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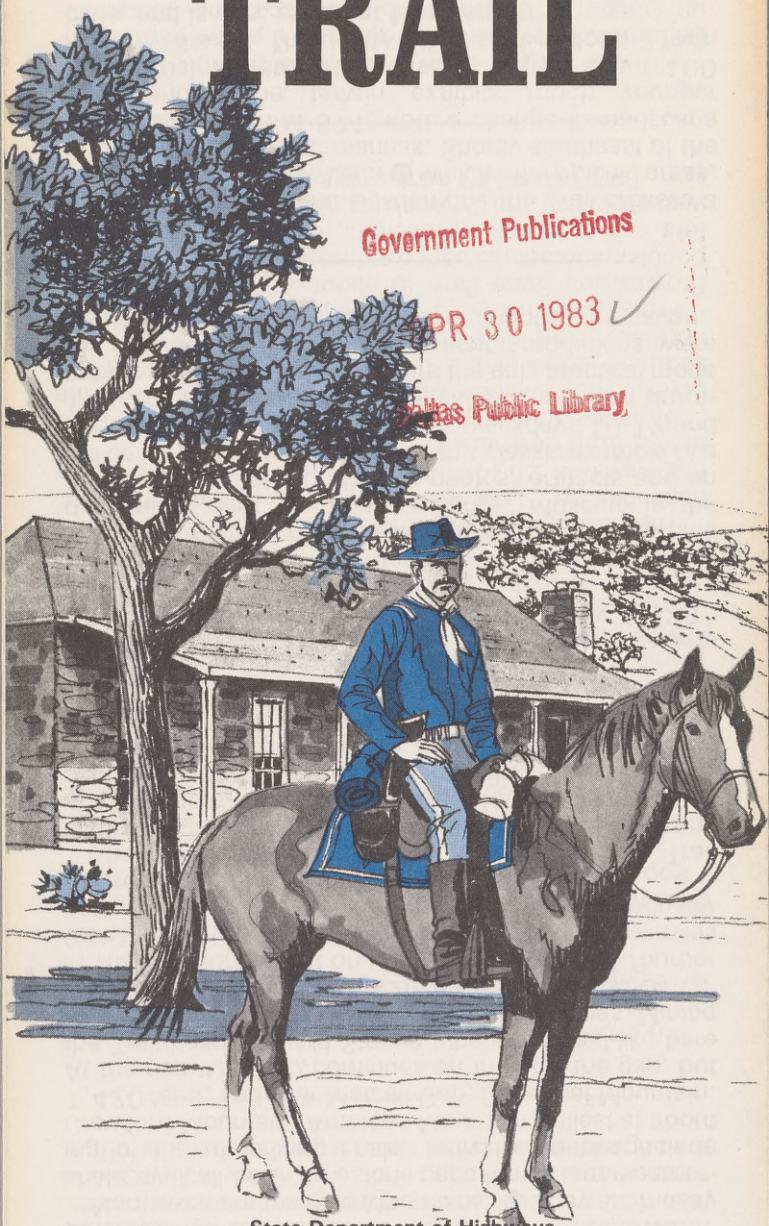
Ride the Texas

# FORTS TRAIL

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Satank was killed trying to escape, but Santana and Big Tree were returned to Fort Richardson for trial. The chiefs were convicted of murder and sentenced to hang, but a national outcry resulted in life terms instead. Later paroled, both violated the terms of their release. Santana was recaptured and sent to Huntsville prison where he killed himself. The elusive Big Tree stayed free, later helping to establish an Indian mission.

The Jacksboro trials firmly established the white man's law on the frontier — a turning point in Indian and government relations.

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## **MINERAL WELLS**

**Pop. 14,468**

## **Palo Pinto County**

**Alt. 925**

A well driller in the 1880s discovered mineral waters that made the town famous. Medicinal qualities were credited to the water, and the area became a popular spa. Minerals extracted from the water were marketed as Crazy Water Crystals, and the original Crazy Well is marked by a plaque at 109 S. Oak Ave. Details about the city and its history may be obtained at the chamber of commerce, just off US 180 east (beyond the Trail intersection) at 103 SE Ninth Ave.

Lake Mineral Wells State Park 16 three miles east of the city, is described in *Texas! Live the Legend*, as well as Lake Palo Pinto 18 25 miles southwest.

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Between Mineral Wells and Palo Pinto the Trail winds through beautiful vistas of steep, wooded hills. The Brazos River Valley 17 offers some fine landscape views.

In Palo Pinto, plan to see the massive, 1880 jail that's two blocks south of the courthouse. It's open as a museum only on weekend afternoons in summer, but the exterior is worth a drive-by look any time. On the grounds is a dog-run log cabin that served as a ranch bunkhouse for many years.

Palo Pinto (painted stick) is the seat of the same-named county, both of which derive from the Spanish



### TEXAS FORTS TRAIL

The frontier forts of Texas were spearheads of civilization into a primitive land. As settlers poured West — ever eager for new fields to break and sow, and broader pastures to produce beef — lines of forts were established to secure and protect the far-flung frontier.

The passions of that era were often volatile — frontiersmen on one side, tough and self-reliant, accustomed to taking what they wanted; Indians on the other side, savage and resentful of intruders in a land they had once roamed at will. Often in between was the frontier soldier. His hardships were many and his dangers very real.

Usually it was the soldier who built the fort — felled trees and shaped crude timbers, quarried stone and heaved both into place with pure muscle.

Then when it was finished — by the time frayed tents gave way to rude barracks — he looked around to find the nucleus of a town. Farmers were plowing new ground; stores and saloons had sprung up. "Civilization" had arrived, and the frontier had moved. But the frontier's edge was still bloody, and the soldier moved with it.

More than 30 U.S. military forts were established in Texas, not to mention earlier forts of the Republic, private bastions erected by pioneer families, and a host of much older presidios (forts) from the Spanish colonial period. The Texas Forts Trail leads to eight of the famous frontier forts of West Central Texas, and includes one of the ancient presidios.

