

# TEXAS FOREST 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.

### The 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.

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HISTORICAL  
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*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

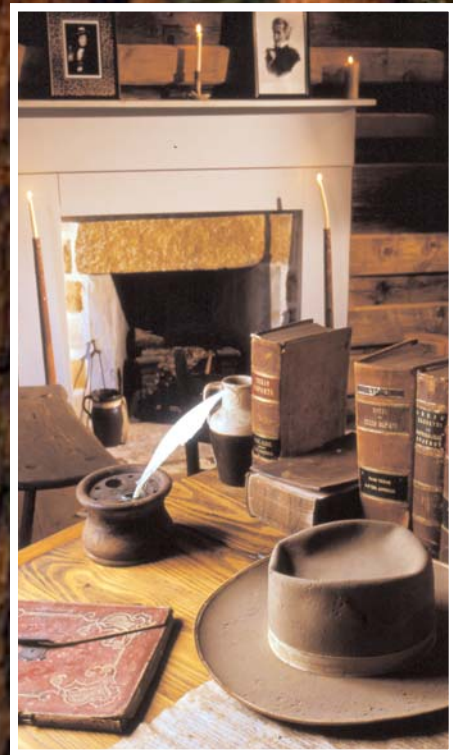
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*It's like a whole other country.*

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*Inset: Sam Houston Memorial Museum, Huntsville  
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**EXPLORING THE  
HERITAGE  
OF EAST TEXAS**

Spanning 35 East Texas counties, from the Oklahoma/Arkansas border to the Gulf of Mexico, the Texas Forest Trail Region was the “Gateway to Texas” for prehistoric Caddo Indians, Spanish and French explorers, Anglo pioneers, European immigrants, and enslaved and freed African Americans. Shadows of early Caddo and Spanish occupation linger, and the stories of Texas’ emergence from a wilderness to a great state unfold in the region’s numerous towns, many among the state’s oldest.

All you expect from Texas is here: wide-open spaces, oil derricks, rodeos and that proud-to-be-Texan spirit — all found throughout its many cultural traditions. But there’s more. Add four national and five state forests, abundant lakes and rivers, the incomparable Big Thicket, old Southern plantations, historic courthouse squares, festivals galore, spectacular spring and fall colors, and the Texas Forest Trail Region becomes the perfect place for tourists to indulge their appetites for history, culture and nature.

# The Texas Forest Trail Region

★ ★ ★ Gateway to Texas ★ ★ ★

Texas heritage is everywhere — from historic downtowns with antique shops, restored Victorian buildings, soda fountains, museums and monuments to historic sites, railroads, sawmill towns and oil boomtowns. East Texans love their heritage, and if sometimes they get carried away it’s because they’re good storytellers not adverse to embellishing the already colorful facts. Legend has it East Texas is home to the invention of the hamburger and a biblically inspired flying machine, which some believe flew before the Wright brothers’ famous flight.

The region boasts one of Texas’ greatest heroes, Sam Houston, who made his home in East Texas for many years. A complex man, he lived with Cherokees in Oklahoma and was governor of Tennessee before leading Texas’ fight for independence from Mexico in 1836. Houston became the first elected president of the Republic of Texas, and when Texas became a state, he served as both a U.S. senator and governor.

*Exhibits at the Sam Houston Memorial Museum in Huntsville explore the life of the famous Texan.*



Among the area's earliest inhabitants were the Caddo Indians, an advanced prehistoric civilization of mound builders with sophisticated trade networks. The state owes its name to the Caddos. They welcomed Spanish explorers, calling them "tejas," meaning friends.

Texans declared independence from Mexico in 1836, but the spirit of independence flared earlier in East Texas. Nacogdoches was the site of three separate rebellions dating to the early 1800s. After the fall of the Alamo, settlers from all over Texas fled their homes during the Runaway Scrape. Many headed toward the Louisiana border and took refuge in East Texas towns until word came of the decisive victory at San Jacinto.

Western expansion and European immigration brought many people to and through East Texas beginning in the mid-1800s. They drove out most Native American tribes, but the Alabama-Coushatta, relative newcomers, remain on a reservation near Livingston.



*Visitors can walk over a 560-foot historic bridge at the center of Footbridge Park in Rusk.*



THC



*The Mobil Oil Pegasus, above, symbolizes the impact oil had in East Texas.*

*The engineer checks his pocket watch at the Texas State Railroad State Park located in Rusk and Palestine.*



THC

TPWD

During the Civil War, Texas chose secession. Passions ran high in East Texas. Some towns were suppliers and mustering points for the Confederate Army, and most lost a significant number of men.

Around the 1870s, railroad expansion in East Texas and the depletion of forests in Northern states gave rise to the timber industry. Clear cutting destroyed many old-growth forests, but eventually modern forestry and conservation practices were adopted.

When the Lucas Gusher blew in at Spindletop near Beaumont in 1901, the word Texas became synonymous with oil. In the 1930s, the discovery of oil in Gladewater and Kilgore brought fortune hunters as well as desperate families seeking relief from the Great Depression. Boomtowns sprang up overnight.

Historically, the Texas Forest Trail Region's climate, natural beauty, wildlife and abundant water attracted settlers and visitors as far back as the 19th century. Today the development of lakes, parks and trails, the creation of cultural and heritage attractions and the historic revitalization of nearly 20 Texas Main Street cities make the region more inviting than ever.

# Where history and culture come naturally —

from historic downtowns with antique shops, restored Victorian buildings, soda fountains, museums and monuments to historic sites, railroads, sawmill towns and oil boomtowns.



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION



*The Starr Family State Historic Site represents four generations of the Starr family in Texas.*

*Visitors can participate in hands-on exhibits at heritage festivals.*

The following cities are highlighted in this guide and the number refers to the city's location on the map.

- ALTO 27
- ATHENS 31
- ATLANTA 3
- BEAUMONT 16
- CARTHAGE 7
- CENTER 8
- CLARKSVILLE 1
- COLDSRING 21
- CONROE 22
- CROCKETT 25
- DAINGERFIELD 38
- GILMER 40
- GLADEWATER 42
- HEMPHILL 10
- HENDERSON 45
- HUNTSVILLE 24
- JACKSONVILLE 30
- JASPER 11
- JEFFERSON 4
- KARNACK 5
- KILGORE 43
- KOUNTZE 18
- LIVINGSTON 20
- LONGVIEW 41
- LUFKIN 47
- MARSHALL 6
- MINEOLA 33
- MONTGOMERY 23
- MOUNT PLEASANT 37
- MOUNT VERNON 36
- NACOGDOCHES 46
- NEDERLAND 14
- NEW LONDON 44
- NEWTON 12
- ORANGE 13
- PALESTINE 29
- PITTSBURG 39
- PORT ARTHUR 15
- QUITMAN 34
- RUSK 28
- SAN AUGUSTINE 9
- SILSBEE 17
- TEXARKANA 2
- TYLER 32
- WECHES 26
- WINNSBORO 35
- WOODVILLE 19

