

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN TEXAS: A LASTING LEGACY

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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 TexasTimeTravel.com.

ABOUT THE COVER

Texas African American History Memorial on the Capitol grounds in Austin by sculptor Ed Dwight (see page 31).



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JOURNEY THROUGH AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE AND HERITAGE IN TEXAS



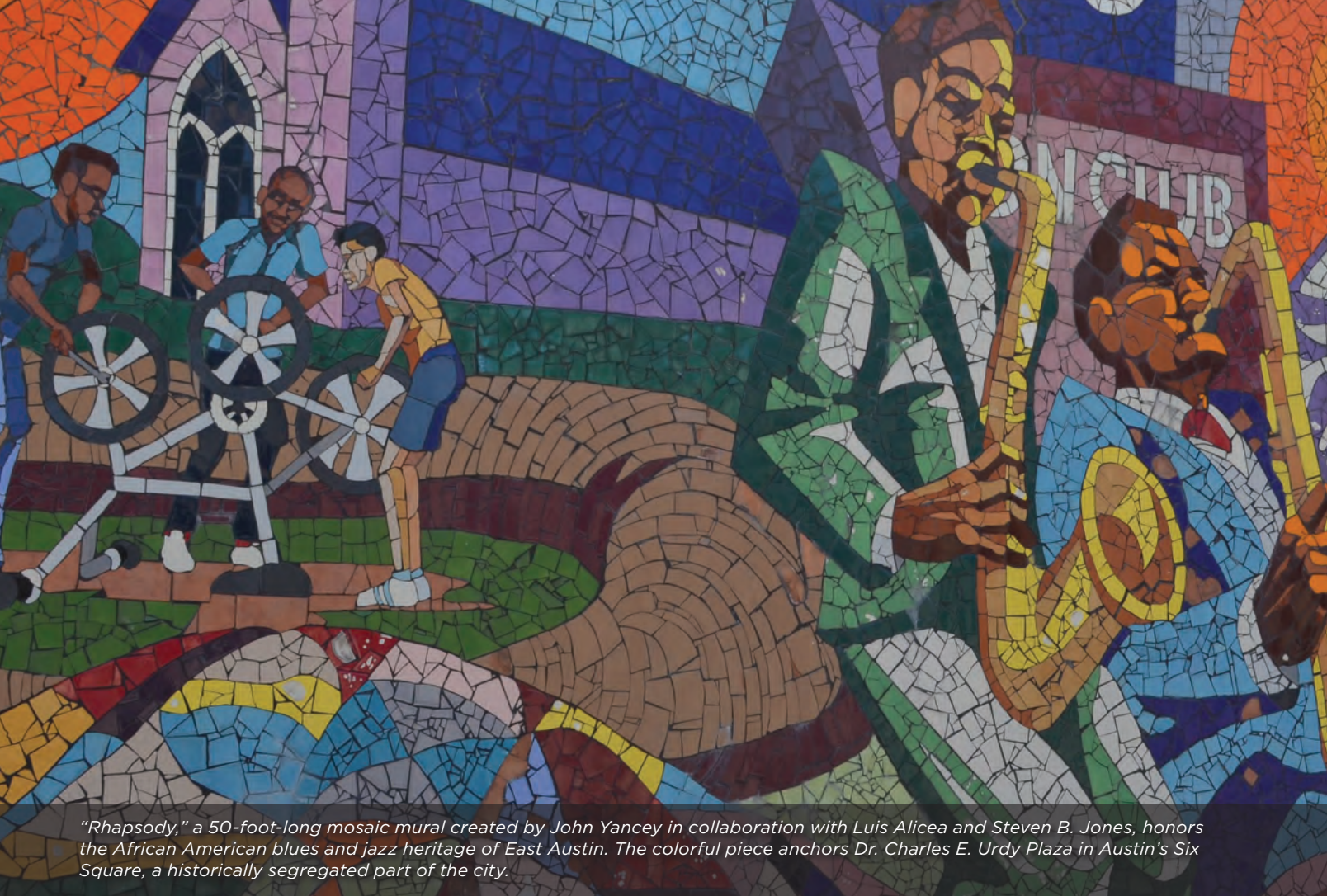
43

BASEBALL



57

BESSIE COLEMAN



"Rhapsody," a 50-foot-long mosaic mural created by John Yancey in collaboration with Luis Alicea and Steven B. Jones, honors the African American blues and jazz heritage of East Austin. The colorful piece anchors Dr. Charles E. Urdy Plaza in Austin's Six Square, a historically segregated part of the city.

JOURNEY THROUGH AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE AND HERITAGE IN TEXAS

Real Stories and Real People: Delve into the state's African American history.

To follow in the footsteps of African American Texans is to embrace an experience that includes hardships and triumphs, valor and determination, influence and change. This travel guide attempts to capture the essence of this important story, thus enriching lives and highlighting African Americans' important contributions to Texas—contributions that have greatly influenced our state's development through numerous political, economic, and ideological achievements.

Begin in 1528 with Estevanico (Estevan), a Moroccan enslaved by the Spanish, who was the first documented African-born person to traverse Texas. He traveled with three Spaniards, entering first near today's Galveston and then again at La Junta de los Ríos.

By the mid-1700s, Spanish settlement in what would become the state of Texas included permanent communities, missions, and presidios (fortifications providing protection for nearby missions). Spanish colonial populations consisted of a number of individuals representing different African heritages, including those who were free and a relatively smaller number who were imported and enslaved.

After 1803, when the United States acquired Louisiana, some enslaved workers fled across the border to Spanish Texas seeking freedom and opportunity. These formerly enslaved people settled predominantly in East Texas and made the best living available to them, despite racial adversity.

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 Anastasio Bustamante halted the importation of enslaved people by Anglo settlers; however, many settlers bypassed this decree by making their enslaved workers indentured servants for life.

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 white settlers. Amid the growing number of enslaved workers held by the Texians, some resisted captivity in passive ways, such as retaining aspects of former African cultures. Others escaped to freedom. Samuel McCulloch 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 during the nine years of the Republic, when Slave Codes and a constitution that did not grant them full rights as citizens were established—a situation that did not change drastically when Texas joined the Union in 1845.

In 1861, Texas joined the Confederacy, and the practice of slavery continued to support the state's war economy. Many African Americans were conscripted and served as medics, cooks, and fort-building



Located in Galveston, the birthplace of Juneteenth, the "Absolute Equality" mural honors the enduring pursuit of liberty and justice for all.

laborers—not as battlefield soldiers in the conventional sense. It wasn't until 1865, when the Confederate Congress passed a law allowing it, that African American men could formally serve as soldiers in the traditional role. Freedom of the enslaved in the Confederate states came gradually with Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation on Jan. 1, 1863, an order that was not enforced in Texas until Union forces asserted control of the state on June 19, 1865—now commemorated as Juneteenth. Immediately, formerly enslaved workers established settlements, known as Freedom Colonies, throughout Texas, as the freedmen and their families started new lives.

The Reconstruction Era in the state (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



Dedicated to the African Americans who contributed so much to the making of Texas, this bronze monument is found on the south Capitol grounds in Austin.



This composite of the “African-American Legislators and Constitutional Convention Delegates” hangs in the south alcove above the entrance to the Capitol’s rotunda in Austin.

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 Constitutional Convention of 1868–69, where 10 African Americans served as delegates, the adopted constitution (later replaced by the Texas Constitution of 1876) 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 foyer of the Texas State Capitol.



At the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum in Houston, a reenactor teaches about what it was like to be an African American soldier serving on the Texas frontier.

Meanwhile, both before and after the Civil War, the U.S. government constructed a series of fortifications to protect settlers in the West from Native Americans and others who resisted their advance. Many of these frontier forts were protected by African Americans known as Buffalo Soldiers, a name given in admiration by Native Americans because of the similarity of the curly hair, battlefield bravery, and fighting fierceness exhibited by both buffalo and African American troops. 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 received the Medal of Honor—the United States’ 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



Jones Chapel Methodist Church served African Americans for more than 100 years in Beeville.

the neighborhoods that developed around them. These churches were often forces for positive change by adopting and persistently advocating for 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.

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 TexasTimeTravel.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 people, real stories, and real places that define the history of Texas.



Civil rights demonstrators protested in many Texas cities, including Dallas.



AFRICAN
AMERICAN
TRAVEL GUIDES:
“The
Green
Book”

Called the Beacon Theatre before being renamed the Pastime Theatre, this Jewish-owned entertainment venue in Houston was highlighted in “The Green Book” as a safe place for Black travelers to visit.

During the Jim Crow era, African Americans endured discriminatory hazards while traveling around the country. To circumnavigate these unwelcome situations, they used various travel guides to locate where they could purchase gas, get a haircut, buy a meal, sleep for the night, or enjoy some entertainment. These travel guides were published from the early 1930s up to the late 1960s and provided information that would keep the African American traveler “from running into difficulties, embarrassments and to make his trips more enjoyable.” Probably the best-known guide is “The Negro Motorist Green Book,” more commonly known as “The Green Book.”

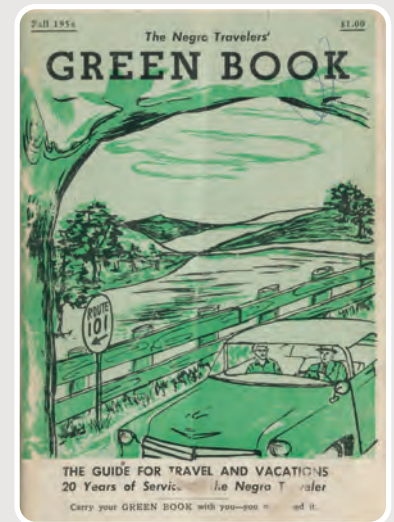
The Texas Historical Commission (THC) is documenting the remaining African American travel guide sites still in existence; approximately 25% are extant across the state. Based on 34 African American travel guides in

the THC’s files, more than 780 individual travel guide sites were listed in 43 communities across the state. These sites included a broad range of stops: restaurants and barbecue stands, barber shops and beauty salons, YMCAs and YWCAs, service stations and garages, hotels and boarding rooms, doctors and dentists, lawyers and NAACP representatives, taverns and liquor stores, theaters and night clubs, and historically Black colleges and universities.