For the Trail experience to be complete and rewarding, a copy of the state's primary travel guide, *Texas! Live the Legend*, should be used along with this folder. Cities visited by the Trail are described, along with their attractions. The book, and an Official Highway Travel Map, are available free from any Texas Tourist Bureau or by mail from the address at the end of this folder.

The starting point is Abilene, major metropolitan area on the Trail. The route description is then presented in a clockwise direction. However, the Trail is designed so that it may be started at any point along the way and driven in either direction by carefully consulting the accompanying map and descriptive copy. See map legend for information about special Trail signs and arrows.

**ABILENE**  
Pop. 98,315

**Taylor County**  
Alt. 1,738

One of West Texas' busiest cities, Abilene thrives from a combination of old and new economic, transportation and social factors. In a county named for three brothers who died at the Alamo, Abilene remains fundamentally Western in outlook and lifestyle. Traditional ranching operations spread a hundred miles in all directions. The city is a transportation hub, and travelers find an abundance of excellent accommodations. A college and two universities accent cultural aspects. And in recent decades, oil has become a primary economic boon.

During the city's centennial celebration in 1981, a demonstration oil-drilling rig was set up on the Taylor County Fairgrounds — just to illustrate the techniques of "making hole." They struck oil...not much, but enough for modest, profitable production.

In Abilene, visitors will find some of the best Western dining opportunities in the state. The city's features are highlighted in the state travel guide, and first-hand details are available at the Abilene Convention & Visitors Council, 325 Hickory St.

The first leg of the Forts Trail aims north, soon looping around a popular recreational feature, Lake Fort Phantom Hill. Crossing the dam, the Trail leads to an attractive lakeside park, with a free public boat ramp.

Just a few miles north are the ruins for which the lake was named, Fort Phantom Hill. The fort burned in 1854, and solitary chimneys are principal remainders. Only the stone commissary, guard house and powder magazine are intact. Privately owned, the ruins are open to the public with interpretive signs. Never a thriving post, duty here was hard. The post gardens were undependable, and pickles were included in the troops' rations to make up for the lack of vegetables. Historians say many desertions were due to monotony and loneliness. More details about the fort's three-year life are in a folder from the Abilene Visitors Council.

Leaving the Fort, the highway crosses gently rolling plains until near Albany the road loops down to the Cross Timbers region once an area of dense, dwarf woods, but now mostly cleared.

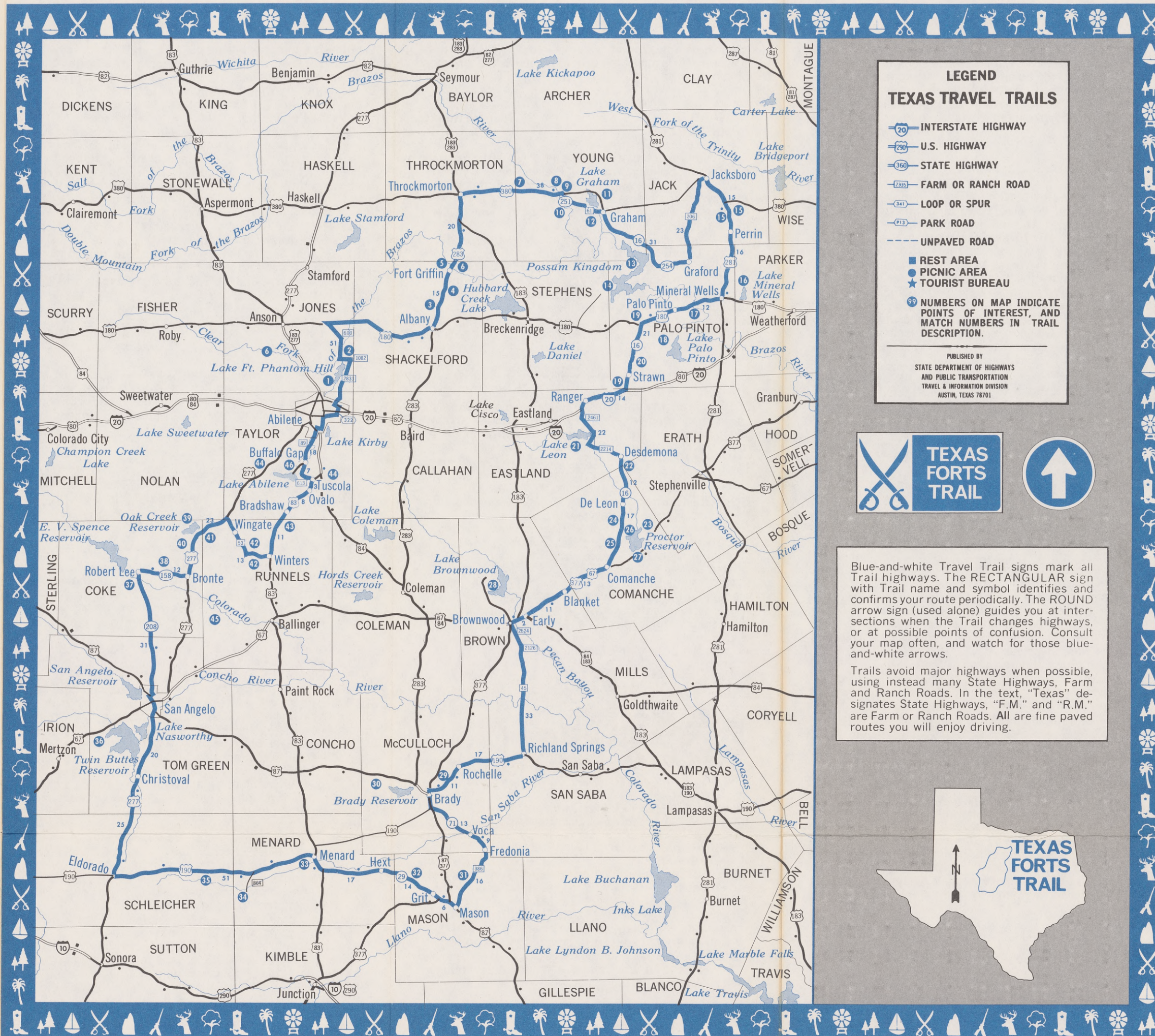
**ALBANY**  
Pop. 2,450

**Shackelford County**  
Alt. 1,429

A sign proclaims Albany "The Home of the Hereford," referring to early introduction of that popular breed in Texas here. Other breeds now share this ranching country, but fine herds of Herefords are still prominent.