**TEXAS FOREST TRAIL REGION**

Miles 0 5 10 20 30  
 Km 0 5 10 20 30 40

- INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
- U.S. HIGHWAY
- STATE HIGHWAY
- TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER
- NUMBERS ON MAP MATCH CITIES IN GUIDE
- TEXAS FOREST TRAIL

**TEXAS FOREST TRAIL**

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
TEXAS HERITAGE TRAILS PROGRAM



## ALTO

For centuries travelers followed the Texas section of El Camino Real, or the Royal Highway, which roughly follows Texas State Highway 21 through Alto. It was blazed by Spaniards in the 1690s with the help of Ais Indian guides who traced their ancestors' footpaths. Southwest of town, the scenic highway opens onto the spectacular Neches River Valley and the area occupied by Caddo Indians from A.D. 800 to 1300. At the interpretive center of Caddoan Mounds State Historic Site, learn how the Caddos worked and lived. A short walking trail leads to ceremonial mounds and a village site.

## ATHENS

Discover history and nature in this spirited town. Local celebrations include Uncle Fletch's Hamburger and Bar-B-Q Cook-off in honor of the café owner who, legend has it, invented the hamburger and introduced it at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. Step into the past in the recreated law office, kitchen and schoolroom at the Henderson County Historical Museum, housed in the 1896 Victorian-era Faulk and Gauntt Building. Visit the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center to watch divers feed fish in huge aquariums, try a hand at casting or view displays of antique fishing gear.

## ATLANTA

Many of Atlanta's early settlers came from Georgia, and vestiges of the Old South linger. Visitors to the renovated Texas & Pacific Train Depot Museum will find more than a proud Southern heritage exhibited. One prominent display honors Bessie Coleman. Born here in 1892, Coleman was the world's first licensed African American pilot. At Atlanta State Park, situated on Lake Wright Patman Dam, archeologists have uncovered evidence of early Caddo Indians.

Home to blues legend Aaron "T-Bone" Walker, ragtime composer Scott Joplin and musical talent Don Henley, the **Linden** area is the place to hear live music in East Texas. Head to Music City Texas Theater and listen to nationally known bands of all genres in an intimate setting.

This quiet Piney Woods community also boasts the Cass County Courthouse, considered the oldest working courthouse in Texas.



*Grand historic homes, such as the McFaddin-Ward House in Beaumont, grace the entire region.*

## BEAUMONT

Historic pride flourishes in this Texas Main Street City, especially in the Crockett Street Entertainment District, where abandoned historic buildings became restaurants and nightclubs. The opulent 1927 Jefferson Theatre's Mediterranean-influenced interior features a white marble staircase and an organ that rises from the orchestra pit on a hydraulic lift. The 1903 Tyrrell Historical Library, a former Baptist church, houses thousands of books on Texas history, genealogical resources and art collections. The nearby cultural district is home to the Texas Energy Museum, the Art Museum of Southeast Texas and the Edison Plaza Museum. "The world's largest fire hydrant" and the historic 1927 Beaumont Fire Department Headquarters mark the location of the Fire Museum of Texas.

Bordering downtown is **Old Town** where 100 years' worth of luxurious furnishings fill the 1906 Classic Revival McFaddin-Ward House. Visitors glimpse another side of life at the turn of the 20th century while strolling through a reconstructed boomtown at the Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum. For an overview of all the area's attractions — and to learn about the pioneering golfer who earned the title "the greatest woman athlete of the first half of the 20th century" — visit the Babe Didrikson Zaharias Museum and Visitor Center.



## CARTHAGE

This Texas Main Street City was the birthplace of two country music greats, Woodward Maurice “Tex” Ritter and “Gentleman” Jim Reeves. The Tex Ritter Museum and Texas Country Music Hall of Fame (at right) honors both, along with other Texas country music stars, through displays of movie posters, guitars and memorabilia.



TxDOT



RANDY MALLORY

*The magnificent 1885 Shelby County Courthouse stands at the heart of Center.*

## CENTER

Center won an 1866 dispute over the location of the Shelby County seat, but Shelbyville, the acting seat, would not concede. So, in the dead of night, some Center folks stole the county records. In 1885, the county built the distinctive Shelby County Courthouse, reflecting the heritage of its architect, J.J.E. Gibson, an Irish immigrant descended from builders of cathedrals and castles. An interesting touch in this courthouse, which is now a visitor center, is a trap door behind the bench so the judge could make a hasty retreat if necessary. Visitors can learn more about the county at the Shelby County Museum, where a timeline and period rooms interpret history from the days of Caddo Indians to Spanish explorers to pioneer settlers.

## CLARKSVILLE

The “Gateway to Pioneer Texas,” Clarksville was the first stop for many settlers crossing the Red River from Oklahoma. A Texas Main Street City, Clarksville offers a historic courthouse and town square that takes visitors back through time.

## COLDSRING

A narrow window of time is captured on Main Street where most buildings were erected between 1916 and 1923. The townsite was moved there just blocks from its original location after a 1915 fire destroyed the original wooden courthouse. The San Jacinto County Museum, housed in the 1887 jail, remains on the old townsite along with other original and relocated buildings.

## CONROE

After several epidemics and two major fires early in its history, this town’s fortunes changed in 1931 when the discovery of oil lifted it from the Great Depression. Unique displays and a general store filled with activities for children bring history to life at the Heritage Museum of Montgomery County. Downtown, the 1934 Crighton Theatre, built for vaudeville productions and then converted to a movie theater, stages live local and touring shows.



LAKE CONROE AREA CVB

*Heritage Museum of Montgomery County, Conroe*

## CROCKETT

Established in 1837 as the seat of one of the oldest counties in the Republic of Texas, the town was named for the famous Tennessean scout, David Crockett, who is said to have camped there on his way to the Alamo. During the Civil War, Crockett was a mustering point and training center for Confederate forces. Today, visitors can enjoy the town’s many historic homes and take part in events such as the Fiddlers Festival in June.

## DAINGERFIELD

Imagine the area’s Civil War-era iron foundries, sawmills and cowhide tanyards working full speed to supply the Confederacy. Today, much of the region’s vitality centers around Daingerfield State Park, developed as a recreation area by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the late 1930s.

## GILMER

Red-brick streets and old-fashioned shops invite a leisurely stroll around the square of this Texas Main Street City, located on the site of a former Cherokee Indian village. Enjoy a wide-ranging collection of county memorabilia in the Historic Upshur Museum, which occupies the former 1925 post office. Exhibits include a 20th-century photographic record of the area and a history of the region's industries and agriculture. Farmers lost their market for yams, an important cash crop, when sweet potato weevils invaded in 1930, and officials imposed a five-year shipping quarantine. When the quarantine lifted in 1935, a celebration called the East Texas Yamboree was held at harvest time. Now about 100,000 people gather each October to attend the Yamboree, one of Texas' oldest continuous festivals.

