

TEXAS HIGHWAYS--RED RIVER--WHEN...--MALLORY

Along the Red River's 680-mile trek across Texas, U.S. 82 roughly parallels the river's eastern stretches from Texarkana to Wichita Falls, where U.S. 287 picks up and leads westward to the river's upper reaches in the Panhandle. Both highways--almost always less than 10 or 20 miles from the river--connect with more than two dozen other highways which cross the Red offering river views. Several scenic farm and ranch roads also lead to important historical sites.

Though historians still search for the exact site of 18th century French trader Bernard de La Harpe's Indian post, you're close by when you reach Roseborough Lake, a cut-off lake once part of the Red River. From Texarkana take the Richmond Road (Farm Road 559) exit off Interstate 30 and go north. The road deadends at the lake, after a pleasant eight-mile jaunt across broad, flat blackland prairie scattered with pecan orchards and pastures.

Catch a nice view of the Red near the unmarked site of Spanish Bluff, where Spanish soldiers turned back the 1806 river exploration of Thomas Freeman and Peter Custis. From New Boston (Bowie County), take Texas 8 north approximately seven miles to the bridge crossing. A half mile before the bridge, notice a historical marker on Richard Ellis, a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence.

Drench yourself in history at Clarksville, located on U.S. 82 in the center of Red River County. For a map of historical sites contact the Clarksville/Red River County Chamber of Commerce, 101 N. Locust St., Clarksville 75426 (903/427-2645). To reach the site of old Jonesboro, an important early immigrant entry into Spanish Texas, take Texas 37 north from Clarksville about 18 miles. Just before crossing the river, turn left on Farm Road 195 for about two miles, then go right on Farm Road 410 for another six miles to Sam Houston Park. The small site encloses markers on Jonesboro and on

Sam Houston's first entry into Texas, as well as the grave of Jane Chandler Gill, one of the earliest Anglo burials in Texas. (Just before you reach Sam Houston Park, look for the Arnold E.A. Roitsch Archeological Site, location of an early Caddo Indian village indicated by a roadside marker.)

From Jonesboro, Farm Road 410 continues west, then south, paralleling a great bend in the river. The road goes eight miles or so--past pastoral alluvial farmlands of soybeans, sorghum, and wheat--to Kiomatia in an area that once comprised the practical head of navigation on the Red. Farm Road 410 continues south another 18 miles to its junction with U.S. 82 at Detroit.

North of Sherman and Denison (Grayson County) lies Lake Texoma, the largest water recreation reservoir on the Red. To reach Denison Dam go five miles north on Texas 91 from Denison. Tours, Monday through Friday at 1 p.m., take you through the massive powerhouse. Fishing, camping, and concession located below the dam. For details contact the Texoma Resident Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Box 60, Cartwright, OK 74731-0060 (903/465-4990). Weekday office hours are 8 to 4:30.

At Denison Dam look for signs to Eisenhower State Park, less than two miles from the dam on Farm Road 1310. Features include boating with full-service marina, fishing, swimming, tent and RV camping, screened shelters, picnicking, group facilities, group trailer area with pavilion, air-conditioned recreation hall, and hiking trail. Open year-round with reservations advisable. Entry fee is \$5 per day per vehicle, plus camping fees. Write Park Superintendent, Rt. 2, Box 50K, Denison 75202 or call 903/465-1956 from 8 to 5.

Thousands of boats dock on Lake Texoma. More than two dozen marinas and several companies offer boat rentals, fishing guides, and charter services. The lake also sports several popular resorts with a wide range of recreation, lodging, and dining--in addition to several fishing tournaments and sailing regattas. For a guide to resorts and marinas, contact the Lake Texoma Association, Box 610, Kingston, OK 73439 (405/564-

2334). Also contact the Denison Area Tourist & Conventions Bureau, 313 W. Woodard, Denison 75202 (903/465-1551; fax 903/465-8443) and the Sherman Convention and Visitors Council, Box 1029, Sherman 75091-1029 (903/893-1184; fax 903/893-4266).

Don't miss a visit to historic Preston Bend Cemetery, burial site for Sophia Porter, known as the "Confederate Lady Paul Revere." From Denison take Texas 120 west approximately 15 miles until it deadends at the cemetery, overlooking the lake. Historic markers detail Sophia, as well as husband Holland Coffee's 1837 trading post.

Also visit Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge on Lake Texoma. Self-guided auto tour follows interpretive panels on refuge management. Wildlife observation sites offer glimpses of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. Daylight fishing permitted year-round; boating permitted April through September. From U.S. 82 turn north on Southmayd Road (located 7.5 miles west of Sherman) and follow signs to Visitor Center which features brochures and interpretive exhibit. Write Refuge Manager, Rt. 3, Box 123, Sherman 75090 (903/786-2826).

Near Nocona (Montague County) lie two unmarked historic sites. At the end of Farm Road 103, approximately 17 miles north of town, find the community of Spanish Fort, near where in 1759 Plains Indians defeated Spanish soldiers decisively, expelling them from the middle Red. Northwest of Nocona on an unmarked dirt road (sometimes four-wheel-drive only) lies Red River Station near where the famed Chisholm Trail crossed the Red River.

