A vibrant stained glass artwork depicting a protest scene. The composition is filled with bold, geometric shapes in shades of purple, blue, red, and yellow. In the center, a man in a suit and glasses holds a sign that says "Act". To his left, another sign reads "JUSTICE NOW!". To the right, a sign says "JOBS". In the lower left, a sign partially shows the word "SAFE". The background is a complex pattern of lines and colors, suggesting a large gathering of people.

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

**AFRICAN AMERICANS IN TEXAS:**  
**A Lasting Legacy**

**A GUIDE FOR HERITAGE TRAVELERS**



Front cover: Stained-glass window by Jean Lacy, Trinity United Methodist Church, Houston (see page 49); Back cover: Isadore Yett, longtime member of Mt. Horeb Baptist Church, Blanco (see page 36).

**AFRICAN AMERICANS IN TEXAS:**

# **A Lasting Legacy**

## REAL STORIES FOR THE ROAD

Explore the vast richness of freedmen's communities, Rosenwald schools, family cemeteries, civil rights archives, historic neighborhoods and stops along the "Chitlin' Circuit" with this travel guide's mobile companion. The "African Americans in Texas" mobile tour features audio, video, additional historic images and optional nearby points of interest based on your location. It's one of several thematic tours in our Texas Time Travel Tours mobile app, which is available at [www.texasimetravel.com](http://www.texasimetravel.com).

TexasTimeTravel.com is your statewide resource for exploring Texas' historic and cultural treasures. Use our Plan Your Adventure tool, travel themes, events calendar, maps and travel guides to find and learn about historic, cultural and natural attractions across the 10 heritage trail regions of the Texas Historical Commission's Texas Heritage Trails Program.



The "African Americans in Texas" mobile tour is available at [www.texasimetravel.com](http://www.texasimetravel.com).

All photos are by Randy Mallory or Texas Historical Commission staff unless otherwise credited.

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09/16—200K

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The cities and sites in this guide are organized by the 10 Texas Heritage Trail Regions. Learn more and download or order other travel guides at [www.texastimetravel.com](http://www.texastimetravel.com).



## Journey through African American culture and heritage in Texas—

an experience that includes hardships and triumphs, valor and determination, influence and change. Beginning in 1528 with Estevanico (Estevan), a Spanish slave who was the first documented African-born person to traverse Texas, people of African descent have greatly influenced our state's development through numerous political, economic and ideological contributions.

By the mid-1700s, Spanish settlement in what would become the state of Texas included permanent communities, a number of missions and, less commonly, presidios (fortifications providing protection for nearby missions). African heritage during the early part of the Spanish period was represented by biracial people (typically of European and African descent), some of whom were free, along with a relatively smaller number of imported slaves.

After 1803, when the U.S. acquired Louisiana, some slaves fled across the border to Spanish Texas seeking freedom and opportunity. These former slaves settled predominately in East Texas and made the best living available to them, despite racial adversity.

*This travel guide attempts to capture the essence of this important story and enrich lives through an exploration into African American history in Texas.*

In 1821, under Mexican rule, free individuals of African descent were more readily accepted and many prospered. Mexico outlawed slavery in 1829, but exempted Texas to encourage economic development. By 1830, Mexican President Anastacio Bustamante halted the importation of slaves by Anglo settlers; however, many settlers bypassed this decree by making their slaves indentured servants for life.



Buffalo Soldier reenactors engaged in a firing exhibit for a school group, Fort Concho, San Angelo (see page 27).

Although free individuals of African heritage received liberties under Mexican law, many fought with the Texians (the term used to describe residents of Texas before annexation) against Mexico during the Texas Revolution. Many historians believe these free persons of African descent joined the cause to protect their status among the Anglo settlers. Amid the growing number of slaves held by the Texians, some resisted captivity in passive ways, such as retaining aspects of former African cultures. Others escaped to freedom. Samuel McCullough, Jr., a free individual of African heritage, was among the first Texians wounded in the conflict during the seizure of Goliad in 1835. People of African descent also fought at San Jacinto, helping Texas earn its freedom from Mexico in 1836.

The status of African Americans deteriorated sharply during the nine years of the Republic, when their lives were defined by slave codes and a constitution that did not grant them full rights as citizens—a situation that did not change drastically when Texas joined the Union in 1845.

In 1861, Texas joined the Confederacy and slavery continued as a backbone of the state's war economy. Many African Americans served on the battlefield and helped build forts. Union soldiers of the 62nd U.S. Colored Infantry fought Confederate soldiers near Brownsville in May 1865 at the Battle of Palmito Ranch—one month after the surrender of Robert E. Lee's army at Appomattox. Freedom from slavery came with Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in



Texas has many Buffalo Soldier-related sites. Look for the Buffalo Soldier symbol in the site descriptions to follow the Buffalo Soldier trail of history through Texas.

*With emancipation, freed slaves established settlements throughout the state, as freedmen and their families sought to start new lives.*

1863, but African Americans in Texas were not made aware of their freedom until June 19, 1865—now commemorated as Juneteenth. Immediately, freed slaves established settlements throughout the state, as the freedmen and their families sought to start new lives.

The Reconstruction Era (1865–1874) following the Civil War was particularly challenging for African Americans in Texas. An all-white constitutional convention in 1866 denied suffrage even for literate African Americans, and the state legislature refused to

ratify the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which provided equal protection under the law for all citizens. The state legislature and several cities limited the civil rights and economic options of newly freed men and women by adopting restrictions known as the Black Codes that included the prohibition of office-holding, jury service and racial intermarriage. Several organizations, including the federal Freedmen's Bureau and many religious organizations, attempted to provide education, agricultural training and other assistance, but were met with much resistance from white Texans. Racist, vigilante groups like the Ku Klux Klan were very active during this period.

Federal intervention, including the imposition of military rule in 1867, eliminated the Black Codes and ushered in an era of substantial contributions by African Americans. Texas was officially readmitted to the U.S. in March 1870, one of the last of the former Confederate states to reenter the Union. At the 1868–69 state constitutional convention, where 10 African Americans served as delegates, the adopted constitution (later replaced by the current 1876 constitution) protected civil rights, established the state's first public education system and extended voting rights to all men. Photographs of most of the 52 African Americans who served in the Texas Senate, House of Representatives and two constitutional conventions between 1868 and 1900 can be seen in the south lobby of the Texas Capitol.

Meanwhile, both before and after the Civil War, the U.S. government constructed a series of fortifications to protect settlers in the West from American Indians and others who resisted their advance. Many of these frontier forts were protected by African Americans known as Buffalo Soldiers, a name given by American Indians because of the similarity of the curly hair of both the buffalo and African American troopers. Some of these far-flung and isolated posts were also home to the Black Seminole Scouts, descendants of early African Americans who joined Seminole Indian tribes in Florida to escape slavery and were recruited by the U.S. Army because of their exceptional tracking skills. Although Buffalo Soldiers and Black Seminole Scouts received little respect and even less admiration from the society they sought to protect, they served with distinction, and 22 were recipients of the Medal of Honor—the U.S.’ highest military decoration, awarded

for bravery “above and beyond the call of duty.”

Churches have played a significant role in Texas’ African American culture, with many serving as anchors for the neighborhoods that developed around them. These churches were often forces for positive change by adopting and persistently advocating social causes. This was evident in the struggle for education as churches established some of the first schools and colleges for African Americans in Texas. Colleges, such as Wiley College in Marshall, were established by churches to advance the cause of higher education. In addition to church-built schools, a number of facilities were created through a collaborative community effort, where African Americans pulled together to build their own schools and hire teachers. All of these learning institutions have served as sources of education and pride for area residents, remaining as treasured today as they were in the past.



Signs made by NAACP youth, Juanita J. Craft Civil Rights House, Dallas (see page 59).

*Segregation could not withstand the resolve of the Civil Rights Movement.*

African Americans, both urban and rural, carved out a sense of place and security in the formation of districts and neighborhoods in a segregated, oppressive American society. As in the rest of the country, African Americans in Texas were drawn to large cities during the 20th century. Rapid industrialization created jobs, leading to the decline of many rural communities when younger residents sought opportunities in urban areas.

Although African American society had been kept separate through years of entrenched cultural norms and the use of Jim Crow laws—state and local laws enacted between 1876 and 1965 that mandated segregation in all public facilities—segregation could not withstand the resolve of the Civil Rights Movement. Having grown tired of second-class status, African American educators, congregations,

journalists, community groups and individuals joined together to tear down the unjust boundaries imposed upon them. These hard-fought battles won members of the African American community a more equal place in a society that had long denied them basic rights.

The African American contribution to Texas history has not been fully documented, but a long and proud legacy has undeniably shaped today's Lone Star State mystique. It is through all Texans' continued preservation efforts that the heritage of this great state will be kept alive. In this travel guide and its companion mobile tour (found at [www.texastimettravel.com](http://www.texastimettravel.com)), the Texas Historical Commission presents only a glimpse into those pivotal events, historic locations and cultural landscapes captured by historians and scholars. While some facets of this history have been lost, more will certainly be uncovered over time. The rich legacy left by previous African American generations is an inheritance of real stories and real places that define the history of Texas.





## AFRICAN AMERICANS IN TEXAS:

# A Lasting Legacy

## TIMELINE



Churches have been historical pillars of African American society, providing refuge, community, hope and social advocacy. Above: Congregation of Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church, Austin (see page 33). Background: Stained-glass window by Jean Lacy, Trinity United Methodist Church, Houston (see page 49).

**1528–1536** Estevanico (Estevan), a survivor of the Narváez expedition, accompanies Cabeza de Vaca through Texas before being rescued by the Spanish military. He is able to learn American Indian languages and help the Spanish survive in what is now Texas.

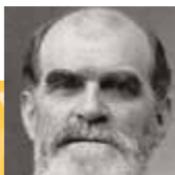
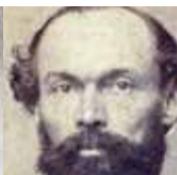
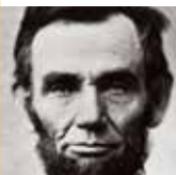
**1829** Attitudes toward people of African descent are generally more tolerant in Mexico than in the U.S. during the 18th and 19th centuries, leading to the abolition of slavery in Mexico on Sept. 15. However, Anglo immigration into Mexican Texas in the 1820s brings increased numbers of slaves, which Mexican authorities tolerate for economic reasons. Even after abolition, slavery is overlooked by the Mexican government, though divisiveness over the issue contributes to tensions leading to the Texas Revolution.

**1869** The new state constitution recognizes African American men's right to vote, serve in office, attend school and serve on juries. Ten African Americans serve in the constitutional convention.

**1873** Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church establishes Wiley College in Marshall.

**1874** Reconstruction, a tumultuous era following the Civil War when the nation reorganized economically and politically, ends in Texas with the election of Gov. Richard Coke.

**1877** Troop A of the 10th U.S. Cavalry, under the command of Capt. Nicholas Nolan, is lost while tracking Comanche Indians. Four Buffalo Soldiers die in what newspapers call the "Staked Plains Horror."



**Abraham Lincoln,**  
Library of Congress.

**Gordon Granger,**  
DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University.

**Richard Coke,**  
Library of Congress.

**Norris Wright Cuney,**  
Maud Cuney-Hare, Norris Wright Cuney, *A Tribune of the Black People.*

**John "Jack" Johnson,**  
Library of Congress.

**1835–1836** African Americans, free and enslaved, participate in the Texas Revolution.

**1863** Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, initially drafted in September 1862, becomes effective on Jan. 1.

**1865** Union Gen. Gordon Granger arrives in Galveston and announces an end to slavery in Texas on June 19. A state holiday since 1980, the event is commemorated annually as Juneteenth and is the oldest known celebration of the end of slavery in the U.S.

**1867** The first regiment of African American troopers—the 9th U.S. Cavalry—arrives in Texas, deployed by the U.S. Army in support of protection of the western frontier.

**1886** Norris Wright Cuney is appointed Texas committeeman to the National Republican Party.

**1902** Voters approve a state constitutional amendment for a poll tax to limit African American political power.

**1906** Several companies from the 25th U.S. Infantry are accused of attacking townspeople in Brownsville, and roughly 165 Buffalo Soldiers are dishonorably discharged as a result of the "Brownsville Raid."

**1908** Galveston native Arthur John "Jack" Johnson becomes the first African American world heavyweight-boxing champion.

**1917** Racial discrimination against men of the Third Battalion, 24th U.S. Infantry, stationed at Camp Logan in Houston, leads to the Houston Riot of 1917, in which approximately 20 people die (including four soldiers). After the conflict, 110 soldiers are convicted by court martial, and 19 Buffalo Soldiers are hanged.

**1920–1932** Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Company, expands education opportunities by aiding the effort to build public schools for African Americans in the South.

**1921** Atlanta, Texas, native Bessie Coleman receives a pilot's license from the French Fédération Aéronautique Internationale to become the first licensed African American pilot in the world.

**1942** Marshall native James L. Farmer, Jr., son of a Wiley College professor, helps organize the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to peacefully protest racial discrimination in the U.S.

Mess Attendant Second Class Doris Miller of Waco is awarded the Navy Cross for his heroic actions during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

**1944** In *Smith v. Allwright*, the U.S. Supreme Court decides in favor of Houston dentist Lonnie E. Smith that Texas' white primary is unconstitutional. The result of Smith's lawsuit can also be attributed to initial efforts made by Dr. Lawrence Aaron Nixon of El Paso in *Nixon v. Herndon* and *Nixon v. Condon*.



**Julius Rosenwald,**  
Library of Congress.



**Bessie Coleman,**  
National Air and Space Museum,  
Smithsonian Institution.



**Melvin Tolson,**  
Wiley College.



**Doris Miller,**  
Naval Historical Foundation.

**1929** Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College begins collecting oral histories of former slaves. In 1936, the Works Progress Administration establishes the Federal Writers' Project Slave Narratives initiative to continue efforts to preserve first-hand accounts of slavery in the southern U.S., including Texas.

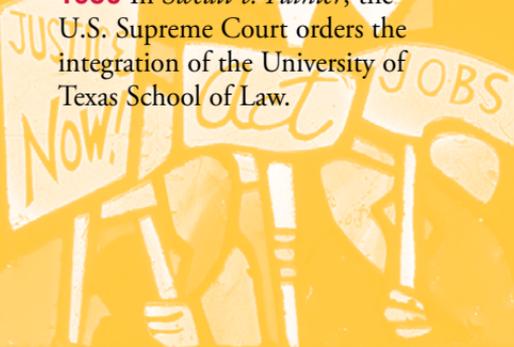
**1935** The Wiley College debate team defeats the University of Southern California, the reigning national champions.

**1936** Dr. Connie Yerwood Conner becomes the first African American physician on the staff of the Texas Department of Health.

**1947** To prevent Houston postman Heman M. Sweatt from enrolling at the University of Texas School of Law, the Texas Legislature establishes the Texas State University for Negroes, which later becomes Texas Southern University.

Melvin B. Tolson and James L. Farmer, Jr. promote Wiley College's first sit-in at the Harrison County Courthouse in Marshall, where students protest the state Democratic Party's white primary.

**1950** In *Sweatt v. Painter*, the U.S. Supreme Court orders the integration of the University of Texas School of Law.



**1954** In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the U.S. Supreme Court overturns the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision and declares separate schools for African American students are unconstitutional. Following the decision, two African American students integrate into an all-Anglo school in Friona. The San Antonio school district becomes one of the first districts in Texas to integrate its schools.