## GLADEWATER

While the nation suffered during the Great Depression, Gladewater became a thriving oil boomtown. Once called the "Hub of the East Texas Oil Field," this Texas Main Street City is now known as the "Antique Capital of East Texas." A replica of Old Snavelly No. 1, the derrick for the discovery well that started the 1931 boom, stands in the middle of town.

Fifteen miles west of Gladewater, **Hawkins** boasts Jarvis Christian College, a historically black institution initiated through the efforts of Mary Alphin, the African American leader of the Negro Disciples of Christ in Texas. Learn about the college's founding through stained glass windows in the campus' Christian Church.



*Daingerfield State Park*

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## HEMPHILL

On the town square, men gather almost daily under the cedar tree to play dominoes. The tree and tradition go back to the early 1900s. County memorabilia and genealogy records share space with jail cells and trap-door gallows at the Sabine County Museum and Virgie Speights Memorial Library. The setting for this multi-use facility is the 1903 Victorian-era jail, remodeled in 1925.

*Sabine County  
Courthouse seal,  
Hemphill*



LEANNA SKARNULIS

## HENDERSON

Prior to the Civil War, cotton was the foundation of Henderson's early economy and was even used as legal tender. Although cotton trading is no longer abundant, this Texas Main Street City preserves much of its early charm, and the town square is a National Register Historic District. Heritage abounds at the Rusk County Depot Museum Complex which features numerous relocated buildings. Children and adults enjoy its Children's Discovery Center, a hands-on learning facility in the former cotton warehouse of the 1901 Missouri-Pacific Depot. The museum also boasts the Victorian-era Arnold Outhouse, the only outhouse in Texas with a state historical marker. The Gaston Museum, outside of Henderson and near **Joinerville**, focuses on life during the oil boom era. It is located near the site of the Daisy Bradford #3, which helped establish the East Texas Oil Field in 1930.



*Rusk County Depot Museum Complex*

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# EAST TEXAS OIL FIELD

# 1930



## HUNTSVILLE

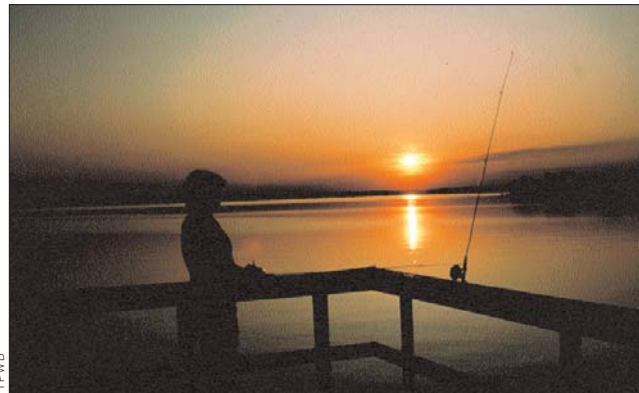
From its founding as a trading post in the 1830s, Huntsville quickly established itself as a prominent Texas town. In 1847 this Texas Main Street City became the site of the Texas State Penitentiary. The Sam Houston Memorial Museum features the Woodland Home, which Houston sold to pay campaign debts, and the relocated Steamboat House, where Houston's body lay in state in 1863 before being laid to rest at Oakwood Cemetery. For a fascinating look at life and death behind prison walls, visit the Texas Prison Museum, which houses the electric chair nicknamed "Old Sparky."

## JACKSONVILLE

Not to be left behind, the residents of Jacksonville picked up and moved the town in 1872 when the International & Great Northern Railroad laid tracks several miles from their original townsite. View East Texas splendor at the scenic ridge Love's Lookout. A popular tourist destination during antebellum Texas, the site offers spectacular views, a visitor center and picnic arbors. The Vanishing Texana Museum, in the Jacksonville Public Library, displays Native American artifacts, old farm implements and photographs. Held every June, Jacksonville's annual Tomato Festival draws large crowds.

## JASPER

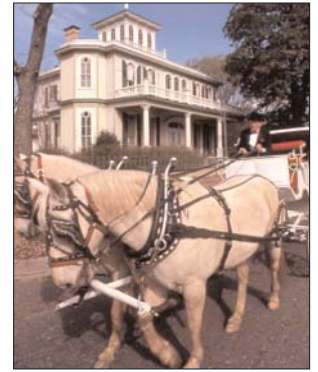
Alligators, herons and bass attract hikers, birders and fishermen to this community, which is located east of B.A. Steinhagen Lake and south of Lake Sam Rayburn. A trail in Boykin Springs National Forest leads to the unrestored ruins of the old Aldridge sawmill and ghost town. Once a thriving sawmill town, residents abandoned **Aldridge** in the 1920s after the native timber was depleted.



TPWD

## JEFFERSON

A bustling riverport in its heyday, much of Jefferson's glamorous past is preserved for today's heritage tourist. Imagine railroad tycoon Jay Gould entertaining friends aboard his elegantly appointed 1888 private railroad car called "The Atalanta." The coach, which is open for tours, was restored after serving as a



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*Explore Jefferson by carriage.*

oil boom. Visitors can tour or spend a night at the historic 1852 Excelsior House Hotel, one of Jefferson's elegant bed-and-breakfasts. The Excelsior also stands out as one of Texas' oldest continuously operating hotels. Nearby, the Jefferson Historical Museum occupies an 1888 federal building and features local memorabilia. At the intersection of Lafayette and Market streets is the bronze Sterne fountain, graced by a statue of the goddess Hebe who pours water in three levels — for horses, people and dogs.

## KARNACK

Named after a city in Egypt, Karnack was the childhood home of Claudia Taylor (Lady Bird) Johnson, former first lady of the United States. Today, it serves as a gateway to the mystical Caddo Lake. Covering 26,000 acres, the lake is a swampy maze winding through overgrown cypress, with 42 miles of channel marked to keep boaters from getting lost. One theory is the lake formed behind a Red River logjam. Another is that it resulted from the 1811 earthquake centered in Missouri, a theory similar to a Caddo Indian legend that says the lake was formed at night by angry shaking earth spirits.



LBJ LIBRARY

*Lady Bird Johnson*

*Photo credits opposite page: Background, Randy Mallory  
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P70b:8, P90s:30, P901:210*

*The region boasts magnificent lakes  
such as B.A. Steinhagen Lake near Jasper.*

Prior to the 1880s, the magnificent East Texas pines remained virtually untouched. Without dependable transportation, which local rivers could not provide, hauling timber was a tedious and rare endeavor. Everything changed with the railroad. Tracks sprang up and sawmills followed closely behind. Between the 1880s and late 1920s, the lumber industry exploded. Mill towns were born, lumber kings were crowned and timber production dominated the East Texas economy. In 1907, the industry reported a record annual cut of more than 2.25 billion board feet of lumber. After World War I, the industry declined as companies exhausted their timber supplies and ceased operations, but rejuvenated after World War II with reforestation and with new equipment that utilized more of the tree and increased the variety of wood products.

