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# INDEPENDENCE TRAIL



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West of Old Ocean the Trail enters Matagorda County, one of the leading rice producers in Texas. Some of Texas' earliest fortunes were based on rice production.

**BAY CITY**  
**Pop. 17,837**

**Matagorda County**  
**Alt. 55**

Review Bay City's summary in the state travel guide, and plan a visit to the Matagorda County Museum. The town hosts winter RV visitors from northern climes, and fishermen throughout the year who ply the waters of the Colorado River down to its confluence with Matagorda Bay on the coast. Details about visitor sites and local festival events are available at the chamber of commerce, 2420 7th St. (Texas 35).

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Matagorda 9 off the Trail south of Bay City via Texas 60, is a quiet bayside village popular with anglers. Fishing boats and guides are available for hire, and there's 20 miles of surf fishing and primitive camping along the coastline there.

A mile and a half west of the Texas 60/FM 521 intersection below Wadsworth, just north of the Trail, is the historic St. Francis Church. 10 A marker gives details.

Between Bay City and Palacios the Trail crosses an area typical of the Texas coastal plain. More than three-quarters of this county is made up of similar treeless prairie, and ranching is a major industry.

The Trail crosses the Colorado River and several small streams, including Tres Palacios River which soon becomes Tres Palacios Bay. The name, supposedly given by a group of shipwrecked Spaniards, means "three palaces."

**PALACIOS**  
**Pop. 4,667**

**Matagorda County**  
**Alt. 17**

Entering Palacios from the north, continue on Texas BR 35 to First St. and the beach area. For an historic feature, follow the beach-front road west four blocks to the Luther Hotel. Built in 1903, it served as a social and cultural center during the area's development by land companies. Said to have had the longest front porch in Texas (since razed) in its heyday the hotel's resident orchestra played for guests at mealtimes and gave public concerts on Sunday afternoons. The hotel still accepts guests, and is virtually booked solid with winter visitors from Dec. to Mar. Across from the hotel are free fishing piers.

The town is another very popular coastal spot for fishermen. Marinas provide bait, tackle and boat service; bay and surf fishing are almost always productive. Visit the chamber of commerce, 205 4th St. in the City Hall building, for details.