**1955** Thelma White of El Paso wins a federal lawsuit against Texas Western College, allowing African American undergraduates to enroll at the previously all-Anglo school.

**1966** Curtis Graves and Joe Lockridge are the first African American state representatives elected since the 1890s; Barbara Jordan is elected to the Texas Senate.

**1973** Barbara Jordan is elected the first African American from a Southern state to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives since Reconstruction.

**1979** Houston pharmacist Mickey Leland is elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, taking the seat vacated by Barbara Jordan.



**James L. Farmer, Jr.,** President  
**Lyndon B. Johnson,**  
Library of Congress, LBJ Library.



**Barbara Jordan,**  
Texas State Library and Archives Commission.



**Mickey Leland,**  
Collection of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives.



**Wilhelmina Delco,**  
Korey Howell Photography.

**1956** To prevent three African American students from enrolling at Mansfield High School, more than 300 Anglo protesters violate a court order in an effort to maintain segregation.

**1964** Texas native and President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act, making Jim Crow segregation and discrimination illegal.

**1965** President Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act, prohibiting state laws that restrict voting. Johnson oversees the implementation of sweeping civil rights reform in the U.S. during his presidency.

**1980** Juneteenth is officially established as a state holiday, celebrating Union Gen. Gordon Granger's announcement on June 19, 1865, of the Civil War's end and the abolishment of slavery.

**1991** Wilhelmina Delco becomes the first woman and second African American Speaker Pro Tempore of the Texas House.

**1992** Morris Overstreet of Amarillo is the first African American in Texas elected to statewide office when chosen as Judge, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

## > ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The sites featured in this educational travel guide are organized according to the 10 heritage regions in the Texas Historical Commission's nationally award-winning tourism initiative, the Texas Heritage Trails Program. The African American cultural and historic sites are listed alphabetically within the heritage region in which they are located. There is no recommended sequence in which to visit these sites; city numbers on the map follow the order in which they appear in the guide.

### TEXAS BRAZOS TRAIL REGION (PAGE 16)

- 1 | Bastrop\*
- 2 | Bryan
- 3 | Calvert

### TEXAS FOREST TRAIL REGION (PAGE 21)

- 4 | Atlanta
- 5 | Crockett
- 6 | Huntsville
- 7 | Marshall
- 8 | Nacogdoches

### TEXAS FORTS TRAIL REGION (PAGE 25)

- 9 | Abilene
- 10 | Albany
- 11 | Jacksboro
- 12 | Menard
- 13 | San Angelo

### TEXAS HILL COUNTRY TRAIL REGION

(PAGE 30)

- 14 | Austin
- 15 | Blanco
- 16 | San Marcos



Throughout the text, the following abbreviations note a site's historical significance with national and/or state designations and/or markers.

#### KEY

- NHL** Designated a National Historic Landmark
- NR** Listed in the National Register of Historic Places
- RTHL** Designated a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark
- SM** Texas Historical Subject Marker
- HTC** Designated a Historic Texas Cemetery



Many sites in this guide are also designated as local landmarks or districts by local municipalities.

**TEXAS INDEPENDENCE TRAIL REGION** (PAGE 40)

- 17 | Brazoria
- 18 | Brenham
- 19 | Galveston
- 20 | Houston
- 21 | Kendleton
- 22 | Lockhart
- 23 | Prairie View
- 24 | San Antonio\*\*
- 25 | Seguin
- 26 | Texas City
- 27 | Washington
- 28 | West Columbia

**TEXAS LAKES TRAIL REGION** (PAGE 57)

- 29 | Dallas
- 30 | Denton
- 31 | Fort Worth
- 32 | Waxahachie

**TEXAS MOUNTAIN TRAIL REGION** (PAGE 64)

- 33 | El Paso
- 34 | Fort Davis

**TEXAS PECOS TRAIL REGION** (PAGE 67)

- 35 | Brackettville
- 36 | Fort Stockton
- 37 | Sheffield

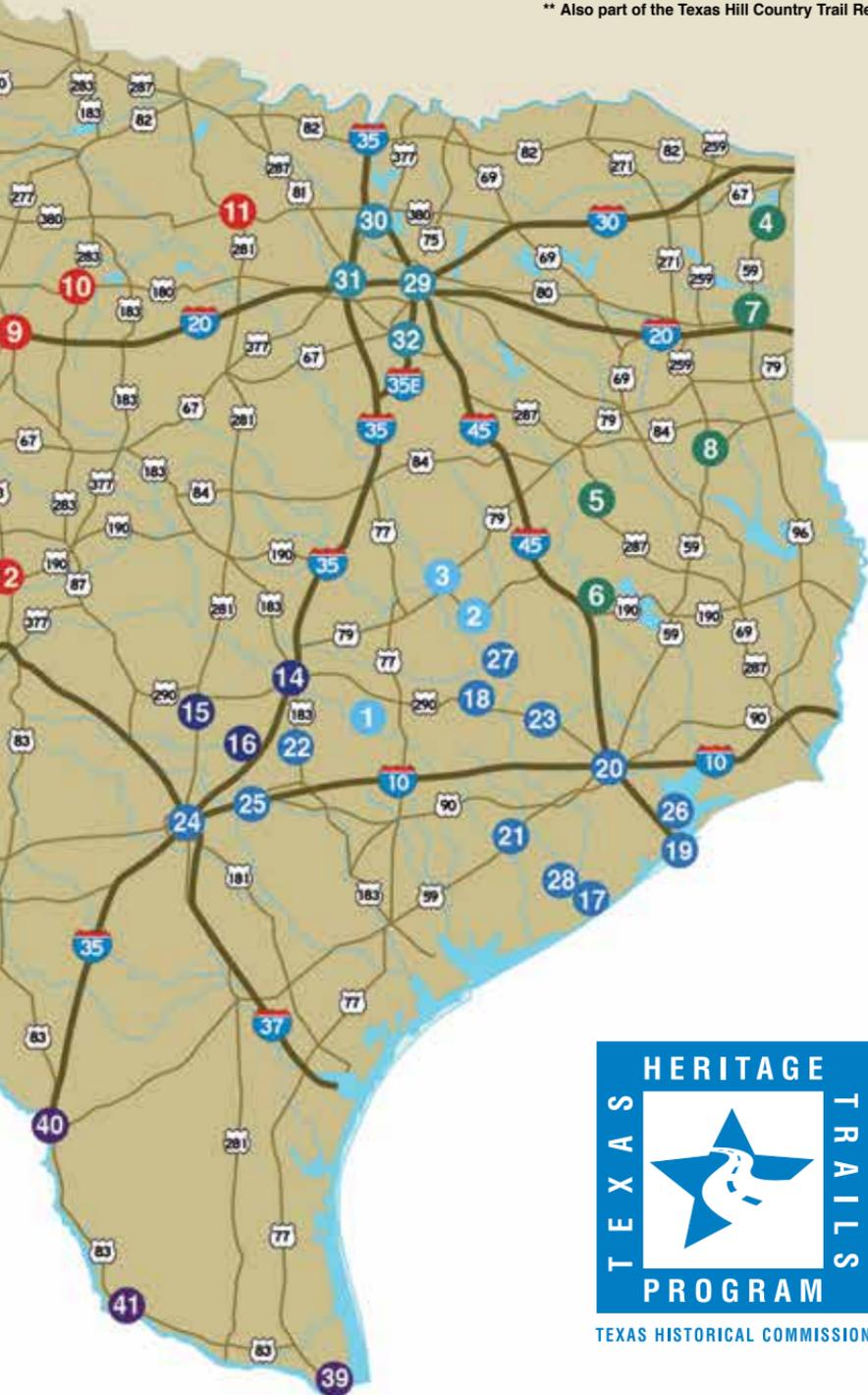
**TEXAS PLAINS TRAIL REGION** (PAGE 70)

- 38 | Lubbock

**TEXAS TROPICAL TRAIL REGION** (PAGE 72)

- 39 | Brownsville
- 40 | Laredo
- 41 | Rio Grande City

\* Also part of the Texas Independence Trail Region  
 \*\* Also part of the Texas Hill Country Trail Region



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION



**TEXAS BRAZOS TRAIL REGION**  
[www.texasbrazostrail.com](http://www.texasbrazostrail.com)

Community members gather for music, Kerr Community Center, Bastrop.

## **1 | BASTROP** Also part of the Texas Independence Trail Region **Kerr Community Center**

Restored in 2008, the Kerr Community Center, with its two-story wood-frame construction and white paint, is easy to identify. Constructed in 1914 by Beverly and Lula Kerr—their house can be seen nearby—the community center provided a haven for African American social activities, lodge meetings and other functions in the segregated South. Additionally, several prominent black entertainers performed at the center, including the “Grey Ghost,” blues pianist Roosevelt Williams. During World War II, the U.S. Army, in keeping with its segregationist policies, used this building as a United Service Organizations (USO) center for African American soldiers from Camp Swift. The Kerrs were music teachers and prominent members of the African American community in Bastrop. (NR)

**1308 Walnut St.**

## **Ploeger-Kerr-White House**

Robert A. Kerr was one of Bastrop’s leading African American citizens during the late 19th century. Born in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1833, Kerr had an Anglo father and, as a result, received a private education. Kerr arrived in the Bastrop area and took a job with a local grocery store after the Civil War. His political career included an appointment as an alternate delegate for the 1872 Republican National



Convention and as an election judge for San Patricio, Refugio, Calhoun and Victoria counties. Local voters elected Kerr to the 17th Legislature of Texas (1881–82). He also served as a member of the Bastrop School Board in 1893. Kerr and his wife, Sarah, were the second residents of this house, constructed by Prussian immigrant Carl Ludwig Ploeger. (NR)

**806 Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr.**

## **2 | BRYAN** **Brazos Valley African American Museum**

This museum houses a unique collection focused on the African American experience in the Brazos Valley. Growing out of the collections and research of Mell Pruitt, a retired

educator, the facility features some African artifacts and a rotating exhibit. The museum is also developing a genealogical and research library.

**500 E. Pruitt St. • 979-775-3961**  
**[www.bvaam.org](http://www.bvaam.org)**

## **3 | CALVERT** **Calvert School**

Constructed in 1929, the Calvert School was the largest Rosenwald School (see Education spotlight, next page) in Texas at the time. The town restored the building, and it served as the W.D. Spigner Elementary School until 2010. It is now a multipurpose center operated by Calvert Colored W.D. Spigner High School Alumni Association, Inc.

**801 W. Texas Ave.**

## > EDUCATION

African Americans were denied access to education while enslaved, but opportunities emerged after emancipation. Though former slaves quickly sought educational prospects for themselves and their children, finding schools proved difficult at best. Organized by the federal government, the Freedmen's Bureau founded several schools in the state that offered day and night classes, and several church societies followed suit. The state established a segregated public education system that underfunded African American scholastic activities, limiting student access to books, libraries, educational resources and buildings.

In 1917, the Rosenwald Fund was established by Chicago philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, president and board member of Sears, Roebuck and Company, who also served on the Board of Directors for Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute. Among the fund's many social projects was the rural school building program, which provided matching monies to communities to build public schools for African American students. Rosenwald Schools began forming in Texas in 1920. By 1932, the school-building program had come to an end, after helping fund more than 5,000 schools across the South, 527 of them in Texas.

Segregation continued as a major long-term obstacle for African Americans pursuing an education, and it still casts a long shadow on school systems today. In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court found segregated schools to be unconstitutional in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, a ruling that was slow to be implemented throughout the South. The accomplishment of school district integration can primarily be attributed to the relentless pursuit of equality in education by many African

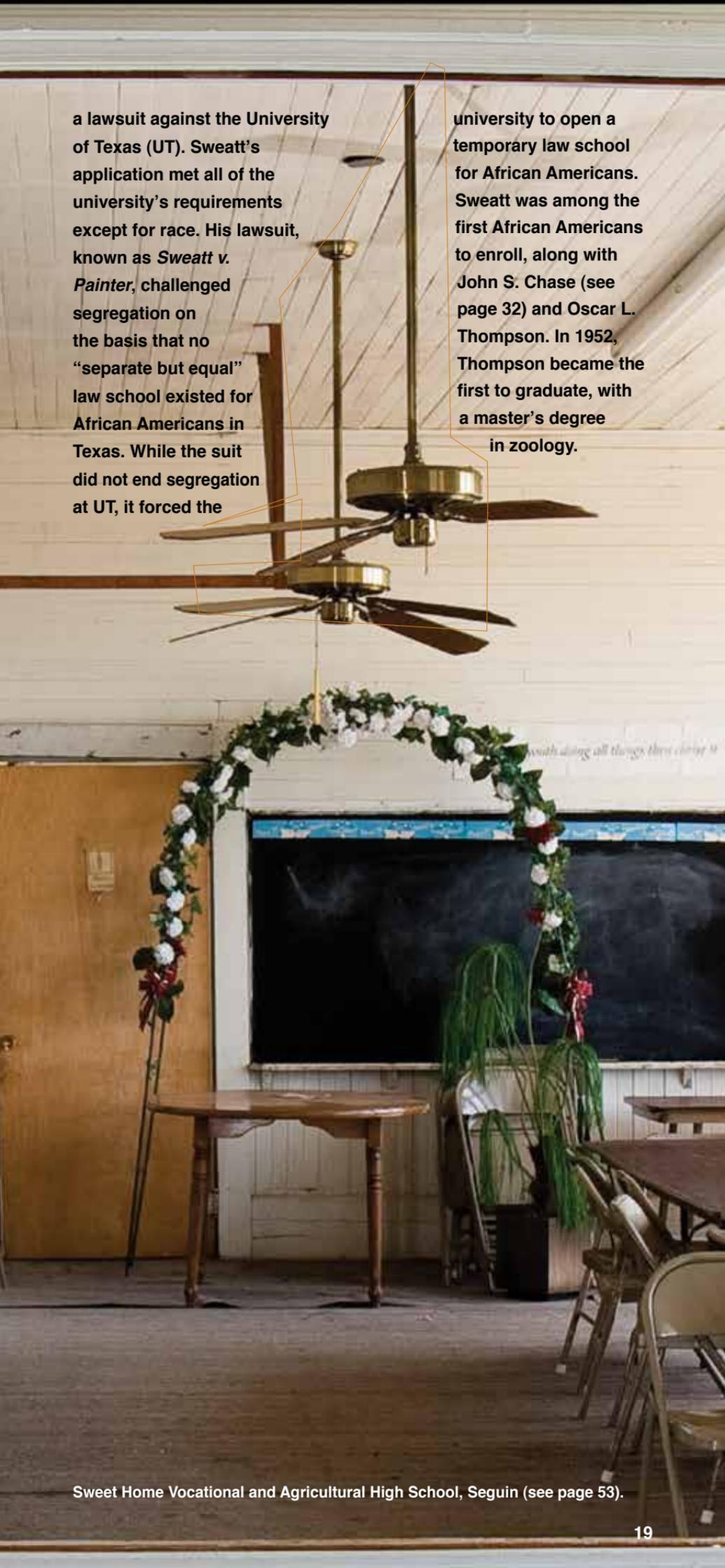
Americans who participated in peaceful sit-ins, filed numerous lawsuits and suffered through forceful opposition. While Texas led desegregation efforts in the South—with Friona integrating first in 1954, followed shortly by the San Antonio school district—the state did not completely come into compliance until the late 1970s.