For all the sites, extant or not, the THC staff and interns are gathering articles, advertisements, historical photographs, postcards, census records, military draft cards, birth and death records, city directories, and other ephemera in order to write historically accurate narratives to showcase the forgotten histories of everyday life of the African American. Learn more about the project by visiting thc.texas.gov/greenbook.



Sprott Hospital opened by 1947 in Beaumont and was operated by brothers Edward D. Sprott Jr., Curtis B. Sprott, and Maxie C. Sprott.



“The Green Book” helped African American travelers navigate everything from accommodations to legal help.



AFRICAN AMERICANS IN TEXAS: A Lasting Legacy

TIMELINE

All Texas voters were required to pay a poll tax before they could vote, which discouraged African Americans from voting. The tax was revoked at the federal level in 1964 and in local Texas elections two years later.

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

1829 Attitudes toward people of African descent are generally more favorable 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 enslaved workers, which Mexican authorities tolerate for economic reasons. The Mexican government did not enforce abolition, though divisiveness over the issue contributes to tensions leading to the Texas Revolution.

1835–1836 African Americans, free and enslaved people, 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 and now recognized nationally, Juneteenth is commemorated annually and is the oldest known celebration of the end of slavery in the U.S.



1867 The 9th U.S. Cavalry (above)—one of four regiments to become known as Buffalo Soldiers—arrives in Texas, deployed by the U.S. Army to protect the western frontier.

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, becomes disoriented and lost while tracking members of the Comanche Nation. Four Buffalo Soldiers die in what newspapers call the “Staked Plains Horror.”

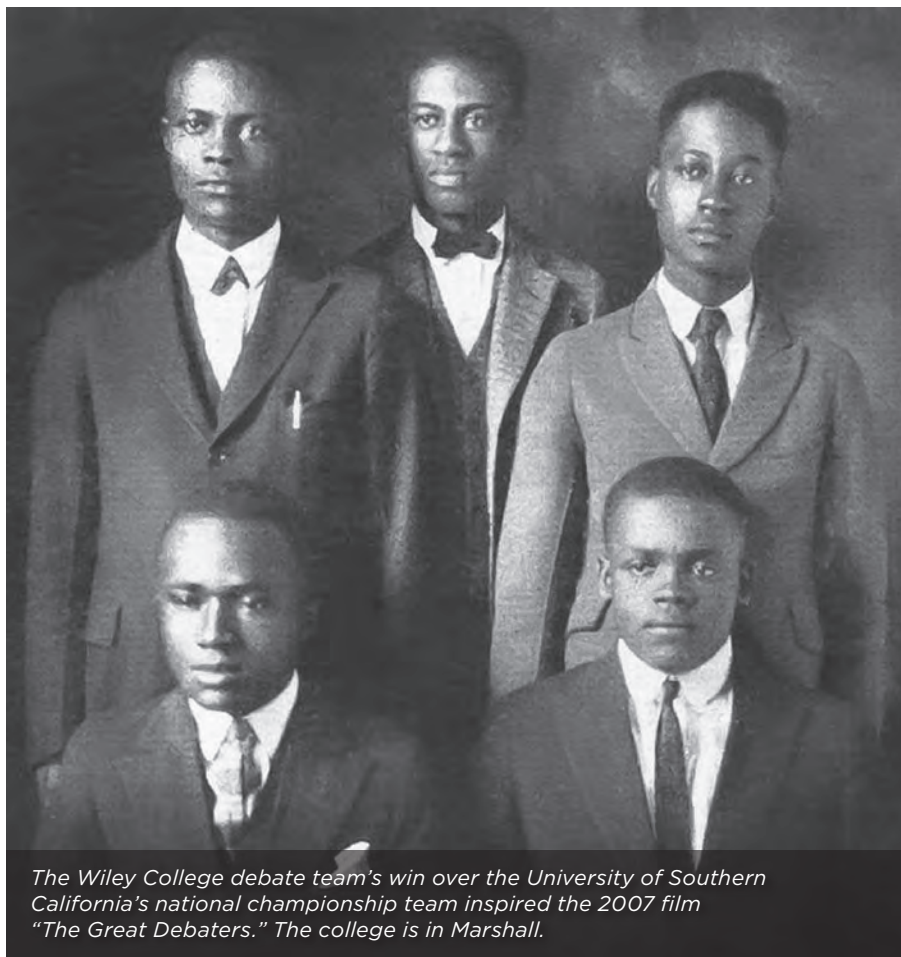
1886 Norris Wright Cuney is appointed Texas committeeman to the National Republican Party.

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 167 soldiers, despite a Texas court clearing the soldiers of any wrongdoing, are dishonorably discharged as a result of the “Brownsville Raid.” In 1972, the U.S. government reversed the dishonorable discharges and made restitution to the sole surviving soldier.

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

1917 Multiple acts of racial discrimination against Buffalo Soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 24th U.S. Infantry, stationed at Camp Logan in Houston and failure to address the issues serve as a catalyst for the Houston Riot of 1917, in which 20 people die (including four soldiers). The incident increases concerns about training Black soldiers in Deep South states with Jim Crow laws. After the conflict, 110



The Wiley College debate team's win over the University of Southern California's national championship team inspired the 2007 film "The Great Debaters." The college is in Marshall.

soldiers are convicted by court martial; 19 are executed. The execution of 13 in December at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio is the largest mass execution of American soldiers by the U.S. Army. In 2020 and 2021, the South Texas College of Law requests a review and, in 2023, is successful in having all 110 convictions set aside and honorable discharges issued.

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.

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

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

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

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. Also, 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 rules 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*.

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 Marshall's Harrison County Courthouse, 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.

1908
JACK JOHNSON



1917
CAMP LOGAN GATE

1929
SLAVE NARRATIVES



1942
DORIS MILLER

1944
DR. LAWRENCE AARON NIXON



1947
MELVIN B. TOLSON



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-white 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-white school.

1956 To prevent three African American students from enrolling at Mansfield High School, more than 300 white 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.

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.

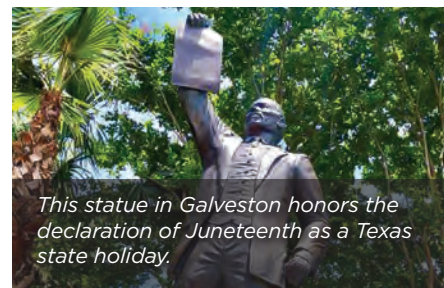
1973 Barbara Jordan is the first African American from a Southern state elected to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives since Reconstruction.

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

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

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.



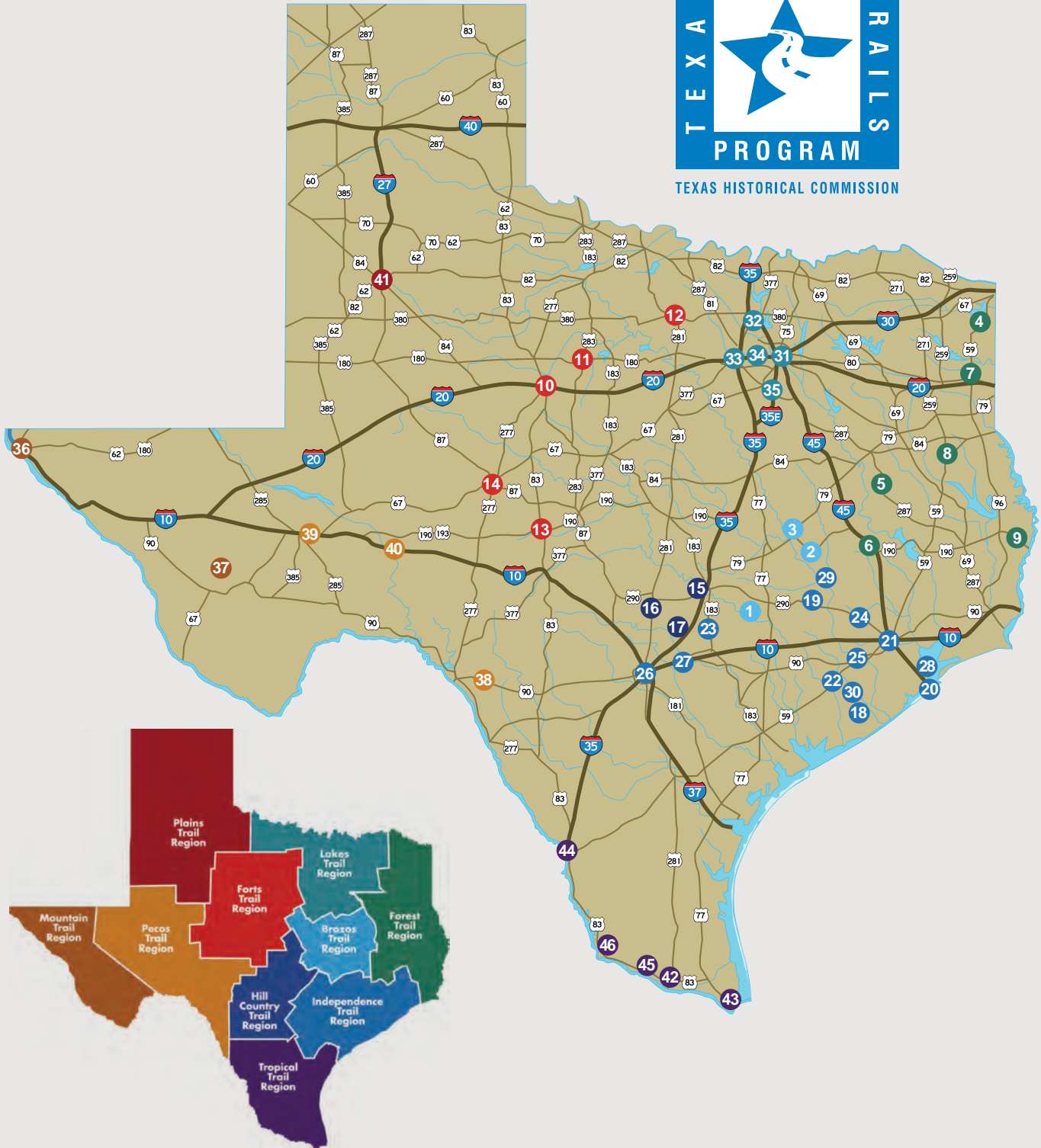
This statue in Galveston honors the declaration of Juneteenth as a Texas state holiday.