Sixteen buildings around Albany's many-cupoled courthouse (1883) comprise a National Historic District. A museum in the 1878 jail is exceptional. Read about it and other Albany attractions in the state travel guide, and for additional information visit the chamber of commerce in the old MKT depot at Central and Main Sts.

North of Albany the Forts Trail spans gently rolling pasturelands past occasional oil activity. Most of the



#### LEGEND TEXAS TRAVEL TRAILS

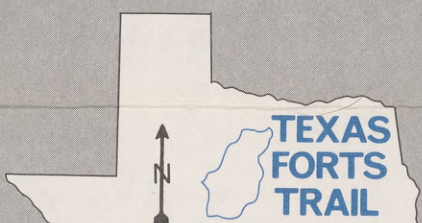
- INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
- U.S. HIGHWAY
- STATE HIGHWAY
- FARM OR RANCH ROAD
- LOOP OR SPUR
- PARK ROAD
- UNPAVED ROAD
- REST AREA
- PICNIC AREA
- TOURIST BUREAU
- NUMBERS ON MAP INDICATE POINTS OF INTEREST, AND MATCH NUMBERS IN TRAIL DESCRIPTION.

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AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701



Blue-and-white Travel Trail signs mark all Trail highways. The RECTANGULAR sign with Trail name and symbol identifies and confirms your route periodically. The ROUND arrow sign (used alone) guides you at intersections when the Trail changes highways, or at possible points of confusion. Consult your map often, and watch for those blue-and-white arrows.

Trails avoid major highways when possible, using instead many State Highways, Farm and Ranch Roads. In the text, "Texas" designates State Highways, "F.M." and "R.M." are Farm or Ranch Roads. All are fine paved routes you will enjoy driving.



**THROCKMORTON**  
Pop. 1,174

**Throckmorton County**  
Alt. 1,441

On the grounds of Throckmorton's 1891 courthouse is a marker about Camp Cooper, once located some 17 miles south. Founded in 1856 by Col. Albert Sidney Johnston, its most distinguished commander was Lt. Col. Robert E. Lee. A nearby Comanche Indian reservation was ostensibly under the fort's protection, but the hostility of local settlers caused removal of the Indians to Oklahoma in 1858.

A 106,900-acre division of the famed Swenson Ranches is in Throckmorton County. The ranches were founded by a prominent Swedish settler, Sven Magnus Swenson, who came to Texas in 1838.

Civil War years and reconstruction were blighted by defeat and bitterness, plus an Indian menace that had gained strength while the frontier had little protection. About 19 miles east of Throckmorton two markers recall bloody events of that period. Here at Elm Creek, Indians swooped down on a ranch complex in 1864, killed 12 persons and abducted six women and children. Another marker commemorates three youths killed by Indians in 1867.

Just beyond the Brazos River crossing, the Trail follows a short portion of Texas 251 to introduce the third fort on this route. However, travelers interested in historical architecture may wish to make a short side trip to Newcastle that once thrived as a coal-mine town. Prosperity faded when the mines closed, leaving interesting structures from a past era. The facade of the defunct First National Bank is of interest.

The site of Fort Belknap is now a county park. Several structures are restored, and historical markers offer a wealth of details. A museum in the large two-story stone building (once the post commissary) is open daily except Wednesday. Exhibits include not only military items, but also Indian artifacts, ranch and trail equipment, and a collection of early barbed wire types. Eighteen-inch lengths of rare barbed wire command im-

pressive prices among collectors. Established on June 24, 1851 near Newcastle, Fort Belknap was the northern anchor of a second line of forts that extended from the Red River to the Rio Grande. The first, earlier line, some 80 miles to the east, had been overrun by settlers constantly pressing west.

Selected in the green flush of spring, the first site proved inhospitable in later seasons. Two wells sunk to more than 60 feet encountered solid rock but produced no water. In November the post was moved to its present location near the river, but water was still a problem. The river water was said to be too salty to drink, and nearby springs provided only a few barrels a day.

The fort became a hub of roads and trails including the famous Southern Overland Mail Route (Butterfield Stage). Buildings included barracks for five companies of infantry, officers quarters, guardhouse, library, hospital, and forage house. Married enlisted men built small huts for themselves.

Among the commands at Fort Belknap were companies of the 2nd Cavalry, the most elite unit that ever saw field duty. From its officers, 17 generals served in the War Between the States, 12 with the Confederacy. Fort Belknap was abandoned in 1859, and was reactivated only briefly in 1867.

The Trail route between Fort Belknap and Graham skirts Lakes Graham and Eddleman. To the south are the scenic Belknap Mountains.

**GRAHAM**  
Pop. 9,055

**Young County**  
Alt. 1,045

The small, busy city offers pleasant amenities for Trail travelers. Visit the chamber of commerce, on the Trail route downtown at Third and N. Elm, for information about recreational opportunities on nearby lakes and streams, local historic sites and festival events.

At the west edge of Graham is Firemen's Memorial Park shaded by elm, oak and pecan trees. There are picnic tables, rest rooms, playgrounds and a fishing pond. Shawnee City Park is at the south edge of town.

Wooded hills and dramatic rock outcroppings are landscape features between Graham and Grafrod. Watch for a choice picnic area beside Rock Creek, a tributary of Possum Kingdom Lake. There, below the rocky bluff, is the opportunity for close-up views of native flora including juniper (locally called cedar) and mesquite trees. Note the mistletoe in upper branches of the mesquite.

