

TEXAS LAKES TRAIL

R E G I O N

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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.

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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.



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PHONE 512.463.6100 • FAX 512.475.8222
www.thc.state.tx.us

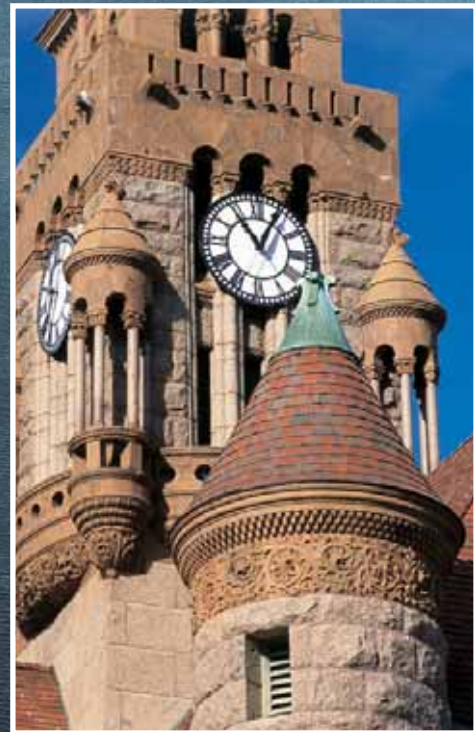


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EXPLORING THE HERITAGE OF NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS

*Inset: Wise County Courthouse, Decatur
Background: Lake Texoma*

The Texas Lakes Trail

Where the Old South meets the Wild West

Geographically and historically, the Texas Lakes Trail Region of North Texas has long been a meeting place. Once, a great ancient sea met the land here.

The sea receded. The land became rolling tallgrass prairies — the Blackland and Grand Prairies — located between piney woods to the east and wind-blown plains to the west. Major rivers — the Red, Trinity, Brazos, Sabine and Sulphur crossed the prairies, as did belts of hardwood forests called the Eastern and Western Cross Timbers.

In these verdant grasslands and scattered forests, game such as buffalo, pronghorn and bear thrived. Bands of Wichita and Caddo Indians lived here in domed grass huts, hunting game and growing corn, tobacco and melons.

Spanish soldiers of the De Soto-Moscoso Expedition trekked here in 1542, searching in vain for gold and silver. The French arrived from neighboring Louisiana in the 1700s, engaging in trade with local Indians.

During the first half of the 19th century, settlers from the South and Midwest trickled into the region. The trickle became a flood after the Republic of Texas became the state of Texas in 1845. Cotton growers and their slaves extended the cotton culture to the prairies, turning rich Blackland into cotton plantations.



Downtown Grapevine

As farms and towns cropped up, authorities pushed out native peoples and established frontier forts, including Fort Worth, to protect the settlers.

Frontier settlers kept up with news from “back East” via the Butterfield Overland Mail stagecoaches which rambled through here (1858–61) on their way from St. Louis to California.

Despite anti-secession sentiment in a few counties, the region supplied men and materials to the Confederacy during the Civil War. After the war, families fled the ravaged South for a fresh start on the prairies and freed slaves moved from plantations into growing towns such as Dallas.

A new Texas enterprise arrived on the prairies in the 1870s and 1880s — the cowboy culture. Drovers herded millions of Longhorns from South Texas through North Texas along the Chisholm, Shawnee and Western cattle trails, crossing at the Red River on their way to market railheads in Kansas.

Cattle and cotton shaped the culture, but steel rails brought the first prosperity in the late 1800s. With the arrival of trains, Texas cattle, cotton and other agricultural products found unprecedented access to outside markets.



*Fossil Rim Wildlife Center,
Glen Rose*

*Hopkins County Museum and
Heritage Park, Sulphur Springs*

By the turn-of-the-20th century, rising wealth and burgeoning populations turned Dallas and Fort Worth into centers of commerce and culture. In the 1910s and 1920s, oil discoveries in North Texas further boosted the economy.

Big lakes began dotting the prairies beginning in the 1930s, as several decades of federal dam building impounded more than 30 major lakes, providing reliable water resources to a growing region. The Trinity River basin formed lakes such as Ray Roberts, Lewisville, Lavon, Ray Hubbard, Cedar Creek and Richland Creek. On the Sabine River came Lake Tawakoni. The largest of all, Lake Texoma, harnessed the middle stretch of the flood-prone Red River. Reservoirs also created new opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Today, the Lakes Trail Region sprawls across 31 counties from the Red River in the north to the Bosque River in the south, from the prairie cities of Paris and Sulphur Springs in the

*Experience a culture shaped by
cattle and cotton.*

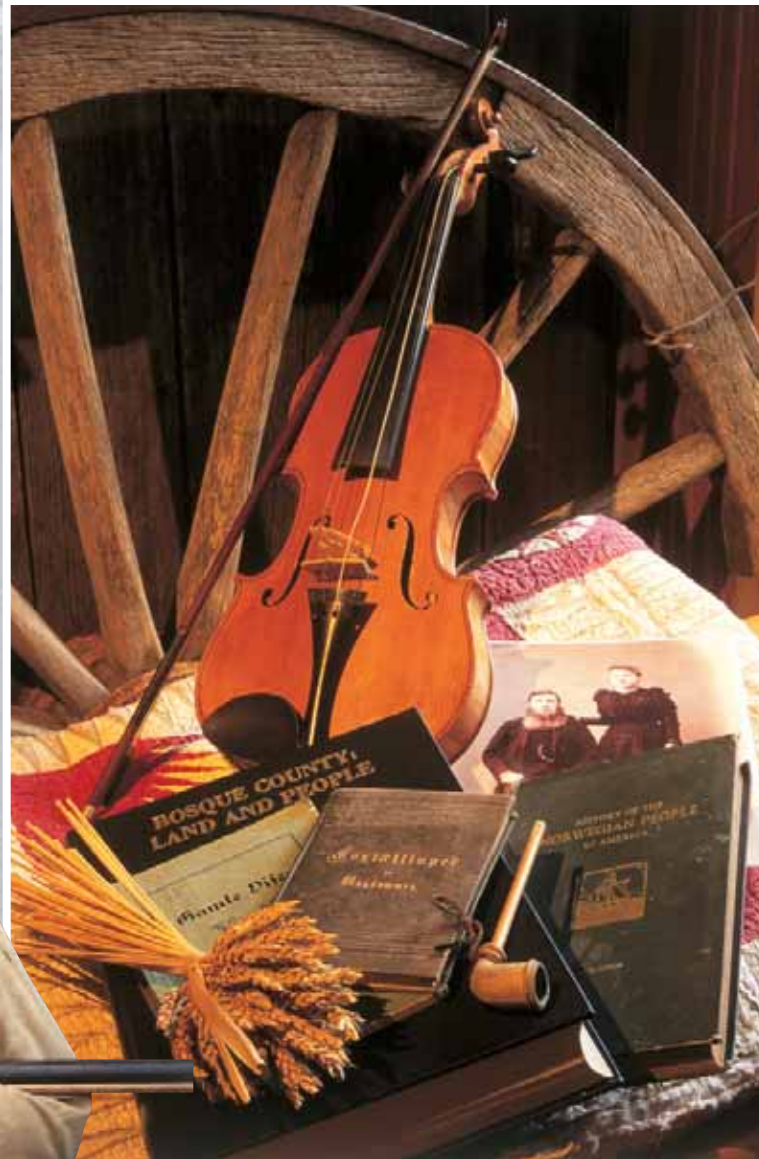


east to the plains cities of Wichita Falls and Vernon in the west. The Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex remains the regional hub, offering an array of world-class cultural, commercial and educational opportunities.