Institutions of higher learning were also affected by the legacy of discrimination. Segregation led to the founding of several African American colleges by religious, government and other organizations, including Paul Quinn College (Dallas), Bishop and Wiley colleges (Marshall), Jarvis Christian College (Hawkins), Mary Allen Junior College (Crockett), Texas Southern University (Houston), Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College—now Prairie View A&M (Prairie View)—Texas College (Tyler), and Samuel Huston College and Tillotson Collegiate and Normal Institute, which merged into Huston-Tillotson in 1952 (Austin).

Higher education for African Americans took a dramatic turn in the late 1940s when Heman M. Sweatt filed

a lawsuit against the University of Texas (UT). Sweatt's application met all of the university's requirements except for race. His lawsuit, known as *Sweatt v. Painter*, challenged segregation on the basis that no "separate but equal" law school existed for African Americans in Texas. While the suit did not end segregation at UT, it forced the

university to open a temporary law school for African Americans. Sweatt was among the first African Americans to enroll, along with John S. Chase (see page 32) and Oscar L. Thompson. In 1952, Thompson became the first to graduate, with a master's degree in zoology.





**BESSIE COLEMAN**

First African American woman to earn her pilot's license in the United States. She was the first African American woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean. She was also the first African American woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. She was the first African American woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

## > BESSIE COLEMAN

Bessie Coleman was born in Atlanta, Texas, and grew up primarily in Waxahachie, picking cotton in her youth to help ease her family's monetary woes. Following a brief semester at an African American college in Oklahoma, where she was forced to quit because of financial difficulties, Coleman joined her brother for a short time in Chicago. However, her desire to fly airplanes was unrelenting.

With backing from Chicago entrepreneurs, Coleman's dream to fly took her to Le Crotoy, France, to attend aviation school. Racial segregation prevented the pursuit of her passion in the U.S. On June 15, 1921, after 10 months of perfecting her skills, Coleman became the world's first licensed African American pilot. She returned to the U.S. and performed in air shows, earning the nickname "Brave Bessie" because of her fondness for daredevil stunts.

Coleman encouraged African Americans to pursue their dreams and, during a performance in Waxahachie, she refused to give an exhibition on Anglo school grounds unless blacks were permitted to use the same entrances as Anglos. Sadly, she died during a test flight before a show on April 30, 1926. Coleman's historical significance is undeniable and was highlighted in 1995 when the U.S. Postal Service issued a commemorative stamp in her honor.

Bessie Coleman exhibit, Atlanta Historical Museum.



**TEXAS FOREST TRAIL REGION**  
[www.texasforesttrail.com](http://www.texasforesttrail.com)

Otis Duren holds a photo of his great-grandfather, Bill, a former slave and community founder, New Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Germany Community.

**4 | ATLANTA**

**Atlanta Historical Museum**

Housed in the historic Texas and Pacific Railroad Depot, the Atlanta Historical Museum showcases the community's history with a special emphasis on child-friendly exhibits, which makes this a great stop for traveling families. Both a scale model of a Curtiss Jenny bi-wing plane, the centerpiece of the museum, and a display honor the town's most famous citizen, the pioneering African American pilot Bessie Coleman.

**101 N. East St. • [www.atlantatexas.org/city/atlanta-historical-museum.html](http://www.atlantatexas.org/city/atlanta-historical-museum.html)**

**5 | CROCKETT**

**Germany Community**

The community name of Germany originated from references to a German family that settled here. The first African Americans arrived in this area as slaves. Following the Civil War, a group of former slaves that included John Burt, George Smith, Lewis Hall and Van and Jane Benton applied for and received land patents in the area. In 1883, the community constructed the New Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, which doubled as a school, and set aside land for a cemetery. The agricultural community of Germany has never been large, but the church remains active and hosts several social events throughout the year. (SM)

**10 miles northeast of Crockett off SH 21**

## 6 | HUNTSVILLE

### Samuel Walker Houston Museum and Cultural Center

Samuel Walker Houston was the son of Joshua Houston, a slave owned by Sam Houston. Born into slavery in 1864, Samuel grew up to become an educator, founding the Galilee Community School in 1907 for African American students in grades 1–11. It was later known as the Houstonian Normal and Industrial Institute, then as the Samuel W. Houston High School. The museum shares Samuel Walker Houston's legacy through exhibits featuring artifacts and photos of the school. Outside on the grounds is the “Dreamers” sculpture, a curved, concrete wall featuring 69 faces depicting multiple generations of African Americans. Just over a mile to the northeast is Emancipation Park, where Huntsville's African American community has celebrated Juneteenth since 1915. (SM)

**1604 10th St. • 936-295-2119**

## 7 | MARSHALL

### Buard History Trail

This driving tour provides an overview of Marshall's history and includes important African American sites, such as historic Wiley College, New Town and the Old Powder Mill Cemetery, which includes the graves of two of the famous Tuskegee Airmen who served in World War II. The city installed interpretative markers for each of the stops on the Buard History Trail, which is named in honor of the late Rebecca D. Buard, a popular local historian. Before beginning the tour, stop



by the Marshall Convention and Visitors Bureau to pick up a trail guide brochure or DVD, or call in advance to arrange a guided tour.

### Marshall Convention and Visitors Bureau

**301 N. Washington Ave.  
903-702-7777**

### Wiley College

Founded in 1873, Wiley College was named after Bishop Isaac Wiley of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1882, Wiley became the first college west of the Mississippi River certified by the Freedmen's Aid Society. In 1935, Wiley College's debate team, coached by Melvin Tolson, made headlines when it defeated



Willis J. King Administration Building, Wiley College, Marshall.

the University of Southern California's national championship team, a feat that inspired the film "The Great Debaters" (2007). One member of the team, James Farmer, Jr., assisted in founding a major civil rights organization, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). In 1960, students from Wiley and Bishop colleges held sit-ins at the Woolworth's and Fry Hodge stores in downtown Marshall. (SM)

**711 Wiley Ave. • 903-927-3300**  
**[www.wileyc.edu](http://www.wileyc.edu)**

## **8 | NACOGDOCHES** **Zion Hill Historic District**

The history of this district is typical of many southern U.S. communities after the Civil War. Zion Hill was home

primarily to service workers, including shop porters, servants, maids, cooks and groundskeepers for affluent white families living on nearby Mound Street. One-story framed dwellings known as shotgun houses dominate the area. The Gothic Revival-style 1914 Zion Hill Baptist Church anchors the neighborhood, and the Oak Grove cemetery contains graves dating to 1837.

(NR, SM)

**Roughly bounded by Park Street, the Lanana Creek, Oak Grove Cemetery and North Lanana Street**



## > FREEDMEN'S COMMUNITIES

Following emancipation, many African Americans set up independently sustaining freedmen's communities throughout the state. They were established in both rural and urban areas, creating employment opportunities, a sense of society and a cultural unity that this marginalized population had not been allowed to experience freely.

Shankleville in Newton County, for example, became a freedmen's community, representing the triumph of family bonds over slavery. The Shankle family was torn apart when Winnie Shankle was separated from her husband following her sale from Mississippi to an East Texas landowner. Undertaking a treacherous journey, Jim Shankle traveled miles on foot and was eventually bought by his wife's owner, reuniting the couple and her three children. With emancipation, the Shankles bought more than 4,000 acres and established the community of Shankleville ([www.shankleville.org](http://www.shankleville.org)). (SM, HTC)

One of the most important urban freedmen's colonies was a 40-block residential area in Houston now called the Freedmen's Town Historic District. Established in the 1880s–1890s, Freedmen's Town served as the economic and cultural center for Houston's African American

population, providing community access to commercial businesses, schools, churches and social services. Although a historic Houston neighborhood, Freedmen's Town's preservation has suffered from metropolitan growth. (NR, SM)

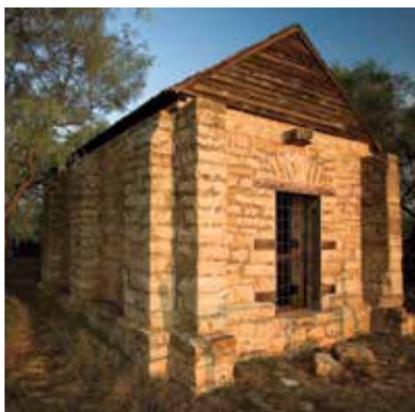
Many of these freedmen's communities and businesses have been absorbed into the larger surrounding cities, while others—including Austin's San Bernard Historic District—have evolved into identifiable, ethnically diverse communities. Revitalization of these areas is key to preserving the heritage and culture that characterized the independent African American way of life in Texas. Urban renewal often demolished these communities, but revitalization allows the commercial and residential structures, and the rich stories they embody, to remain an integral part of contemporary neighborhoods, cities and society.

Jimmie Odom (grandson of Jim and Winnie Shankle) and family, circa 1906, Shankleville.



**TEXAS FORTS TRAIL REGION**  
[www.texasfortstrail.com](http://www.texasfortstrail.com)

Buffalo Soldier reenactor visits with a family, Fort Phantom Hill, Abilene.



Powder magazine,  
 Fort Phantom Hill, Abilene.

**9 | ABILENE**  
**Fort Phantom Hill**

Interpretive signs provide a history of this property, which the U.S. Army established in 1851. Sporadically occupied, the site served as a frontier garrison—including a stint under Confederate control—and as a stagecoach and mail stop. The 9th U.S. Cavalry, a unit of the famous Buffalo Soldiers (see sidebar, page 28),

fought Comanche and Kiowa Indian forces here in 1869. Visitors to the site can follow trails among the ruins, which include buildings, foundations and a large number of now-orphaned chimneys scattered around the 22-acre property. (NR, SM)

 **10 miles north of Abilene on FM 600 • 325-677-1309**  
[www.fortphantom.org](http://www.fortphantom.org)



Period kitchen, Fort Richardson, Jacksboro.

## 10 | ALBANY

### Fort Griffin State Historic Site

Established in 1867—during the Indian Wars, when Kiowa and Comanche Indians reacted to U.S. efforts to remove them from their traditional lands by raiding settlements and attacking travelers—Fort Griffin served as an active garrison until 1881. It supported, at various times, Buffalo Soldiers from companies of the 9th and 10th U.S. Cavalry and Company E of the 24th U.S. Infantry. These soldiers used the fort as a resting point from which they could patrol the surrounding areas and pursue raiders. Today, Fort Griffin State Historic Site, a Texas Historical Commission property, features remains of the fort, plus campgrounds, nature trails and Texas longhorn cattle. Several events take place at Fort Griffin, including the annual Living History Days in October that includes Buffalo Soldier reenactors. (NR, SM)

 **1701 N. U.S. Hwy. 283**  
**325-762-3592**  
[www.visitfortgriffin.com](http://www.visitfortgriffin.com)

## 11 | JACKSBORO

### Fort Richardson State Park and Historic Site

The U.S. Army built Fort Richardson in 1867, and Buffalo Soldiers from both the 10th U.S. Cavalry and the 24th U.S. Infantry operated here during the 1870s. Now a state park, the site includes both restored and reconstructed buildings. Guided tours are offered midday. Fort Richardson hosts various special events, including military reenactments. The area makes a good spot for a family vacation, offering a variety of facilities for travelers, including campgrounds and nature trails. (NHL, RTHL, SM)

 **228 State Park Rd. 61**  
**940-567-3506**  
[www.tpwd.texas.gov/  
state-parks/fort-richardson](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/fort-richardson)

## 12 | MENARD

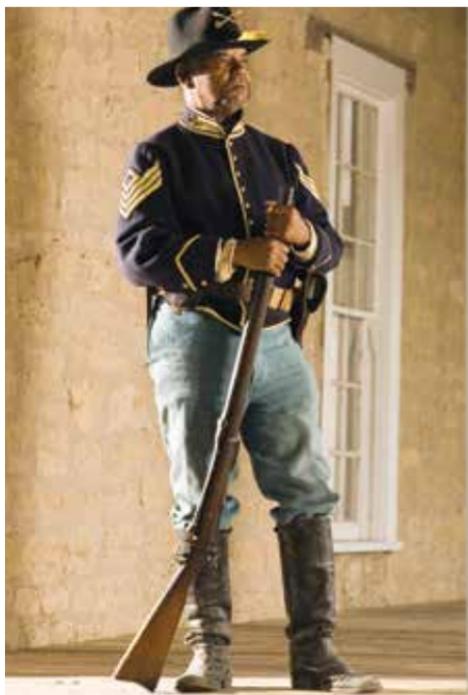
### Fort McKavett State Historic Site

The U.S. Army established Fort McKavett in 1852, but abandoned it by the end of the decade. In 1868, the fort reopened and elements of the U.S. Army's four African American regiments—the Buffalo Soldiers—used Fort McKavett during the Indian Wars. Sgt. Emmanuel Stance, one of the first Buffalo Soldiers to earn the Medal of Honor, was stationed here in 1870. Fort McKavett State Historic Site is a Texas Historical Commission property with restored buildings and a visitors center featuring detailed exhibits that tell the real stories behind this place. The site is open daily and also hosts a number of events throughout the year, including the annual West Texas Heritage Days in the spring. (NR, RTHL, SM)

 **7066 FM 864**  
**(23 miles west**  
**of Menard) • 325-396-2358**  
**[www.visitfortmckavett.com](http://www.visitfortmckavett.com)**



Restored hospital, Fort McKavett State Historic Site, near Menard.



Buffalo soldier reenactor, Fort Concho, San Angelo.

## 13 | SAN ANGELO

### Fort Concho National Historic Landmark

Established in 1867 and closed in 1889, Fort Concho belonged to the chain of frontier posts used by the Buffalo Soldiers during the Indian Wars. All four regiments of Buffalo Soldiers (the 9th and 10th U.S. Cavalry and the 24th and 25th U.S. Infantry) served at Fort Concho during its active use as a military facility. It remains one of the best-preserved frontier forts in Texas, with 23 structures on the grounds, including a museum and living history exhibit buildings. Fort Concho has plenty to see and hosts kid-friendly events throughout the summer. Families on vacation are encouraged to check the events calendar and consider stopping by for one of the Fun at the Fort days. (NHL, NR, RTHL, SM)

 **630 S. Oakes St.**  
**325-481-2646**

**or 325-657-4444**  
**[www.fortconcho.com](http://www.fortconcho.com)**

## > THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS

The volatile environmental conditions of the American Southwest made Anglo settlement an extremely arduous task. Inevitable friction between Anglo settlers and American Indians, as well as bandits and cattle thieves, created a general atmosphere of lawlessness that the drastically reduced post-Civil War U.S. military found challenging. To meet these threats, the U.S. Army stationed troops, many of whom were African Americans, throughout the region. They were called Buffalo Soldiers by American Indians who were reminded of the buffalo when they saw the soldiers' thick black hair. Some believe the name symbolized a respect for the Buffalo Soldiers' bravery and valor.

The duties assigned to these units ranged from escorting settlers, cattle herds and railroad crews, to protecting the mail, keeping roads open and pursuing outlaws. Throughout the Indian Wars era, many U.S. cavalry troops were African American, and they fought more than 170 engagements. Several of these brave men were recipients of the Medal of Honor. A few Buffalo Soldier units, the 9th and 10th U.S. Cavalry Regiment, conducted campaigns against American Indian tribes on a western frontier that extended from Montana to Texas and the Southwest. In 1869, the 24th U.S. Infantry Regiment was organized at Fort McKavett with the consolidation of the 38th and 41st U.S. Infantry Regiment.

