R433i Ride the Texas
INDEPENDENCE
TRAIL



State Department of Highways and Public Transportation 118210 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).

Matagorda • 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. 

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, if 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.



# **TEXAS INDEPENDENCE TRAIL**

In the saga of Texas history, no period is so distinctive, so accented by epic events, as the interval of Texas' struggle for independence and its formative years as a sovereign republic. Climactic dates from that era are still celebrated as holidays by Texans. The period's heroes are remembered in the names of cities and towns, streets, plazas and public buildings. The Lone Star Flag, inherited from the republic, flies prominently throughout the state.

Compared to the scope of 20th Century distances and populations, those early patriots who cast their lot for Texas freedom were small groups, and their stage of action was a relatively limited area. Most of that area is surveyed by the Texas Independence Trail.

But the Trail is far more than a history route. Although the sites of strife — landscapes that witnessed triumph and tragedy — appear repeatedly along Trail miles, they are only historical threads that link a modern odyssey of discovery through one of the state's most rewarding regions for travelers. Trail drivers will discover coastal playgrounds along the blue Gulf of Mexico, abundant visitor attractions in Texas' largest city, some genuine ghost towns, the headquarters for America's spacemen, towns where the accents of European settlers are still prominent, a rare botanical park, and much, much more.

Due to this folder's space limitation, descriptions are mainly devoted to the driving route. Before setting out, Trail drivers should obtain a free copy of the state's primary travel guide, the 176-page *Texas! Live the Legend*, which provides supplementary details about points of interest in many of the cities and towns along the route. An Official Highway Travel Map will also be useful. Both may be obtained by mail from the departmental address at the end of this folder, or from any Texas Tourist Bureau.

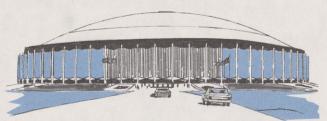
For even more information about local accommodations, campgrounds and tourist activities, visit chambers of commerce and tourist offices listed in this folder.

The Trail's starting point is the city of Houston, major metropolitan area on the route. The Trail description is then presented in a clockwise direction. However, the Trail may be started at any point and driven in either direction by carefully consulting the folder map and descriptive text. See the map legend for information about special Trail signs and arrows on the highway.

## HOUSTON Pop. 1,594,086

Harris County Alt. 55

The scope of Houston's attractions for visitors is so broad that this entire folder couldn't do it justice. Review Houston's highlights in the state travel guide — the fabulous Astroworld and Astrodome, the superb Museum of Fine Arts, the busy Port of Houston, and Hermann Park's elaborate zoo — but remember that those listings are only highlights. For real details that every visitor should know, and an abundance of free brochures, maps, and visitor tips, be sure to stop at the city's Visitor Information Center, 3300 Main St. It's open Mon. — Fri., and Sat. until 3 p.m. There's free parking and even drive-up window service.



To enrich your Trail adventure, plan plenty of time to explore Houston's abundant visitor amenities!

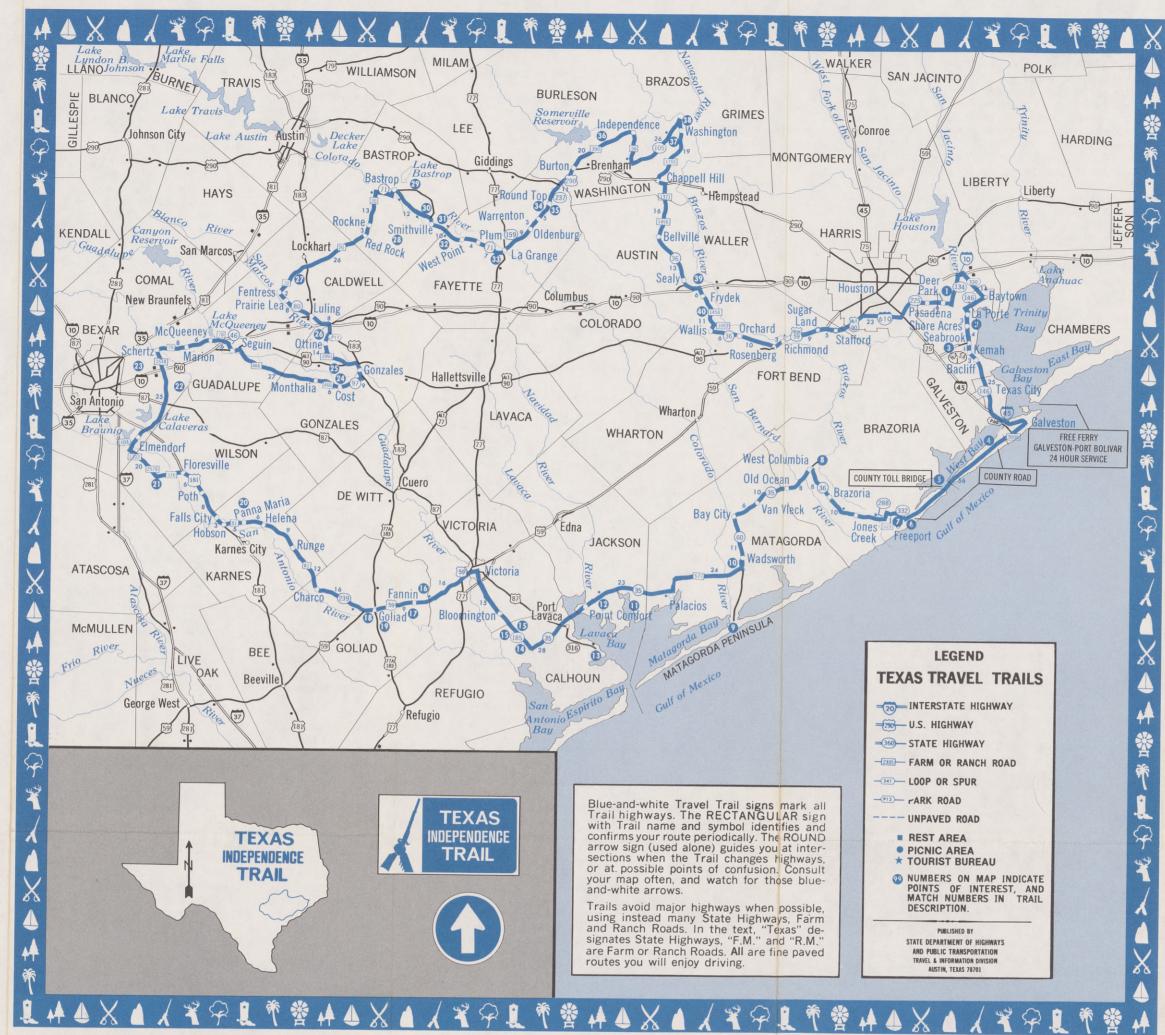
The series of historical events being traced by the Texas Independence Trail climaxed on a flat, coastal prairie east of Houston on April 21, 1836. The Trail's first segment aims toward that site, etched in history as the San Jacinto Battleground.