2021 The 117th U.S. Congress passed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, which was signed into law by President Joseph Biden.

YOUR PASSPORT TO THE PAST



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION



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 historical 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 20)

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

TEXAS FORTS TRAIL REGION

(Page 24)

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

TEXAS HILL COUNTRY TRAIL REGION (Page 28)

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

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE TRAIL REGION (Page 36)

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

TEXAS LAKES TRAIL REGION

(Page 52)

- 31 | Dallas
- 32 | Denton
- 33 | Fort Worth
- 34 | Irving
- 35 | Waxahachie

TEXAS MOUNTAIN TRAIL REGION

(Page 58)

- 36 | El Paso
- 37 | Fort Davis

TEXAS PECOS TRAIL REGION

(Page 60)

- 38 | Brackettville
- 39 | Fort Stockton
- 40 | Sheffield

TEXAS PLAINS TRAIL REGION

(Page 62)

- 41 | Lubbock

TEXAS TROPICAL TRAIL REGION

(Page 66)

- 42 | Alamo
- 43 | Brownsville
- 44 | Laredo
- 45 | Pharr
- 46 | Rio Grande City

* Also part of the Texas Independence Trail Region

** Also part of the Texas Hill Country Trail Region

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

KEY



State Historic Site



Buffalo Soldier Site

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.



The Peterson Brothers, who honed their musical talents at the Kerr Community Center (inset), still play around Texas today.

The Brazos Valley African American Museum was built on the site of one of the original Black schools in the Brazos Valley.



The Calvert School educated Black children in 1st through 11th grades when it opened in 1929.





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, still operating today, provided a haven for African American social activities, lodge meetings, and other functions in the segregated South. Additionally, several prominent Black entertainers, including blues pianist Roosevelt “Grey Ghost” Williams, performed at the center. 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. • kerrcommunitycenter.org

Bastrop County African American Cultural Center and Freedom Colonies Museum

Housed in the historic Kerr-Wilson house, the Bastrop County African American Cultural Center and Freedom Colonies Museum stands as part of the culturally significant Kerr compound. The Kerr family, the original owners, embodied the resilience, determination, and excellence that helped establish one of Bastrop County’s once-thriving Freedom Colonies.

The center aims to foster cultural awareness, highlighting the contributions of minorities, particularly African Americans, to the history of the United States. Many of the museum’s founders trace their heritage to the 13 Freedom Colonies that flourished in Bastrop.

1303 Pine St. • 512-985-5241

bastropcountyafricanamericanculturalcenter.org

Hopewell Rosenwald School

In nearby Cedar Creek, the Hopewell Rosenwald School was established on land in Bastrop County once owned by Martin and Sophia McDonald, who had been enslaved as children. In 1876, the McDonalds purchased 83 acres and built a thriving farm, championing land ownership and education. By 1906, their efforts expanded the farm to 1,100 acres, and in 1919, the McDonald estate deeded one-and-a-half acres

and a financial grant to create a church and school for the Hopewell community.

Completed in 1921, the school was funded through public contributions, support from the local African American community, and a grant from the Rosenwald Fund. Initially serving as an elementary school, Hopewell later evolved into a one-year, and eventually a two-year, high school. The school remained a vital educational, cultural, and social hub for the community until the late 1950s, when school reorganization and integration rendered Rosenwald schools unnecessary. In 2015, the Hopewell Rosenwald School was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The building has been restored and hosts a variety of events throughout the year.

(NR, RTHL)

690 Highway 21 • hopewellrosenwaldcc.org

2 | BRYAN

Brazos Valley African American Museum

The museum, built on the site of one of the original Black schools in the Brazos Valley, houses a unique collection focused on the African American experience in the area. Growing out of the collections and research of Mell Pruitt, a retired educator, the museum features African artifacts and several rotating exhibits. The museum is an official FamilySearch affiliate library for genealogical research.

500 E. Pruitt St. • 979-775-3961 • 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. (RTHL)
801 W. Texas Ave.

**LEARN MORE
ABOUT THE
BRAZOS TRAIL!**

**SCAN
ME>>>**





Teacher J.W. Hogg poses with his Black students in 1907 at their schoolhouse in Diboll. Reported average daily attendance at this segregated school was 40 students.

SPOTLIGHT: A LESSON IN

Education

Real Stories: Denial to persistence to integration

African Americans were denied access to education while enslaved, but opportunities emerged after emancipation. Though formerly enslaved workers 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. Later, 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.

Photo: The History Center



Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical University features several historical buildings designed by African American architects who studied and later taught at the university.

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 (founded in Waco and later moved to 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 University (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 denied 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 and also to make graduate studies available to Black students. Sweatt was among the first African Americans to enroll in the law school, and John S. Chase (see page 29) and Oscar L. Thompson pursued graduate degrees. In 1952, Thompson became the first African American to graduate from UT, with a master’s degree in zoology.



Desegregation at all levels of school helped African Americans hit the books.



The historic Texas and Pacific Railroad Depot has been rehabilitated into the Atlanta Historical Museum.

Germany was a small Freedom Colony established after the Civil War.



Relocated from its original location, the Samuel Walker Houston Museum and Cultural Center reopened on a site that previously served as Huntsville's Negro High School.



With historical buildings that include a distinguished train depot, Marshall also offers the Buard History Trail, which highlights sites tied to the area's African American experience.





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. In September 2024, the museum opened a new permanent exhibit dedicated to Coleman's life and achievements.

101 N. East St.

experienceatlantatx.com/explore/atlanta_historical_museum.php

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 enslaved workers. Following the Civil War, a group of formerly enslaved workers 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 Highway 21

6 | HUNTSVILLE

Samuel Walker Houston Museum and Cultural Center

Samuel Walker Houston was the son of Joshua Houston, an enslaved man 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. On tours available to school groups and the public, the museum shares Samuel Walker Houston's legacy through exhibits featuring artifacts and photos of the school. Topics covered include African American history, segregated education, and the African American Civil Rights Movement. 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

samuelwalkerhoustonmuseum.com

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 holds the graves of two Tuskegee Airmen who served in World War II. The city installed interpretive 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 Main Street office (211 N. Washington Ave.) to pick up a trail guide brochure, or call in advance to arrange a guided tour.

Marshall Convention and Visitors Bureau

110 S. Bolivar St. • 903-934-7901

visitmarshalltexas.com



The administration building at Wiley College bears the name of former student and prominent Methodist bishop Willis J. King.



Zion Hill Baptist Church was home to one of Texas' oldest African American Baptist congregations.



Many members of the Shankleville Freedom Colony, including its founders, are buried in its cemetery.

7 | MARSHALL

Wiley College

Founded in 1873, Wiley College was named after Bishop Isaac Wiley of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1882, Wiley became the first historically Black 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 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

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, Lanana Creek, Oak Grove Cemetery, and North Lanana Street

9 | SHANKLEVILLE COMMUNITY

Jim and Winnie Shankle, recognized as the first African Americans in Newton County to purchase land and emerge as community leaders after emancipation, left a lasting legacy. Beginning in 1867, they, along with their associate Steve McBride, acquired over 4,000 acres of land. Their thriving neighborhood included successful farms, churches, a cotton gin, grist mills, sawmills, and schools, notably McBride College (1883–1909), established by Steve McBride. Jim and Winnie Shankle are interred in the Jim Shankle Cemetery. Each June, visitors to Shankleville can enjoy the Texas Purple Hull Pea Festival, which celebrates the area's agricultural and food traditions. (SM)

shankleville.org

**THE THC IS DISCOVERING
EVER MORE ABOUT THE
STATE'S FREEDOM COLONIES.**

SCAN
ME >>





Larutha Odom Clay holds a journal detailing her family and her roots in Shankleville.



Mt. Hope Baptist Church has been a religious center for Shankleville since 1898.

SPOTLIGHT: STEPPING INSIDE THE Freedom Colonies

Written by: Lareatha H. Clay, former Commissioner, Texas Historical Commission

Following emancipation, many African Americans set up independently sustaining Freedom Colonies 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 Freedom Colony, 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 (shankleville.org). (SM, HTC)

One of the most important urban Freedom Colonies was a 40-block residential area in Houston now called

the Freedmen's Town Historic District. Established in summer 1865, 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 and efforts to preserve it have suffered from metropolitan growth. (NR, SM)

Many of these Freedom Colonies and businesses have been absorbed into the larger surrounding cities, while others—including Austin's Six Square Black Historic District (formerly San Bernard Historic District)—have evolved into identifiable, ethnically rich 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 integral parts of contemporary neighborhoods, cities, and society.



A retired cannon rests among remnant chimneys at Fort Phantom Hill.

Fort Griffin's administration building once housed the office of the commanding officer.



Buffalo Soldiers from the 10th Cavalry operated from Fort Richardson during the 1870s.



A Buffalo Soldier reenactor with his horse demonstrates the story of African Americans in military service at Fort McKavett State Historic Site.



10 | 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 spotlight, page 26), fought Comanche and Kiowa Indian forces near 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

Farm to Market 600

325-677-1309 • fortphantom.org

11 | 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, a Texas Historical Commission state historic site, features remains of the fort, plus campgrounds, nature trails and the Official State of Texas Longhorn herd. Several events take place at Fort Griffin, including the annual Living History Days in October, which features Buffalo Soldier reenactors.