Today, the evidence of this mighty industry is still apparent through old sawmill ruins, log trucks, museums, state parks and national forests. The lumber industry continues to be a major economic supplier for Texas, bringing in \$2.5 billion annually. ★

# LOGGING IN EAST TEXAS



## KILGORE

In the early 1930s, two gushers miles apart signaled the discovery of the biggest oil field of its time. Overnight, the tiny farming community of Kilgore swelled to 10,000 people eager to strike it rich. Today, a park filled with replicated derricks marks the spot once known as “the world’s richest acre.” The excitement and harsh realities of that period are realized at the East Texas Oil Museum, where visitors can walk the streets of Boomtown USA. In the realistic, full-sized street scene, workers toil to free vehicles mired in the mud, while visitors, like yesteryear boomtown residents, can enjoy an ice cream soda, go to the theater, listen to a jukebox or browse the shops. Kilgore’s glamorous side is on display at the Rangerette Showcase, which honors the world-famous Kilgore College precision drill and dance team. Visitors will get a kick out of seeing memorabilia dating back to the team’s founding in 1940.



KILGORE COLLEGE

# LEGENDS OF CADDO LAKE



The mystical Caddo Lake, near Karnack, draws recreational and nature enthusiasts to the area.

One Caddo Indian legend says that the lake was formed at night by angry shaking earth spirits.

## KOUNTZE

“The Big Light in the Big Thicket,” is a gateway to the vast, dense woods that were once hideouts for murderers, thieves and Civil War draft dodgers. Today, the Big Thicket is a major biological crossroads where swamps, barrens and piney woods collide. The 97,000-acre Big Thicket National Preserve serves as a living laboratory for the study of diverse ecological systems. Visitors to this natural setting can view fascinating exhibits and explore hiking trails at the preserve’s visitor center, located seven miles north of town on U.S. 69. Grab your binoculars for the annual Birding in the Big Thicket in April.

## LIVINGSTON

A suspicious 1902 fire, purportedly set over local liquor prohibition, forced residents to rebuild this Texas Main Street City. An old log-hauling locomotive and the 1933 Jonas Davis Log Cabin mark the location of the Polk County Memorial Museum and Heritage Park. East of town, in the heart of the Big Thicket, is the Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation. The tribe settled in East Texas around 1780, and Sam Houston had the land declared a reservation as a reward for the tribe’s courage in remaining neutral during Texas’ War for Independence.

Visit the Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation the first weekend in June for the Annual Powwow, a Native American dance competition.

Photo credits opposite page:  
Background, William Hammond  
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Populating the East Texas Piney Woods for more than 1,200 years, the Caddo are responsible for shaping and influencing modern East Texas.

They created extensive interregional trade routes and were known for their rich variety of durable and artistic pottery goods, which are considered among the finest aboriginal pottery manufactured in North America.

Earthen mounds, intact at dozens of sites throughout Northeastern Texas, were used as temple structures for civic and religious functions and burials of social and political elite. Learn about other East Texas Native American tribes at [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us).

# NATIVE EAST TEXANS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



## LONGVIEW

During World War II, Longview gained national prominence as the gathering point for the Big Inch pipeline, designed to protect crude oil for the war effort from sabotage on its way to Pennsylvania. That story is one of many described on wall panels in Heritage Plaza, where visitors can learn about Longview's first century, from 1870 to 1970. At the Gregg County Historical Museum, exhibits range from a Dalton Gang bank robbery to an old-fashioned dentist's office.

## LUFKIN

When the railroad came in 1881, this town in the heart of the Piney Woods became a thriving timber center. Legend has it the railroad originally was to go through Homer but shifted to Lufkin after Homer's constable threw the surveying crew in jail for rowdiness.

The Texas Forestry Museum tells the story of the establishment and expansion of the East Texas timber industry.

Visitors enjoy outdoor exhibits, an indoor interpretive center and the Urban Wildscape Trail's native landscapes. The Museum of East Texas features art and history exhibits, as well as a discovery room for children. Before you head out, stroll through the revitalized downtown of this Texas Main Street City.



*Texas Forestry Museum*

## MARSHALL

In the early 1900s, trainloads of westward-bound immigrants stopped briefly at the Texas and Pacific Depot, located in today's Ginocchio Historic District. To accommodate feeding several hundred customers each day, the staff at the beautiful Ginocchio Hotel set up tables in its lobby and ballroom. The hotel is now the temporary home of the Harrison County Historical Museum, which will return to the 1901 Harrison County Courthouse pending renovation. The historic T&P Depot, built in 1912 to replace an older depot, is both an active Amtrak station and railroad museum. View the lives of four generations of one family at the Starr Family Home State Historic Site. The attraction's centerpiece is "Maplecroft," an 1870 Italianate house with early 19th-century furnishings. A surprise for many visitors to this Texas Main

Street City, the Michelson Museum of Art displays the life work of Russian-American impressionist Leo Michelson (1887–1978). Founded in 1873, Wiley College was the first school west of the Mississippi River established by the Freedman's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The campus was relocated to this site in 1878.

## MINEOLA

The birthplace of philanthropist and art matron Ima Hogg, this Texas Main Street City was founded in 1873. Charming by day, it turns magical at night with lighting from period street lamps. The Select Theater, believed to be the longest continuous operating theater in Texas, features both movies and live productions. Mineola's 1950s depot is still used by Amtrak passengers and reminiscent of this city's railroad town beginnings.

# MAIN STREET CITIES & TEXAS PINEY WOODS



*The Harrison County Courthouse in Marshall sparkles in December.*

## MONTGOMERY

A bustling town in the mid-1800s, Montgomery boasts many historic commercial buildings and gracious homes. The N.H. Davis Pioneer Complex and Museum showcases period furnishings and memorabilia in a pioneer home. Its original owner was a lawyer who built the first section in 1851 from logs received as payment for legal fees.

## MOUNT PLEASANT

Water is the elixir of life to this Texas Main Street City. A century ago, red mineral springs lured visitors. Today the attraction is excellent fishing at lakes Bob Sandlin, Monticello and Welsh. Within Lake Bob Sandlin State Park is the Fort Sherman cemetery and archeological evidence of Caddo Indians who occupied the area from 200 B.C. to A.D. 1700.