Cities, towns and farms have replaced the tallgrass prairies, though a few still exist. The Texas Lakes Trail Region remains a

meeting place — where the heritage of the Old South meets the heritage of the Wild West.

The Texas Historical Commission created this brochure to highlight heritage sites that preserve the fascinating story of the diverse peoples — Indians, Spanish, French, Americans, African slaves and Texans — who made this place their home.



Bosque County Museum, Clifton



Historic home, Farmersville



Parker County Peach Festival, Weatherford

TXDOT



verflowing with adventure, beauty and history, the Texas Lakes Trail Region offers an exceptional travel experience. With so much to see and do, the only problem is deciding where to start. This travel guide makes that easy by dividing the region into four sections, each accessible from the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Each is filled with the heritage and culture that makes the region, as well as Texas, truly unique. Here are a few of the many things to see and do:

- Explore history museums on topics from the cotton and cattle cultures to African American and Hispanic heritage.
- Peruse shops and eateries on quaint courthouse squares or tour world-class art museums.
- Watch cowboys vie in rodeos and Native Americans dance in powwows.
- Enjoy shows at restored vaudeville theaters or overnight in historic lodgings.
- Ride a steam-powered train or hop a 1940s urban electric trolley.
- Sample Texas wines or nibble on fruitcake famous for more than a century.
- Visit the world's largest state fair or the world's largest flea market.
- Step inside the ancient footprint of a dinosaur or stroll prairies unchanged in 150 years.



Pioneer Park, Dallas





Southwestern Corridor

For a true Texas experience, live it up in the big city then head out to uncover quaint small towns. Explore communities that offer everything from baseball memorabilia to authentic dinosaur tracks.

■ FORT WORTH

No wonder Fort Worth is “where the West begins.” It was established in 1849 as a military post on the Texas frontier. Cattle drives rumbled through from the 1860s to the 1880s and Fort Worth became “Cowtown.” After the arrival of the railroads in the 1870s, the town grew into a railhead, stockyards and beef packing center.

That Western heritage rings true across blocks of the Stockyards National Historic District. Restored mercantile buildings and stockyards from the early-20th century embody the city’s Western flair. Along brick-paved Exchange Avenue, shops sell handcrafted saddles, chaps, hats and boots.

Located in the 1904 Livestock Exchange Building, the Stockyards Collection & Museum chronicles the stockyards’ heyday through early photos and memorabilia. Adapted sheep and hog pens house the Stockyards Station, a marketplace of Western and Indian art galleries, restaurants, gift shops and Western clothing stores. The station also serves as a depot for the Grapevine Vintage Railroad (see Grapevine). Twice-daily Longhorn cattle drives and historic district walking tours begin here.

The Stockyards boasts the 1907 Stockyards Hotel (where Bonnie and Clyde stayed in room 305), and the White Elephant Saloon (an 1880s saloon that annually re-enacts the “Last Great Gunfight of the Old West”). It’s also home to the Texas Cowboy Hall of Fame, a horse barn-turned-museum that interprets the heritage of the Texas cow-horse culture.

Three of the Cultural District’s six major museums showcase the Old West. The new state-of-the-art National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame documents women of the American West — including cowgirls and ranch women, but also writers, artists, teachers and entertainers.



*Cowtown souvenirs,
Fort Worth*

The Cattle Raisers Museum chronicles Texas ranch life through film, photos, interactive exhibits and displays of ranching memorabilia.

The recently expanded Amon Carter Museum originally showed 400 works from local philanthropist Amon G. Carter’s Western art collection. It broadened its focus and now houses a wide range of 19th- and 20th-century American art and photographs.

Two other Cultural District museums showcase Fort Worth’s urban side. Opened in 1972, the Kimbell Art Museum remains one of the world’s finest museum designs (by American architect Louis I. Kahn) and houses one of the world’s finest art collections. Across the street is the new Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. Texas’ oldest art museum (founded in 1892) boasts Texas’ newest art museum building, opened in 2002. Celebrated Japanese architect Tadao Ando designed the new Modern to be as artistic as the avant-garde works inside.

History rides high in downtown’s Sundance Square, a 20-block area named for the outlaw Sundance Kid, who hung out here with



Thistle Hill, Fort Worth



Stockyards National Historic District, Fort Worth

partner Butch Cassidy. Its redbrick streets and restored turn-of-the-20th century structures host theaters, restaurants and lodging. The opulent Tarrant County Courthouse presides proudly over this area.

New to downtown is the Fort Worth Rail Market. Housed in a 1937 Santa Fe Railway warehouse, the market boasts several eateries and shops selling coffee, wine, flowers and gifts — plus a weekend farmers' market in the spring and summer.

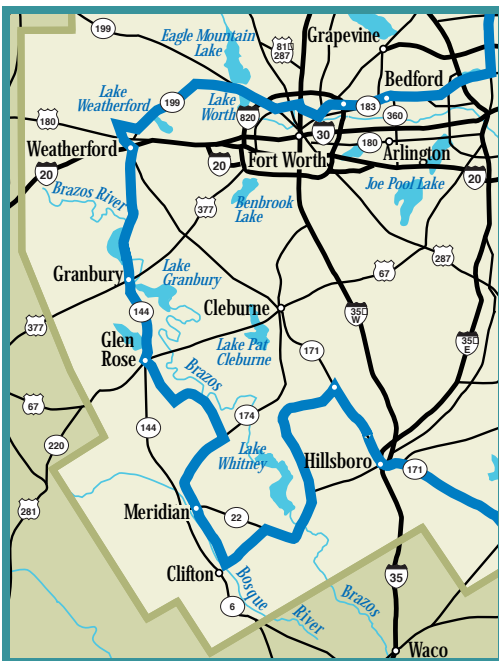
Experience the pioneer era at Log Cabin Village. This living history museum in a city park features seven preserved pioneer homes built during the 1850s. Historical interpreters, dressed in period clothing, pose as pioneers in the homes and at a water-powered gristmill, one-room schoolhouse, blacksmith shop and herb garden.

A more opulent era is on view at Thistle Hill. One of the region's few Georgian Revival mansions, the 11,000-square-foot home was built by cattle baron W.T. Waggoner as a "honeymoon cottage" for his only daughter, Electra.

Fort Worth's high-flying heritage unfolds at the American Airlines C.R. Smith Museum. Dedicated to C.R. Smith, founder of the Fort Worth-based airline, the museum retells the airline's development and the evolution of commercial aviation.

■ ARLINGTON

Fertile Blackland drew farmers here in the 1840s. Today, Arlington is fertile ground for lively attractions, including Johnnie High's Country Music Revue. Baseball fans flock to the Texas Rangers' Ballpark in Arlington for games and to relive legendary sports moments at the Legends of the Game Baseball Museum and Learning Center. The 24,000-square-foot museum has exhibits on the Texas Rangers, plus lesser-known teams of the Texas League and the Negro League. Built in 1914, the Fielder House Museum features a variety of exhibits including a turn-of-the-century barbershop and general store.



Log Cabin Village, Fort Worth



*Legends of the Game
Baseball Museum and
Learning Center, Arlington*

■ GRANBURY

Granbury offers the quintessential Victorian town square. In fact, its National Register downtown serves as a model for historic preservation nationwide.

Centered around the Second Empire-style Hood County Courthouse (1890), more than 50 quaint antique and specialty shops, restaurants and boutiques line the square. Visitors can take horse-drawn carriage rides and overnight at more than 20 local bed and breakfasts, many in historic homes.