(NR, SM)



1701 N. U.S. Highway 283 • 325-762-3592

visitfortgriffin.com

12 | 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. The site includes

both restored and reconstructed buildings. Self-guided tours are offered year-round, as well as occasional ranger-led tours. 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 Road 61 • 940-567-3506

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/fort-richardson

13 | 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 is a Texas Historical Commission state historic site with restored buildings and a visitor center featuring detailed exhibits that tell the real stories behind this place. The site is open daily and also hosts a number of living history events throughout the year. (NR, RTHL, SM)



7066 Farm to Market 864 (23 miles west of

Menard) 325-396-2358 • visitfortmckavett.com

14 | SAN ANGELO

Fort Concho National Historic Landmark

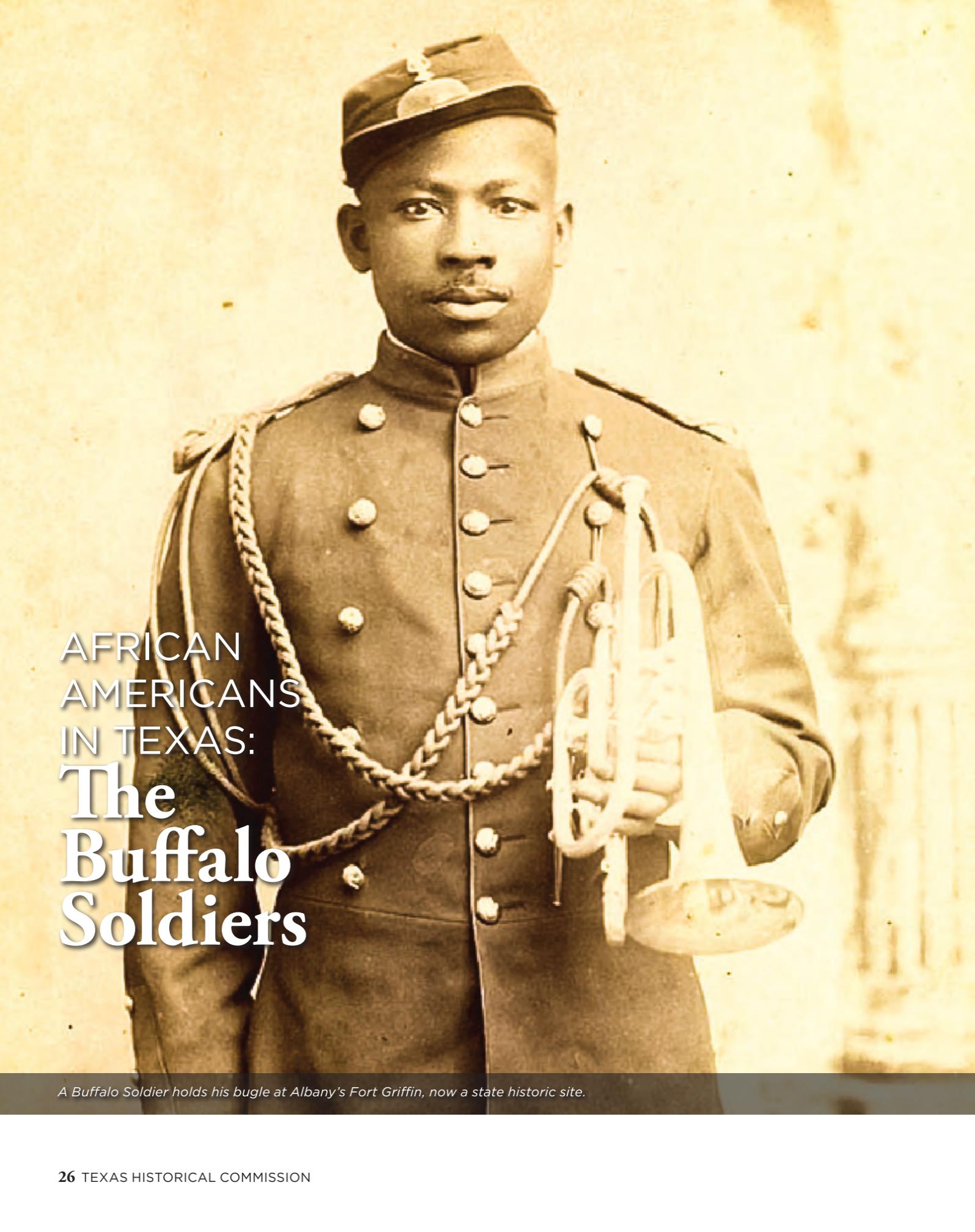
Established in 1867 and closed in 1889, Fort Concho belonged to the chain of frontier posts used by the Buffalo Soldiers during the Indian Wars. All four regiments of Buffalo Soldiers (the 9th and 10th U.S. Cavalry and the 24th and 25th U.S. Infantry) served at Fort Concho during its active use as a 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 do. 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

fortconcho.com

A sepia-toned portrait of a Buffalo Soldier, a Black man in a military uniform. He is wearing a dark, high-collared jacket with two rows of buttons and a braided cord around his neck. He is also wearing a matching cap. He holds a brass bugle in his left hand. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

AFRICAN
AMERICANS
IN TEXAS:
**The
Buffalo
Soldiers**

A Buffalo Soldier holds his bugle at Albany's Fort Griffin, now a state historic site.

The volatile environmental conditions of the American Southwest made white settlement an extremely arduous task. Inevitable friction between white settlers and Native Americans, 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 Native Americans who were reminded of the buffalo when they saw the soldiers' thick, curly black hair. Some believe the name—which continued to be used through the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II before

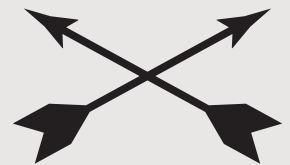
desegregation of troops in 1948—symbolized a respect for the Buffalo Soldiers' bravery and valor. The duties assigned to these units ranged from escorting settlers, cattle herds, and railroad crews, to protecting the mail, keeping roads open, and pursuing outlaws. Throughout the Indian Wars era, many 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 regiments, 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 regiments. 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 take place around the state, such as the ones at San Angelo's Fort Concho and Brackettville's Fort Clark.



Through exhibits and special programming, the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum in Houston interprets the stories and contributions of African Americans in the U.S. military.



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.



Notable African Americans, such as Barbara Jordan and Willie Wells, are among the prominent Texans buried at the Texas State Cemetery.

John S. Chase, Texas' first licensed Black architect, designed the David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church.



The George Washington Carver Genealogy Center is part of the museum campus that bears the scientist's name.



Olivet Baptist Church is another example of Chase's work.



15 | AUSTIN

Six Square

Encompassing about six square miles in East Austin, Six Square—Austin’s historically segregated Black Cultural District, formerly known as African American Cultural Heritage District—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 visitor center and art studio. 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 B.B. King, Bobby “Blue” Bland, and Big Joe Williams have graced the stage.

A few blocks farther 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 those of Barbara Jordan (see Spotlight, page 39) 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 of 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.), 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 Black 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 owned by the University of Texas and used as a community engagement center. The association, founded in 1884 by faculty members at Prairie View State Normal School (now Prairie View A&M University), fought to get equal pay and working conditions for African American teachers in Texas during segregation.

The George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center (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.

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 Road) and **Bethany Cemetery** (1300 Springdale Road). **Roughly bounded by Interstate 35, Airport Boulevard, Manor Road, and East 11th Street/Rosewood Avenue/Oak Springs Drive**
info@sixsquare.org • 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



In Austin, an early congregation of the First Colored Baptist Church, which was formally organized in 1867 with 13 charter members, was led by the Rev. Jacob Fontaine.

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. (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 congregation for enslaved people, it was officially organized after the Civil War in 1867 by the Rev. Jacob Fontaine, a formerly enslaved clergyman (see Gold Dollar entry). 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 Lane

Gold Dollar Newspaper Building

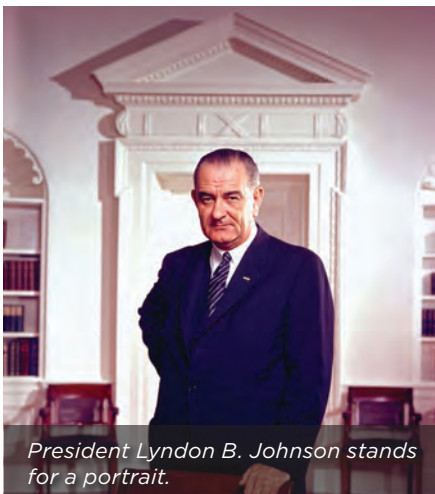
This two-story building is all that remains of the African American community of Wheatville, which once encompassed the area from 24th to 26th streets and from Rio Grande Street to Shoal Creek. The Rev. Jacob Fontaine lived here and also published the *Gold Dollar*—the first African American-owned newspaper printed in Austin—from this location. In the aftermath of the Civil War, Fontaine, a formerly enslaved person, 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 and is now a coffee shop.

2402 San Gabriel St.

LBJ Presidential Library

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 desk on which Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. An interpretive timeline that spans Johnson's life and presidency includes key dates: the signing of the Civil 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.
512-721-0177 • lbjlibrary.org



President Lyndon B. Johnson stands for a portrait.

Neill-Cochran House Museum

Just minutes from the University of Texas, the Neill-Cochran House Museum tells the story of one of Austin's oldest historic residences, including the city's only intact enslaved people's quarters. Just behind the main house is the Slave Quarters building, which enables visitors to experience the past through the eyes of the people, both enslaved and free, who lived and worked there. Participate in the guided "Urban Enslavement in Austin—The NCHM Slave Quarters Tour" on the third Saturday of every month. (NR, RTHL)

201 San Gabriel St.
512-478-2335 • nchmuseum.org

Texas African American History Memorial

Installed on the Texas State Capitol grounds in 2016, the Texas African American History Memorial honors and celebrates the contributions and culture of African Americans in Texas. Created by sculptor Ed Dwight, the monument spans African American history from the 1500s to the present day. It features representations of notable figures Hendrick Arnold and Barbara Jordan, as well as elements commemorating Juneteenth (June 19, 1865), the day when enslaved African Americans in Texas celebrated their emancipation.