## MOUNT VERNON

This Texas Main Street City boasts a gracious plaza, restored town square and more than 65 historic homes, many of which can be seen on a driving tour. The recently restored 1880s Thruston House serves as the Bankhead Highway Visitors Center, which features exhibits on Mount Vernon native Henry Clay Thruston. Standing 7 feet 7 1/2 inches tall, Thruston is said to be the tallest soldier to fight for the Confederacy in the Civil War. The Franklin County Historical Museum, housed in a 1940 structure built by the Work Projects Administration, boasts natural history collections, Ice Age and more recent Native American artifacts and pioneer memorabilia.

## NACOGDOCHES

This Texas Main Street City was the site of three failed attempts to establish a republic prior to the 1832 Battle of Nacogdoches, an early battle in the War for Independence. Four signers of Texas' Declaration of Independence, including Thomas J. Rusk, are buried in the historic Oak Grove Cemetery. Visitors enjoy artifacts and memorabilia at the Stone Fort Museum, a 1936 replica of the home of Don Antonio Gil Y'Barbo, founder of present-day Nacogdoches. The Sterne-Hoya House Museum and Library, built by Adolphus Sterne around 1830, is a house museum that was restored to reflect the lives of its earliest occupants. At Millard's Crossing Historic Village, a cluster of relocated 19th-century buildings including a schoolhouse, church and boardinghouse, conjures up images of a bygone era. Representing the most intact surviving African American community in Nacogdoches, Zion Hill Historic District's collection of wood frame, two-room shotgun houses dating from the late-19th century reflects standard housing types of African American communities in the South.



Top: Mount Vernon native Henry Clay Thruston, standing 7 feet 7 1/2 inches tall, is said to be the tallest Confederate soldier in the Civil War.

Above: The Sterne-Hoya House Museum and Library in Nacogdoches was built by Adolphus Sterne around 1830.



Stone Fort Museum, a 1936 replica of the home of Don Antonio Gil Y'Barbo, founder of present-day Nacogdoches

## NEDERLAND

Promoters gave the town its Dutch name in 1897 to attract settlers from Holland to the area's railroad jobs and rich farmland. The opportunities also lured Acadians from South Louisiana. A native of Nederland, Woodward "Tex" Ritter was known for his Western movies and songs. His namesake park houses the Windmill Museum and La Maison Acadienne Museum, which exhibits replicas of a windmill and log cabin showcasing the heritage of Nederland's Dutch and Acadian settlers.



LEANNA SKARNULIS

## NEW LONDON

"The Day a Generation Died" describes the horrific impact of the 1937 school explosion that killed 311 local students and teachers. Within weeks after the tragedy, sparked by an undetected natural gas leak, survivors testified before the state legislature and succeeded in getting a law passed requiring odor be added to natural gas. The New London Museum tells the poignant story in photographs, oral histories and memorabilia that includes a sympathy telegram from Adolph Hitler. The museum lies behind the drugstore where survivors met for reunions. Between the museum and the rebuilt school is a landmark cenotaph, or empty tomb, bearing the names of victims. Visitors are also welcome at the museum's tearoom soda fountain.

# ALL ABOARD

## NEWTON

Nature lovers will enjoy the longleaf pines, rock bluffs and spring blooms of wild honeysuckle at Wild Azalea Canyons. Visitors can see the influence of pioneer families and sawmill towns at the Newton County Historical Center and Museum, which houses memorabilia dating to 1846. Nearby, the restored Powell Hotel, open for tours but not for overnight lodging, has an unpretentious charm recalling its 1914 conversion to a hotel from its original purpose as the W.H. Ford Male and Female College.

## ORANGE

Because of its isolated location on the Louisiana border, Orange was a stopping place for outlaws and renegades crossing the Sabine River into Texas. The town's colorful history is chronicled in photographs and memorabilia at the historic Woodmen of the World Lodge building. The adjacent Heritage House Museum looks at upper-middle-class family life from the turn of the 20th century to the 1940s. See the striking difference between the middle class and the fabulously wealthy by visiting the 1894 W.H. Stark House, a three-story Victorian-era mansion with authentic furniture and room settings.

## PALESTINE

Historic homes, magnolias and dogwoods impart a gracious Southern feeling to this town. In addition to the Dogwood Trails, visitors find more than 1,300 historic homes and buildings, many in two National Register Historic Districts that can be viewed on a driving tour. The conductor sounds the "all aboard" for the steam excursion train at the Texas State Railroad State Park depot. The 25 miles of rails, known as the nation's "longest and skinniest state park," offers boarding for one-way or round-trip excursions at depots in Palestine and **Rusk**.



TxDOT

*Board the steam excursion train at the Texas State Railroad State Park for the round trip between Palestine and Rusk.*

## PITTSBURG

Experience rural life, railroad heritage and one man's fanciful idea of a flying machine in this Texas Main Street City. The Northeast Texas Rural Heritage Center offers exhibits in its Depot Museum, a former Cotton Belt Railroad Depot. It showcases a working telegraph office, history of the poultry industry and the story of the Center Point Training School, established after the Civil War to educate African American children from Texas and other states. The site also houses a full-sized replica of the Ezekial Airship, a curious flying machine inspired by a biblical verse and built before the Wright Brothers' historic flight. Ironically, a train accident destroyed the original airship. At the nearby Farmstead Museum, history comes alive in a blacksmith shop, smokehouse, general store and a fully restored 100-year-old farmhouse.

*A cenotaph is dedicated to those killed in the 1937 school explosion in New London.*



THC



NORTHEAST TEXAS RURAL HERITAGE MUSEUM

*Ezekial Airship, Northeast Texas Rural Heritage Museum in Pittsburg*

# EL CAMINO REAL DE LOS TEJAS

A National Historic Trail, El Camino Real de los Tejas is a system of trails running from Mexico to Louisiana dating to the 1690s. The trails originally served as a lifeline for missions transporting freight supplies and military protection. Later they were used for exploration, colonization, trading, ranching and battle, ultimately becoming the state's original highway. Visit these East Texas towns dotted along this historic trail.

- Alto
- Nacogdoches
- Crockett
- San Augustine
- Milam





## PORT ARTHUR

This town began as an inland port for shipping midwestern grain, but with the Spindletop oil discovery in 1901, it became a leading center for refining and shipping oil. Experience the area's industrial history and stories of Paleo-Indians and Spanish explorers at the Museum of the Gulf Coast. The museum's Music Hall pays tribute to local musical greats, such as J.P. Richardson Jr. (the Big Bopper) and Janis Joplin, and houses a replica of Joplin's psychedelic-painted Porsche. At Sabine Pass Battleground State Park and Historic Site, a statue honors Lt. Dick Dowling who led a small Confederate force in preventing a Union fleet of gunboats from invading this Texas port during the Civil War.