Also as a result of the U.S. Army's 1869 Consolidation Act, the 25th U.S. Infantry Regiment served at numerous posts in Texas in the years after the Civil War.

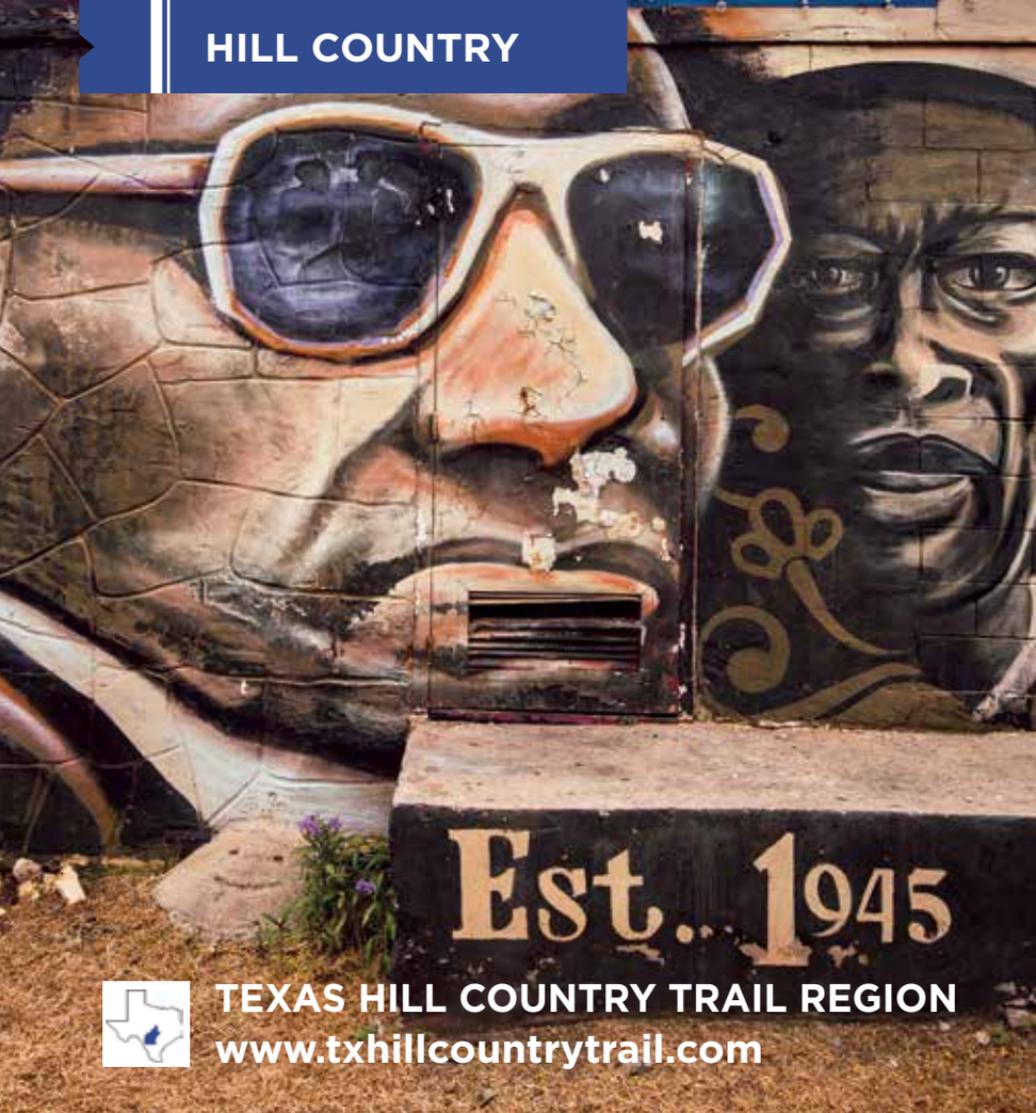
Today, the Buffalo Soldier story is interpreted through many public and private programs, notably the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Buffalo Soldier Heritage and Outreach Program, which emphasizes Texans' shared western heritage. Buffalo Soldier history events, such as the Morton Buffalo Soldier Encampment in Cochran County, take place around the state. Other events occur at San Angelo's Fort Concho and Brackettville's Fort Clark.



Texas has many Buffalo Soldier-related sites. Look for the Buffalo Soldier symbol in the site descriptions to follow the Buffalo Soldier trail of history through Texas.

Buffalo Soldier reenactor marches toward post at Fort Phantom Hill, Abilene (see page 25).





**TEXAS HILL COUNTRY TRAIL REGION**  
[www.txhillcountrytrail.com](http://www.txhillcountrytrail.com)

Mural on the Victory Grill, Austin.

## 14 | AUSTIN

### African American Cultural Heritage District

Encompassing about six square miles in East Austin, this historically segregated area has been changed dramatically by gentrification. But much of its rich African American history remains and is presented at the African American Cultural and Heritage Facility (912 E. 11th St.). A modern building houses city offices, while the circa 1880 Dedrick-Hamilton House—owned by one of the first freedmen in Travis County—now serves as a visitors center. The “Reflections” mural in the courtyard pays tribute to prominent local African Americans. Another mosaic mural is located in the Charles E. Urdy Plaza at East 11th and Waller streets. “Rhapsody” reflects East Austin’s musical and cultural heritage—a legacy that lives on at the nearby Victory Grill (1104 E. 11th St.), one of the oldest blues venues in the state. Established in 1945 to accommodate African Americans and especially servicemen who couldn’t go to other segregated clubs, it became a stop on the “Chitlin Circuit,” a network of Southern clubs that gave black performers access to venues during segregation. Blues legends such as B.B. King, Bobby “Blue” Bland and Big Joe Williams have graced the stage.

A few blocks further east on the southern edge of the district is the serene, rolling landscape of the Texas State Cemetery (909 Navasota St.), where eminent statesmen and heroes of the



Lone Star State are buried. Notable gravesites include Barbara Jordan (see sidebar, page 44) and Myra McDaniel, who served as Texas' first African American secretary of state from 1984–87. The Black Legislators Monument honors the 52 African American men who served in the Legislature or the Texas Constitutional Convention during Reconstruction. A couple blocks east is Blackshear Elementary School (1712 E. 11th St.), which opened in 1891 to provide free public education to African American children in a community then known as Gregory Town. Across the street is Huston-Tillotson University (900 Chicon St.),



Black Legislators Monument at the Texas State Cemetery, Austin.



George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center, Austin.

a historically black university that resulted from the 1952 merger of Samuel Huston College and Tillotson Collegiate and Normal Institute, which both date to the 1870s. The campus hosts many African American heritage events throughout the year, including the annual MLK Community March and Festival and Juneteenth Parade.

Several notable buildings in the district were designed by John S. Chase, the first African American architect licensed in Texas. David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church (2211 E. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.) has a unique roofline that guides the visitor's eye toward the cross in the sanctuary. The 1958 building also features folding panels that increase the functionality of the building, allowing it to be subdivided into smaller areas. The modernist architect also designed Olivet Baptist Church (1179 San Bernard St.),

the King-Tears Mortuary building (1300 E. 12th St.) and the Teachers State Association of Texas building (1191 Navasota St.), which is now a salon. The Association was founded in 1884 by faculty members at Prairie View State Normal School (now Prairie View A&M), and fought to get equal pay and working conditions for African American teachers in Texas during segregation.

The Carver Museum and Cultural Center and the Carver Branch Library (1165 Angelina St.) grew out of one of the first library buildings in Austin, which later became the "colored branch" of the Austin Public Library system. The small building was originally constructed in 1926 as the central library at Guadalupe and West 9th streets. It was moved to its current location in 1933 and renamed in 1947 after Dr. George Washington Carver, the famous African

American agricultural scientist known as one of the greatest inventors in American history. After completion of the larger branch library to the south, the historic facility was rededicated in 1979 as one of the first African American neighborhood museums in Texas. In 2005, a new museum and cultural facility was added to the campus, housing four galleries, a conference room, classroom, darkroom, dance studio, 134-seat theater and archival space. The galleries feature a core exhibit on Juneteenth, a permanent exhibit on African American families in Austin, an artists' gallery and a children's exhibit on black scientists and inventors. The historic building now houses the Carver Genealogy Center.

Another noteworthy site is the Connelly-Yerwood House (1115 E. 15th St.), which was owned by Dr. Charles Yerwood, an African American physician, and later by his daughter, Dr. Connie Yerwood Conner. She painted it the distinct pink and aqua colors of her sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha, the oldest Greek-letter society established by African American women. Conner worked for the state's Department of Health where, despite facing discrimination both as an African American and as a woman, she eventually rose to the position of Chief of the Bureau of Personal Health Services. Additional sites of interest in the district include the Henry G. Madison log cabin at Rosewood Park (2300 Rosewood Ave.), Wesley United Methodist Church (1164 San Bernard St.), Evergreen Cemetery (3304 E. 12th St.) and Oakwood Cemetery (1601

Navasota St.), which contains a large African American section of mostly unmarked graves. Additional African American graveyards just east of the district are Plummers Cemetery (1150 Springdale Rd.) and Bethany Cemetery (1300 Springdale Rd.).

**Roughly bounded by I-35, Airport Boulevard, Manor Road and East 11th Street/Rosewood Avenue/Oak Springs Drive**  
**512-505-8738**  
**[www.sixsquare.org](http://www.sixsquare.org)**

### **Clarksville Historic District**

The Clarksville historic district is one of Austin's oldest African American communities and established neighborhoods. A freedman, Charles Clark, settled the area in 1871, having purchased two acres outside Austin specifically for the purpose of forming a district for freedmen. Austin eventually expanded to encompass the neighborhood. The construction of the Mopac Expressway through Clarksville greatly reduced the size of the district, although it has not diminished the enduring sense of community pride. When visiting the area, be sure to stop by the Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church at 1725 W. 11th St. (see page 10). (NR, SM)

**Bounded by West Lynn Street, Waterston Avenue, West 10th Street and Mopac Expressway**

## First Colored Baptist Church

Although the First Colored Baptist Church (now known as First Baptist Church) began as a slave congregation, it was officially organized after the Civil War in 1867 by the Rev. Jacob Fontaine, a former slave (see *Gold Dollar* entry below). Today, the church is considered to be one of the oldest African American Baptist churches in Austin. The current building is the fourth home for this congregation. (NR, SM)

**4805 Heflin Ln.**

## Gold Dollar Newspaper Building

This two-story building is all that remains of the African American community of Wheatville, which once encompassed the area from 24th to 26th streets and from Rio Grande Street to Shoal Creek. The Rev. Jacob Fontaine lived here and also published the *Gold Dollar*—the first African American-owned newspaper printed in Austin—from this location. In the aftermath of the Civil War, Fontaine, a former slave, rose to prominence as an influential civic, spiritual and business leader for the Texas African American community. He established several churches and a variety of businesses, some of which were housed in the Gold Dollar Newspaper building, including the First Colored Baptist Church, New Hope Baptist Church and a community grocery store. The building was rehabilitated in 2012 to house a barbecue restaurant.

**2402 San Gabriel St.**



## Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum

Located on the University of Texas campus, this presidential library opened in 1971 to share the life and legacy of the 36th U.S. president, Lyndon Baines Johnson. Among the collection's millions of documents, photos, recordings and artifacts, is a substantial exhibit on civil rights legislation passed during the Johnson presidency. Visitors can listen to a telephone call between Johnson and Martin Luther King, Jr., watch powerful videos about the civil rights movement and the struggle to enact civil rights legislation and see the actual desk on which Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. An interpretive timeline that spans Johnson's life and presidency includes key dates such as the signing of the Civil



## Webberville and Webberville Ebenezer Baptist Church

John F. Webber, an Anglo, settled in this area with his African American wife and children after receiving a land grant in 1827. Webber sought to find a place where he and his family could escape the discrimination of the antebellum South. The resulting community eventually received a post office and was known originally as Webber's Prairie. The town officially adopted the name Webberville in 1853. Cotton brought prosperity to this small community, which boasted almost 400 residents by the turn of the century and included cotton gins, grist mills, four general stores, two churches, a cemetery and several schools. As time passed, however, the community began to shrink, and the post office closed in 1903.



The Webberville Ebenezer Baptist Church was founded in 1868, when resident Matthew Duty donated land for the sanctuary construction. Led by the Rev. Wesley Barrow, the church was formed as a mission of the St. John Regular Missionary Baptist Association. Although many of Webberville's former citizens have moved, the church boasts an active congregation; out-of-town members continue to gather to celebrate holidays and special events. When visiting the church, look to the north, across an open pasture, for an iron fence surrounding a few stone markers; this is Duty's cemetery, where he and several members of his family were buried in the 1800s. (SM)

**13 miles east of Austin  
on FM 969**

Above left: Gold Dollar Newspaper building, Austin.

Above: Monument detail, Webberville Ebenezer Baptist Church Cemetery.

Rights Act of 1964 on July 2, 1964; the appointment of Thurgood Marshall as the first African American Supreme Court Justice on June 13, 1967; and the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 on April 11, 1968.

**2313 Red River St.**

**512-721-0200 • [www.lbjlibrary.org](http://www.lbjlibrary.org)**

**15 | BLANCO**  
**Mt. Horeb Baptist Church**

Established in 1874, the Mt. Horeb Baptist Church served the residents of Peyton Colony, a freedmen's community named after Peyton Roberts, a former slave and one of the first freedmen to settle in the area. The church's first minister was the Rev. Jack Burch, and its original log building doubled as a school. The current one-story, wooden structure demonstrates

common features found in most Texas African American churches of that era, with twin towers that flank its entrance and tall, arched windows that run along its sides. Nearby, along FM 165, the people of Peyton Colony built a lime kiln to make the ingredients necessary for mortar. Some of the buildings still standing in Blanco County were built with mortar from this kiln. (SM)

**593 Peyton Colony Rd.**

**830-833-4183**



Above: Mt. Horeb Baptist Church, Blanco. Above right: USO and Camp Gary exhibits, Calaboose African American History Museum, San Marcos.



## 16 | **SAN MARCOS** **Dunbar Historic District**

This locally designated historic district takes its name from the Dunbar School, named after renowned African American author Paul Laurence Dunbar. It was the first public school for African American children in San Marcos, providing segregated education from 1877 until the schools were integrated in the 1960s. The seven-acre area where the school once stood is now a city park (801 Martin Luther King Dr.) located a few blocks west of the district. Community leaders and influential citizens resided in the neighborhood. The restored Cephas House (213 Martin Luther King Dr.) was home to Ulysses Cephas, an African American blacksmith who lived there during the first half of the 20th century. An adjacent lot was recently converted into the small Eddie Durham Park, named after a prominent jazz musician born in San Marcos in 1906.



Church used by oldest known African American congregation in San Marcos, Wesley Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Across the street is the Calaboose African American History Museum (200 Martin Luther King Dr.), which was originally constructed as a county jail in 1873. The city acquired the building in 1885 and turned it into a community recreation center after the county built a stone replacement jail. The Calaboose (from the Spanish word meaning dungeon or local jail), as it came to be called, was enlarged in the 1940s and used as a World War II United Service Organization (USO) center for African American servicemen at a time when segregation kept black and Anglo soldiers from mingling. Local African American historian Johnnie Armstead fought to preserve the site and create the museum.

Since 1879, the Wesley Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church (224 S. Fredericksburg St.) has been home to San Marcos' oldest known African American congregation, although a succession of sanctuaries have stood on this site. The church had been established for four years when the first building was constructed in 1883, and a freedmen's school, operated by the church, also met here.