100 W. 11th St.

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 Farm to Market 969

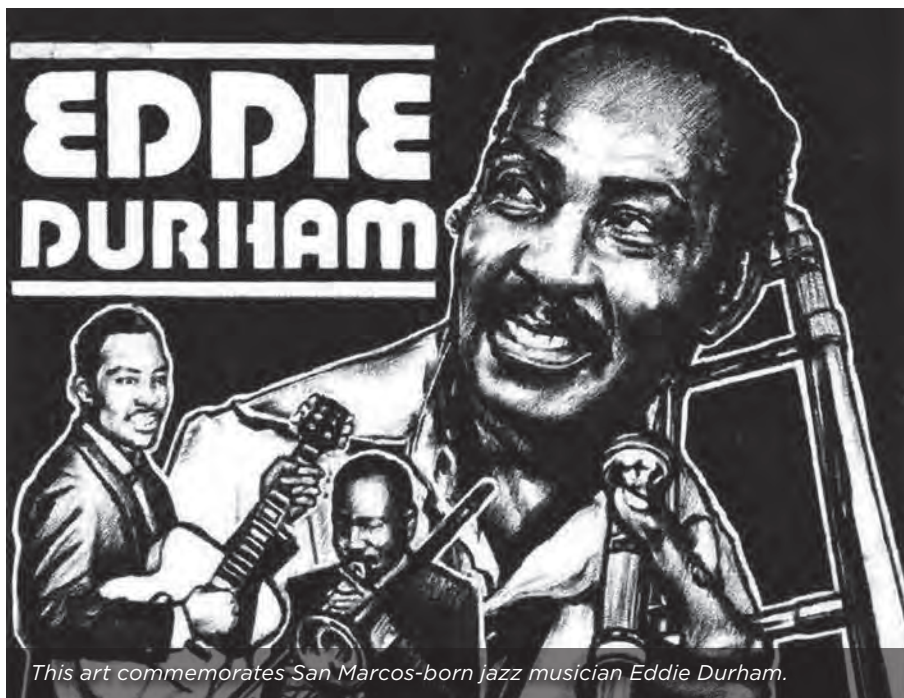
16 | BLANCO

Mt. Horeb Baptist Church

Established in 1874, the Mt. Horeb Baptist Church served the residents of Peyton Colony, a Freedom Colony named after Peyton Roberts, formerly



Blanco County resident Peyton Roberts and his neighbors built this lime kiln to make the ingredients for mortar, which was then used in constructing area buildings, some of which remain today.



This art commemorates San Marcos-born jazz musician Eddie Durham.

an enslaved person 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 Farm to Market 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 Road
830-833-4183

17 | 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 7-acre area where the school once stood is now a city park (801 Martin Luther King Drive) 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 Drive) 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



Exhibits inside the Calaboose African American History Museum relate to the Buffalo Soldiers, Civil Rights, and more.

prominent jazz musician born in San Marcos in 1906. Across the street is the **Calaboose African American History Museum** (200 Martin Luther King Drive), 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 white 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, Valley, Centre, and Herndon streets, and Martin Luther King Drive

**HEAR THE
MUSIC OF
EDDIE DURHAM!**

**SCAN
ME >>**





AFRICAN AMERICANS IN TEXAS: **Agriculture**

The Texas agriculture industry owes much of its foundation to the forced labor and resilience of enslaved African Americans. Their sweat and hard work played a vital role in building the state's agricultural system, especially in cotton production.

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 white landowners and African American farmers.

This system allowed landowners 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 often led to indebtedness to landowners.

Levi Jordan Plantation State Historic Site is a Texas Historical Commission property near Brazoria that highlights the multiple perspectives and evolving relationships of those who lived and worked on the land during the 19th century. Today, the Levi Jordan Plantation (see page 37) provides a unique opportunity to understand the evolving agricultural history of the South and the early African American experience in Texas. It

serves as a living example of the early African American lifestyles through a transition from slavery to tenant farming. (RTHL)

Sabine Farms near Marshall housed more than 75 families who 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. (SM)



Visitors browse the exhibits inside the recently opened visitor center at the Levi Jordan Plantation State Historic Site in Brazoria.



After the Civil War, most African Americans in Texas continued farming, with only about 20 percent owning land.



Archeological excavations at the Levi Jordan Plantation uncover artifacts that reveal much about the people who lived and worked there.

Several African American Catholic families, such as this one, were part of a distinct congregation that began in 1888 near Brenham.



36 TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Belle's Alley lies within Toubin Park and features interpretive panels detailing the formation and significance of the Freedom Colonies established in the area.



Panels dotting Washington County's Freedom Colony comprise the Camptown Soundwalk Experience, which interprets area history.





18 | BRAZORIA

Levi Jordan Plantation State Historic Site

Significant to the antebellum period of Texas history and the tumultuous era of Reconstruction, Levi Jordan Plantation, a Texas Historical Commission state historic site, hosted a sizable plantation operation and two-story, Greek Revival-style house. Levi Jordan moved his family and enslaved workers to Texas to establish a sugar and cotton plantation on the San Bernard River in the late 1840s. The site highlights the multiple perspectives and evolving relationships of those who lived and worked on the land during the 19th century. Today, the Levi Jordan Plantation provides a unique opportunity to understand the evolving agricultural history of the South and the early African American experience in Texas. (RTHL)

10510 Farm to Market 524 • 979-798-2202
visitlevijordanplantation.com

19 | 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 enslaved workers to the area. The Catholic settlers and their workers worshipped together at first, and the nearby Old Catholic cemetery, which is still in active use, contains markers for both the Spann family and their enslaved workers, 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 enslaved workers. 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 Highway 105, then north-north-west on County Road 100/Sweed Road

Belle's Alley Freedom Colonies Exhibit

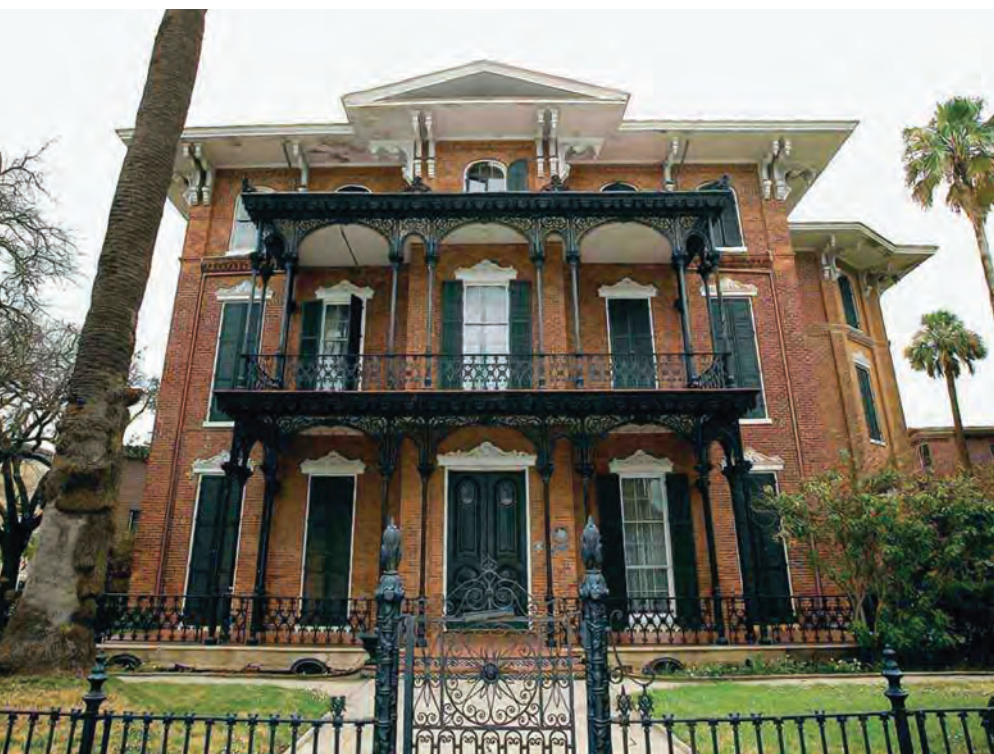
Visitors can explore the lesser-known history of the Freedom Colonies in downtown Brenham's Belle's Alley. These communities were founded in Washington County by formerly enslaved individuals between 1865 and 1930. During a turbulent period in history, these colonies offered a safe haven where African Americans could build communities, establish a sense of belonging, and begin their lives as free citizens. For a hands-on experience, take part in the scavenger hunt that accompanies the Belle's Alley Freedom Colonies Exhibit.

208 S. Park St.
979-337-7580 • visitbrenhamtexas.com

Camptown Soundwalk Experience

The Camptown Soundwalk Experience explores the history of Washington County's earliest Freedom Colony, where enslaved individuals gathered before emancipation and formed a settlement following the end of the Civil War. This outdoor exhibit highlights key locations that played a vital role in shaping the community and its history. As you explore, embark on a tour filled with the sounds and stories of the area. Simply scan the QR code on each panel with your phone to immerse yourself in narratives from the past.

Jerry Wilson Park • 900 E. Alamo St.
979-337-7580 • visitbrenhamtexas.com



Constructed using slave labor, Ashton Villa is also where the proclamation freeing slaves was read and Juneteenth originated.

20 | GALVESTON

Ashton Villa

James Moreau Brown built Ashton Villa in 1859 with the help of an enslaved brickmason 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. The city’s Juneteenth exhibit, “And Still We Rise...,” is located inside the carriage house of Ashton Villa. This exhibit is overseen by the Galveston Historical Foundation’s African American Heritage Committee and draws upon over 16 interviews, historic documents, and histories that tell the story from the announcement of emancipation to the present day. (NR, RTHL)

2328 Broadway St.
galvestonhistory.org



A display at Central High School honors Bobby Lee Hilton, a star athlete who was the first African American to receive the Billy Hempel Memorial Award for the Most Outstanding Football Player in Galveston.