Just east of the picnic area is a highway cut that's often pictured in geology textbooks. The rock layers are predominately limestone, formed over eons of time in shallow oceans. Of special interest is a sandstone layer near the middle of this 80-foot cut. Geologists call it a distal delta — or, the toe of a delta formed by a river some 300 million years ago. The structure here was a sort of ocean shelf, and the delta formed at what was then the edge of the sea.

Between Graham and Grafrod the Trail skirts Possum Kingdom Lake. Before the reservoir was built some "practical" individuals said the area was good for nothing but possums. Today the lake is a delightful recreation spot. Popular Possum Kingdom State Park on the lake's west shore, is reached by Park Road 33 from Caddo (off the Trail). See the state travel guide for a list of the park's visitor facilities.

The Trail bends at Grafrod (so named because it was a stopping point midway between Graham and Weatherford as early as 1855) then spans vast ranchlands between Grafrod and Jacksboro. An historical marker tells about the first settler in Palo Pinto County.

**JACKSBORO**  
Pop. 4000

**Jack County**  
Alt. 1,074

Unlike most frontier fort towns, Jacksboro preceded Fort Richardson by a dozen years; the 1855 settlement was known as Lost Creek. Sturdy 19th Century limestone buildings surround the courthouse square. The chamber of commerce, on the square where the Trail highway turns, can provide information on the city and Jack County.

Indians threatened the post-Civil War frontier, and new army posts were needed. Tentatively founded in 1866, Fort Richardson was permanently established in 1867 and saw more than a decade of distinguished frontier service. Now a State Historic Site administered by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, original buildings include the native fieldstone hospital, morgue, guardhouse, commissary, powder magazine, picket-type officers quarters, enlisted men's barracks (which houses the museum displays), and the bakery where an average of 600 loaves of bread were produced daily.



Adjacent parkland facilities include utility-equipped campsites, picnic areas, rest rooms and showers, nature hiking trails and fishing. Admission.

Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie, who later gained fame as leader of Mackenzie's Raiders, commanded the 4th Cavalry here in 1871. Gen. William T. Sherman, who had belittled the Indian threat on the frontier, arrived on an inspection tour in May of that year. A few hours later a wounded survivor stumbled into the fort to describe the massacre of an army wagon-master and six teamsters by Indians...along the same road Sherman had traveled that day. Sherman's opinion of frontier danger



# TRAIL FORTS Ride the Texas

changed abruptly, and he ordered Mackenzie in pursuit, but the trail was lost in a downpour. The Indians, led by Satank, Santana and Big Tree, returned to their reservation near Fort Sill where their boasting led to their arrest. Satank was killed trying to escape, but Santana and Big Tree were returned to Fort Richardson for trial. The chiefs were convicted of murder and sentenced to hang, but a national outcry resulted in life terms instead. Later paroled, both violated the terms of their release. Santana was recaptured and sent to Huntsville prison where he killed himself. The elusive Big Tree stayed free, later helping to establish an Indian mission.

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Lake Mineral Wells State Park three miles east of the city, is described in *Texas! Live the Legend*, as well as Lake Palo Pinto 25 miles southwest.

Between Mineral Wells and Palo Pinto the Trail winds through beautiful vistas of steep, wooded hills. The Brazos River Valley offers some fine landscape views. In Palo Pinto, plan to see the massive, 1880 jail that's two blocks south of the courthouse. It's open as a museum only on weekend afternoons in summer, but the exterior is worth a drive-by look any time. On the grounds is a dog-run log cabin that served as a ranch bunkhouse for many years.

Palo Pinto (painted stick) is the seat of the same-named county, both of which derive from the Spanish

name of a local creek. It's also the name of a colorful building stone found in the area. Examples of the stone outcroppings can be seen a few miles west of town.

Northwest are the Palo Mountains. They are mostly shale, typically with limestone caps that retard weathering of the underlying shale. Individual peaks include Crawford Mountain, Antelope Mountain (tallest at about 1,420 feet), and near Metcalf Gap, Sugarloaf Mountain. At the gap, US 180 continues on through the gap, but the Trail heads toward Strawn where pyramid-like bare hills to the east are tailing heaps of coal mines. Mining started here about 1860 and ceased in the 1930s.

The Trail turns west on I-20, but the town of Thurber (see the entry in *Texas! Live the Legend!*) is just six miles east. After years as a near-ghost town, the coal industry has returned, now with strip-mining activities.

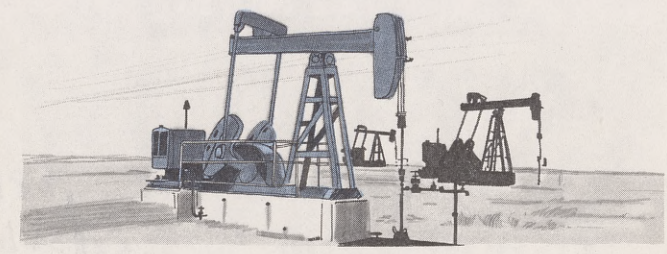
Thanks to modern highway engineering, the Trail climbs easily over the ridge of the Palo Pinto Mountains to Ranger. In years past, Ranger Hill caused many an overheated radiator, and for the railroad this was the toughest challenge between Fort Worth and El Paso, often requiring an additional engine.

**RANGER**  
Pop. 3,142

**Eastland County**  
Alt. 1,429

The story of Ranger's larger-than-life boom-town days is told in *Texas! Live the Legend!*, but for a more graphic description, visit the Roaring Ranger Museum in the 1923 railroad depot. Historic photos, artifacts and an old cable-tool rig tell the story of this classic example of a boom town. The museum is open weekdays 10-12 and 1-3. Across the street is a typical example of a drummers hotel. When railroads were the only practical mode for long-distance travel, such accommodations were standard fixtures by virtually every depot in the nation.

Between Ranger and Desdemona the Trail crosses a dam impounding Lake Leon which offers picnic areas, public boat ramps and marinas. Shortly southeast of the Trail crossing of FM 571, note a change in landscape appearance. The terrain exhibits much younger (cretaceous) limestone-based soils "only" about 100 million years old. The gently rolling surface doesn't form cliffs, and is rich, excellent farmland.