**Roughly bounded by South Fredericksburg Street, Valley Street, Centre Street, Herndon Street, and Martin Luther King Drive**



## > AGRICULTURE

In the face of debilitating cultural practices during and after Reconstruction—including segregation, lynching, Jim Crow laws and forced labor through a corrupt convict lease system—the African American spirit remained strong and resilient. After slavery was abolished, a need for cheap labor on farms and sugar and cotton plantations arose, which was met through a sharecropping and tenant farming system typically comprised of Anglo land owners and African American farmers.

This system allowed land owners to retain ownership while sharecroppers tended to the agriculture, making income through a share of the crops. A small portion of African Americans owned their own land and farms, but a greater percentage were sharecroppers, a form of work that typically led to indebtedness to land owners.

Levi Jordan Plantation State Historic Site (RTHL) is a Texas Historical Commission property near Brazoria with limited hours that is being restored and slated to fully open to the public in 2017 (see next page).

It serves as a living example of the early African American lifestyles through a transition from slavery to tenant farming. The University of Texas at San Antonio's Institute of Texan Cultures features a sharecropper's cabin that allows visitors to step into this time of hardship and hope. Sabine Farms (SM) near Marshall housed more than 75 families that worked the land through tenant farming. While a kinship was forged, the community center is all that remains to tell the story of this significant time in Texas history.



## TEXAS INDEPENDENCE TRAIL REGION

[www.texasindependencetrail.com](http://www.texasindependencetrail.com)

Blessed Virgin Mary Chapel, Brenham.

### 17 | BRAZORIA

#### Levi Jordan Plantation State Historic Site

This Texas Historical Commission site is a significant example of a plantation before the Civil War and during Reconstruction. The sugar and cotton plantation was established by Levi Jordan in the 1840s near the San Bernard River, utilizing slave labor to construct a brick sugar house, brick slave quarters and a large sugar mill. The recently restored Greek Revival plantation house was built in 1854, using slaves to hand-hew the sills and studs of the house and make bricks for the fireplaces. When sharecropping replaced slavery after emancipation, some freedmen continued to occupy the slave quarters until the 1880s. Archeological remains in the area of the slave quarters have contributed to the interpretation of the site, which presents the evolving history of Southern agriculture and African American plantation workers during the 19th century. At the time of publication, the site was under development with limited tours available by appointment and slated to fully open in 2017.

7234 FM 521 • 979-798-2202

[www.visitleviordanplantation.com](http://www.visitleviordanplantation.com)



Carved shell found in slave cabin at Levi Jordan Plantation, Brazoria.



## **18 | BRENHAM** **African American** **Catholic Community**

This is among Texas' oldest communities of African American Catholics. In the late 1840s, the Spann family, settlers from South Carolina, brought slaves to the area. The Catholic settlers and their slaves worshipped together at first, and the nearby Old Catholic cemetery, which is still active, contains markers for both the Spann family and their slaves, the Sweeds. African American Catholics formed their own distinct congregation here in 1888 under the leadership of Father Martin Francis Huhn, who conducted Mass in the same log building once used by the original settlers and slaves.

Descendants of the Spann and Sweed families continued to share a connection through their Catholic heritage. In 1969, land deeded to descendants of the Sweed family by the Spann family became the site of a new church building, the Blessed Virgin Mary Chapel, and a hall for the African American Catholic community. More recently, in 1995, the town constructed the newest church building, which continues to serve Brenham's African American Catholics, including descendants of the Sweed family. (SM)

**12 miles northeast of Brenham  
on SH 105, then north-north-  
west on CR 100/Sweed Road**



Ashton Villa, Galveston.

## 19 | GALVESTON Ashton Villa

James Moreau Brown built Ashton Villa in 1859 with the help of a brick mason slave named Aleck. According to some accounts, the mansion is one of the places where Union Gen. Gordon Granger read “General Order No. 3” a few years later. The public reading of the Emancipation Proclamation on June 19, 1865, officially ended the practice of slavery in Texas nearly two and a half years after President Lincoln gave the order and just two months after the president’s death. The anniversary of Granger’s announcement has grown into the international celebration of emancipation known as Juneteenth, which is commemorated by a statue on the grounds. Ashton Villa is part of Galveston’s annual Juneteenth celebration, which includes a parade down Martin Luther King Boulevard. (NR, RTHL)  
**2328 Broadway St.**  
**[www.galvestonhistory.org](http://www.galvestonhistory.org)**

## Jack Johnson Park at Old Central

Galveston native Jack Johnson, a former world boxing champion (1908–1915), is honored at his namesake park with an impressive life-sized statue. Known as the “Galveston Giant,” Johnson was the first African American heavyweight boxing champ. His athletic achievements and bold defiance of early-1900s cultural norms made him a controversial figure, and he has only recently received significant recognition. Johnson’s compelling story became national news when filmmaker Ken Burns profiled him in a 2005 documentary.

The park has also hosted events celebrating Juneteenth, which originated in Galveston in 1865. Commemorations are also held at the site of the Texas Historical Commission’s official Juneteenth historical marker, located a mile north at the intersection of 22nd Street and The Strand.

The park’s adjacent Central High School is considered the first African American high school in Texas, established in 1885. The current two-story brick building was built in 1924 and is attached to the 1905 Rosenberg Colored Library, which was developed by the Rosenberg Library Association for the local African American community. (SM)  
**2601 Avenue M**  
**[www.galvestonoldcentral.com](http://www.galvestonoldcentral.com)**

## Norris Wright Cuney Historical Marker

Norris Wright Cuney was born in 1846, in the slave quarters of Sunnyside Plantation near Hempstead, to Anglo planter Philip Cuney and one of his slaves, Adeline Stuart. His father sent Norris Cuney to Pittsburgh, Pa., to attend a school for African American students, but Cuney left the school following the Civil War. He worked a variety of odd jobs, including stints as a riverboat worker, before returning to Galveston. In Texas, Cuney grew into a national leader, giving Texas' African Americans a voice in both state and national politics. He was appointed inspector of customs for Galveston in 1872, and became the first African American to serve as a Galveston alderman when elected to that position in 1883. Cuney chaired the Republican State Convention in 1882 and was a delegate in every national convention from 1876 to 1892. U.S. President Benjamin Harrison appointed Cuney collector of customs in 1889.

He was also involved in African American fraternal organizations, serving as the first grand master of the Prince Hall Masons from 1875–77. (SM)  
**722 Moody Ave. (on Galveston County Courthouse grounds)**

## Reedy Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church

The congregation traces its origins to 1848, when slaves met for outdoor services. In 1863, Anglo Methodists constructed a chapel for their slaves to use; after emancipation, it became home to Reedy Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, one of the first AME churches in Texas. The current building dates to 1886 and survived the hurricane of 1900. If the chapel is open, step inside for a moment; the distinctive, two-story building has a beautiful sanctuary with a high, vaulted ceiling. The building also features a plaque commemorating Norris Wright Cuney. (NR, RTHL, SM)  
**2013 Broadway St.**  
**[www.reedychapel.com](http://www.reedychapel.com)**

Reedy Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Galveston.



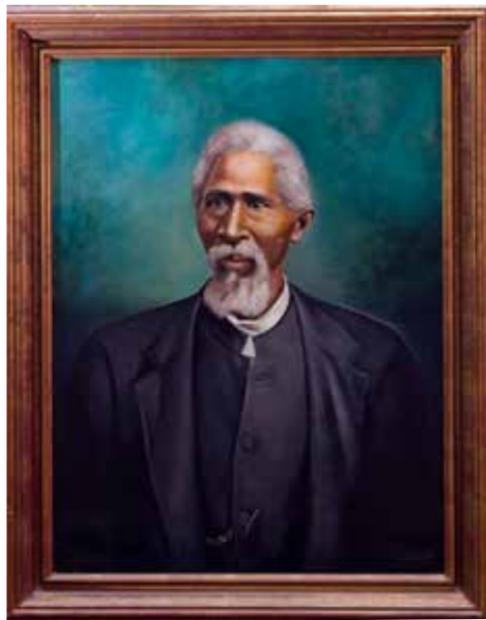


## > BARBARA JORDAN

Known for her speaking prowess, Barbara Jordan was a politician and educator who helped shape the political landscape of Texas. Born in Houston on Feb. 21, 1936, she grew up in the historic Fifth Ward neighborhood, attending Texas Southern University and receiving her law degree from Boston University. Returning to Houston in 1960, she practiced law from her parents' home until she was able to open her own office. Transitioning from law to politics, she campaigned twice unsuccessfully for the Texas Senate in the early 1960s.

In 1966, redistricting and an increased number of African American voters contributed to her political triumph as the first African American state senator in Texas since 1883. Jordan excelled in politics and, in 1973, successfully ran for the U.S. House of Representatives from the 18th Congressional District. She was the first African American woman from a Southern state to serve in

Congress. As a result of her eloquent speeches, she was chosen as the first woman to deliver the keynote address for the Democratic National Convention in 1976. Jordan was a true innovator, recognized by her induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 1990. She died in Austin on Jan. 17, 1996, leaving behind the legacy of an enduring spirit.



Portrait of Rev. Jack Yates, Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, Houston.

## 20 | HOUSTON African American Library at the Gregory School

The Edgar M. Gregory School served as the first public school for African Americans in Houston. Located in the city's National Register-listed Freedmen's Town Historic District, the building is now part of the Houston Public Library system. It was named after a Union army officer and assistant commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau in Texas. The African American Library at the Gregory School offers permanent exhibits and archives featuring photos, documents and recordings focusing on the lives of blacks in the historic Fourth Ward neighborhood. Many items have been collected, including personal letters, photos, newspaper clippings and information about local businesses. This area of the city, part of the Fourth Ward, served as a cultural center for African Americans. In 1870, several Freedmen's Bureau schools were consolidated at Gregory School, which became the wood-frame Gregory Institute that was

eventually replaced by the current two-story brick building in 1926. A 2009 rehabilitation included an oral history recording studio, reading rooms and space for visiting scholars.

**1300 Victor St. • 832-393-1440**  
**[www.thegregoryschool.org](http://www.thegregoryschool.org)**

## Antioch Missionary Baptist Church

John Henry (Jack) Yates, a former slave and one of the first ordained African American Baptist ministers in Houston, was the inaugural preacher at one of Houston's oldest African American Baptist congregations, the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church. The church was originally organized in historic Freedmen's Town in 1866. The sanctuary, built in 1875, stands on a corner in the shadow of downtown Houston. Queen Elizabeth II visited the church in 1991, and her picture is just one of the church's many interesting artifacts and pieces of memorabilia. The cruciform chapel includes a set of beautiful stained-glass windows and intricately carved wooden doors. While in the area, be sure to visit Sam Houston Park a few blocks away, where visitors can see the house that belonged to Jack Yates. (NR)

**500 Clay St. • 713-652-0738**  
**[www.ambchouston.org](http://www.ambchouston.org)**



Buffalo Soldier reenactor interprets the story of African Americans in military service from the Civil War to the present, Buffalo Soldiers National Museum, Houston.

### **Buffalo Soldiers National Museum**

Founded in 2000, the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum preserves and promotes the history and traditions of African Americans who served in the U.S. armed forces, including the Buffalo Soldiers. The museum tells the stories of these largely unsung heroes through exhibits and a notable collection of artifacts. Touted as one of the world's largest collections of African American military memorabilia dating from 1770–2000, the museum is staffed principally by military retirees who offer their personal stories as part of the tour. An introductory video highlights the role played by African Americans in the armed forces since the American Revolution, and the museum hosts reenactments for an additional fee.



**3816 Caroline St.  
713-942-8920**

**[www.buffalosoldier  
museum.com](http://www.buffalosoldiermuseum.com)**

### **Houston Negro Hospital**

The Houston Negro Hospital (now Riverside General Hospital) was built in 1926 in Houston's Third Ward. The three-story, Spanish Colonial Revival-style building was Houston's first nonprofit hospital for African American patients, and it provided a place of work for black physicians who were largely excluded during segregation from the city's Anglo hospitals. Today, the hospital continues to serve the community as an active medical facility. Be sure to visit nearby Emancipation Park, established in the 1870s by the efforts of Jack Yates and other African Americans. Named in commemoration of freedom from slavery, Emancipation Park also hosts annual Juneteenth events. (NR)

**3204 Ennis St.  
[www.riversidegeneral  
hospital.org](http://www.riversidegeneralhospital.org)**

## Independence Heights

Middle-class African American families moved into this area and established the neighborhood around 1908. Independence Heights was an important center for African American businesses, including retail stores, restaurants, building contractors, lumberyards and a blacksmith shop. Residents also formed a number of fraternal organizations and churches in the community. By 1915, the community had grown to more than 400, and the residents incorporated Independence Heights as a city, electing George O. Burgess as the first mayor. The city invested substantially in improvements, including shell paving for streets, plank sidewalks and a municipal water system. In 1929, the growing city of Houston annexed Independence Heights. (NR, SM) **Bounded by North Yale Street, East 34th Street and Loop 610; State marker at 7818 N. Main St.**



Artists rotate through the studios, Project Row Houses, Houston.

## Project Row Houses

Shotgun houses, defined as narrow rectangular residences usually no more than 12 feet wide and with doors at each end, were built in many Southern cities as large numbers of former slaves migrated from the country to the cities in search of opportunity. The term “shotgun house” is widely thought to be a reference to the idea that a blast of shotgun pellets could fly straight through all rooms of the house if the doors were open. The plan is thought to have origins in Africa and the Caribbean. Spreading across 10 blocks, the Project Row Houses community contains 55 buildings—including 25 shotgun houses and the historic Eldorado Ballroom—many of which have been converted to art spaces, artist residencies and mixed-income housing. This unique, community-based project brings together ideals of historic preservation, neighborhood revitalization and cultural education. Visitors can enjoy year-round events.

**2521 Holman St. • 713-526-7662**

**[www.projectrowhouses.org](http://www.projectrowhouses.org)**



Houston Negro Hospital is now Riverside General Hospital.



The Rutherford B.H. Yates Museum features artifacts from on-site archeological excavations, Houston.

## Rutherford B.H. Yates House

Built in 1912, this charming house sits in the historic Freedmen's Town neighborhood in Houston's Fourth Ward. The house serves as a small museum dedicated to Rutherford B.H. Yates, who graduated from Bishop College in Marshall with a printing degree and later went on to teach at the Houston Academy. Along with his brother, Paul, he founded the Yates Printing Company in 1922, and the business continued its operations until 1978. The Rutherford B.H. Yates Museum is dedicated to preserving the history of both the Yates family and African American printing, and it includes a number of artifacts found on the grounds. The museum hosts an annual Juneteenth celebration and also sponsors special events during African American History Month (February).

