texas Sports Hall of Fame, Waco*

Several gracious historic homes are open to the public, including the Greek Revival Earle-Harrison House, which has white columns, a sweeping veranda and landscaped grounds. The structure was home to Thomas Harrison, one of six Confederate generals that called Waco home. The McCullough House, a modified Greek Revival home, was built in 1866, then sold to Mr. and Mrs. Champe Carter McCullough in 1872. Located on its original site, the Fort House is a magnificent home on beautifully landscaped grounds. The home has a music room and a collection of Pickard china on display upstairs. The Greek Revival Earle-Napier-Kinnard House boasts white-pillared porticos and is said to be the second brick house in Waco. The East Terrace is an Italianate-style redbrick villa built in the 1870s. Its scenic setting on the banks of the Brazos River offers an authentic experience for visitors.

An educational opportunity awaits visitors to the Heritage Homestead Traditional Craft Village in Elm Mott, north of Waco. The site offers classes in gardening, beekeeping, canning, soap making, quilting, weaving, spinning and more. At the visitors' center, travelers can buy fine handcrafted wood items and craft how-to books and kits. Thousands flock to this peaceful setting each November for a heritage festival that showcases crafts of yesteryear.



*Dr Pepper Museum, Waco*

*The communities of the Texas Brazos Trail Region played a vital role in the development of the state, both culturally and economically. The sites featured in this brochure remind us of that important contribution and allow us to experience the stories firsthand.*



*Fort House Museum, Waco*



## COMMUNITIES IN THE TEXAS BRAZOS TRAIL REGION

For more information on the sites in this brochure, use the *Texas State Travel Guide* as a reference or call the sources listed below for site locations and hours, as well as details about events and other local attractions.

Many information centers are closed weekends, please contact in advance. To obtain a free *Texas State Travel Guide*, call 800.traveltex or visit [www.traveltex.com](http://www.traveltex.com).

### **Anderson**

City Hall  
936.873.3102

### **Bastrop**

Chamber of Commerce  
512.321.2419  
[www.bastropchamber.org](http://www.bastropchamber.org)

### **Belton**

Chamber of Commerce  
254.939.3551  
[www.beltontxchamber.com](http://www.beltontxchamber.com)

### **Bryan-College Station**

Convention and Visitors Bureau  
979.260.9898  
[www.bryan-collegestation.org](http://www.bryan-collegestation.org)

### **Caldwell**

Chamber of Commerce  
979.567.3218  
[www.rtis.com/reg/caldwell](http://www.rtis.com/reg/caldwell)

### **Calvert**

Chamber of Commerce  
979.364.2559  
[www.rtis.com/reg/calvert](http://www.rtis.com/reg/calvert)

### **Cameron**

Chamber of Commerce  
254.697.4979  
[www.cameron-tx.com](http://www.cameron-tx.com)

### **Centerville**

Chamber of Commerce  
903.536.7261  
[www.rtis.com/reg/centerville](http://www.rtis.com/reg/centerville)

### **Clifton**

Chamber of Commerce  
800.344.3720  
[www.cliftontexas.org](http://www.cliftontexas.org)

### **Copperas Cove**

Chamber of Commerce  
254.547.7571  
[www.copperascove.com](http://www.copperascove.com)

### **Dime Box**

Lexington Chamber of Commerce  
979.773.4337

### **Elgin**

Chamber of Commerce  
512.285.4515  
[www.elgintx.com](http://www.elgintx.com)

### **Fairfield**

Chamber of Commerce  
903.389.5792  
[www.fairfieldtx.com/chamber/index.htm](http://www.fairfieldtx.com/chamber/index.htm)

### **Gatesville**

Chamber of Commerce  
254.865.2617  
[www.gatesvilletx.info](http://www.gatesvilletx.info)

### **Georgetown**

Convention and Visitors Bureau  
800.436.8696  
[www.visitgeorgetown.com](http://www.visitgeorgetown.com)

### **Giddings**

Chamber of Commerce  
979.542.3455  
[www.giddingstx.com](http://www.giddingstx.com)



*The Grove*



**Groesbeck**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 254.729.3894  
[www.groesbecktexas.org](http://www.groesbecktexas.org)

**Hamilton**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 254.386.3216

**Hearne**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 979.279.2351  
[www.hearnetexas.info](http://www.hearnetexas.info)

**Hico**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 254.796.4620  
[www.hico-tx.com](http://www.hico-tx.com)

**Killeen**  
 Civic & Conference Center and  
 Visitors Bureau  
 254.501.3888  
[www.killeen-cvb.com](http://www.killeen-cvb.com)

**Lexington**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 979.773.4337

**Madisonville**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 409.348.3591  
[www.madisonvillechamber.com](http://www.madisonvillechamber.com)

**Marlin**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 254.803.3301  
[www.marlintexas.com](http://www.marlintexas.com)