Another famous cattle crossing lies in Wilbarger County on the old Western Trail. At Vernon take U.S. 283 north about 12 miles to Ranch Road 2916 and turn right for three miles to the community of Doans. Find the restored 1881 adobe home of store owner Corwin Doan and a monument to cattle drivers who passed by. Each year Doan's descendants invite the public to one of the state's oldest annual events, the Doans Annual May Picnic. Begun in 1884, the picnic (bring your own or buy barbecue as part of a high school fund-raiser) features pioneer handicrafts and a walk to the river.

For dates and details contact Tip Igou, 1730 Main St., Vernon 76384 (817/552-9361 during the day).

For further information and a visitors guide to areas from Fannin County to Wilbarger County, contact the Red River Valley Tourism Assn., 3201 Texoma Parkway, Sherman 75090 (903/893-2161).

View the upper reaches of the Red at Palo Duro Canyon State Park. From Interstate 27 at Canyon take Texas 217 east 12 miles. From Amarillo, go south on Ranch Road 1541 to Texas 217 and turn east to the park. Facilities include tent and RV campsites (reservations advised), hiking trails, miniature railroad, horseback riding, restored dugout cabin, snack bar and souvenir shop, as well as the popular outdoor musical "Texas." Open 365 days per year, weather permitting. Visitor Center--featuring exhibits on history, geology, and wildlife--is open 11 to 7, Wednesday through Sunday from June 1 to August 31. Entry fees are \$5 per vehicle per day, in addition to camping fees. Contact Park Superintendent Rt. 2, Box 285, Canyon 79015 (806/488-2227 daily 8 to 5).

"Texas" makes its 30th appearance in Palo Duro's amphitheater June 7 through August 19 nightly except Sunday. The musical romance of Panhandle history begins at 8:30 p.m. with a pre-show barbecue dinner available 6 to 8 (additional charge). Tickets for "Texas" range from \$6 to \$14 adults, \$3 to \$14 children. Mail ticket orders to "Texas," Box 268, Canyon 79015. For reservations call 806/655-2181 from 8:30 to 4:30 weekdays. For tickets the day of the performance call 806/488-2220 after 6 p.m. Checks or money orders only; no credit cards accepted. Free park admission after 5:30 to show-goers. For bus service nightly from Amarillo or Canyon motels call 806/354-8533 by 6 p.m.

While few visible traces of the Red River Valley's early history remain, historical museums at many towns recall centuries of life along the river. Here is a listing of several museums:

Texarkana Historical Museum, 219 State Line Ave., Texarkana 75504 (903/793-4831).

Open Tuesday through Friday 10 to 4, Saturday noon to 3, and Sunday 1 to 3.

Admission is \$1 adults, 50 cents children; free on Sunday.

Fannin County Museum of History, One Main Street, Bonham 75418 (903/583-8042).

Open 10 to 4, April 1 through September 1, and noon to 4, September 2 to March 31.

Admission free.

Sam Rayburn Library and Museum, located on U.S. 82 in Bonham. Write Box 309, Bonham 75418 (903/583-2455). Open 9 to 5 Monday through Friday, 1 to 5 Saturday, and 2 to 5 Sunday. Free admission.

The Sam Rayburn House, located on U.S. 82 approximately 1.5 miles west of Sam Rayburn Library and Museum. Write Rt. 3, Box 308, Bonham 75418 (903/583-5558).

Open 10 to 5 Monday through Friday, 1 to 5 Saturday, and 2 to 5 Sunday. Groups by advanced reservation only. Free admission.

Red River Historical Museum, 301 S. Walnut, Sherman 75090 (903/893-7623). Open 10 to 4:30 (closed noon to 1) Tuesday through Friday and 2 to 5 Saturday. Closed Sunday and Monday. Admission charge.

Morton Museum of Cooke County, 210 S. Dixon, Gainesville 76240, (817/668-8900).

Open 10 to 5 Tuesday through Friday and noon to 5 on Saturday; closed Sunday and Monday. Free admission.

Wichita Falls Museum & Arts Center, #2 Eureka Circle, Wichita Falls 76308 (817/692-0923). Open 10 to 5 Tuesday through Saturday, 1 to 5 Sunday. Free admission.

Red River Valley Museum, 4600 College Dr., Box 2004, Vernon 76384, (817/553-1848) on the campus of Vernon Regional Junior College (on U.S. 70 just west of U.S. 287).

Open 1 to 5 Tuesday through Sunday. Free admission.

Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, 2401 Fourth Ave., Canyon 79016 (806/656-2244), on the campus of West Texas A&M University. Open 9 to 6 Monday through Saturday

and 1 to 6 Sunday from June through August, and 9 to 5 Monday through Saturday and 1 to 6 Sunday from September through May. Admission donation requested.

To read more about the Red River and its history look for *Jefferson and Southwestern Exploration* by Dan Flores (1984), *The Red River in Southwestern History* by Carl N. Tyson (1981), *Red River Dust* by Eugene Bowers (1968), and *Red River Valley* by Harry Sinclair Drago (1962).