The Yates House, which belonged to Rutherford's father Jack Yates, was moved from this area in 1994 and now sits in nearby Sam Houston Park. Across the street from the

Rutherford B.H. Yates House is the Colonial-style house that belonged to the Rev. Ned Pullum. The Pullum House was purchased as part of an ongoing campaign, led by the Rutherford B.H. Yates Museum, Inc., to raise capital for the purchase and restoration of historic properties in the Freedmen's Town Historic District, which has already lost many of its original properties to nearby construction and gentrification projects. (NR, RTHL)  
**1314 Andrews St. • 713-739-0163**  
**[www.rbhy.org](http://www.rbhy.org)**

## Texas Southern University

Located just a few miles south of downtown Houston, Texas Southern University's (TSU) founding dates to 1927, when it was established as the Houston Colored Junior College with an enrollment of 300. The university experienced growth throughout the 20th century, becoming a state university in 1947. It now enrolls nearly 10,000 students. During the past six decades, TSU students have showcased cultural events and artistic expression by painting colorful murals in the campus' Hannah Hall. Recent grants have funded careful restoration of the inspirational murals, which are accessible via public tours the first Sunday of every month. TSU also houses an impressive archive collection, including the papers of prominent African American legislators Barbara Jordan and Mickey Leland, as well as significant art holdings in its University Museum. The museum's highlights include the African Art Collection, the Carroll Harris Simms Sculpture

Collection and the Alumni Art Collection.

**3100 Cleburne St. • 713-313-7011**  
**www.tsu.edu**

### **Trinity United Methodist Church**

Established in 1848 as a slave congregation, the Trinity United Methodist Church continues its service today as one of the oldest African American churches in Houston. Members of the congregation helped found a variety of local educational institutions, including the Freedmen's Aid Society, Wiley College and Houston Colored Junior College (later incorporated into Texas Southern University), and a number of area schools are named for members of the Trinity congregation. The current sanctuary, built in 1951, contains a set of large stained-glass windows depicting both religious and civil rights themes. Visitors can see the windows and read about the history on the church's website. (SM)

**2600 Holman St. • 713-528-2356**  
**www.trinityeastumc.org**

### **Yates House, Sam Houston Park**

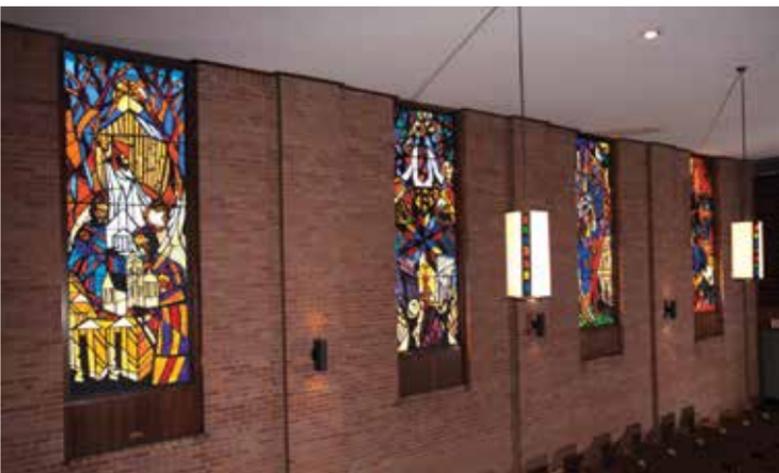
This house was built in 1870 and originally sat in nearby Freedmen's Town—now Houston's Fourth Ward—before the Houston Heritage Society

moved it to this location to preserve it. A former slave, the Rev. Jack Yates played a prominent role in the religious and civic life of Houston's African American community. Yates helped found and also preached at a number of local churches, including the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, whose beautiful sanctuary stands just a few blocks from the park. Yates also helped found several schools. His son's home, now the Rutherford B.H. Yates Museum, remains in its original location in nearby Freedmen's Town.

The Yates House contains a large collection of artifacts and memorabilia from the Yates family. The Heritage Society hosts tours of the facilities and collections. Stop by the museum and register at the entrance desk. Be sure to specify the Yates House, as the tour generally makes four stops, chosen by participants, among the various properties in the park. Also, visitors should set aside time to stroll along the paths leading through the park past other historic buildings, including the 4th Ward Cottage. Cell phones are recommended because the Heritage Society has a phone tour for visitors to access and hear information about each building.

**1100 Bagby St. • 713-655-1912**  
**www.heritagesociety.org**

Trinity United Methodist Church, Houston.





St. John Colony Cemetery, Lockhart.

## 21 | **KENDLETON** **Fort Bend** **County Heritage** **Unlimited Museum**

This museum sits a stone's throw from the original site of Kendleton, a freedmen's town founded shortly after the Civil War on the banks of the San Bernard River. The museum focuses on the lives of African Americans in the surrounding area. The museum's permanent exhibits depict the lifestyles of African American settlers and residents from 1865–1965. Rotating displays focus on topics of interest like African American politics and church history (Barbara Jordan's father was a minister in one of the local churches). Of particular interest is the museum's genealogy corner, where volunteers assist individuals on researching family history. The museum also hosts activities, such as quilting workshops, heritage days, local art displays and an emancipation reenactment.

Bates Allen Park, where the museum is located, also features a variety of other recreational opportunities with plenty of amenities, including restrooms,

barbecue pits, a playground, a fishing pier and boat launch. There are two cemetery sites along the river, some of the last remaining signs of the original Kendleton community site. Included in the cemetery is the grave marker for Benjamin Franklin Williams, a former slave who rose to prominence as a preacher, community activist and Texas legislator before settling in the area and accepting an appointment as Kendleton's first postmaster.

**630 Charlie Roberts Ln.**  
**979-531-8694**  
**[www.fbheritage.org](http://www.fbheritage.org)**

## 22 | **LOCKHART** **St. John Colony**

This freedmen's community took its name from the St. John Missionary Baptist Church, founded in 1873, shortly after settlers led by the Rev. John Henry Winn arrived in the area. Across the road from the church is the official marker for the cemetery, which includes the graves of many of the colony's original inhabitants. (SM)

**12 miles northeast of Lockhart**  
**on FM 672, 0.2 miles east**  
**of CR 294/CR 167 intersection**



## > BASEBALL

Pow! That's the sound the ball made when Satchel Paige's mighty fastball hit the catcher's glove.

San Antonio native John Miles knows because he faced the legendary Negro Leagues pitcher on several occasions. Before Jackie Robinson broke Major League Baseball's (MLB) color barrier in 1947, the Negro Leagues were the only option for Texas athletes like Miles, who "just wanted to play ball."

In the 1920s, the Texas Negro League produced stars with remarkable skills who rivaled their MLB counterparts. Miles once hit home runs in 11 consecutive games (an unmatched accomplishment in MLB history), and Austin native Willie Wells, a clutch hitter and formidable fielder known as the "Shakespeare of Shortstops," gained fame in the 1940s as a respected player-manager with the Negro Leagues' Newark Eagles.

Through high school, city and corporate athletic programs, the African American community in Texas shared an enthusiastic companionship and sportsmanship. They continue to serve as galvanizing entities today. Many small-town Texas sandlots launched the careers of skilled ballplayers who went on to become all-stars in the Negro Leagues, including Calvert's Andrew "Rube" Foster, Giddings' Hilton Smith and Seguin's Smokey Joe Williams. Each of them, along with Wells, ultimately received their due recognition when they were inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame by the Veterans Committee.

Segregated Pan American Oil baseball team in the 1930s, Texas City.



Sweet Home Vocational and Agricultural High School, Seguin.

## 23 | PRAIRIE VIEW Prairie View A&M University

This university was established as the Alta Vista Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas for Colored Youth when the Alta Vista Plantation was deeded to the state in 1876. Later renamed Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical University, this was the only publicly funded historically African American college in Texas for years. The campus has several historic buildings designed by renowned African American architects who studied and later taught at the university. (NR, SM)

**FM 1098 and University Drive**  
**936-261-3311 • www.pvamu.edu**

## 24 | SAN ANTONIO Also part of the Texas Hill Country Trail Region The Alamo

Many African Americans, including Greenbury Logan, William E. “Bill” Goyens and Samuel McCullough, Jr., played

important roles in helping secure Texas’ independence from Mexico during the Texas Revolution (Oct. 2, 1835–April 21, 1836). Texian forces benefited from the contributions of both freedmen and slaves who made great sacrifices for their adopted country. At the Alamo, William B. Travis’ slave, Joe, fought in the battle (see caption, page 5). In an attempt to disparage Texans, Gen. Santa Anna freed Joe after the battle to tell the story of how the Mexican Army crushed the Texian defenders. Although Joe eventually recounted the fall of the Alamo to the Texas cabinet, accounts of the battle served to galvanize the Texas revolutionaries into action, as demonstrated by their famous battle cry, “Remember the Alamo.” Visitors can read Joe’s entire account, as recorded by William Fairfax Gray, on the Alamo’s official website. (NHL, RTHL)

**300 Alamo Plaza • 210-225-1391**  
**www.thealamo.org**

## St. Paul United Methodist Church

With a congregation first organized in 1866, St. Paul United Methodist Church is one of the oldest African American churches in San Antonio. The first congregation comprised former slaves and freedmen from Paine Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church. The current building—easily recognizable by the striking octagonal towers that flank the main doors—was constructed in 1922. The United Methodist Church has designated St. Paul United Methodist Church as its 397th historical site. (SM)

**508 N. Center St. • 210-227-2525**  
**[www.stpaulofsanantonio.com](http://www.stpaulofsanantonio.com)**

## 25 | SEGUIN Seguin-Guadalupe County Heritage Museum

In 1869, James, Hiram and Wallace Wilson opened the H. Wilson & Co. pottery shop and operated it until 1884. The three former slaves had split off from the business once owned by their former master, John M. Wilson. By their success, both in building a business and as craftsmen creating unique pottery, the freedmen demonstrated that African Americans could be prosperous entrepreneurs at a time when Southern Anglos actively sought to keep former slaves tied to the land as sharecroppers. Although the location of Wilson Potteries has now become an archeological site that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and received an official Texas Historical

Wilson pottery, Seguin-Guadalupe County Heritage Museum, Seguin.

Subject Marker, the story continues to be told today at the Seguin-Guadalupe County Heritage Museum through a pottery artifact display.

**114 N. River St. • 830-372-0965**  
**[www.theheritagemuseum.org](http://www.theheritagemuseum.org)**

## Sweet Home Vocational and Agricultural High School

Sweet Home Vocational and Agricultural High School operated from 1924–1962. Sweet Home was one of the county's six Rosenwald Schools, financed in part by a donation from the Rosenwald Fund, which provided matching funds to African American communities to build public schools. The schoolhouse included a library, four primary classrooms and a kitchen; the campus also had several separate dormitory buildings. Accredited as a public high school in 1935, Sweet Home, like many African American schools, focused on training students for industrial and agricultural jobs following a strategy for empowering black communities made popular by Booker T. Washington's famous Tuskegee Institute. Today, the building serves as a community center. (NR, RTHL)

**3340 Sweet Home Rd.**



## 26 | TEXAS CITY

### The 1867 Settlement Historic District

The 1867 Settlement

Historic District is the only Reconstruction-era African American community in Galveston County. The Bell, Britton, Caldwell and Hobgood families, whose patriarchs were African American cowboys, pioneered the community, which was self-sustained for more than 100 years. The men survived the hardships of slavery, including being torn from their families during the Civil War to serve their masters on the battlefield and drive cattle for the Confederacy. When freedom came in June 1865, the men worked on the Butler Ranch in north Galveston County; some had been slaves of the Butler family. In 1867, they began contracting acreage from Judge William Jones with money earned by driving cattle up the Chisholm Trail to Kansas. After the Civil War, Judge Jones set aside the only land in the county available for purchase by freedmen who could get testimonials from local businessmen proclaiming their good morals and work ethics. Many descendants of the original pioneers still reside or own property within the historic community boundaries, where trail rides and horses are common sights. Interpretative kiosks and historical markers are located throughout the district. The oldest structure, the 1887 Frank Sr. and Flavilla Bell home, is being restored for development as a community museum.

(NR, SM, HTC)

117 S. Bell Dr.

## 27 | WASHINGTON

### Washington-on- the-Brazos State Historic Site

The 293-acre state historic site marks the original town location of Washington, an important political and commercial center in early Texas. Delegates to the Convention of 1836 met here to draft and sign the Texas Declaration of Independence and create a constitution for the new Republic. The Star of the Republic Museum has several displays dedicated to the roles of African Americans in the Republic, including contributions made during the Texas Revolution. Stop by the Barrington Living History Farm, where visitors can participate in daily activities alongside costumed interpreters who explain the lifestyles and technologies of Texans 150 years ago and perform some of the same tasks on the farm as its original residents. The farm also includes replica quarters where visitors can learn more about the personal lives of enslaved people in Texas. (SM)

12300 Park Rd. 12 (at FM 1155)

936-878-2214

[www.wheretexasbecame  
texas.com](http://www.wheretexasbecametexas.com)

## 28 | WEST COLUMBIA

### Columbia Rosenwald School

One of four Rosenwald Schools in Brazoria County, the Columbia Rosenwald School operated from 1921 until 1948, when it was closed after the consolidation of the West and East Columbia School Districts. The school was financed with a grant from the Rosenwald Fund—which provided



Sugarcane cooking pots, Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site, West Columbia.

matching grants to build public schools for African American children—as well as local monies and contributions from the community. One teacher taught first through seventh grades at the same time in the one-room school, until eighth grade was added in the 1940s. After the school closed, it was moved and used as a hay barn. In 1995, the deteriorated structure was identified as a Rosenwald School and moved to its current location behind the Columbia Historical Museum, which owns and operates the school building. It was restored in 2009. (SM)

**247 E. Brazos • 979-345-6125**  
**[www.columbiarosenwaldschool.com](http://www.columbiarosenwaldschool.com)**

### **Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site**

Following Stephen F. Austin to Texas, Martin Varner and several slaves settled on this land in 1824. In 1834, Varner sold the land to the Patton family, who brought a large number of slaves to the property and established it as a sugar

plantation that operated continuously until the Civil War. Slaves made bricks by hand and constructed many buildings on this site, including the plantation house and slaves' quarters. The line of bricks that surrounds the large kettle is all that remains of the sugar mill, where slaves processed sugarcane to produce molasses by boiling it in kettles. The availability of brick materials was probably one reason why this site appealed to the original settlers, and income derived from the manufacture and sale of bricks may have supplemented the plantation's agricultural production. Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site, a Texas Historical Commission property, is open regularly for guided tours. (NR, RTHL)