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
galvestonoldcentral.com

Norris Wright Cuney Historical Marker

Norris Wright Cuney was born in 1846 in the enslaved peoples' quarters of Sunnyside Plantation near Hempstead to Anglo planter Philip Cuney and one of his enslaved workers, Adeline Stuart. His father sent Norris to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to attend a school for African American students, but Norris 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, Norris Cuney grew into a national leader, giving Texas' African Americans



Barbara Jordan's impact on Texas politics has inspired many exhibits, such as this one at Texas State University sharing her accomplishments.

SPOTLIGHT: A POLITICAL FORCE

Barbara Jordan

Real People: Eloquence that turned ears and changed minds

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. In 1976, she became the first woman and the first African American to deliver the keynote at a Democratic National Convention, further cementing her renown for eloquent, inspiring speeches. 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.



The Houston Public Library rehabilitated the former Gregory School into the African American Library at the Gregory School. The building serves as a repository of historical papers, resources, and cultural information related to the area's African American Freedom Colonies.

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 1876–1892. 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 1875–1877. (SM)

722 Moody Ave. (on Galveston County Courthouse grounds)

Reedy Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church

The congregation traces its origins to 1848, when enslaved workers met for outdoor services. In 1863, Anglo Methodists constructed a chapel for their enslaved workers to use; after emancipation, it became home to Reedy Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, one of the first AME churches in Texas and site of the first Juneteenth celebration. 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.
reedychapel.com



Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, gifted land to the enslaved peoples in 1848, so they could build a place of worship, now Reedy Chapel.

21 | 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 Black residents 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
houstonlibrary.org/aahrc

Antioch Missionary Baptist Church

John Henry (Jack) Yates, a formerly enslaved worker 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
antiochdowntown.com

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 African Americans have played in the armed forces since the American Revolution, and the museum hosts reenactments for an additional fee.



3816 Caroline St.
713-942-8920
buffalosoldiermuseum.com



Emancipation Park features one of the state's 17,000-plus historical markers connected to Texas' African American history.

Houston Negro Hospital

The Houston Negro 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 white hospitals. Although the historic building remains, it is no longer open to the public. 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.

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 and East 34th streets and Loop 610; State marker at 7818 N. Main St.

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 5 blocks, the Project Row Houses community contains 39 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
projectrowhouses.org

Freedmen's Town Museums Houston

The Freedmen's Town Museums Houston, a part of Rutherford B.H. Yates Museum, Inc., exist to preserve the original homesteads of formerly

enslaved African Americans in Houston's Freedmen's Town in the city's Fourth Ward. The complex includes the six remaining historic homes and structures in Freedmen's Town that once belonged to influential community leaders and laborers.

Currently, the only home open to the public is the **Rutherford B.H. Yates House**. Built in 1912, this charming 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 House 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.

Also part of the complex is the **Rev. Ned Pullum House Museum**, a Colonial-style house that belonged to the Rev. Ned Pullum. The Rev. Pullum, born into slavery in Alabama, became a prominent leader in Houston's Freedmen's Town. After serving as pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, he founded Friendship Baptist Church in 1903, where he remained until his death. Beyond his ministry, Pullum promoted economic growth by establishing businesses, including a brickyard, and actively supported civic and educational initiatives in the Black community.

The Rev. Ned Pullum House Museum 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.

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.

(NR, RTHL, SM)

1314 Andrews St. • 713-739-0163
rbhy.org



These row houses are found in Independence Heights, Texas' first incorporated Black city, which Houston annexed in 1929.



The Rutherford B.H. Yates House is a well-preserved example of the middle-class residences built in Houston's Fourth Ward.



Project Row Houses, now infused with art and community programs, is part of Houston's Historic Third Ward, one of the city's oldest African American neighborhoods.



Segregated teams were the only option for Black baseball players until the mid-1940s. Texas had several teams, including this Pan American Oil one from Texas City.

SPOTLIGHT: A SWING AND A HIT!

Baseball

Real Stories: African American players breaking barriers—and records

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. Such programs 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 Era Committee.

In 2024, MLB announced that Negro League stats were added to its historical record, resulting in changes to the leaderboard in several categories.



With the Negro Leagues now part of the MLB records, Willie Wells ranks No. 27 in the MLB records of elite shortstops.



The work of Mexican artist Diego Rivera inspired the murals inside Hannah Hall at Texas Southern University.

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
tsu.edu

Trinity United Methodist Church

Established in 1848 as a congregation for enslaved workers, 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
thetumc.com

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 formerly enslaved worker, 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. New in 2024 were two Black history tours and elevated tour experiences that include reenactments and performances. Also, visitors should set aside time to stroll along the paths leading through the park past other historic buildings, including the Fourth Ward Cottage. Cell phones are recommended because the Heritage Society has general information available for visitors to hear about each building.

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

22 | KENDLETON

Fort Bend County Heritage Unlimited Museum

This museum sits a stone's throw from the original site of Kendleton, a Freedom Colony 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.



A docent at Fort Bend County Heritage Unlimited Museum holds a framed photo of Benjamin F. Williams, a Texas Representative from Kendleton, a Freedom Colony.



The mission of the Fort Bend County Heritage Unlimited Museum is to preserve, promote, and perpetuate the history and contributions of community settlements in this southeast Texas region from 1865 to 1965.

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 a boat launch. There are two cemetery sites along the river, some of the last remaining signs of the original Kendleton community site. Included in one of the cemeteries is the grave marker for Benjamin Franklin Williams, a formerly enslaved worker 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 Lane
979-531-8694
fbcheritage.org

23 | LOCKHART

St. John Colony

This Freedom Colony 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 Farm to Market 672, 0.2 miles east of County Road 294/County Road 167 intersection

24 | 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



A headstone, located in Lockhart, marks the grave of an original St. John Colony resident.

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)

Farm to Market 1098 and University Drive • 936-261-3311 • pvamu.edu

25 | ROSENBERG

The Black Cowboy Museum

Established by Larry Callies, The Black Cowboy Museum is dedicated to honoring and preserving the rich history of Black cowboys in America.

Here, visitors discover the stories of trailblazers like Bass Reeves, Nat Love, and Bill Pickett, and learn about the influential African American cowboys who not only shaped the past of the American West but are also paving its future.

**1104 3rd St.
281-787-3308
blackcowboymuseum.com**

26 | 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 McCulloch 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 enslaved workers who made great sacrifices for their adopted country. At the Alamo, William B. Travis’ enslaved worker, Joe, fought in the battle. In an attempt to disparage Texians, 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
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 formerly enslaved workers 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



A classroom inside the former Sweet Home Vocational and Agricultural High School in Seguin looks much the same as it did when it was buzzing with students.



Congregants fill the sanctuary of San Antonio's St. Paul United Methodist Church, just as they have each Sunday since 1866.

27 | SEGUIN

The Heritage Museum

In 1869, James, Hiram, and Wallace Wilson opened the H. Wilson & Co. pottery shop and operated it until 1884. The three formerly enslaved workers had split off from the business once owned by their former enslaver, 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 Subject Marker, the story continues to be told today at The Heritage Museum through a pottery artifact display.

114 N. River St. • 830-372-0965

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 Sweet Home building serves as a community center. (NR, RTHL)

3340 Sweet Home Road

28 | 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 enslavers 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 enslaved workers 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



Students and their teacher stand on the steps of the original Columbia Rosenwald School, which has since been restored.



In Rosenwald Schools, standard school-issued desks replaced the rough wooden slabs, pews, and benches typical of many other places African American children were taught.



Workers harvest sugarcane at a plantation, now preserved as the Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site.



Built in the 1920s, this cottage at the Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site is available for nightly lodging.

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. Interpretive kiosks and historical markers are located throughout the district. The oldest structure, the 1887 Frank Sr. and Flavilla Bell home, was restored for development as a community museum. It is open for tours throughout the year on an occasional basis. (NR, SM, HTC)
117 S. Bell Drive

29 | 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 site includes a recreation of the historic town, including a blacksmith shop once operated by an African American man named Simon. The Star of the Republic Museum features exhibits on African American experiences and contributions throughout Texas history, from the Republic era to modern times. (SM)

23400 Park Road 12
936-878-2214
visitwashingtononthebrazos.com

! Barrington Living History Farm State Historic Site

Located on the Washington-on-the-Brazos campus, this state historic site invites visitors to travel back in

time to 1850 and explore the original home of Dr. Anson Jones, the last president of the Republic of Texas. The Jones family lived at the farm for over a decade, building a successful cotton farm with enslaved labor after Texas joined the Union. This living history farm is complete with period-costumed interpreters using 19th-century farming practices for planting, cultivating, harvesting, and working with livestock. Explore the sights and smells of farm life, and experience the daily lives of those who came 150 years ago. (RTHL)

23100 Barrington Lane
936-878-2214

30 | WEST COLUMBIA

Columbia Rosenwald School

One of four Rosenwald Schools in Brazoria County, the Columbia Rosenwald School operated from 1921–1948, 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 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
columbiahistoricalmuseum.org/roswald-school/

! Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site

Visitors can explore the real stories of the people who lived and worked on this property, from the prosperous landowners to the enslaved people and oil field workers whose labor was essential to the economic viability of the site. Generations of Texas history, commerce, and entrepreneurship encapsulate Varner-Hogg Plantation, a Texas Historical Commission state historic site, which tells the stories of the many families, both enslaved and not, who worked to build Texas. For more than 130 years, the site hosted sugarcane production, cattle ranching, and oil drilling as it transitioned through the ownership of the Varners, the Pattons, and the Hoggs. (NR, RTHL)

1702 N. 13th St. • 979-345-4656
visitvarnerhoggplantation.com

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AFRICAN
AMERICANS
IN TEXAS:
Texas
Jazz and
Blues

Robert Johnson was a young blues musician in the mid-1930s known for his masterful guitar playing, songwriting, and singing.

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 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.



Cover art from a Robert Johnson album depicts one of his two recording sessions, this one at the Gunter Hotel in San Antonio.



Blind Lemon Jefferson recorded 110 sides during his career.



Before Booker T. Washington was a magnet high school for performing arts, it was an overcrowded, segregated Dallas high school with a football team.