Most historic among downtown's several live entertainment venues is the Granbury Opera House. Established in 1886 as Kerr's Hall (an opera house until it closed in 1911), the venue was restored in the 1970s and annually stages some 300 musicals, plays and melodramas.

For family movies under the stars, visitors flock to the Brazos Drive-In Theater, open weekends Mar. 1 to Dec. 1. This 1950s-era, single-screen drive-in is one of only a dozen or so still operating in Texas.

History takes center stage at the Hood County Museum in an 1880s jail. Cells and gallows upstairs remain largely intact. Downstairs, sheriff's quarters contain exhibits. One tells the story of county namesake and Confederate Gen. John Bell Hood and his Texas Brigade.



Hood County Museum, Granbury



Layland Museum, Cleburne

Downtown Granbury

■ GLEN ROSE

Water is essential to understanding Glen Rose history. In 1860 Charles Barnard settled on the Paluxy River and routed its flow through a stone flour and gristmill. An art gallery is now in Barnard's mill. Abundant mineral springs attracted self-styled healers who set up sanatoriums. During Prohibition, the waters made the area a moonshine mecca.

Some hundred million years earlier, the Paluxy attracted a lost breed — dinosaurs. Visitors see the state's best-preserved dinosaur tracks just four miles from Glen Rose at 1,525-acre Dinosaur Valley State Park.

Three miles from town, endangered wildlife still thrive at Fossil Rim Wildlife Center. The 1,400-acre former wild game ranch protects 32 species of endangered, threatened and native animals representing several continents.

■ CLEBURNE

Excellent water in West Buffalo Creek attracted pioneer travelers, including cattlemen from the nearby Chisholm Trail, to what's now Cleburne. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Cleburne was a transportation crossroads, where several rail lines, an interurban train from Fort Worth and a streetcar line moved people and products. This story and more are detailed at the city's Layland Museum, housed in a century-old Carnegie Library. Started with collections from local businessman William J. Layland, the museum maintains 10,000-plus artifacts, an extensive research library and archives and a restored upstairs theater.

■ CLIFTON

The original name — Cliff Town, after the surrounding limestone cliffs — eventually was shortened to Clifton. The town is located in southern Bosque County, an area known as the Norwegian Capital of Texas. The first Norwegian settlers arrived in 1854, the year the county was established.

Clifton's Bosque Memorial Museum preserves that heritage. Opened in 1923 with artifacts from Norwegian pioneer Jacob Olson, the museum contains the largest collection of Norwegian artifacts in the South and Southwest.

The nearby Bosque Conservatory shares Norwegian roots. It's housed in the 1923 administration building of the former Clifton College, a private school formed in 1896 with support from the Norwegian Lutheran Churches of America. The facility now serves as a center for the arts, with performances and art exhibits year-round.

■ HILLSBORO

The 1890 Hill County Courthouse is an inspiration not only because of its 70-foot clock tower and eclectic design by notable architect W.C. Dodson. In 1993, it was ravaged by fire, but was immediately rebuilt and remains a testament to local commitment to heritage.

County history fully unfolds at the Hill County Cell Block Museum. Located a block north of the courthouse in the 1893 county jail, the National Register building chronicles county history from prehistory to today. An unusual display features memorabilia about native son Willie Nelson. The site also features a restored 19th-century Cumberland Presbyterian church and picturesque gazebo.

Military history fills Hillsboro's Texas Heritage Museum. Located in the Harold B. Simpson History Complex at Hill College, the museum recounts combat experiences of Texans from the Civil War to World War II.

Learn about a county's rich history where its most dangerous outlaws once slept.



Regional wildflower

*Dinosaur Valley State Park,
Glen Rose*

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Northwestern Corridor

The western flair and unique “culture meets cowboy” atmosphere that embodies Fort Worth is also manifest in nearby communities. A restored historic schoolhouse, a true Texas wine festival and a town with Hollywood ties are just a few of the attractions awaiting visitors.

■ BEDFORD

World War I was underway when a principal, four teachers and students moved into the new Bedford School in 1915. Outgrown by 1969, the redbrick building was all but gutted by fire in 1991. Community efforts restored the National Register schoolhouse to its original Classical Revival style. The Old Bedford School now is a visitor's center and performance hall with music and theater in a large auditorium. Its authentically furnished classroom depicts education in the early 20th century.

■ GRAPEVINE

Once called Cross Timbers, by the 1850s Grapevine was officially named after a creek where wild Mustang grapes proliferated. Heritage and a special grape product — wine — now proliferate here. In fact, half a dozen Texas wineries host tasting rooms in Grapevine's historic Main Street District, also the site of fine eateries, art galleries and shopping.

Each September, the city hosts GrapeFest, one of America's largest wine festivals. Grapevine is even home of the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association. It's located in the Grapevine Heritage Center and Historical Museum, a three-acre site encompassing a blacksmith shop, leather shop, farmers market, heritage garden and the restored 1901 Cotton Belt Railroad Depot.



Old Bedford School, Bedford

The depot houses the Grapevine Historical Museum and the Grapevine Convention and Visitors Bureau Information Center. It's also home to the historic Grapevine Vintage Railroad. Named for an early spider-like railroad map, this restored 1896 steam excursion train runs daily 21 miles to the Fort Worth Stockyards.

Up Main Street from the depot lies the recently restored 1939 Palace Theater. The one-time movie palace is now Grapevine Opry, a 500-seat venue for country music shows by headliners such as Willie Nelson, Charlie Walker and the Judds.

■ DENTON

Denton has been a college town for more than a century. It's home of the University of North Texas (UNT), established 1890, and Texas Woman's University (TWU), authorized 1901. Music devotees nationwide know UNT for advanced music programs, especially jazz. And fans of architecture know TWU's Little Chapel-in-the-Woods. Designed in the 1930s by Texas regionalist architect O'Neil Ford, the chapel was named one of the state's top 20 buildings in 1983.

Watching over downtown Denton is the domed clock tower of the grand 1897 courthouse. Inside, the Courthouse-on-the-Square Museum depicts county history through early photos, plus exhibits on prominent early families, including African Americans and Hispanics. The museum also displays Indian pottery, American pressed blue glass, thimbles from around the world and the quirky folk art people of B. W. Crawford, made entirely from pecans.