During its oil-boom days, Desdemona had the nickname of Hogtown, and old-timers still talk of "drilling in Hogtown." Just south of Desdemona an historical marker by the roadside tells of Fort Blair, a private family fort established on this dangerous frontier before the Civil War.

Crop-wise travelers will note fields of peanuts in this area of sandy soil particularly suited to the lowly legume. Comanche County leads the state's production with some 50,000 acres and a value of \$15.8 million. Peanuts add \$9.9 million to the farm income of adjacent Eastland County.

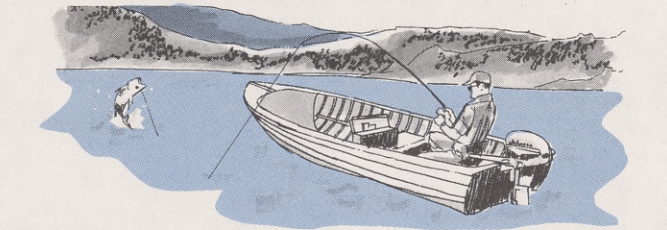
**DE LEON**  
Pop. 2,478

**Comanche County**  
Alt. 1,268

*Texas! Live the Legend* describes De Leon as a shipping point for agricultural products, and the railroad crossed by the Trail serves just that purpose. It's the Texas Central that connects Dublin, De Leon and Gorman, but locally it's called "The Peanut Line" because of immense quantities carried each harvest season. Another agricultural venture, just west of the Trail on Texas 6, is one of the nation's largest orchards — mostly peaches, but also apples and persimmons. The orchard's 65,000 trees would make one row 236 miles long. The fruit is available at roadside stands in season. Visit the chamber of commerce, 404 Navarro, for local and regional information.

The Trail between De Leon and Comanche passes near popular Proctor Reservoir. A Corps of Engineers project, the lake covers 4,600 acres and provides facilities for fishing, water sports and related activities.

Four public-use areas are at lakeside. Between the Sabanna River and Rush Creek is access to Promontory Park one of those recreational areas. Another, Copparras Creek Park (also reservoir headquarters), is accessible off the Trail on FM 2861.



**COMANCHE**  
Pop. 4,075

**Comanche County**  
Alt. 1,358

For early settlers, Comanche's name was all too appropriate. Established in 1858, the area suffered Indian raids for 15 years. Today Comanche is a trade center for an agricultural area. The county annually ranks third or fourth in the state in dairying, and in peanut production. It's the Spanish peanut that's grown here; yield in 1981 was more than 1,500 pounds per acre.

The chamber of commerce, on the Trail highway at the south side of the square, offers information about more than 50 historical markers in the county, an historical museum, other area attractions and recreational sites. The Fleming Oak, described in *Texas! Live the Legend!* is across the street from the chamber office.

An excellent four-lane highway speeds Trail travelers between Comanche and Brownwood. Most of the broad landscape is devoted to hay and pasturelands.

**BROWNWOOD**  
Pop. 19,203

**Brown County**  
Alt. 1,342

Watch for a pleasant picnic area beside Pecan Bayou at the Brownwood/Early city limits; there an historical marker cites details about Brown County. The city's chamber of commerce is at 521 E. Baker across from the coliseum where a variety of events are regularly scheduled. Check for information about lodging, dining (some of the most famous barbecue in Texas), and visitor sites like the 1902 stone Gothic jail with its castle-like tower; St. John's Church, a Tudor Gothic structure dating from 1892, and historical markers on the courthouse grounds.

The Douglas MacArthur Academy of Freedom, described in state travel guide, is beside the Trail highway (FM 2524/Austin Ave.) at Coggin Ave. a few blocks from downtown.

Brownwood's eight city parks cover almost 300 acres. They include beautiful Festival Park near the southern edge of the city, and Riverside Park at the northeast edge on Pecan Bayou.

From Brownwood a side trip is available to Lake Brownwood State Park about 20 miles north. The popular recreational park overlooks the large lake and offers cabins, screened shelters, campsites, rest rooms with showers, and RV hookups. Excellent fishing; admission. Take Texas 279 north from US 67 to Park Road 15.

A major crop in Brown County is pecans. The U.S. Department of Agriculture operates a pecan experimental station in Brownwood, and occasional pecan orchards will be seen along Trail routes. Fall travelers may see odd-looking orchard equipment — tractors with long metal booms that terminate in a crescent-shaped arm — a pecan tree shaker. The boom is placed against a branch, vibrating power is applied, and down comes a shower of nuts!

Also beside highways travelers may note metal triangles attached to telephone cables. High winds in this country are not infrequent, and the devices are designed to maintain even pressure on the cables to prevent their whipping. Similar treatment will be seen later near Fort McKavett.

South of Brownwood much of the pastureland is edged by mesquite trees along fences. Mesquites thrive in a variety of climates, and their size is determined by the amount of rainfall. These middle-sized mesquites reflect an annual rainfall of about 27 1/2 inches. Round, green balls of mistletoe (a parasite) will be seen in both mesquite and oak trees.

In Richland Springs, at the highway intersection, an historical marker describes John Duncan's private fort. The marker's few lines provide considerable insight into the perils of frontier life.

Six miles east of Brady another marker recalls the time, not so long ago, when this area was on the fringe of civilization. It cites a violent incident on Onion Creek in 1866.

**BRADY**  
Pop. 5,969

**McCulloch County**  
Alt. 1,670

The town, near the geographical center of Texas, was situated on a military road between Forts Mason and Griffin, and on the old Dodge Cattle Trail. Historical markers are on the courthouse grounds, and a block west of the impressive courthouse is the Heart of Texas Museum in a red brick jail (c. 1910). The handsome structure is typical of many such jails built early in this century in a style called Romanesque Revival.