## QUITMAN

Governor Hogg City Park, honoring Texas' first native-born governor, James S. Hogg, has three museums. On special occasions, visitors can watch the Stinson House Quilters work in the 1869 house that belonged to Sallie Hogg's parents. The Honeymoon Cottage, the early home of Gov. Jim and Sallie Hogg, features original furnishings, while the Ima Hogg Museum, named for the Hogs' only daughter, houses Northeast Texas and family memorabilia.



TPWD

*The Honeymoon Cottage in Quitman is the early home of Gov. Jim and Sallie Hogg and features original furnishings.*



*A statue honors Lt. Dick Dowling, a Civil War hero, at Sabine Pass Battleground State Park and Historic Site near Port Arthur.*

*Photo credits opposite page: Background, TxDOT  
Insets, Texas Energy Museum, Beaumont*

## RUSK

Rich iron ore deposits were the basis of this historic town's early economy. Restored Victorian commercial buildings on the downtown square and the ghost town of **New Birmingham**, an ill-fated iron boomtown, are reminiscent of that past. A 560-foot bridge, located in Footbridge Park, was built in 1889 to enable people living east of the valley to cross the rising waters of One Eye Creek to get to town. Authentic steam engines, replica depots and magnificent scenery draw both tourists and Hollywood filmmakers to the Texas State Railroad State Park. Puffs of steam, a rhythmic rocking motion and the sound of wheels on tracks accompany the 25-mile train ride through scenic piney woods between Rusk and **Palestine**. Historically, the railroad belonged to the Texas Prison System. Prisoners laid the tracks in 1893 to haul iron ore and wood from convict work camps to smelting furnaces at the East Texas State Penitentiary in Rusk. Just outside town is Jim Hogg City Park, a day-use park that features a replica of the log cabin birthplace of the Texas governor who served from 1891 to 1895.



TPWD

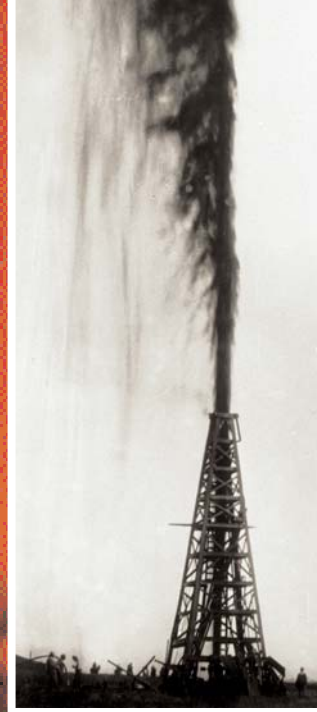
**O**n January 10, 1901, the discovery well at Spindletop, near Beaumont, blew in with a 100-foot gusher. Oil flowed unchecked for nine days, producing more than 100,000 barrels a day and awakening an oil boom unlike anything the country had ever seen.

Twenty-nine years later, there were other significant discovery wells near present-day Joinerville. Over the course of the next two years, drillers brought in wells in four other locations, all originating from the same massive pool of oil. Stretching 45 miles in length and spreading beneath more than 140,000 surface acres, the East Texas Oilfield was the largest known in the world at the time.

These events forever changed the face of Texas' economy, culture and identity. ★

East Texas continues to be a top producer of oil and gas, and remnants of this heritage can be seen throughout the Texas Forest Trail Region.

*Full of drive and determination, wildcatters, roughnecks and roustabouts changed the world with the discovery of oil in Texas.*



# ★ 1901 ★ ★ ★ SPINDLETOP!

## SAN AUGUSTINE

Historic homes and churches dot this quaint town rich in Texas history. An Eastern gateway for settlers from Southern states, it became one of the first Anglo communities when Texas was part of Mexico. The Mission Dolores Visitor Center commemorates the site of an early Spanish mission, founded in 1716. Exhibits describe life among the missionaries and Ais Indians, and territorial struggles between Spain and France. The Ezekial Cullen House, built in 1839, was the home of a prominent judge in the Republic of Texas.

## SILSBEЕ

Located at the edge of the Big Thicket National Preserve, Silsbee was originally developed with the railroad, but later thrived through oil, timber and agricultural resources. Learn about the town's railroad development at the Ice House Museum and Cultural Center. Located in a 1926 icehouse, exhibits illustrate life before refrigeration.

## TEXARKANA

A vibrant mural honoring Scott Joplin, Pulitzer Prize-winning “King of Ragtime Composers” and past resident of Texarkana, marks the heart of this city's lively cultural district. Inside the Discovery Place Children's Museum, fun and learning go hand-in-hand amid such interactive exhibits as a 12-foot musical wall, a post office and an old-fashioned kitchen. A brick building nearly as old as the city itself houses the renovated Museum of Regional History. Permanent exhibits include the Native American Gallery, Scott Joplin Gallery and period rooms. The Regional Arts Center, which hosts national touring and juried shows, occupies a former U.S. district courthouse, built in 1909.



Scott Joplin

The grand, ornate structure boasts a 26-foot vaulted ceiling, copper cage elevator and abundant marble. Nearby, the beautifully restored Perot Theater, built in 1924 as the Saenger Theater, offers exhilarating live performances in a historic setting. Just outside the cultural district is the unique Draughon-Moore Ace of Clubs House. Legend has it a lucky card drawn in a poker game inspired its cloverleaf shape. Inside, its rooms provide a glimpse of Texarkana high society between 1880 and 1940.



LEANNA SKARNULLIS

*The Mission Dolores Visitor Center in San Augustine*

*Roses are abundant in Tyler, “The Rose Capital of America.”*



TXDOT

## TYLER

This colorful city was known for its abundance of fruit trees, but when disease threatened the trees, growers turned to cultivating rose bushes. Eventually this Texas Main Street City became “The Rose Capital of America” and the site of the Texas Rose Festival each October since 1933. At the Tyler Municipal Rose Garden and Museum, more than 450 varieties of rose bushes, including antique varieties, bloom in the garden. The museum showcases glamorous gowns worn by Texas Rose Festival Queens, as well as the history of the rose industry. Another outstanding homegrown attraction grew from a backyard menagerie to become the first-rate Caldwell Zoo. Relax with a cool lemonade on a shaded porch and watch elephants, zebras and lions roam the realistic East African-style savannah where natural barriers separate predators and prey. Downtown, children will enjoy the Discovery Science Place where hands-on, crawl-through and climb-over activities make learning fun. Texas College, a historically black university, is the oldest of three higher education institutions in Tyler. The college was established under the auspices of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in 1894. A traditional center for learning, the 1904 Carnegie Library now houses the Smith County Historical Museum, which has wonderful Works Progress Administration wall murals and exhibits that include a pioneer Chinese family's memorabilia.

LUPHELIA MIDDLEBROOKS

At the Goodman Museum, visitors can imagine living in an 1859 Texas colonial-style mansion. The site of Camp Ford, one of the largest prisoner-of-war camps during the Civil War, is located outside of town and features nature trails and informational displays.