Grapevine Vintage Railroad

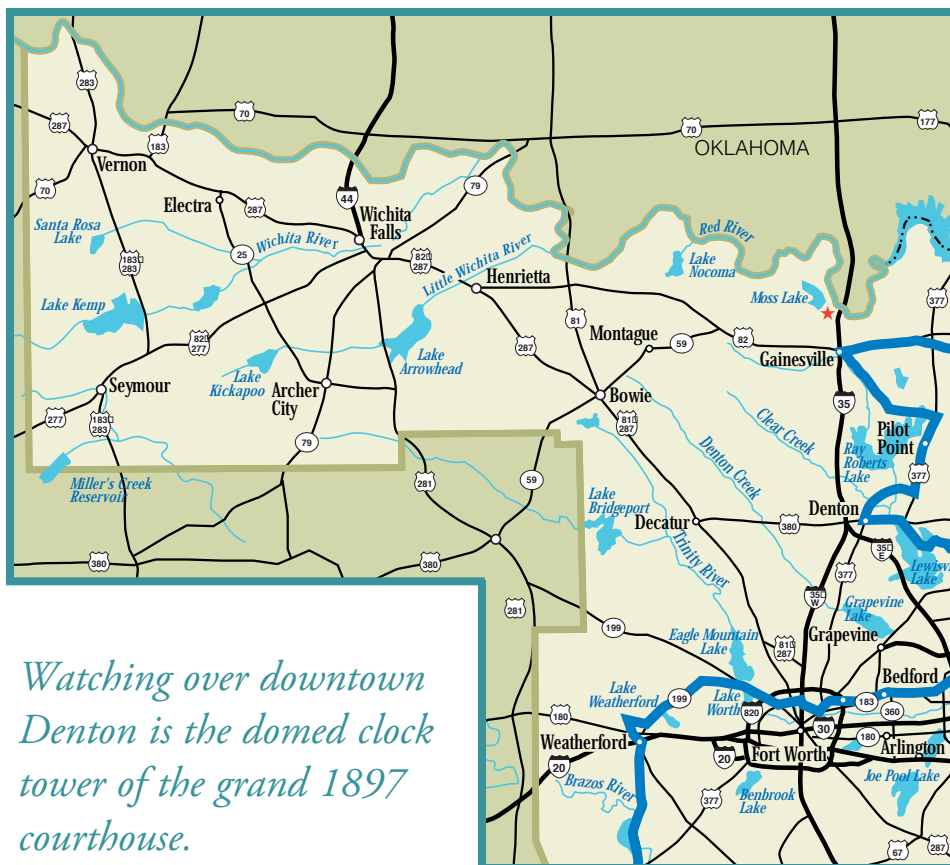


*Bayless-Selby House
Museum, Denton*

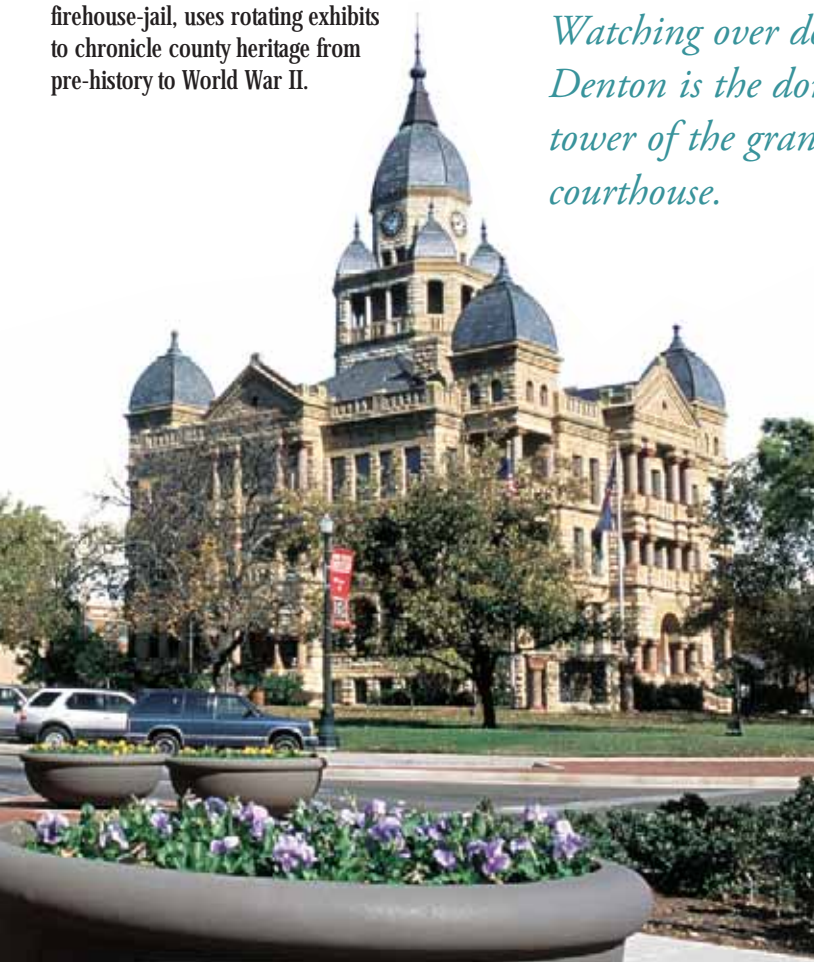
An associated downtown heritage site, the Bayless-Selby House Museum, offers tours and lectures in an 1898 Queen Anne-style home representing life at the turn-of-the-20th century.

■ GAINESVILLE

During the cattle drive era, Gainesville became a supply point for cowboys moving herds north to Kansas. Later, cotton and oil sustained the economy. During the 1930s, the town gained a national reputation for the Gainesville Community Circus, a community fund-raising project. The three-ring extravaganza, presented entirely by townspeople-turned-circus stars, thrilled crowds across the region. That rare saga, along with the story of local transportation and Coca-Cola lore, develops at the Santa Fe Depot Museum, housed in a restored 1902 depot. The associated Morton Museum of Cooke County, located nearby in a restored 1884 city hall-firehouse-jail, uses rotating exhibits to chronicle county heritage from pre-history to World War II.



Watching over downtown Denton is the domed clock tower of the grand 1897 courthouse.



Denton County Courthouse, Denton



Grapefest, Grapevine

TxDOT

■ HENRIETTA

Clay County was settled in 1857. When soldiers withdrew during the Civil War, Indian attacks forced out settlers, who didn't return until the early 1870s, setting up Henrietta as the county seat. In 1884 the county built a redbrick-and-sandstone courthouse and in 1890 built a large jail. The domed courthouse remains and, a block away, so does the jail, now a museum and heritage center. The original cells and a never-used gallows depict the austere life of an inmate. The refurbished sheriff's living quarters show life on the other side of the bars.

■ WICHITA FALLS

Platted in 1876, the original town site included a small waterfall on the Wichita River. The waterfall later washed away and was replaced in 1986 by a 54-foot-tall manmade waterfall. Trains from Fort Worth reached here in 1882. The economy took off in the 1910s when drillers struck oil nearby.

One of the city's leading promoters was businessman Frank Kell, who built a lavish Classic Revival home in 1909. The stately redbrick home is open for tours as the Kell House Museum. Boasting seven fireplaces and hand-stenciled decorations, the restored home retains many original family furnishings, including a baby grand player piano.

The pivotal history of railroading unfolds downtown at the Wichita Falls Railroad Museum. Located in a working rail yard on the former Union Station site, the museum maintains a dozen or so pieces of rolling stock — locomotives, cabooses, and passenger and freight cars. Tour guides (many themselves ex-railroaders) regale visitors with train tales, especially those of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railway (the Katy).



Railroad Museum, Wichita Falls

■ ARCHER CITY

During the 1990s, noted author Larry McMurtry, who wrote *Lonesome Dove* and *Terms of Endearment*, turned his hometown into a book ranch by opening four massive bookstores, collectively called Booked Up, that contain hundreds of thousands of used and rare titles and draw readers from around the world.

McMurtry originally put Archer City on the map with his acclaimed novel (and associated movie), *The Last Picture Show*. The last picture show was the town's Royal Theater. A fire in the 1960s left only its shell, but recently renovations have turned it into a venue for roots music shows (served up with barbecue) and stage performances. While getting booked up, visitors can stay at the restored 1928 Spur Hotel, around the corner from McMurtry's stores and the Royal.



Royal Theater, Archer City



Clay County Jail Museum and Heritage Center, Henrietta

■ VERNON

As early as 1858, Tonkawa Indians called this Eagle Springs, because eagles nested here. By 1880, the town was the seat of Wilbarger County, and was probably named either for George Washington's Mount Vernon or for traveling whiskey salesman Vernon Brown. The region's colorful cultural and natural heritage is preserved at the Red River Valley Museum. Founded in 1963, the museum is located next to Vernon College and has exhibits on the county archeology, cultural history and the arts.