The Brady Chamber of Commerce, a block south of the courthouse on the east side of the Trail highway at 101 E. First, offers details about area attractions and historical points including the site of Texas-Ranger Camp San Saba, 11 miles south off US 87/377. Camp San Saba was established in 1862 as a ranger station for the Frontier Regiment, created by the Texas Legislature to replace federal troops that had been withdrawn due to the Civil War. The regiment formed a contracted defense line of 18 such posts for frontier protection from hostile Indians. Thinly manned, they were only minimally effective as the Civil War drained more and more manpower from Texas. Fort Belknap, previously visited on the Trail, served as a Frontier Regiment post during this period.

Richards Park, in town beside Brady Creek, offers picnics, pavilions, playground and rest rooms. Year-round fishing is good on nearby Brady Reservoir and Brady Creek.

Between Brady and Mason the Trail crosses the San Saba River. At the bridge a marker tells of an important feature in frontier times — a waterwheel mill that provided power in a time when most power was provided by man or animal. Camp San Saba (mentioned above) was about three miles upriver from this crossing.

South of Fredonia, occasional bald domes of rock mark the Llano Uplift mineral region. The domes are pink granite, and though little shows, many are the tops of buried mountains, the result of ancient igneous intrusions thrust to the surface from 35 to 40 miles deep.

They are a feature of the Llano Basin, so-called because higher edges of the Edwards Plateau surround it. The Llano Basin is relatively small — only about 1.5 million acres including Mason, Edwards and Gillespie Counties.

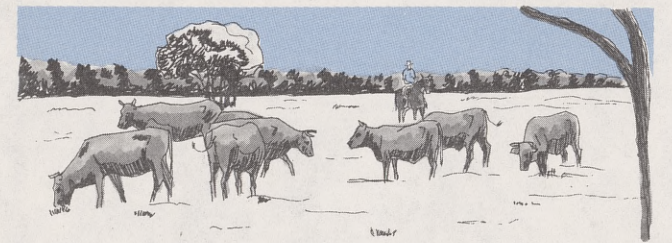
During World War II, the Defense Department scoured the country to compile a list of strategic mineral reserves. Mason County had many — from chromium to iron to zinc. They're still here, but none are commercially feasible for development at current prices.

**MASON**  
Pop. 2,153

**Mason County**  
Alt. 1,550

The history of Mason, and of frontier Fort Mason around which the city grew, is summarized in *Texas! Live the Legend!* The chamber of commerce, on the Trail highway on the north side of the square, can provide information and directions to the Fort Mason site, the elegant Seaguest Home, Mason County Museum, and, for rockhounds, the Seaguest Ranch where a modest charge is made for rock hunting and camping.

On the courthouse square are historical markers about Fort Mason and about the nearby site of Confederate Camp Llano. Other markers are in picnic areas in the west part of town, and just beyond the Texas 29/US 87 intersection.



The museum has details about the Mason County War which was, in fact, an ethnic confrontation. Both German and Anglo-American settlers came here. The land-hungry Europeans bought property and fenced it precisely with rock walls. The open-range-minded Anglos put their money in livestock, and saw fences as restricting the area available for their cattle. Following the lynching of five men charged with rustling, retaliation erupted, and a dozen more persons were murdered in less than a year. Hatreds were so savage that several victims were also scalped.

It is impossible here to detail Fort Mason's dramatic and colorful history, but one incident may give insight into the fort's mission. It began in July 1857 when 24 troopers rode out under the command of Lt. John Bell Hood in search of a reported Comanche war party.

The patrol was not supposed to be difficult: Three days out to scout the suspected war party, perhaps some action, and then back to the fort. After 12 days of blazing July weather, the persistent Hood finally located a fresh trail of 15 or 20 Indian horses headed south, and took up pursuit. Food rations were exhausted and far-spaced water holes were often dry. Then after 16 days on the trail, tracks showed that the original band of Indians had been joined by a larger group.

Despite the apparent odds of at least 50 Indians to 25 cavalrymen, Hood pressed on before the Indians could cross into Mexico. Finally a small group of Indians appeared, waving a white flag — the frontier signal meaning "friends."



Well in the lead, Hood warily approached the "friendly" group. When 20 paces away, the Indians threw down the white flag, seized weapons and attacked as scores of hidden warriors rose from concealment around the troops and fired a fusillade of arrows and rifle shots.

Hood, thoughtfully armed with a double-barreled shotgun, promptly dispatched his first two attackers, and then drew his two Navy Colt six-shooters. The troopers also relied on six-shooters after firing their single-shot carbines — then fought with sabers because there was no time to reload. The Indians set fire to the tinder-dry grass, then scattered in all directions. During the fray an arrow pierced Hood's left hand. He broke off the head, withdrew the shaft and wrapped a handkerchief around the wound while still mounted and still fighting.

It was later learned that nearly 100 Comanche and Lipan-Apache Indians were in the war party. They lost 19 killed including two minor chiefs, and twice as many wounded. Two troopers were killed and five wounded, including Hood.

After burying their dead they rode to Fort Clark where Hood filed his report, and then northeast to Fort Mason. The "routine" patrol spanned five weeks during which the troopers had ridden more than 500 miles.

The flamboyant Hood later received the most rapid series of promotions of any man during the Civil War, North or South, attaining the rank of full general in the Confederate Army in 1864.

Among distinguished personnel who served at Fort Mason was a quiet, dignified lieutenant colonel named Robert E. Lee. Fort Mason was Lee's last command in the U.S. Army. From here Lee was summoned to Washington where he was offered, and refused, command of the Federal army being prepared for the Civil War.

Between Mason and Menard Travelers will note small ground-clump types of yucca usually *Yucca arkansana*. From the clump of green, spiky leaves the plants thrust up straight, thin stems in early summer, topped by masses of beautiful white blossoms.

An historical marker 10 miles east of Menard tells about events at the Pegleg Crossing of the San Saba River, and a marker on US 83 just south of Menard in a picnic area notes this pass between the hills, "Puerto de Baluartes" (Haven of the Strong Points) was a landmark on old Spanish trails.