**1702 N. 13th St. • 979-345-4656**  
**[www.visitvhp.com](http://www.visitvhp.com)**



## > TEXAS JAZZ AND BLUES

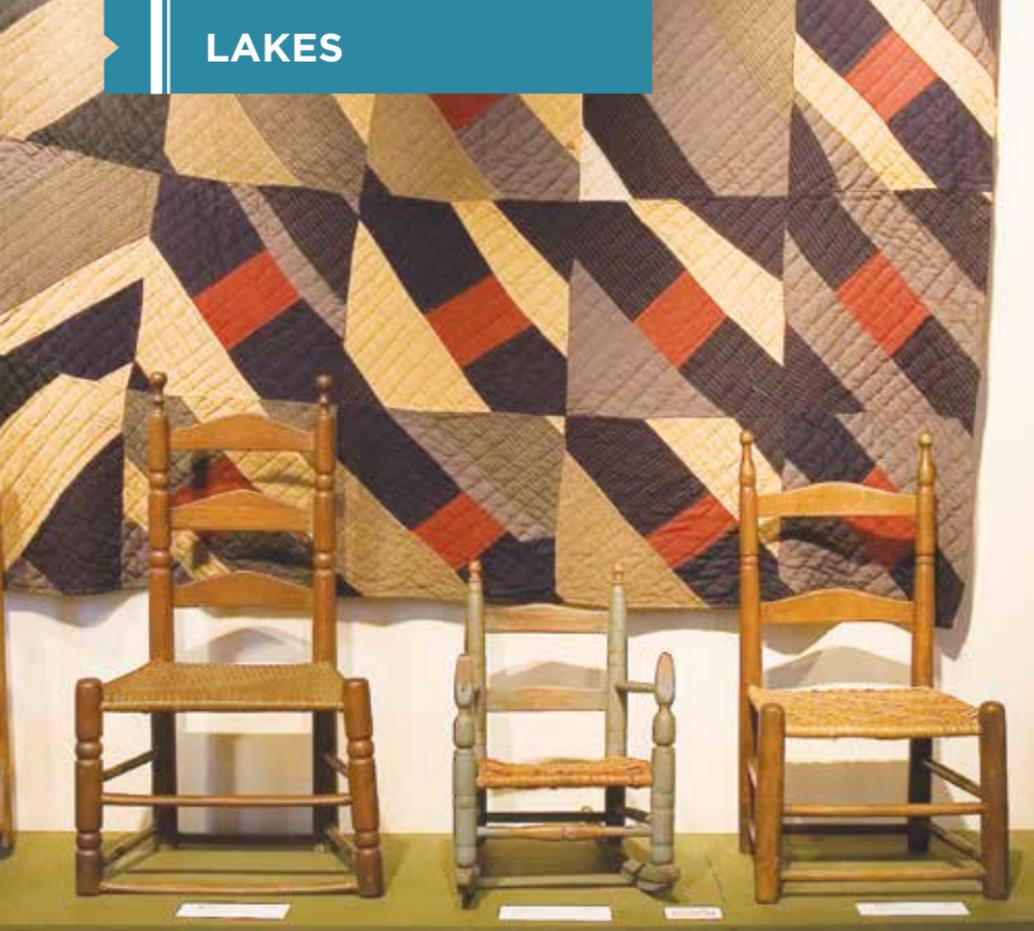
Texas has long been a hub for musical innovation. Western swing, rock 'n' roll, conjunto, country and the blues were all greatly influenced by Texans. When the Great Depression hit, many jazz and blues musicians moved to cities like Houston, Dallas and Galveston, where they created a style known as Texas blues—a melding of jazz and blues. African American jazz and blues musicians with ties to Texas include legends Blind Lemon Jefferson, Blind Willie Johnson, pianist and singer Charles Brown, singer and guitarist Robert Johnson, swing-era composer Eddie Durham and jazz guitarist Charlie Christian—to name just a few.

Jefferson's originality on the guitar, accompanied by his distinctively high-pitched voice, earned him the title "Father of the Texas Blues." Jefferson was one of the most popular blues singers of the 1920s, and his musical style influenced the likes of vocalist "Texas Nightingale" Sippie Wallace, singer/guitarist Aaron Thibaux "T-Bone" Walker, singer/guitarist Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins and singer/guitarist Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter.

The Gunter Hotel in San Antonio is the site of one of Robert Johnson's two recording sessions. Hailed posthumously as "King of the Delta Blues,"

Johnson cut his tracks in an unknown room of the hotel in November 1936. Although he died at age 27 in 1938, this influential singer and guitarist was awarded the Grammy Recording Academy's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006. The Gunter Hotel lobby contains several displays commemorating the recording session and Johnson's impressive, but short career. (NR)

Interactive exhibits housed in the Museum of Regional History in Texarkana relate stories of Scott Joplin, dubbed the "King of Ragtime," along with Ledbetter's enduring musical legacy.



## TEXAS LAKES TRAIL REGION

[www.texaslakestrail.com](http://www.texaslakestrail.com)

Slave-made chairs of wood and straw or bark, African American Museum of Dallas.

### 29 | DALLAS

#### African American Museum of Dallas

This museum houses documents and art relating to the African American experience. The museum's permanent displays include African artifacts, folk art, furniture and decorative pieces. As part of its mission to educate the public about African American history and culture, the museum hosts a variety of functions, including special exhibits, lectures, workshops, music festivals and other events.

**3536 Grand Ave. in Fair Park • 214-565-9026 • [www.aamdallas.org](http://www.aamdallas.org)**

#### Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts

Constructed in 1922, Booker T. Washington High School replaced the older Dallas Colored High School. The student body traces its origins to 1892, when the Dallas Board of Education created the segregated city's first African American high school. During its first 17 years of operation, the often-overcrowded school served every African American student in Dallas County. In 1976, facing court-ordered desegregation, the Dallas Independent School District redesignated Booker T. Washington as a magnet school for artistically gifted students aspiring to future careers in the performing and visual arts.

**2501 Flora St. • 972-925-1200 • [www.dallasisd.org/btw](http://www.dallasisd.org/btw)**

## Deep Ellum Historic District

Prior to World War II, when segregation divided Anglo and black residents in Dallas, African American commerce clustered in Deep Ellum. In the 1920s–30s, blues musicians Blind Lemon Jefferson, Bessie Smith and Sam “Lightnin’” Hopkins played in the district’s clubs. Today, there are a number of shops, live music venues and sidewalk cafés in this area, where colorful and innovative murals decorate many of the walls.

**Bounded by Elm,  
Commerce, Oakland and  
Good Latimer streets**

## Freedman’s Cemetery Memorial

Freedman’s Cemetery, as the name suggests, belonged to a community of former slaves established in this area after the Civil War. Dedicated in 1869, the cemetery closed in the 1920s and suffered from both neglect and vandalism. In the 1930s–40s, the construction of an expressway and a major intersection eliminated most of the remaining above-ground reminders of the cemetery. In the late 1980s, efforts to expand the city’s Central Expressway led members of the local community, including descendants of those buried in the cemetery, to wage a successful campaign to halt freeway construction long enough for an archeological survey and excavations of the cemetery and the relocation of those interred within it. Between 1991–94, an archeological investigation uncovered more than 1,000



“The Sentinel” depicts an African warrior, Freedman’s Cemetery Memorial, Dallas.

graves, which were carefully relocated, and the local community constructed this memorial. Sculptures by David Newton tell the story of African Americans and their descendants’ journey from slavery to emancipation. Poems around the perimeter also commemorate those originally buried here. (SM)  
**Southwest corner  
of North Central Expressway  
2700 Lemmon Ave.**

## **Juanita J. Craft** **Civil Rights House**

The Juanita J. Craft Civil Rights House is one of only three house museums in the nation honoring major female figures in the modern civil rights movement. Craft, a leading civil rights and social justice reformer, lived in this 1920 Craftsman bungalow for 35 years. She organized 185 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) branches and dozens of youth councils across Texas, and helped lead efforts to desegregate the University of Texas School of Law, North Texas State University (now University of North Texas) and the State Fair of Texas. She participated in four presidential conferences, was elected to two terms as a Dallas city councilwoman and was honored with Dallas' highest civic honor, the Linz Award. In addition to this site, Dallas has named a park, recreation center and post office after Craft. (NR, RTHL)

**2618 Warren Ave.**

## **Knights of Pythias Temple**

The Grand Lodge of the Colored Knights of Pythias Temple was completed in 1916. Designed by William Sidney Pittman, a renowned African American architect, it is considered one of the most distinctive buildings in the Deep Ellum district. Influential architect Pittman, married to Portia Washington, daughter of Booker T. Washington, moved to Dallas in 1913 and was the first practicing African American architect in Texas. He designed at least seven major

projects in Dallas, as well as projects in Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio. Built in the Beaux Arts style, the Knights of Pythias building served as the social and business center for Dallas' African Americans. Besides providing a venue for a wide array of notable speakers and performers, including Marcus Garvey, George Washington Carver and the Fisk Jubilee Singers, the building provided office space, often in short supply in the segregated city, for African American professionals.

Through fraternal organizations such as the Knights of Pythias and Masons, as well as political activism, African Americans gained prominence in Texas. By persevering to lift social barriers and determination to create a better life for their families and communities, early Texas leaders emerged, such as William McDonald, a Fort Worth businessman, politician and founder of the Fraternal Bank and Trust Company, the chief depository for the state's African American Masonic lodges. Women also found recognition as members of social and cultural organizations—such as Jack and Jill of America, Inc. and The Links—and as leaders of education, humanitarian and political causes.

**2551 Elm St.**

## Queen City Heights Historic District

Farmers and workers settled here during Reconstruction, and Queen City Heights continued to attract working-class African American families as Dallas grew throughout the 20th century. The district's growth helped spur the development of surrounding African American neighborhoods. When touring the district, Exline Park, at the corner of Eugene and Latimer streets, is a nice stop for a picnic or rest. (NR)

**Bounded by Eugene,  
Cooper, Latimer, Kynard  
and Dildock streets**

## St. Paul United Methodist Church

Organized in 1873 to minister to former slaves, this is one of the oldest African American congregations in Dallas. The distinctive red-brick structure,

with its high archways and beautiful stained-glass windows, was completed in 1927. The building has many features in common with Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, in nearby Fort Worth (see page 62); accomplished architect William Sidney Pittman, who designed that sanctuary, is also linked to this building. Today, the renovated St. Paul United Methodist Church is at the center of the downtown arts district, right across from the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. The church hosts regular music events, including a jazz night, and has a permanent display of archeological items excavated by University of Texas students and other items that tell the story of the church and Dallas' Freedmen's Town. (RTHL)

**1816 Routh St. • 214-922-0000  
www.stpaulumcdallas.com**



Dallas' Queen City Heights Historic District was established during Reconstruction.



The Denton County African American Museum is housed in a restored home from Quakertown, an early African American neighborhood in Denton.

### Tenth Street Historic District

This is one of the few remaining freedmen’s towns in the South that still retains a significant amount of its original construction. Look for the smaller shotgun houses—the homes have rectangular floor plans with adjoining rooms, rather than hallways—and their larger counterparts, the double shotgun and camelback houses. Most of these dwellings were built prior to World War II, and a few date to the 1890s. (NR, SM)

**Roughly bounded by East Clarendon Drive, South Fleming Avenue, I-35 East, East 8th Street and the east end of Church, East 9th and Plum streets**

### 30 | DENTON Denton County African American Museum (Quakertown House)

Built in 1904, the house that holds the Denton County African American Museum once belonged to an African American Quakertown in Denton. The house was moved in 1922 to southeast Denton, after the city forcibly relocated the Quakertown community to make way for the Denton Civic Center Park. Today, the house has been moved close to its original setting in downtown Denton. In addition to chronicling the lives of the African American families of Denton County and the Quakertown experience, the award-winning museum has an interesting collection of papers and medical supplies of Dr. Edwin D. Moten, Denton’s first African American doctor. The museum also hosts special events, and groups can schedule guided tours.

**317 W. Mulberry St.  
940-349-2850**



Tudor Gothic Revival sanctuary, Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Fort Worth.

### **31 | FORT WORTH** **Allen Chapel** **African Methodist** **Episcopal Church**

The Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1875, and William Sidney Pittman drew up the designs for this sanctuary in 1914. The building's design demonstrates a modified Tudor Gothic Revival style, with tall stained-glass windows and a bell tower on one corner. To see another well-preserved, architecturally similar structure, visit St. Paul United Methodist Church in Dallas (see page 60).

(NR, RTHL, SM)

**116 Elm St. • 817-332-5071**  
**[www.allenchapelFW.org](http://www.allenchapelFW.org)**

### **National Multicultural** **Western Heritage Museum**

In the Wild West, when Anglos and non-Anglos tended to move in separate social spheres, cowboys were an unusually integrated lot; one-third or more of the working cowboys

in Texas were African American, Latino or American Indian. Founded in 2001, the National Multicultural Western Heritage Museum highlights the important contributions of these ethnically diverse cowboys to the unique culture of the West. The museum also celebrates the contributions of other African Americans, such as the Buffalo Soldiers, the Tuskegee Airmen and early African American flying pioneer Bessie Coleman. Formerly known as the National Cowboys of Color Museum and Hall of Fame, the museum's Hall of Fame recognizes individuals who were instrumental in the formation of Western history, such as Bill Pickett and Bose Ikard. The museum hosts a variety of events, including weekly workshops, children's storytelling and holiday events.

**3400 Mount Vernon Ave.**  
**817-534-8801**  
**[www.cowboysofcolor.org](http://www.cowboysofcolor.org)**

## Stop Six Historic African American Neighborhood

This working-class African American neighborhood, once the sixth stop on the Northern Texas Traction Company line running between Dallas and Fort Worth, was originally known as Cowanville.

Throughout the neighborhood visitors will see early-20th-century houses. The school at 5100 Willie St. was built in 1924 with funding from the Julius Rosenwald Foundation, much like Booker T.

Washington High School in Dallas (see page 57).

**Bounded by Rosedale, Loop 820 South and Miller streets**

## 32 | WAXAHACHIE Joshua Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church

First organized in 1876, Joshua Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church took its name from the Rev. Joshua Goins, who founded AME churches throughout Texas. William Sidney Pittman designed the two-story, red-brick sanctuary, constructed in 1917. The Romanesque Revival-style design features walls of large windows supported by exterior buttresses.

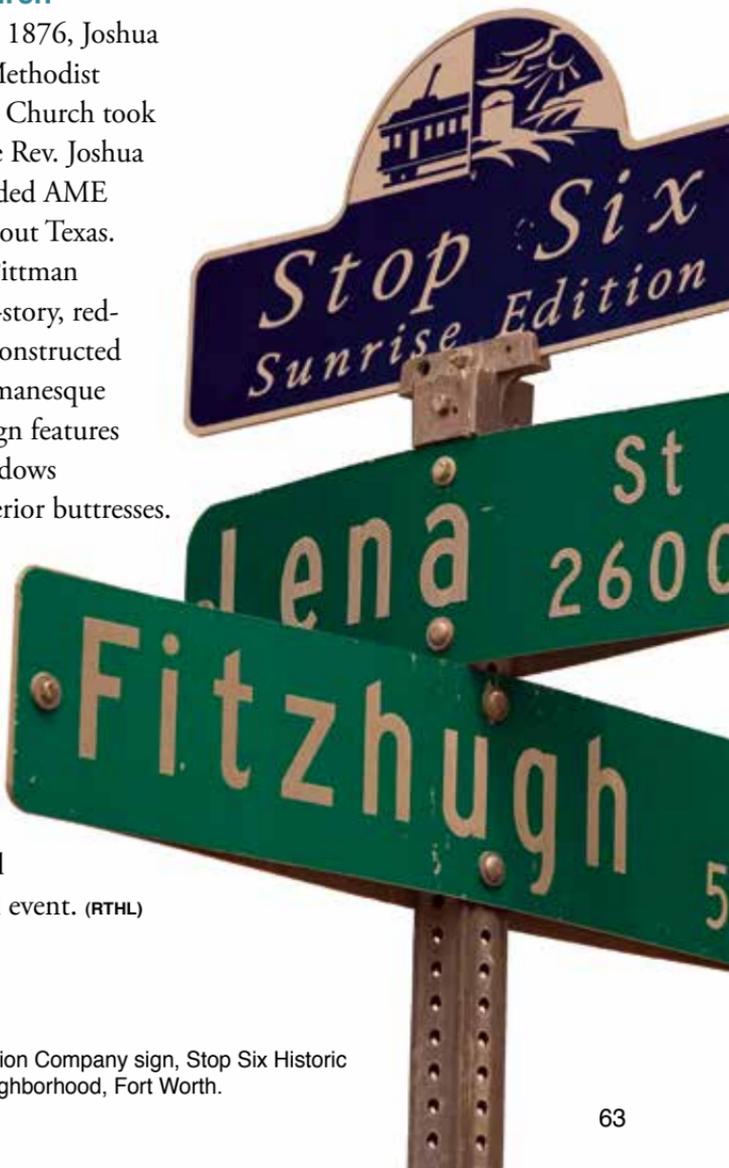
Periodically, the Ellis County Museum hosts tours of the church and lectures about Pittman, and the church is open during the annual Gingerbread Trail event. (RTHL)

**110 N. Aiken St.**

## Wyatt Street Shotgun House Historic District

Built from 1900–1935, the Wyatt Street shotgun houses feature a design—three to five rooms with no hallways—with origins in Africa and the Caribbean. Built and inhabited by the city’s booming African American population, shotgun houses were cheap to build, and their narrow designs allowed for good airflow, an important consideration in hot climates prior to the advent of air conditioning. Shotgun housing was a common residential building type throughout the South from Reconstruction to the early 20th century. (NR)

**East side of the 300 block of Wyatt Street**



Northern Texas Traction Company sign, Stop Six Historic African American neighborhood, Fort Worth.