Southeastern Corridor

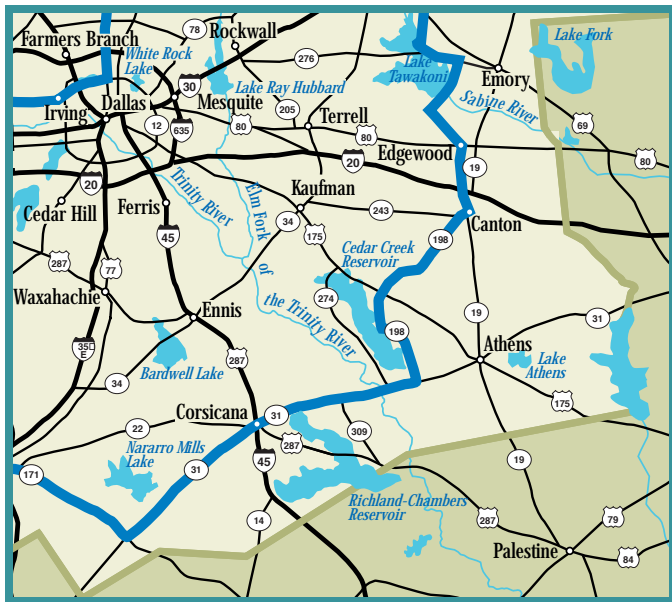
Experience the variety of heritage attractions in this diverse part of the state. Texas' culture is on display at the many museums of Dallas, and the surrounding communities offer everything from an authentic family farm to a historic bakery.

■ DALLAS

Texas' second-largest city was founded on business. Pioneer John Neely Bryan settled in 1841 on a ford of the Trinity River and opened a trading post. In the 1870s, Dallas was one of the state's first rail crossroads. It later became a center for leather, cotton, banking and insurance and oil industries.

Since 1886, visitors have flocked to Dallas for the State Fair of Texas. More than three million come each fall for traditional fair exhibits (including food and livestock shows), Broadway-style entertainment, Big Tex (a 52-foot-tall cowboy figure) and Texas Star (the hemisphere's largest Ferris wheel).

The fair is held in Fair Park, a 277-acre museum and entertainment complex just east of downtown. Built in 1936 for Texas Centennial Exposition, the park is a National Historic Landmark, boasting America's largest collection of Art Deco exposition buildings, including the majestic Hall of State.



State Fair of Texas, Dallas

Say howdy to Big Tex and take a spin on the Texas Star at the State Fair of Texas.

Year-round, Fair Park welcomes Broadway shows at the Music Hall and competitions at the Cotton Bowl (since 1929, site of the Texas-Oklahoma college football rivalry). It's home to eight museums — including the Museum of Natural History (dinosaurs to current native animals in realistic dioramas), the Women's Museum: An Institute for the Future (interactive exhibits chronicling American women), the Age of Steam Railroad Museum (27 restored train engines and cars) and the African American Museum (history displays and one of the nation's largest African American folk art collections).

The city's most-visited heritage site, Dealey Plaza Historic District, is also a National Historic Landmark. The plaza was built from 1934 to 1940 as the western gateway to downtown. Tragedy made it famous worldwide in 1963. On the plaza is the former School Book Depository, where Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated President John F. Kennedy. It's now the Sixth Floor Museum, which recounts Kennedy's life, death and legacy in dramatic sight-and-sound exhibits. Dealey Plaza also encompasses the 1970 Kennedy Memorial by noted architect Philip Johnson, the 1891 Richardsonian Romanesque "Old Red" Courthouse, the 1913 Renaissance Revival Dallas Criminal Courts Building and a replica of John Neely Bryan's 1841 log cabin.

Up Elm Street from Dealey Plaza lies the Majestic Theatre. Opened in 1921 for Vaudeville acts, it converted to motion pictures in 1932. Refurbished half a century later, the Renaissance Revival building is a glamorous venue for dance, music and theatrical performances.

Not far away, on Commerce Street, is the Adolphus Hotel. This restored 1912 Beaux-Arts hotel was built with rich ornamentation by beer baron Adolphus Busch. Another Commerce Street hotel with Old World charm is the Magnolia Hotel. It's in the 1922 Magnolia Petroleum Building, a 29-story Beaux-Arts structure topped by the newly restored iconic flying red horse, Pegasus, once the corporate symbol of Magnolia Oil and later Mobil Oil.



African American Museum, Dallas



Women's Museum: An Institute for the Future, Dallas

On downtown's north side, the 17-block Arts District makes up one of the nation's largest urban cultural areas. Here are the Meyerson Symphony Center, Annette Strauss Artist Square, Dallas Museum of Art, Arts District Theater, Nasher Sculpture Center and Crow Collection of Asian Art.

From the Arts District visitors ride the vintage McKinney Avenue Trolley to a 125-year-old residential, entertainment and retail district called Uptown. The clang of the electric streetcar bell and the toot of its whistle recall the early days of urban transport.

Dallas' premier historic village lies on 13 wooded acres just south of downtown in Old City Park. More than 35 historic structures interpret two eras, 1861 and 1901. History comes alive as costumed re-enactors depict life in a working farm, traditional Jewish household, school, Victorian homes and commercial buildings.

From downtown, Elm Street extends eastward into an entertainment and arts district called Deep Ellum (from the black pronunciation of Elm). After the Civil War, former slaves made this a freedmen's town.

Wander through a heritage park with Dallas' brilliant skyline as a backdrop.



Dallas Skyline

By the early 1900s, it was a warehouse district and hotbed of African American life and culture, especially the blues. It now sports 40-plus nightclubs, restaurants and avant-garde shops.

For more than a decade, aviation enthusiast Jim Cavanaugh has showcased his collection of military aircraft (World War I to Vietnam) in four hangars at Addison Airport. Distinguished warbirds — nearly all of them restored and flyable — include the Sopwith Camel, P-51 Mustang and MIG 15. Visitors can even book flights in two of them — the N2S-4 Stearman and the AT-6 Texan. The museum also exhibits wartime artifacts such as a MP Jeep, a 40mm anti-aircraft gun and a plane ejection seat.

■ MESQUITE

Established in 1873 and named after nearby Mesquite Creek, this town is filled with local folklore and history. Legend has it outlaws Jesse James, Cole Younger and Belle Starr lived in the area in the late 1800s. Today, remnants of the Wild West can be seen every year at the Mesquite Championship Rodeo, which draws in 300,000 people. The town's cultural side can be viewed at the Mesquite Arts Center, a state-of-the-art facility where visitors can experience world-class musical performances as well as theatrical productions. A rotating art exhibit is also on display.



TxDOT



Ellis County Courthouse, Waxahachie

■ CEDAR HILL

In 1854, John Anderson Penn settled in the rugged, cedar-covered hills of southwest Dallas County. Some 36 acres of Penn Farm survive at Cedar Hill State Park, an 1,826-acre urban nature preserve on Joe Pool Reservoir. The park's farmstead depicts how family farms once functioned. Period farm machines add authenticity to several reconstructed and historic buildings — including a 1918 barn, Model T garage and two granaries. Visitors get a rare chance to see life in the horse-and- buggy days within view of the Dallas skyline.