**MENARD**  
Pop. 1,697

**Menard County**  
Alt. 1,960

The story of the city's establishment in 1858 near the ruins of the Spanish fort, Real Presidio de San Saba, is told in *Texas! Live the Legend!*, along with the story of the fort. For more details on Menard, visit the chamber of commerce office, three blocks east of the Trail highway in the new jail building on Tipton St.

An historical marker downtown tells about an irrigation system dating from 1874; another on the courthouse grounds gives details about Fort McKavett (soon a feature of the Forts Trail). A city park alongside the San Saba River by the Trail offers picnic tables shaded by towering pecan trees. Note the old-fashioned Country Store just north of the Trail on US 83 north. Browsers find local honey, home-canned fruits and vegetables, rag dolls and crafts.

The entrance to the ruins of Real Presidio de San Saba is at the western edge of Menard, and a marker on the highway gives brief details. As mentioned above, the state travel guide tells the story. The presidio's history (100 years before the first Anglo-American settlement in the area) provides greater dimension to the problems faced by all newcomers into lands the Indians called their own. Spanish missionaries and soldiers met the same fierce hostility as did later cavalrymen and settlers.

Seventeen miles west of Menard, a short side trip on FM 864 leads south to Fort McKavett. The drive is through rolling hills, woodlands, and farms often irrigated from the San Saba River.

Now administered by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, the extensive ruins of Fort McKavett are being preserved and restored. On display at park headquarters is a model of the fort as it was about 1880. At that time it was busy military post with hundreds of men engaged in protection of the frontier.



Fort McKavett is listed in *Texas! Live the Legend!*, and more details are available in literature at the park. At its peak, the fort had some 40 buildings. Today 12 have been restored, and 18 others are in various stages of ruin. Restored buildings include the schoolhouse, officers quarters, post headquarters, bakery, officer-of-the-day quarters, barracks, hospital and "dead house." This is a prime historic site to explore.

Between Fort McKavett and El Dorado, the area's rocky fields are suitable only for sheep, goats and deer. Woven-wire fences attest to sheep and goat ranching. Highway cuts reveal almost solid rock, thinly overlaid with soil. Even so, trees are able to find enough nourishment to grow to fairly large sizes.

**ELDORADO**  
Pop. 2,061

**Schleicher County**  
Alt. 2,410

The seat of Schleicher County, Eldorado was established in 1895. These are the highlands of the Edwards Plateau, dissected into hills and valleys by the Devils, South Concho and San Saba Rivers. The often rugged terrain is prime habitat for white-tailed deer that attract hunters in season. Eighty percent of the county's agricultural income is from sheep, wool, goats, mohair and cattle. Eldorado Woolens (see *Texas! Live the Legend!*) is in town just east of US 277 south. Colorful, luxurious products are blankets, drapery and upholstery material, sportswear and robes.



If the Schleicher County Museum, on US 190 just east of US 277, appears closed, read the sign on the door. A friend of the museum works nearby, and will be pleased to show it.

Between Eldorado and Christoval, historical markers tell of a former town, an early settler and a stagecoach stand. Near Christoval there's a tree-shaded picnic area, and just north is the Christoval Park. In summer it offers rental boats, swimming and concessions. The ship-shaped, two-story rock building was built in the early 1940s as an elegant restaurant, but didn't survive. Several subsequent attempts were made to use the "ship" — recently as a game room for park visitors.

North of Christoval, note several areas where cedar and mesquite trees have been poisoned to eliminate competition for moisture needed by native grasses. Note the smaller size of mesquites here compared to those near Brownwood. Rainfall here is about 18 inches a year. The trees are recent, unwanted invaders in the former productive grasslands.

Geologically, the Trail is moving into a formation of Permian Age (230 million years old) rocks, mostly sandstone and gypsum. The formation extends from here northeast through Bronte to Abilene. The rocks were formed in an environment much like today's North Africa when the area was at about sea level. Continental sediments washed in regularly, at times in massive quantities during floods. This era saw the beginning of animal life on Earth, but virtually no fossils can be found.

Curiously, when these surface formations were deeply buried, they probably contained a huge oil pool. The surface sandstone shows evidence of having trapped oil, but as it became exposed, the oil evaporated or was consumed by bacteria. This is what an oil field of today would look like if it were lifted to the surface of the earth.

Near San Angelo, two prominent, similar-sized hills to the west give the name to Twin Buttes Reservoir. Nearby is Lake Nasworthy, and, northwest of the city, O.C. Fisher Lake. All offer extensive water sports opportunities.

Much of the farmland here is irrigated from Twin Buttes Reservoir, and the Trail crosses the main irrigation canal at Loop 306.

**SAN ANGELO**  
Pop. 73,240

**Tom Green County**  
Alt. 1,847

Review San Angelo's attractions in *Texas! Live the Legend!*, and for first-hand information about city events, accommodations and dining, visit the chamber of commerce in the Convention Center at 500 Rio Concho Dr.



Prominent to this Trail's title are the extensive remains of Fort Concho centered along Burgess St. and Avenues C and D. Stop first at the Fort Concho Museum to see a diorama of the post as it appeared in the previous century, as well as other displays of guns, wildlife, pioneer relics and old vehicles.

A colorful story regards a foray from Fort Concho led by a man whose name crops up frequently in the chronicle of Texas frontier forts: Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie. In 1871 he was ordered to mount a strong force of the 4th Cavalry and proceed to Fort Clark at Brackettville near the Mexican border. A band of Kickapoo and Lipan had been marauding in the area. Mackenzie's orders: "Take whatever action your own judgment deems fitting."

Seminole scouts employed by the army reported that the raiders' headquarters lay 80 miles into Mexico. Mackenzie judged that "fitting action" would be a quick thrust to destroy the home base, even though it meant invasion of a foreign country and flagrant violation of international treaties.

Leaving Fort Clark before dawn, Mackenzie's 400 cavalrymen splashed across the Rio Grande at daybreak and rode day-long through the parched country. When supply wagons couldn't keep up, the relentless colonel ordered troopers to stuff their blouses with cartridges and biscuits, and abandon the wagons.