**TEXAS MOUNTAIN TRAIL REGION**  
[www.texasmountaintrail.com](http://www.texasmountaintrail.com)

“The Errand of Corporal Ross,” Fort Bliss, El Paso.

### 33 | EL PASO

#### Buffalo Soldier Memorial of El Paso

In 1866, the U.S. established six regiments of African Americans, eventually known as Buffalo Soldiers, which served on the western frontier, particularly in the set of actions collectively described as the Indian Wars. The six original military units included the 9th and 10th U.S. Cavalry, and the 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st U.S. Infantry. From 1866–1901, several of the Buffalo Soldier regiments garrisoned at Fort Bliss. Erected in 1999, “The Errand of Corporal Ross” is a memorial statue depicting Corp. John Ross, Troop I of the 9th U.S. Cavalry, riding on horseback, rifle in hand, against the Mescalero Apache Indians during the Guadalupe Campaign.



**By the gate entrance at Buffalo Soldiers Road**  
**Fort Bliss Army base**

#### Dr. Lawrence Nixon’s Office/McCall Neighborhood Center

This community center honors the memory of Dr. Lawrence Nixon, an African American physician whose legal battles helped secure voting rights for blacks in Texas. A small collection of artifacts within the building pays tribute to this important civil rights leader, while a plaque outside the center commemorates Nixon and noted African American soldier Henry O. Flipper. (SM)

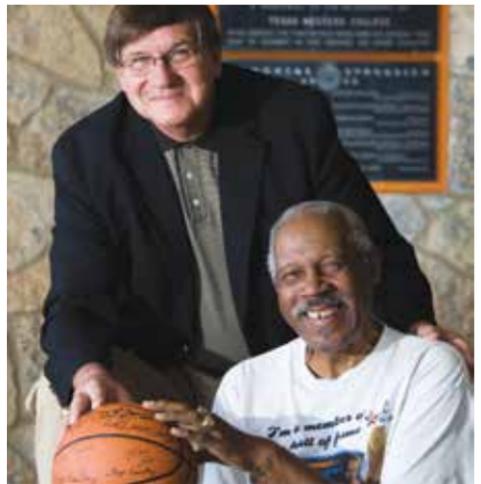
**3231 Wyoming Ave. • 915-566-2407**

[www.mccallneighborhoodcenter.org](http://www.mccallneighborhoodcenter.org)



## Memorial Gymnasium

In 1966 at Texas Western College, now the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), Don Haskins became the first coach ever to start a squad of five African American players in a championship basketball game. The team beat the University of Kentucky in College Park, Maryland, to win the National Collegiate Athletic Association basketball championship, and the event is credited with breaking the color barrier in college sports. Haskins described it further in his autobiography, *Glory Road*, which later was produced into a film of the same name that focused on the game. The school's basketball teams no longer play their home games at Memorial Gymnasium, but basketball fans can plan ahead



1966 NCAA Men's Division I basketball championship team members Togo Railey and Willie Cager, Memorial Gymnasium, El Paso.

to see the UTEP Miners play at the Don Haskins Center, built in 1976.

**The University of Texas  
at El Paso**

**East Robinson Avenue and  
North Oregon Street (south  
of the Don Haskins Center)**

## Old Fort Bliss

Located at Fort Bliss Army base, the adobe buildings at Old Fort Bliss are replicas of the original fort and serve as the center for the children's bicultural living history program. Each year, living history educators provide tours to explain the legacy of the fort, where Buffalo Soldiers were stationed from 1866–1901. The site features an animal cemetery to honor the animals that served military personnel at Fort Bliss. The base also has several other museums, historic homes and displays that visitors can enjoy while on post. Visitor passes are available at base entrances. (SM)



**Near the gate  
entrance at**

**Pleasanton and Sheridan roads**

**915-568-5412**



Above: Restored Fort Davis barracks with century plant.  
Right: Replica cartridge belt, Fort Davis National Historic Site.

## 34 | FORT DAVIS Fort Davis National Historic Site

Fort Davis was an active military post from 1854–1891, except for a brief period during and following the Civil War. In 1867, four companies of the 9th U.S. Cavalry rode into the fort to reestablish and rebuild the military post. All of the regiments of Buffalo Soldiers—including the 9th and 10th U.S. Cavalry and the 24th and 25th U.S. Infantry—were headquartered here at some point during the Indian Wars period. The site highlights the experiences of the Buffalo Soldiers in an introductory film detailing the fort's history, historic buildings, parade grounds and museum exhibits. Living history interpreters tell the story of the enlisted men, officers and civilians who lived at the fort. Education days, Junior Ranger Days and other living history events also provide visitors with learning opportunities. Fort Davis is administered by the National Park Service.

(NHL, NR, SM)

**101 Lt. Henry Flipper Dr.**



**432-426-3224**

**[www.nps.gov/foda](http://www.nps.gov/foda)**





TEXAS PECOS TRAIL REGION  
[www.texaspecostrail.com](http://www.texaspecostrail.com)

Black Seminole scout buried at the Seminole Indian Scout Cemetery, Fort Clark, Brackettville.

### 35 | BRACKETTVILLE

#### Black Seminole Indian Scout Cemetery

The descendants of escaped slaves and Florida’s Seminole Indians, the Black Seminole Indian Scouts were known as unparalleled trackers and fearless combatants. The U.S. Army organized the scout unit in 1870, and the scouts were stationed at Fort Clark (see next page) in 1872, when the cemetery was first established.

Four of the scouts buried here—Adam Payne (Paine), Isaac Payne, John Ward and Pompey Factor—received the Medal of Honor. Look for the small carving at the center of the soldiers’ tombstones of a reproduction of the Army’s version of the medal, which has a five-pointed star, surrounded by a wreath and containing a representation of the goddess Minerva. When visiting this site, set aside time to see the museum at Fort Clark to gain a more thorough understanding of the Buffalo Soldiers and Texas military history. (SM, HTC)



3 miles west of Old Fort Clark  
 on RM 3348



Black Seminole Scout 1st Sgt. Ben July, Fort Clark Springs, Old Guardhouse Museum, Brackettville.

### Old Guardhouse Museum

The well-preserved Fort Clark served as the post for numerous Buffalo Soldier infantry and cavalry units. In particular, the Black Seminole Indian Scouts were stationed here and served alongside Buffalo Soldiers of the 24th and 25th U.S. Infantry. The scouts descended primarily from runaway slaves who found refuge in the swamps of Florida. Black Seminoles endured a forced migration from Florida to reservations in Oklahoma after 1838. Deprived of the right to bear arms and faced with the threat of enslavement in the South, the group that eventually became the Black Seminole Indian Scouts left the reservation under the direction of a leader named John Horse and moved to Mexico prior to

the Civil War. With the end of the Civil War and slavery, this group of Black Seminoles returned to the U.S., where the U.S. Army recruited them to form the Black Seminole Indian Scouts. The fort's history and legacy, from the Black Seminole Indian Scouts through the 2nd U.S. Cavalry Division (the only African American cavalry division in World War II), have been painstakingly preserved and researched by the Fort Clark Historical Society. The guardhouse serves as a museum to highlight the fort's history, including pictures, artifacts and memorabilia from several African American military units. The area is accommodating to travelers looking to stay overnight, with camping, lodging and RV facilities



available, along with attractions that include a spring-fed pool, playground and golf course.

(NR, RTHL)



**Fort Clark**

**Just west of**

**Brackettville on Highway**

**90 West**

**830-563-2493**

**[www.fortclark.com/museum.html](http://www.fortclark.com/museum.html)**

## **36 | FORT STOCKTON**

### **Historic Fort Stockton**

Established in 1858, Fort Stockton is notable for its association with Buffalo Soldiers from the 9th U.S. Cavalry, who made it their headquarters beginning in 1867. Companies of the 10th U.S. Cavalry also served at the fort during its 19 years of activity. Today, the original and reconstructed

military buildings at the site include officers' quarters, barracks, a guardhouse and prisoner cells. The museum features an informational video as well as photo exhibits on the Buffalo Soldiers. Each year on the third Saturday of October, the city celebrates Old Fort Day with living history exhibits.

(NR, SM)



**300 E. 3rd St.**

**432-336-0282**

## **37 | SHEFFIELD**

### **Fort Lancaster**

### **State Historic Site**

The U.S. Army established Fort Lancaster in 1855 near an important crossing of the Pecos River on the military road between San Antonio and El Paso. The garrison's principal work was in providing escorts for mail carriers, wagon trains and settlers. Buffalo Soldiers from the 9th U.S. Cavalry used this sub-post of Fort Stockton for a few years following the Civil War, and several engagements between the soldiers and American Indians took place in this area. Fort Lancaster State Historic Site, a Texas Historical Commission property, is open to visitors, who may walk through the ruins and peruse the museum exhibit. Events offered at Fort Lancaster include archeology awareness days and living history education days. (NR, SM)



**8 miles east**

**of Sheffield**

**on U.S. 290 • 432-836-4391**

**[www.visitfortlancaster.com](http://www.visitfortlancaster.com)**



**TEXAS PLAINS TRAIL REGION**  
[www.texasplainstrail.com](http://www.texasplainstrail.com)

C.B. Stubblefield in his original Stubb's Bar-B-Que restaurant, Lubbock.

## 38 | LUBBOCK

### Chatman Hospital

Chatman Hospital (now Chatman Community Health Center) was opened in 1945 by Dr. Joseph Alvin Chatman. For many years, it was the only medical facility for African Americans in this segregated city. Among his contributions to the community, Dr. Chatman spoke in local churches, participated in politics and served on the board of Texas Southern University and the Lone Star State Medical Society. The two-story cast stone building, designed by architect Louis Fry, suffered a major fire in 1987, but was restored in 1993 and re-opened in 1994.

**2301 Cedar Ave.**

### Stubb's Memorial

Christopher B. Stubblefield was born in Navasota, and his family moved to Lubbock in the 1930s to pick cotton. "Stubb" learned to cook in local establishments and, later, oversaw daily meal preparations for as many as 10,000 soldiers as a staff sergeant during the Korean War. In 1968, he opened a barbecue restaurant that became a center of Lubbock's music scene, attracting regular performers such as Joe Ely, Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Stevie Ray Vaughan. The restaurant burned in the 1980s, and Stubb moved it to Austin, where it continues to be a mainstay of food and live music. Stubblefield died in 1995, and a memorial statue was erected in 1999 on the site of the original Stubb's Bar-B-Que. The site still features concerts and musical fundraisers.

**108 E. Broadway St.**



## > RANCHING

From the Coastal Plains to Big Bend to the Panhandle, African American cowboys and ranchers occupy a definitive place in Texas history. As many as one in three cowhands in the late 19th century was likely of African descent. While many of the first African American cowboys in Texas were born into slavery, after emancipation these Western legends blazed their own trail by developing herds, ranches and farms, leading cattle drives and demonstrating savvy roping and riding skills at area rodeos.

William “Bill” Pickett, the first African American honoree in the National Rodeo Hall of Fame, became renowned for his bull submission technique, bulldogging, in which he would bite the bull’s upper lip. Pickett performed in a number of rodeos and shows all over the world, and bulldogging competitions continue today. Mathew “Bones” Hooks and James “Jim” Perry both established outstanding reputations for roping skills, paired with unmatched bronco busting and horsebreaking abilities, which were sought across the state.

Bose Ikard, a prominent frontiersman and traildriver, worked with Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving on what became known as the Goodnight-Loving Trail. Ikard and Goodnight were lifelong friends, and Goodnight commemorated Ikard’s life with a granite marker on his grave

in Weatherford (SM), which commended him for his loyalty and “splendid behavior.”

Daniel Webster “80 John” Wallace was one of the first African American ranchers in Mitchell County. His parents were slaves, but he was born after emancipation and later pursued his dream of ranching. Wallace first established himself as a cattle driver and wrangler, while saving money for his own herd and land. Becoming a well-respected rancher with more than 12 640-acre sections and more than 500 head of cattle, Wallace left behind a legacy of hard work and success. The ranch house he built and raised his family in is preserved at the National Ranching Heritage Center in Lubbock. An exhibit at the American Windpower Center in Lubbock showcases his and other African American contributions to ranching history in Texas.



TEXAS TROPICAL TRAIL REGION  
[www.texasropicaltrail.com](http://www.texasropicaltrail.com)

Exhibit on stable duty during frontier fort period, Fort Ringgold, Rio Grande City.

## 39 | BROWNSVILLE

### Palmito Ranch Battlefield

The Battle of Palmito Ranch was the last land battle of the Civil War. It took place on May 12–13, 1865, weeks after the Confederate surrender at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia. Union foot soldiers, including some from the 62nd U.S. Colored Infantry stationed on Brazos Island on the Texas Coast, came ashore on the night of May 11 en route to seize Brownsville. The Confederate troops outnumbered the Union forces and also possessed artillery and cavalry units. The Union troops were forced to retreat to Brazos Island. When visiting this site, watch for the marker, as the site is largely undeveloped and not obvious from the road. Also, a good pair of walking shoes or boots is recommended. (NHL, NR, SM for Battle of Palmito Ranch)

**12 miles southeast of Brownsville on Highway 4**

## 40 | LAREDO

### Fort McIntosh Historic District

Fort McIntosh served as the post for numerous African American infantry and cavalry units who patrolled the area and guarded the nearby international crossing of the Rio Grande. Laredo Community College now uses the buildings, which have signs denoting their original purposes. A gallery in the library contains a collection of paintings and photos of the fort. (NR, RTHL, SM)

 **Laredo Community College Campus**  
**West end of Washington Street**



## 41 | RIO GRANDE CITY Fort Ringgold

Established during the U.S.-Mexico War, this fort became the site of a racial confrontation in 1899. Buffalo Soldiers of the 9th U.S. Cavalry, fresh from victories in Cuba during the Spanish-American War, came to Fort Ringgold refusing to tolerate racial segregation in the local community and harassment by its civilian population. Tensions between the troops and local residents resulted in a disturbance on the night of Nov. 20, when Lt. E. H. Rubottom ordered his men to open fire with their Gatling guns. One person was injured and, although official investigations into the incident

did not result in any charges, the U.S. Army relocated the Buffalo Soldiers to avoid further conflict. Today, the remaining buildings of the fort belong to the local school district and are still in use. (NR, SM)



**Fort Ringgold  
Campus**

**East Highway 83**

# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION



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.

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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.



[thc.texas.gov](http://thc.texas.gov)