Ellis County Museum, Waxahachie

■ WAXAHACHIE

This unique name comes from an Indian word meaning “cow” or “buffalo.” Visitors find the town quintessentially quaint. The Richardsonian Romanesque-style Ellis County Courthouse alone draws folks from far and wide. Completed in 1897, the nine-story red granite and sandstone edifice was built from a design by noted courthouse architect J. Riely Gordon. Its clock tower stands as a beacon to downtown.

The courthouse is one of some 300 Waxahachie structures listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In fact, the town prides itself as the “Gingerbread Capital of Texas.” Hollywood agrees. Numerous films — including “Places in the Heart,” “Tender Mercies” and “Trip to Bountiful” — were made here. Each June, the Gingerbread Trail Tour of Homes celebrates this architectural legacy.

Historic commercial and community sites are also on the tour, including the Chautauqua Auditorium. This octagonal, 2,500-seat, open-air pavilion was built in 1902 as part of an adult education movement started in 1874 in Chautauqua, New York. Restored in 1975, the last Chautauqua facility in Texas still holds educational programs annually.

Waxahachie was established on land donated by Emory W. Rogers, a pioneer settler. Where Rogers built his log cabin in 1847 now stands the 1913 Rogers Hotel. The recently restored lodging offers 27 spacious rooms overlooking the courthouse square. Until World War II, the rooms housed

players seasonally from various major league baseball teams headquartered here during spring training.

Also facing the square, the Ellis County Museum retells Waxahachie and county history. It's located in a historic structure, the 1889 Masonic Temple, which was restored in the early 1980s. Exhibits depict everyday life from the mid-1880s to the early 1900s.

■ ENNIS

A tour guide dressed as a conductor welcomes visitors to the Railroad and Cultural Heritage Museum, which is in a 1915 Van Noy railroad restaurant building. Railroads arrived in Ennis in the 1870s. The museum recounts their role through displays such as a replica depot office, railroad china collection and 1897 conductor rulebook. Kids especially like the scale-model rail yard. The museum is next to a working rail line and a former Wells Fargo freight office, now the convention and visitors bureau.



Railroad and Cultural Heritage Museum, Ennis

■ CORSICANA

Like many communities in the region, Corsicana began as a frontier settlement and developed into a cotton and railroading town. In 1894, a water well driller accidentally tapped into the first major oil discovery west of the Mississippi River, and Corsicana became Texas' first oil boomtown.

Many moved here during the boom. One group was mercantile Jews, primarily from Germany, who constructed an unusual synagogue in 1898. Now a community meeting hall, Temple Beth-El features two onion-dome towers and remains a rare example of Moorish Revival architecture in Texas.

Visitors discover local and county history at Corsicana's Pioneer Village. Among its 17 reconstructed and relocated historic buildings are an 1854 dog-run home, general store, carriage house, tack shed, "hoodlums wagon" and antebellum home. Exhibits also chronicle native son and country music star, Lefty Frizzell.

A major new heritage attraction is the Pearce Collections Museum. Located in Navarro College's Cook Center (site of an observatory and planetarium) the new 14,000-square-foot facility is one of few museums interpreting both sides of the Civil War.

■ ATHENS

The seat of Henderson County got its name in the 1850s because locals hoped it would be a cultural center, like Athens, Greece. Visitors experience living culture each May at the Old Fiddlers Reunion, held on the tree-shaded courthouse square. They also get bygone culture at the Henderson County Historical Museum where vintage and antique memorabilia are displayed in the 1896 Faulk-Gauntt building. Its first floor emulates a turn-of-the-century dry goods store.

Athens has been famous for clay bricks since the 1880s. In the 1980s, local scuba-diving fans turned a clay quarry into Athens Scuba Park. Novice and expert divers ply the crystal-clear, seven-acre lake where they explore country music legend Ray Price's tour bus, Clint Eastwood's houseboat and a sunken Lockheed C-140 airliner.

Athens' most famous water attraction is the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center. Aquarium exhibits display popular inland species in natural settings such as a Hill Country stream and East Texas pond.

■ CANTON

Known as the world's largest flea market, Canton Trade Days started in the 1850s when circuit judges came to town. It now entails 7,000 vendors offering all kinds of old and new items, attracting 200,000 bargain hunters monthly. Visitors view First Monday memorabilia downtown at the new Plaza Museum. Located in the 1946 Plaza Theater, the museum's diverse collections include bells, arrowpoints and a working 1938 fire engine.

Discover hidden treasures and rare finds at a Canton flea market established in the 1850s.

■ EDGEWOOD

Founded in 1976 as a bicentennial project, the Edgewood Heritage Park Museum features more than a dozen historic and replica structures including a café, gazebo, dog-trot cabin, blacksmith shop, country store, barber shop, syrup mill and schoolhouse. Together, they form a compact representation of rural life, circa 1900. Docents dressed in period clothing give tours and demonstrate pioneer skills.



Heritage Park Museum, Edgewood

Northeastern Corridor

Experience the sophisticated culture that Dallas has to offer, and then take time out to visit nearby rural communities with friendly people and genuine Texas hospitality. The heritage in this area is apparent in its historic courthouses, crape myrtle lined-streets and great antique shops.

■ FARMERS BRANCH

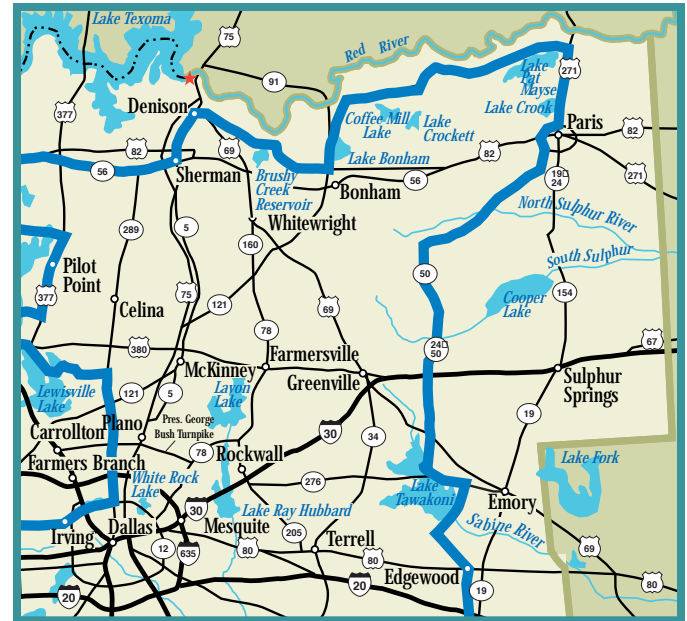
Opened in 1986, the 22-acre Farmers Branch Historical Park features the oldest rock structure in Dallas County, the Gilbert House, on its original 1850s site. Nine other relocated historic buildings form a village including an 1840s log cabin, 1877 Farmers Branch depot, 1891 Methodist church and a one-room schoolhouse used locally 1900–15. Turned porch posts, a pitched cupola and intricate gables make the 1885 Queen Anne-style cottage an architectural jewel.

■ CARROLLTON

Homesteaders of the Peters Colony came to Texas in the 1840s, among them A.W. Perry, who built a home here in 1857. In 1909, his son, DeWitt Clinton, salvaged materials from that house to build a story-and-a-half home that's now a house museum. High ceilings and dark wood-work envelope turn-of-the-20th century furnishings in the Perry house. The original gas light plant, where gas was produced for the home's lights, is on the site, as is a replica barn and cellar.

■ PLANO

A pretentious, yet practical, 1891 farmhouse sits on its original four-acre site 20 miles north of Dallas. Visitors to the Heritage Farmstead Museum experience early life on the Blackland Prairie by touring the stately 14-room Farrell-Wilson house, schoolhouse and pole barn.