There was no rest even at nightfall, for the column kept moving. At dawn, after more than 24 hours in the saddle, scouts reported three Kickapoo and Lipan villages just ahead. In classic cavalry tradition the troopers formed two columns and galloped in an all-out charge.

Complete surprise was achieved, and soon all three villages were in flames. The Indians suffered heavy casualties and the Lipan chief, Castillitos, was captured. Mackenzie did not pause. When destruction was complete, the column immediately turned north for an 80-mile race back to the United States. When the Rio Grande was recrossed, the troopers had been in the saddle more than 60 hours.

Only then did Mackenzie advise his officers that they had invaded Mexico only on his own initiative. Several were shocked and one captain demanded to know what would have happened had he refused to go. Mackenzie replied levelly, "I would have had you shot."

When Mackenzie moved to other frontier posts, Col. B.H. Grierson took command at Fort Concho. Other battles were fought and other hardships were endured, but the might of the frontier soldier finally prevailed. New settlers arrived, and with earlier pioneers they laid the foundations for a peaceful, civilized society.

In a sentimental ceremony, the colors were struck and a last column of troops and supplies clattered out of Fort Concho on Mar. 27, 1889, as the regimental band played "The Girl I Left Behind Me."

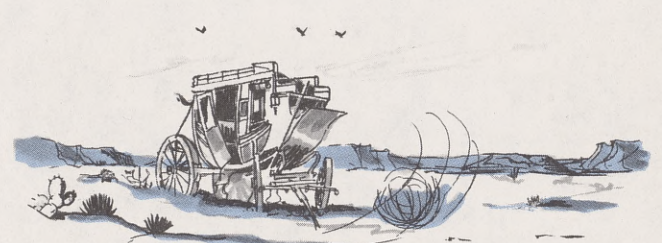
North of San Angelo, low hills squeeze in from both sides and farmlands are replaced by rangeland. In Coke County, long, flat-topped mesas appear to the north features of erosion on a gigantic scale. The mesas' flat surfaces show where all the land once stood. Huge gaps in between reveal the appetite of ancient rivers.

A few blocks off the Trail in Robert Lee, a county park offers a pause at shaded picnic tables, with a swimming pool and golf course nearby. An historical marker in the cemetery east of town notes that 34 CSA veterans are buried here.

Between Robert Lee and Bronte, the Kickapoo Mountains are to the north. Among obvious shapes are Hayrick Mountain and Nipple Peak.

In Bronte, a marker where the Trail turns cites historical details about the town. A block south of that intersection is access to Knierim County Park that offers picnicking, tennis, golf and overnight camping.

Just north of the "Y" intersection of Texas 70/US 277 is Oak Creek Reservoir. Off the Trail, Texas 70 three miles north leads to lakeside camps, fishing docks and boat ramps. At the "Y" a marker details the history of the Southern Overland Mail (Butterfield Stage)



whose route crossed here.

Within two miles is another historical marker a small pink granite slab to the south on a bank above the highway cut, honoring Fort Chadbourn. The well-maintained Fort Chadbourn cemetery is nearby.

Time and weather have taken their toll at the cemetery, and many inscriptions on soft sandstone markers are illegible. Some still readable date back to the 1870s, and some poignant stories are told by the brief lines. The ruins of nearby Fort Chadbourn are on private property, not accessible to the public.

Fort Chadbourn's history was relatively brief, though it served as an important contact and parley point with Indians. Elements of the 8th Infantry established the fort in 1852. Early picket structures were erected, but stone was eventually quarried for a number of substantial buildings. The fort was established on Oak Creek, but the creek proved unreliable and water was a serious problem. Troops left in 1859, and with the outbreak of the Civil War two years later, remaining property was surrendered to CSA forces. The fort was recaptured from 1865 to 1867, but the water shortage forced abandonment and transfer to new Fort Concho in San Angelo.

On FM 53, rich farmlands appear after miles of brushy pasture, and the Trail slices through two oil fields providing close views of pump jacks.

In the north part of Winters a small, pleasant park provides picnicking and camping sites. For details about the city visit the chamber of commerce, 118 W. Dale.

North of Winters the huge mesa to the northeast is called Moro Mountain. Its flat top is 2,350 feet high.

Farther north the hills of the Callahan Divide break the horizon. The chain of hills and buttes forms a barrier between the watersheds of the Colorado River and the Clear Fork of the Brazos River. Some of the notches in the divide have been identified as streambeds of prehistoric rivers that flowed here before the land weathered away.

West of Tuscola at a sharp turn off FM 613 a sign points to Abilene State Park. A better access road, however, is shortly available at Buffalo Gap via FM 89. The park covers 500 acres along Cedar Creek that has been impounded to form Lake Abilene. Visitor facilities are described in the state travel guide.

**BUFFALO GAP**  
Pop. 387

**Taylor County**  
Alt. 1,926

The community is at a natural gap in the Callahan Divide where well-worn buffalo trails were visible when settlers first arrived. During the great cattle trails era, the Dodge or Western Trail passed through here and resulted in establishment of the community. Oliver Loving and Charles Goodnight drove their herds through this pass, as did other early cattle barons.



Today's travelers will find several restaurants and art-souvenir-specialty shops. Of special interest is Buffalo Gap Historic Village. This complex of nine rustic, historic structures is described in *Texas! Live the Legend!*

North of Buffalo Gap the highway leaves the jumbled hills of the Callahan Divide and aims toward Abilene where the Trail begins. Those who have traveled the entire route can speak with authority about much of this fascinating region of Texas, and especially the colorful history of frontier forts. But one word of caution: The vastness of Texas dwarfs even this broad region, and the frontier forts were only a page in the volume of Texas history. There are other eras and other regions to discover before the whole can be measured...green forests sweeping to infinity, mile-high mountain ranges, a palm-edged tropical valley. That too is Texas, and listed below are Trails to guide you throughout every part. Such is the purpose of the Texas Trails...planned pleasure driving to make the most of every mile, introducing Texas in regional portions. When travel efficiency is in everyone's best interest, the Texas Trails are the way to go!

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