The Deep Ellum neighborhood was established shortly after the arrival of the Texas Central Railroad to Dallas in 1872, followed by the Texas and Pacific (T&P) Railroad in 1873.

An archway flanked by two statues welcomes visitors to the Freedman's Cemetery.

From this Craftsman bungalow—her home—Juanita Craft organized people and championed civil rights.



31 | 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

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

btwhspva.dallasisd.org/

Deep Ellum Historic District

Prior to World War II, when segregation divided white 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, a number of shops, live music venues, and sidewalk cafés punctuate this area, and colorful and innovative murals decorate many of the district's walls.

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

deepellumtexas.com

Freedman's Cemetery Memorial

Freedman's Cemetery, as the name suggests, belonged to a community of formerly enslaved workers 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, excavations of the cemetery, and the relocation of those interred within it. Between 1991–94, an archeological investigation uncovered more than 1,000 graves, which were carefully relocated, and the local community constructed a 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.**

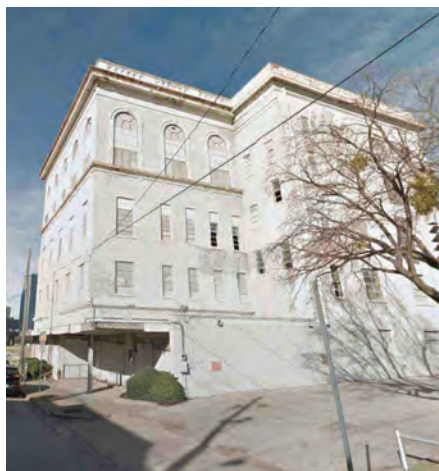
Juanita J. Craft Civil Rights House

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.

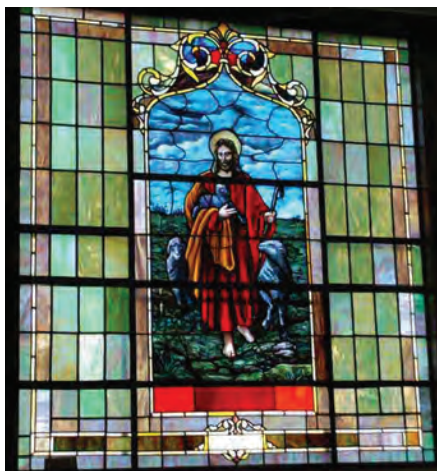
(NR, RTHL)

2618 Warren Ave.

juanitacrafthouse.org



Designed by African American architect William Sidney Pittman, the Knights of Pythias Temple was where prominent African Americans gathered.



St. Paul United Methodist Church in Dallas remains highly regarded for its colorful stained glass windows.



A variety of architectural styles, including Craftsman bungalow and shotgun, are represented in the Queen City Historic District.

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 an 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, including William McDonald. He established himself as a Fort Worth businessman, politician, and founder of the Fraternal Bank and Trust Company, which became 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 Historic District

Now known as Queen City Historic District, Queen City Heights was where farmers and workers settled during Reconstruction. The community 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 formerly enslaved workers, 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; 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
stpaulumcdallas.org

Tenth Street Historic District

This is one of the few remaining Freedom Colonies in the South that 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

32 | DENTON

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

33 | FORT WORTH

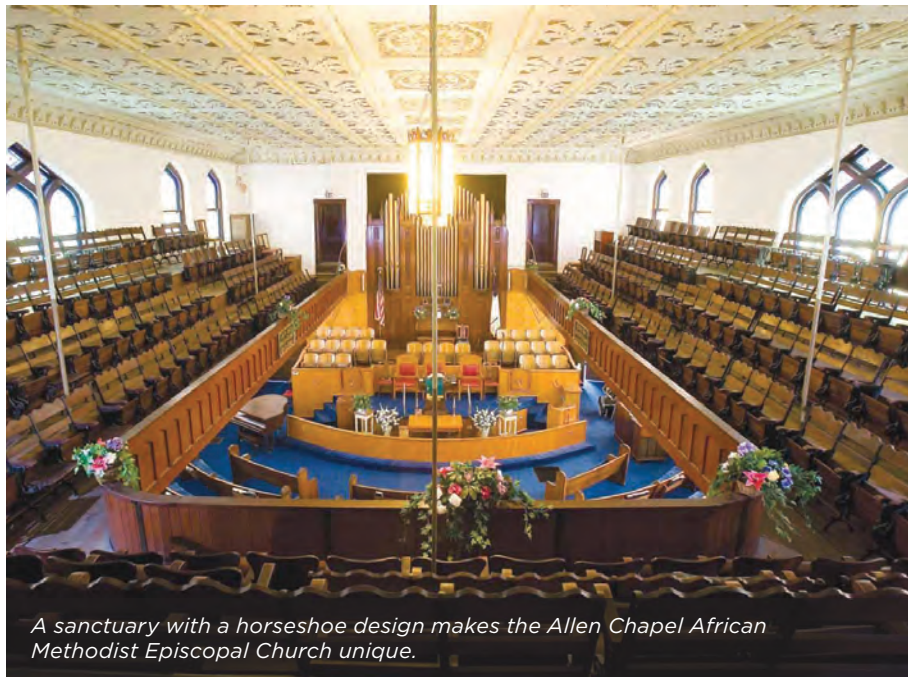
Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church

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. (NR, RTHL, SM)

116 Elm St. • 817-332-5071
allenchapelfw.org

National Multicultural Western Heritage Museum

In the Wild West, when whites and non-whites 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,



A sanctuary with a horseshoe design makes the Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church unique.



The exhibits at Fort Worth's National Multicultural Western Heritage Museum recognize the individuals and groups, including the Tuskegee Airmen and the Buffalo Soldiers, who played a role in settling the early Western frontier.



Street signs mark the heart of the Stop Six community, which got its name from its position as the sixth stop on the Northern Texas Traction Co.'s line.

or American Indian. Founded in 2001, the National Multicultural Western Heritage Museum highlights the important contributions of these ethnically varied 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 National Multicultural Western Heritage Museum holds a Hall of Fame that recognizes individuals, such



The altar at Joshua Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church—one of the oldest Black churches in Waxahachie—serves as a spiritual and cultural anchor to its congregation.

as Bill Pickett and Bose Ikard, who were instrumental in the formation of the West. The museum hosts a variety of events, including weekly workshops, children's storytelling, and holiday happenings.

3400 Mount Vernon Ave.
817-534-8801 • nmwhm.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 can 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 53).

Bounded by Rosedale, Loop 820 South, and Miller streets
stopsixcni.org

34 | IRVING

Jackie Townsell Bear Creek Heritage Center

Part of the Irving Archives & Museum, the Jackie Townsell Bear Creek Heritage Center includes three museums that chronicle the history of the Bear Creek community and the African American experience, spanning from the emancipation of enslaved people to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

3925 Jackson St.
972-721-4754

irvingarchivesandmuseum.com

35 | 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. (RTHL)

110 N. Aiken St.



Modest in scale but rich in cultural legacy, these historic shotgun-style homes on Wyatt Street once anchored a vibrant, close-knit African American community.

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

**WATCH A
PROFILE ON
JUANITA
J. CRAFT.**

**SCAN
ME >>**



Bessie Coleman’s achievement as the world’s first licensed African American pilot was acknowledged with her image on a U.S. postage stamp.

SPOTLIGHT: PURSUING HIGH-FLYING DREAMS

Bessie Coleman

Real People: A woman who reached new heights

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 white school grounds unless Black attendees were permitted to use the same entrances as whites. 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.



"The Errand of Corporal Ross" at Fort Bliss in El Paso honors the legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers.

The 1966 Texas Western Miners shattered barriers by being the first team with an African American starting lineup to win the NCAA men's basketball championship.

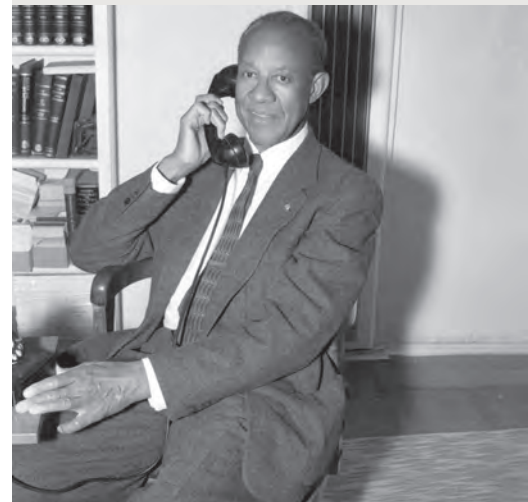


58 TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Fort Davis National Historic Site preserves the barracks where African American troops were once stationed.



El Paso's Dr. Lawrence Aaron Nixon was a pivotal figure in the fight for civil rights and electoral justice in the United States.