*Farmers Branch
Historical Park*



Heritage Farmstead Museum, Plano



*A.W. Perry Homestead,
Carrollton*

The site also boasts a vintage windmill, blacksmith shop, smokehouse, canning kitchen and period garden.

Housed in a 1908 Texas Electric Railway station, the Interurban Railway Station Museum, chronicles the history of the interurban passenger and mail train that ran from Denison to Waco. Visitors hop aboard the railway's last remaining postal car, located next to the museum in Haggard Park.

■ DENISON

Denison was laid out in 1872 as a stop on the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad (the Katy) as it pushed through North Texas. The city even got its name from Katy vice-president George Denison.

In a two-story white frame house on that line, Dwight D. Eisenhower was born in 1890. That house and 10-acre grounds now comprise the Eisenhower Birthplace State Historic Site, which interprets his family life. Another "Ike" site is on nearby Lake Texoma. It's the Eisenhower State Park, a 450-acre outdoor haven near where stagecoaches of the Butterfield Overland Mail once crossed the Red River (1858–61) at Colbert's Ferry.

Since 1944, Lake Texoma has sprawled some 89,000 acres across Texas and Oklahoma, forming one of



*Grayson County
Frontier Village, Denison*



Eisenhower Birthplace State Historic Site, Denison

the region's most popular recreational sites, attracting seven million water enthusiasts annually. On the Big Mineral arm of the lake, the Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge forms a birdwatcher paradise — 11,300 acres of wetland on the migratory flyway of many species of waterfowl.

Between Denison and nearby Sherman lies the Grayson County Frontier Village. More than a dozen historic buildings (1840–1900) were relocated to this 17-acre county park built during the Depression by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The "village" interprets county history and maintains history research archives.

*Water ski, fish or simply relax at one of
the region's pristine lakes or reservoirs.*



Lake Texoma

■ SHERMAN

The area's history is on display at the Red River Historical Museum. The museum is housed in the former Carnegie Library, built in 1914 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Grayson County's only Eastlake-Stick Victorian house resides in Sherman in an elegant stretch of Crockett Street called Heritage Row. The C.S. Roberts home was built in 1896 and remained in family hands until preserved by a local heritage group. The site recently added a re-created servants' quarters to interpret African American life of the period.



Red River Historical Museum, Sherman

■ BONHAM

Settlement began in 1837 when Kentuckian Bailey English built a block-house and stockade here as protection against Indian attacks. A replica of Fort English interprets the pioneer period. The settlement was originally Bois d'Arc, but later was renamed to honor Alamo defender James B. Bonham.



Sam Rayburn House Museum, Bonham

Downtown in a restored 1900 Texas and Pacific Railroad Depot, the Fannin County Museum of History gives the complete county story from the pioneer era to the 1950s. Exhibits fill 14 rooms and include military displays highlighted by a restored Fairchild airplane.

More than anything, Bonham is remembered as home of one of America's most powerful 20th-century politicians, the late Sam Rayburn. "Mister Sam," as he was known, was the longest-serving speaker of the U.S. House. The Sam Rayburn House Museum tells his life story inside the modest 1916 wood-frame home where he lived at the time of his death in 1961.

Nearby is the Sam Rayburn Library and Museum. Dedicated in 1957, this elegant Greek Revival structure of white Georgia marble exhibits photographs, original letters, political cartoons, art, furniture and memorabilia from Rayburn's life and times.

Just outside town lies a recreational and architectural treasure, Bonham State Park. The 260-acre park offers a 65-acre lake, rolling prairies and woodlands. It also boasts a handful of rock-and-timber structures — a concession building, boathouse and open-air dance pavilion — built in the early 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps in characteristic National Park Service rustic style.

■ PARIS

Tradition, not historical evidence, says Paris is named for Paris, France. Regardless, this former railroad town claims several structures with European classic touches. The Lamar County Courthouse is a 1917 Classical Revival structure (with Romanesque details), built of marble and pink granite from the same quarry as the State Capitol.

A stroll away is Paris' downtown plaza, centered around the 1927 Culbertson Fountain. Its waters gurgle beneath shady oaks into Italian marble basins built after an earlier fire destroyed most of downtown. Facing the plaza, the restored 1926 Plaza Theater hosts popular productions of the Paris Community Theater.



Sam Rayburn Library and Museum, Bonham

Down the street is another European touch — the crape myrtle-lined Bywaters Park, home of a 1931 Corinthian peristyle and host of free summer concerts of the Paris Municipal Band, Texas' longest-running municipal band.

The city's most notable historic structure is the 1867 Sam Bell Maxey House State Historic Site. Confederate Gen. Maxey, whose family lived here more than a century, built it. Guided tours offer glimpses of original family furnishings and memorabilia, plus period plants in a Victorian garden.



Sam Bell Maxey House State Historic Site, Paris

■ SULPHUR SPRINGS

Originally Bright Star, the town became Sulphur Springs in 1871, when entrepreneurs used nearby mineral springs to promote the place as a health resort.

In 1894, the town got its own J. Riely Gordon-designed courthouse, a Romanesque Revival edifice almost identical to Gordon's courthouse in Waxahachie. Recently restored, the Hopkins County Courthouse rises above Heritage Square, a district of antique shops, restaurants, and decorator and gift shops.

A heritage museum just north of the square sits on the 11-acre site of an 1890s brick plant. The Hopkins County Museum and Heritage Park contains more than a dozen relocated historic houses, shops and mills.

Hopkins County is one of the state's top-producing dairy counties. That heritage is touted at the Southwest Dairy and Education Center. Housed in a modern, 10,000-square-foot, dairy-barn style complex, the center preserves the artifacts and memorabilia of the pre-electrification dairy industry. An old-fashioned soda fountain offers lunches, malts, milk shakes and sundaes.

■ GREENVILLE

Hunt County and its seat, Greenville, were established in 1846. At the time, one settler described the new town site as "a great prairie covered with tall waving grass." Visitors experience the beauty of never-plowed native Blackland prairie at two Nature Conservancy sites near town. These rare and scenic prairie remnants — the 100-acre Mathews Prairie and 1,068-acre Clymer Meadow — contain a living map of the complex ecosystem that once blanketed North Texas.



Lamar County Courthouse, Paris

By the mid-1880s, Greenville was a leading cotton shipping area. Exhibits at the American Cotton Museum — including equipment and historic photos — recount how cotton changed society. Visitors even see cotton growing on the museum’s 10-acre Blackland prairie. The museum’s restored 1859 Greek Revival-style Ende-Gaillard House interprets antebellum history. Military memorabilia tell the story of native son Audie Murphy, a decorated soldier of World War II.

■ FARMERSVILLE

Audie Murphy lived in nearby Farmersville just before he joined the military. They commemorate his life each year with Audie Murphy Day. The city recently erected Freedom Plaza with a monument to all American war heroes. Farmersville has preserved another part of its heritage by restoring a 1930s onion packing shed. During that era, the town was called the “Onion Capital of North Texas,” annually shipping more than 1,000 railroad carloads of onions.

Experience authentic Texas in the places where history really happened.

■ MCKINNEY

Collin McKinney was a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence and author of a bill establishing the counties of North Texas. Locals honored him by naming the county Collin and its seat McKinney.

Chestnut Square Historical Park is a compact village of seven historic structures built 1853 to 1918, some listed in the National Register. The Victorian and Greek Revival-style houses, chapel and country store reflect historical changes in architecture, decorative art and social style.