## WECHES

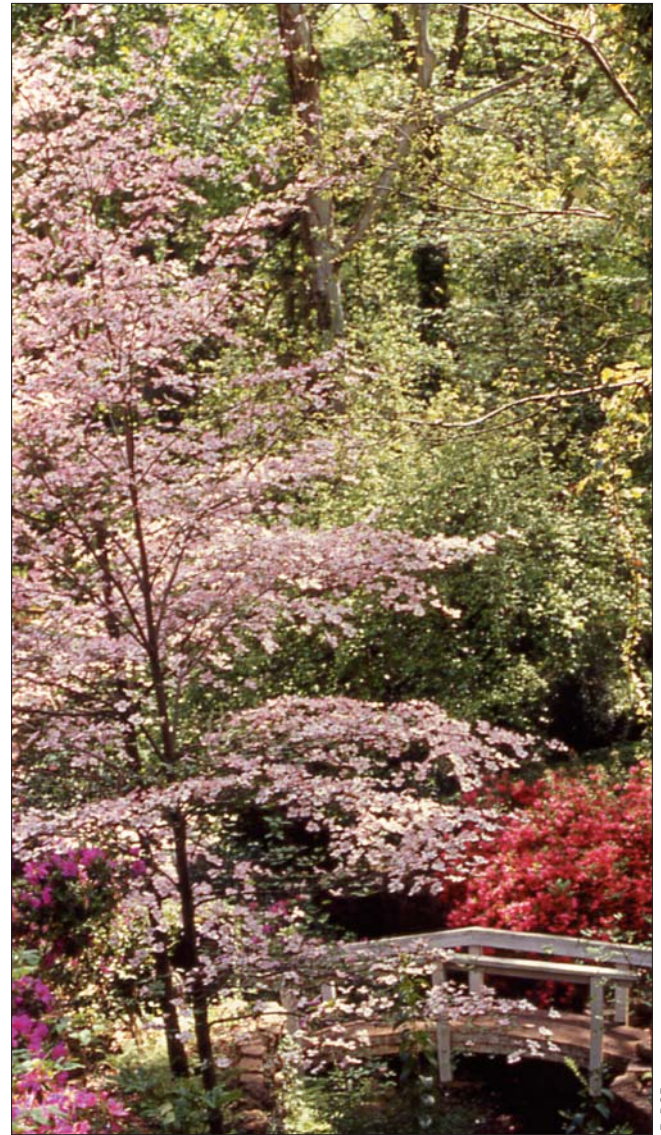
The town is the entry to Mission Tejas State Park, a site honoring the first Spanish mission in the wilderness around 1690. A replica of Mission San Francisco de los Tejas stands in the park that is located in the Davy Crockett National Forest. Visitors can also see the restored 1828 Rice Family Log Home.

## WINNSBORO

A noon stop for daily passenger trains in the early 1900s, this Texas Main Street City acquired a reputation for its food and hospitality. Visitors especially enjoy the historic town during the Autumn Trails Festival. Held every weekend in October, it features driving tours through colorful forests of oak, maple, sycamore and pine trees and a famous trail ride that draws thousands of riders and horses.

## WOODVILLE

One of many East Texas towns that celebrate spring's floral wonders, Woodville traces the origin of its Dogwood Festival to a 1938 barbecue held to lobby state officials for construction of a highway from **Huntsville** to the Louisiana border. Taken with the dogwood's beauty, James E. Wheat suggested an annual observance, and the festival emerged several years before the highway. Mementos and memorabilia are exhibited in the Allan Shivers Museum, dedicated to the Texas governor who spent his childhood in Woodville. Just outside town is the Heritage Village Museum, which grew from a 1950s tourist attraction and now features more than 30 relocated and replicated pioneer structures.



TxDOT

**Around every curve, another surprise awaits the traveler. On the journey, sunlight filters through lush green woods and spills through towns filled with the historic sights and sounds of East Texas.**

The Texas Historical Commission offers free travel brochures on the people and places that shaped Texas history. To request copies, visit [www.thc.state.tx.us/travel](http://www.thc.state.tx.us/travel) or call 866/276-6219.



**TEXAS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION**

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

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

# COMMUNITIES IN THE TEXAS FOREST TRAIL REGION

## Regional Travel Resources

For more information on the sites in this brochure, refer to the *Texas State Travel Guide* or contact 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 800/8888-TEX or visit [www.TravelTex.com](http://www.TravelTex.com).

### Alto

Caddoan Mounds State Historic Site  
936/858-3218  
[www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)

### Athens

Welcome Center  
903/677-0775  
[www.athenstx.org](http://www.athenstx.org)

### Atlanta

Chamber of Commerce  
903/796-3296  
[www.atlantatexas.org](http://www.atlantatexas.org)

### Beaumont

Convention & Visitors Bureau  
800/392-4401  
[www.beaumontcvb.com](http://www.beaumontcvb.com)

### Carthage

Chamber of Commerce  
903/693-6634  
[www.carthagetexas.com](http://www.carthagetexas.com)

### Center

Shelby County Chamber of Commerce  
936/598-3682  
[www.shelbycounty-chamber.com](http://www.shelbycounty-chamber.com)

### Clarksville

Red River County Chamber of Commerce  
903/427-2645  
[www.red-river.net](http://www.red-river.net)

### Coldspring

Chamber of Commerce  
936/653-2184  
[www.coldspringtexas.org](http://www.coldspringtexas.org)

### Conroe

Lake Conroe Area Convention & Visitors Bureau  
877/426-6763  
[www.lakeconroetx.org](http://www.lakeconroetx.org)

### Crockett

Crockett Area Chamber of Commerce  
936/544-2359  
[www.crockettarea-chamber.org](http://www.crockettarea-chamber.org)

### Daingerfield

Chamber of Commerce  
903/645-2646

### Gilmer

Gilmer Area Chamber of Commerce  
903/843-2413  
[www.gilmerarea-chamber.com](http://www.gilmerarea-chamber.com)

### Gladewater

Chamber of Commerce  
903/845-5501  
[www.gladewaterchamber.com](http://www.gladewaterchamber.com)

### Hawkins

Chamber of Commerce  
903/769-4482  
[www.hawkinschamberofcommerce.com](http://www.hawkinschamberofcommerce.com)

### Hemphill

Sabine County Convention & Visitors Bureau  
409/787-1421  
[www.sabinecountytexas.com](http://www.sabinecountytexas.com)

### Henderson

Henderson Area Chamber of Commerce  
903/657-5528  
[www.hendersontx.com](http://www.hendersontx.com)

### Huntsville

Sam Houston Statue and Visitors Center  
800/289-0389  
[www.huntsvilletexas.com](http://www.huntsvilletexas.com)

### Jacksonville

Chamber of Commerce  
800/376-2217  
[www.jacksonvilletexas.com](http://www.jacksonvilletexas.com)

### Jasper

Chamber of Commerce  
409/384-2762  
[www.jaspercoc.org](http://www.jaspercoc.org)

### Jefferson

Marion County Chamber of Commerce  
903/665-2672  
[www.jefferson-texas.com](http://www.jefferson-texas.com)

### Karnack

Caddo Lake Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism  
866/282-2336  
[www.caddolake.org](http://www.caddolake.org)

### Kilgore

Chamber of Commerce  
866/984-0400  
[www.kilgorechamber.com](http://www.kilgorechamber.com)

# PINEY WOODS



TxDOT

View exotic birds and other animals at the historic Caldwell Zoo in Tyler.