36 | 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/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 Black citizens in Texas. A small collection of artifacts within the building pays tribute to this important civil rights leader, while historical markers outside the center commemorate Nixon and noted African American soldier Henry O. Flipper. (SM)

**3231 Wyoming Ave. • 915-566-2407
mccallcenter.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 as a film of the same name that focused on the game. A newly dedicated historical marker at the Foster Stevens Basketball Center, part of the Foster Stevens Center at UTEP, details how African American students integrated the school in 1955, the impact Coach Haskins had on the school’s basketball program, and how Texas Western

transformed college sports. The school’s basketball teams no longer play their home games at Memorial Gymnasium, but basketball fans can plan ahead to see the UTEP Miners play at the Don Haskins Center, built in 1976. Volleyball fans can catch a match at Memorial Gymnasium, as volleyball games have been housed there since 1974. (SM)

The University of Texas at El Paso

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

37 | 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. 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 a National Historic Site administered by the National Park Service. (NHL, NR, SM)

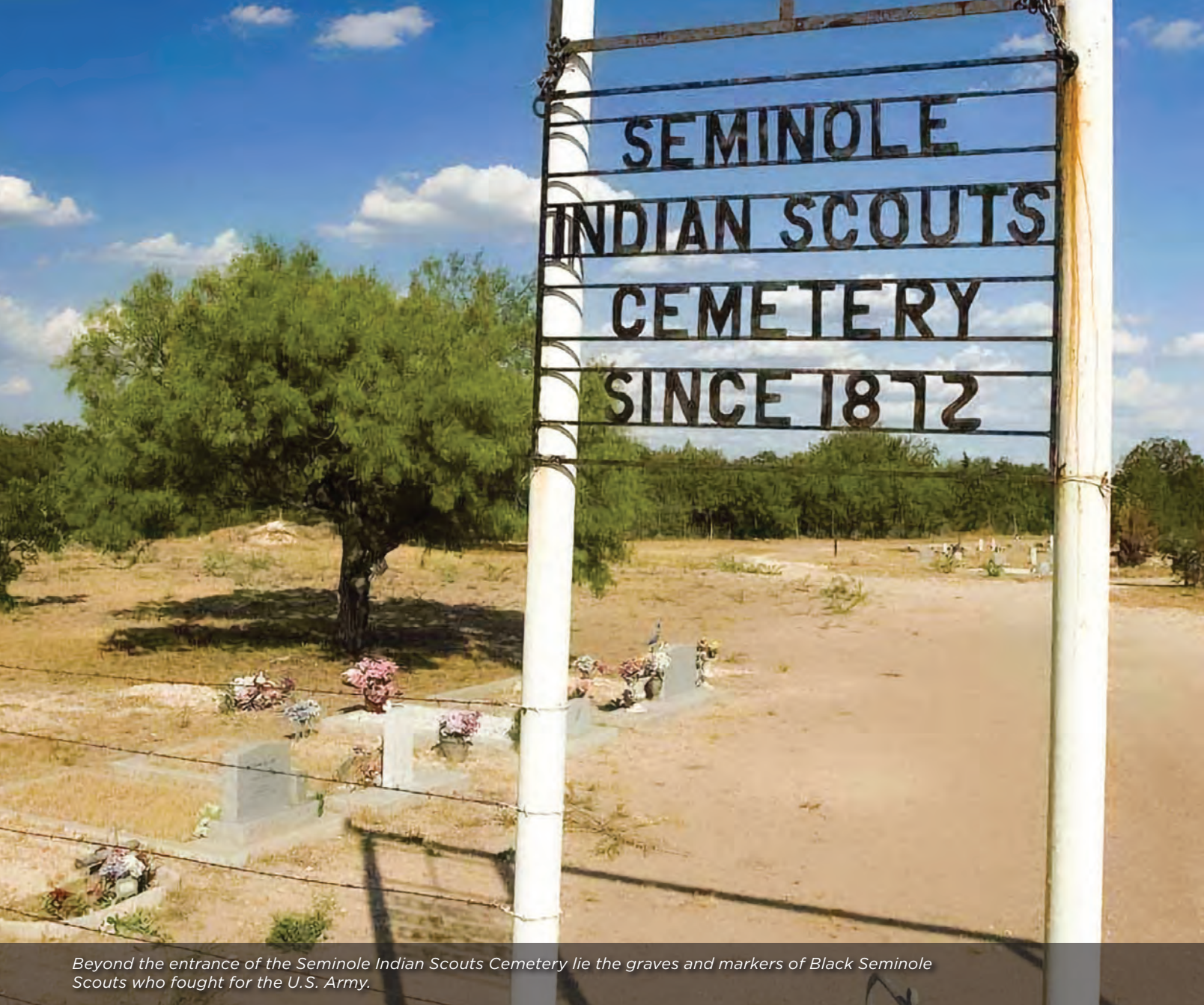


**101 Lt. Henry Flipper Drive
432-426-3224 • nps.gov/foda**

**VIEW A TRAILER OF
“GLORY ROAD.”**

**SCAN
ME >>>**





Beyond the entrance of the Seminole Indian Scouts Cemetery lie the graves and markers of Black Seminole Scouts who fought for the U.S. Army.

This reproduction of a “talking trumpet” represents the ones used at Fort Clark to amplify commands during military drills and battle in the era of Buffalo Soldiers and Black Seminole Scouts.



Living history actors portray what it was like for Buffalo Soldiers inside their quarters at Fort Clark.



At Fort Lancaster and Battlefield State Historic Site, reenactors fire a cannon during a demonstration of Texas frontier military operations.



38 | BRACKETTVILLE

Black Seminole Indian Scout Cemetery

The descendants of escaped enslaved workers 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 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 of a reproduction of the Army's version of the medal, situated at the center of the soldiers' tombstones. The carving 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

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 enslaved workers, 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

fortclark.com/museum

39 | 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 fort celebrates Living History Day with living history exhibits. (NR, SM)



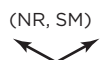
300 E. 3rd St.

432-336-2400

40 | SHEFFIELD

Fort Lancaster and Battlefield 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 and Battlefield, a Texas Historical Commission state historic site, 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

visitfortlancaster.com



The "Roots" mural in Lubbock decorates the south-facing side of the Caviel Museum of African American History. The faces depict local leaders (left to right): Alfred and Billie Caviel, Ted Phea, Eric Strong, George Woods, Mae Simmons, C. Struggs, and J. Patterson.

Once a small medical center, Chatman Hospital is again in operation as the Chatman Clinic, still honoring the work of Dr. J.A. Chatman, one of the first African American doctors in West Texas.



C.B. Stubblefield smiles while kicking back at his original Stubb's Bar-B-Que restaurant in Lubbock.



41 | LUBBOCK

Caviel Museum of African American History

Alfred and Billie Caviel made history as the first African American husband-and-wife team in the United States to own and operate their own pharmacy. Located in the eastside “Flats” neighborhood of Lubbock, Texas, Caviel’s Pharmacy served the community for nearly five decades, from 1960 during the Civil Rights era until 2009.

In 2011, the Caviels donated the building to Lubbock’s Roots Historical Arts Council, envisioning its transformation into a museum celebrating African American culture. Their vision came to life in 2015 when the museum opened, becoming the first African American museum in West Texas.

The museum features exhibits highlighting the contributions of African Americans to medicine, education, and various aspects of community life.

1719 Avenue A
806-773-6046

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 boards 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. It was restored in 1993 and reopened 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.

**WATCH MORE ABOUT
C.B. STUBBLEFIELD.**

**SCAN
ME >>**



A man wearing a white cowboy hat, a blue long-sleeved shirt, and blue jeans is riding a dark-colored horse in a sandy arena. The horse is in motion, and the rider is looking towards the left. In the background, there are green trees, a clear blue sky, and other people, including a child and another rider on a brown horse. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN TEXAS: Ranching

While African American cowboys are often underrepresented in the history of ranching, their contributions to Texas' livestock industry are undeniable.

From the Coastal Plains to the 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 raising herds, developing farms and ranches, 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 horse-breaking abilities, which were sought across the state.

Bose Ikard, a prominent frontiersman and trail driver, 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 enslaved workers, 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 a dozen 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.



The National Ranching Heritage Center in Lubbock interprets the history of ranching through its extensive indoor galleries and outdoor historical park, which is dotted with homesteads, barns, windmills, and corrals that have been relocated from across Texas and the Southwest.



Willie Lusk was one of a few African American Texans to make cowboy boots.



Webber Cemetery commemorates many who played a pivotal role in the Underground Railroad into Mexico.

This strategic military map shows the positions of Confederate forces at the Battle of Palmito Ranch.



Many of Fort McIntosh's surviving buildings, such as the one pictured, are now part of the Laredo Community College campus.



This display at Fort Ringgold highlights what was necessary to be on stable duty during the frontier fort period.



42 | ALAMO

Webber Cemetery

Webber Cemetery is located on the site of Webber Rancho Viejo near the Rio Grande River. The ranch, owned by John Webber and Silvia Hector-Webber (who was formerly enslaved), operated a ferry that the Webbers used to aid enslaved people who were escaping into Mexico toward freedom. The ranch and cemetery are featured in a historical marker for the ranch's role in the Underground Railroad into Mexico. (Learn more about the Webber family on page 31.) (SM)

blackcemeterynetwork.org/bcnsites/john-and-silvia-hector-webber-ranch-cemetery

43 | BROWNSVILLE

Palmito Ranch Battlefield State Historic Site

The Battle of Palmito Ranch was the final land battle of the American Civil War. It was fought May 12–13, 1865, along the banks of the Rio Grande, 13 miles east of Brownsville and 10 miles from the Union-held seaport of Los Brazos de Santiago at Texas' southern tip. The battle, a Confederate victory, took place more than a month after Gen. Robert E. Lee's surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia to Union forces and 13 days before the Army of the Trans-Mississippi under Gen. Edmund Smith surrendered in Galveston on May 26. Today, Palmito Ranch Battlefield NHL contains three historical markers and two U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service viewing platforms, with interpretive signage located at the intersection of Palmito Hill Road and Boca Chica Highway (Highway 4). At the time of this publication, the Palmito Ranch Battlefield State Historic Site is under development on Palmito Hill Road 2 miles south of Highway 4. There are currently no public services or facilities at this site. (NHL, NR, SM for Battle of Palmito Ranch)

43296 Palmito Hill Road
visitpalmitoranchbattlefield.com

44 | 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

45 | PHARR

Eli Jackson Cemetery

The Eli Jackson Cemetery is located on the former Jackson Ranch. Eli Jackson and his African American wife, Matilda Hicks, established the ranch in the hopes of escaping racial intolerance in the Deep South. It became a well-known refuge for the enslaved who escaped and sought freedom in Mexico.

utrgv.edu/civilwar-trail/civil-war-trail/hidalgo-county/jackson-ranch/index.htm

46 | 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 or 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

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SEMINOLE SCOUTS
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Black Seminole Scouts at Fort McIntosh served as U.S. Army trackers on the Texas borderlands.



Officers lived in these quarters at Fort McIntosh; the brick structure replaced earlier wooden buildings.



Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Ringgold in the 1880s were responsible for protecting settlers, building infrastructure, and maintaining order in the developing borderlands of South Texas.



Fort Ringgold's distinctive design helped combat the heat of South Texas, with covered walkways providing shade and improving air circulation.



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