Myriad facets of county history unfold at the Collin County History Museum. Formerly the Old Post Office Museum, it’s in a 1911 U.S. post office made of limestone with Italianate detailing and features original light fixtures, a 1934 WPA mural, and hidden walkways and peepholes once used by postal inspectors.

The life of a wealthy early-20th-century mercantile owner is embodied at the Heard-Craig House Historic Center. Lillie and Stephen Heard constructed the 7,000-square-foot mansion in 1900 based on a design by noted Dallas architect J.E. Flanders. The family resided for 70 years in the home, which was a center of business, social, art and literary activities. Recently restored, it’s open for guided tours and private events.

Early-20th-century farm and commercial life stands side by side with exotic animals at the eclectic Bolin Wildlife Exhibit. Housed in the headquarters of Bolin Oil Company, the large museum was founded in 1980 by rancher, oilman and big game hunter W. Perry Bolin.

Visitors view real live animals at the Heard Natural Science Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary. Nature-lovers walk trails across the 289 acres of tall-grass prairie, bottomland hardwood and limestone escarpment. Visitors of all ages learn about North Texas flora and fauna through extensive educational programs and a garden growing native plants.



Freedom Plaza, Farmersville



Heard-Craig House Historic Center, McKinney

REGIONAL TRAVEL RESOURCES

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 on weekends, please contact in advance.

■ ATHENS

Convention & Visitors Bureau
888.294.2847
www.athenstx.org

■ ARCHER CITY

Convention & Visitors Bureau
940.574.2489
www.archercity.org

■ ARLINGTON

Convention & Visitors Bureau
800.433.5374
www.arlington.org

■ BEDFORD

City Office
817.952.2100
www.ci.bedford.tx.us

■ BONHAM

Chamber of Commerce
903.583-4811
www.bonhamchamber.com

■ BOWIE

Chamber of Commerce
866.872.1173
www.bowietxchamber.org

■ CANTON

Chamber of Commerce
903.567.2991
www.cantontx.com

■ CARROLLTON

Chamber of Commerce
972.416.6600
www.metrocrestchamber.com

■ CEDAR HILL

Chamber of Commerce
972.291.7817
www.cedarhillchamber.org

■ CELINA

Chamber of Commerce
972.382.3600
www.celinatx.com



Lake Texoma

TxDOT

■ CLEBURNE

Chamber of Commerce
817.645.2455
www.cleburnechamber.com

■ CLIFTON

Chamber of Commerce
800.344.3720
www.cliffontexas.org

■ CORSICANA

Chamber of Commerce
877.376.7477
www.corsicana.org

■ DALLAS

Convention & Visitors Bureau
214.571.1000
www.visitdallas.com

■ DECATUR

Chamber of Commerce
940.627.3107
www.decaturtx.com

■ DENISON

Chamber of Commerce
903.465.1551
www.ci.denison.tx.us

■ EDGEWOOD

City Hall
903.896.4448

■ ELECTRA

Chamber of Commerce
940.495.3577
www.electratexas.org

■ ENNIS

Convention & Visitors Bureau
888.366.4748
www.visitennis.org

■ FARMERS BRANCH

Chamber of Commerce
972.243.8966
www.farmersbranchchamber.org

■ FARMERSVILLE

Visitors Center
972.782.6533
www.farmersvilletx.com

■ FERRIS

City Office
972.544.2110

■ FORT WORTH

Convention & Visitors Bureau
800.433.5747
www.fortworth.com

■ GAINESVILLE

Chamber of Commerce
888.585.4468
www.gainesvilletexas.org

■ GLEN ROSE

Convention & Visitors Bureau
888.346.6282
www.glenrosetexas.net

■ GRANBURY

Convention & Visitors Bureau
800.950.2212
www.granburytx.com

■ GRAPEVINE

Convention & Visitors Bureau
800.457.6338
www.grapevinetexasusa.com

TEXAS HERITAGE TRAIL REGIONS



■ DENTON

Convention & Visitors Bureau
940.382.7895
www.denton-chamber.org



Delicious dining options abound

TxDOT

■ **GREENVILLE**
Chamber of Commerce
903.455.1510
www.greenville-chamber.org

■ **HENRIETTA**
Chamber of Commerce
940.538.5261

■ **HILLSBORO**
Chamber of Commerce
800.445.5726
www.hillsborochamber.org

■ **IRVING**
Convention & Visitors Bureau
972.252.7476
www.irvingtexas.com

■ **KAUFMAN**
Chamber of Commerce
972.932.3118
www.kaufmantx.org

■ **MCKINNEY**
Convention & Visitors Bureau
888.649.8499
www.mckinneycvb.org

■ **MESQUITE**
Chamber of Commerce
972.285.0211
www.mesquitechamber.com

■ **PARIS**
Chamber of Commerce
800.727.4789
www.paristexas.com

■ **PILOT POINT**
Chamber of Commerce
940.686.5385
www.pilotpoint.org

■ **PLANO**
Convention & Visitors Bureau
800.817.5266
www.planocvb.com

■ **ROCKWALL**
Chamber of Commerce
972.771.5733
www.rockwallchamber.org

■ **SHERMAN**
Chamber of Commerce
888.893.1188
www.shermantexas.com



*Log Cabin Christmas Bazaar,
Edgewood*

■ **SULPHUR SPRINGS**
Tourism & Visitors Bureau
888.300.6623
www.sulphursprings-tx.com

■ **WAXAHACHIE**
Convention & Visitors Bureau
972/937.2390
www.waxacofc.com

■ **WEATHERFORD**
Chamber of Commerce
888.594.3801
www.weatherford-chamber.com

■ **WHITEWRIGHT**
Chamber of Commerce
903.364.2000
www.whitewrightcc.com

■ **WICHITA FALLS**
Convention & Visitors Bureau
800.799.6732
www.wichitafalls.org

■ **VERNON**
Chamber of Commerce
800.687.3137
www.vernontx.com

Contact these web sites for
more information:

www.thc.state.tx.us/travel

www.texaslakestrail.com

www.traveltex.com

TEXAS LAKES TRAIL REGION

STATE PARKS AND STATE HISTORIC SITES

Travelers to the Texas Lakes Trail Region can visit the area's beautiful parks and historic sites owned and operated by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. For more information on the following sites, please call 800.792.1112 or visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

- Acton State Historic Site, Granbury
- Bonham State Park, Bonham
- Cedar Hill State Park, Cedar Hill
- Cleburne State Park, Cleburne
- Cooper Lake State Park, Cooper and Sulphur Springs
- Dinosaur Valley State Park, Glen Rose
- Eisenhower Birthplace State Historic Site, Denison
- Eisenhower State Park, Denison
- Lake Mineral Wells State Park, Mineral Wells
- Lake Tawakoni State Park, Wills Point
- Lake Whitney State Park, Whitney
- Meridian State Park, Meridian
- Purtis Creek State Park, Eustace
- Ray Roberts Lake State Park, Pilot Point and Valley View
- Sam Bell Maxey House State Historic Site, Paris

TEXAS MAIN STREET CITIES

Visitors can stroll the sidewalks and peruse shops in one of the region's 18 Texas Main Street Cities. Partnering with the Texas Historical Commission, these communities work to revitalize their historic commercial area, which is often the heart of a town.

BOWIE
CANTON
CELINA
CLIFTON
CORSIANA
DECATUR
DENISON
DENTON
ELECTRA

FARMERSVILLE
FERRIS
GRAPEVINE
GREENVILLE
IRVING
PARIS
PILOT POINT
WEATHERFORD
WHITEWRIGHT