*Zinc monument at Old Powder Mill Cemetery, Marshall's oldest African American burial ground in continuous use.*



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**Kountze**  
Chamber of Commerce  
866/456-8689  
www.kountzecoc.org

**Linden**  
Chamber of Commerce  
903/756-3106  
www.lindentexas.org

**Livingston**  
Polk County Chamber of Commerce  
936/327-4929  
www.livingston-polkcountychamber.com

**Longview**  
Convention & Visitors Bureau  
903/753-3281  
www.longviewtx.com

**Lufkin**  
Chamber of Commerce  
936/634-6644  
www.visitlufkin.com

**Lumberton**  
Chamber of Commerce  
409/755-0554

**Marshall**  
Chamber of Commerce  
800/953-7868  
www.marshall-chamber.com

**Mineola**  
Chamber of Commerce  
903/569-2087  
www.chamber.mineola.com

**Montgomery**  
Lake Conroe Area Convention & Visitors  
Bureau  
936/538-7112  
www.lakeconroecvb.org

**Mount Pleasant**  
Chamber of Commerce  
903/572-8576  
www.mtpleasant-tx.com

**Mount Vernon**  
Franklin County Chamber of Commerce  
903/537-4365  
www.visitmtvernon.org

**Nacogdoches**  
Convention & Visitors Bureau  
888/653-3788  
www.visitnacogdoches.org

**Nederland**  
Chamber of Commerce  
409/722-0279  
www.nederlandtx.com

**New London**  
New London Museum  
903/895-4602  
www.nlse.org

**Newton**  
Newton County Chamber of Commerce

409/379-5527  
**Orange**  
Convention & Visitors Bureau  
800/528-4906  
www.org-tx.com/chamber

**Palestine**  
Convention & Visitors Bureau  
800/659-3484  
www.visitpalestine.com

**Pittsburg**  
City of Pittsburg  
903/856-3621  
www.pittsburgtexas.com

**Port Arthur**  
Convention & Visitors Center  
800/235-7822  
www.portarthurtexas.com

**Quitman**  
Chamber of Commerce  
903/763-4411  
www.quitman.com

**Rusk**  
Chamber of Commerce  
800/933-2381  
www.rusktx.net

**San Augustine**  
San Augustine County Chamber of  
Commerce  
936/275-3610  
www.sanaugustinetx.com

**Shenandoah**  
Chamber of Commerce  
281/292-5953  
www.shenandoahtxcvb.com

**Silsbee**  
Chamber of Commerce  
409/385-5562  
www.cityofsilsbee.com

**Texarkana**  
Chamber of Commerce  
903/792-7191  
www.texarkana.org

**Trinity**  
Chamber of Commerce  
936/594-3856  
www.trinitychamber.org

**Tyler**  
Convention & Visitors Bureau  
800/235-5712  
www.tylertexas.com

**Weches**  
Mission Tejas State Park  
936/687-2394  
www.tpwd.state.tx.us

**Winnsboro**  
Chamber of Commerce  
903/342-3666  
www.winnsboro.com

**Woodville**  
Tyler Co. Chamber of Commerce  
409/283-2632  
www.woodvilletx.com



BEAUMONT ENTERPRISE



TxDOT

*Experience the kaleidoscope  
of cultures at small town festivals  
across the state.*

**All you expect  
from Texas is here:  
wide-open spaces,  
oil derricks,  
rodeos and that  
proud-to-be-Texan  
spirit.**



**www.thc.state.tx.us/travel**  
**www.txforesttrail.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.

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## REGIONAL STATE PARKS AND HISTORIC SITES

Travelers to the Texas Forest Trail Region can visit the area's beautiful parks and historic sites owned and operated by Texas Parks and Wildlife.

For more information on the following sites, please call 800/792-1112 or visit [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us).

- Atlanta State Park, Atlanta
- Caddoan Mounds State Historic Site, Alto
- Caddo Lake State Park, Karnack
- Daingerfield State Park, Daingerfield
- Huntsville State Park, Huntsville
- Lake Bob Sandlin State Park, Pittsburg
- Lake Livingston State Park, Livingston
- Martin Creek Lake State Park, Longview
- Martin Dies Jr. State Park, Jasper
- Mission Tejas State Park, Weches
- Palestine State Park, Palestine
- Rusk State Park, Rusk
- Sabine Pass Battleground State Historic Site, Sabine Pass
- Sea Rim State Park, Sabine Pass
- Starr Family Home State Historic Site, Marshall
- Texas State Railroad State Park, Palestine and Rusk
- Tyler State Park, Tyler
- Village Creek State Park, Lumberton



TXDOT



TPWD

*Birding enthusiasts flock to East Texas to view hundreds of different species.*

## NATIONAL FORESTS

The Texas Forest Trail Region boasts the only National Forests in Texas — four in total. Take the scenic route through these natural wonders or stop by for camping, fishing and other outdoor recreation. For more information, call 936/639-8501 or visit [www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us).

- Sabine National Forest
- Sam Houston National Forest
- Davy Crockett National Forest
- Angelina National Forest



TXDOT

*Davy Crockett National Forest*

## TEXAS MAIN STREET CITIES

Visitors can stroll the sidewalks and peruse shops in one of the region's 17 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.

- **Beaumont**
- **Carthage**
- **Clarksville**
- **Gilmer**
- **Gladewater**
- **Henderson**
- **Huntsville**
- **Livingston**
- **Lufkin**
- **Marshall**
- **Mineola**
- **Mount Pleasant**
- **Mount Vernon**
- **Nacogdoches**
- **Pittsburg**
- **Tyler**
- **Winnsboro**



BEAUMONT ENTERPRISE

*Cajun culture thrives in Beaumont.*



THC

*Quaint shops line downtown Winnsboro, a Texas Main Street city.*

## TEXAS HERITAGE TRAIL REGIONS



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Texas Historical Commission offers free travel brochures on the people and places that shaped Texas history.

To request copies, visit [www.thc.state.tx.us/travel](http://www.thc.state.tx.us/travel), [www.txforesttrail.com](http://www.txforesttrail.com) or call 866/276-6219.



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