**Meridian**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 254.435.2966  
[www.meridian-chamber.com](http://www.meridian-chamber.com)

**Mexia**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 888.535.5476  
[www.mexiachamber.com](http://www.mexiachamber.com)

**Navasota**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 936.825.6600  
[www.navasotatx.com](http://www.navasotatx.com)

**Rockdale**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 512.446.2030  
[www.rockdalechamber.com](http://www.rockdalechamber.com)

**Round Rock**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 800.747.3479  
[www.roundrockchamber.org](http://www.roundrockchamber.org)

**Salado**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 254.947.5040  
[www.salado.com](http://www.salado.com)

**Smithville**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 512.237.2313  
[www.ci.smithville.tx.us](http://www.ci.smithville.tx.us)

**Somerville**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 979.596.2383  
[www.rtis.com/reg/somerville/default.htm](http://www.rtis.com/reg/somerville/default.htm)

**Taylor**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 512.352.6364  
[www.taylorchamber.org](http://www.taylorchamber.org)

**Teague**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 254.739.2061  
[www.teaguetexas.net](http://www.teaguetexas.net)

**Temple**  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 254.773.2105  
[www.temple-tx.org](http://www.temple-tx.org)

**Waco**  
 Convention and Visitors Bureau  
 800.321.9226  
[www.wacocvb.com](http://www.wacocvb.com)



The Texas Historical Commission promotes the highest national standards for historic preservation and does not endorse the relocation of historic structures without thorough documentation of the building on its original site. The professional processes required for such action are intended to record and preserve historic properties for the full enjoyment and education of present and future generations.



[www.thc.state.tx.us/travel](http://www.thc.state.tx.us/travel)  
[www.texasbrazostrail.com](http://www.texasbrazostrail.com)  
[www.traveltexas.com](http://www.traveltexas.com)

## TEXAS BRAZOS TRAIL REGION TEXAS MAIN STREET CITIES

Visitors can stroll the sidewalks and peruse shops in one of the region's seven Texas Main Street Cities. Partnering with the Texas Historical Commission, these communities work to revitalize their historic commercial areas, which are often the heart of town.

- ★ Clifton
- ★ Elgin
- ★ Fairfield
- ★ Gatesville
- ★ Georgetown
- ★ Marlin
- ★ Taylor

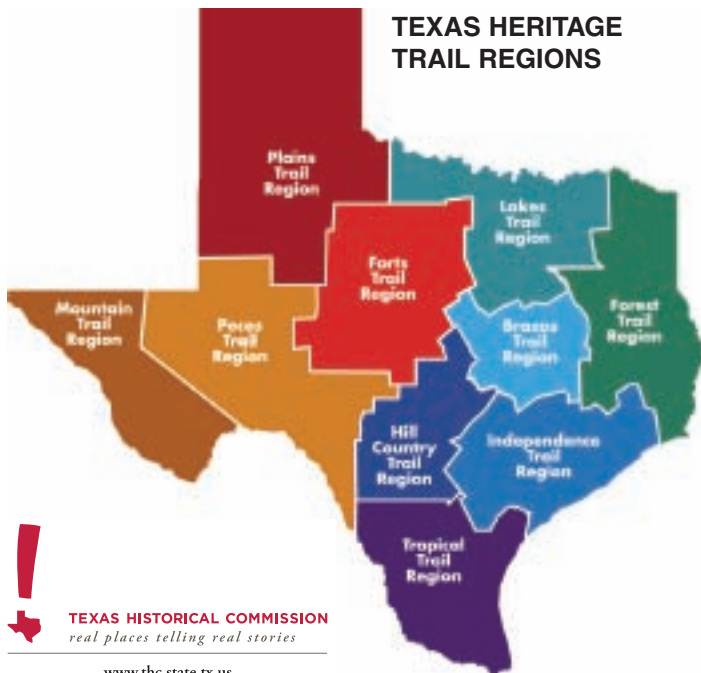


*Palace Theatre, Georgetown*

## REGIONAL STATE PARKS AND STATE HISTORIC SITES

Visit the area's beautiful parks and historic sites owned and operated by Texas Parks and Wildlife. For more information, please call 800/792-1112 or visit [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us).

- ★ Fanthorp Inn State Historic Site, Anderson
- ★ Bastrop State Park, Bastrop
- ★ Fort Boggy State Park, Centerville
- ★ Fairfield Lake State Park, Fairfield
- ★ Meridian State Park, Meridian
- ★ Confederate Reunion Grounds State Historic Site, Mexia
- ★ Fort Parker State Park, Mexia
- ★ Mother Neff State Park, Moody
- ★ Buescher State Park, Smithville
- ★ Lake Somerville State Parks and Trailway, Somerville



*Confederate Reunion Grounds State Historic Site, Mexia*