Since the previous year when open hostilities had flared between Mexican authorities and Anglo-American settlers in Texas, the Texans had suffered a series of military disasters. Picture the situation. Much of Texas was uninhabited. Anglo-American settlers were grouped in small pockets of frontier, log-cabin settlements. There were no communications except by horseback, only the framework of a new, provisional government, no standing army.

ing army.

Mexico, on the other hand, had been an established entity for nearly three centuries, and had won its own independence from Spain 15 years earlier. Santa Anna, Mexico's dictator who styled himself the ''Napoleon of the West,'' gathered an army of thousands and marched north to crush the rebellious Texans.

Sam Houston desperately tried to forge a fighting force from among frontiersmen who by nature resisted regimentation and by geography were scattered throughout the wilderness that was Texas. After wiping out the Alamo defenders in San Antonio, Santa Anna marched eastward, aiming for the village of Harrisburg (now Houston) where the Texas provisional government was located. Sam Houston retreated before the Mexican army, slowly gathering his forces.



Santa Anna dispatched elements of his army here and there, mostly finding abandoned settlements. He took Harrisburg, burned the empty village, and moved in pursuit of the Texans who had fled to Galveston Island.

Pausing on the coastal plain at San Jacinto, Santa Anna probably believed victory was within his grasp. The Texans were elusive, but had offered no serious resistance since the Alamo. Sam Houston chose the siesta hour of 3:30 p.m. to strike. The outnumbered Texans, who had retreated across 200 miles, burst from the plain's bordering woodlands, howling for retribution. History records that the battle lasted only 18 minutes.

It was a complete rout of Mexican forces.

Today a 570-foot monument soars above the grounds of San Jacinto Battleground State Park that's also the home of the Battleship *Texas*. Don't miss these outstanding visitor sites on the Texas Independence Trail, and refer to the park's summary under Houston in *Texas! Live the Legend*.

From the state park, the Trail loops into Baytown via the historic Lynchburg ferry. There's been a ferry here since 1822. The fishy waters where the San Jacinto River enters Galveston Bay attract hosts of anglers and crabbers intent on their hand lines.

## BAYTOWN Pop. 56,923

Harris County Alt. 26

The industrial city is prominently oriented to oil and petrochemicals with dozens of plants including Exxon, Sinclair, Gulf, Celanese, Du Pont, and United Rubber.

Visitors find abundant fishing outfitters and guides.

Visitors find abundant fishing outfitters and guides. Goose and duck hunters converge on the area's bays and rice fields during the fall hunting season. For details about visitor sites and accommodations, visit the Baytown Chamber of Commerce at 2 W. Texas Ave.

Enormous ground water useage from the industrial growth of the Houston metro region has resulted in the phenomenon of subsidence, especially in the Baytown area where land levels have sunk as much as nine feet. If the problem continues, geologists and hydrologists are concerned that some areas may take on aspects similar to subsidence locales like Venice, Italy.

Between Baytown and La Porte, the Trail route (Texas 146) leads under the busy Houston Ship Channel via the only tunnel on the Texas highway system.

## LA PORTE Pop. 14,062

Harris County Alt. 28

La Porte's most famous attraction, Sylvan Beach ② is described in *Texas! Live the Legend*, and a sign at West J St. points the way to this county park. The tall smokestake there is all that remains of former St. Mary's Seminary that was razed after being severly damaged in a storm. The chamber of commerce, 731 S. Broadway, can give directions to Barber's Cut where ocean-going vessels on their way to and from the Port of Houston pass close by, and to Bay Ridge Road with its turn-of-the-century mansions including the duplicate of the White House built by Ross Sterling, former Texas governor and founder of Humble Oil Co. (now Exxon).

South of La Porte are the towns of Seabrook, Kemah and Bacliff, once quiet bayside villages, now busy recreational hubs. Here's where America's astronauts dock their pleasure craft, along with those of fellow engineers, scientists and space-age technicians, because the NASA Manned Spacecraft Center 3 is just four miles west on NASA Road 1.



No other spot in the world offers such a complete introduction to space travel. See the latest on space shuttle flights, massive rockets that hurled spacemen to the moon, exhibits of incredible, furturistic technology...and it's free. Review the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center listing under Houston in the state travel guide, and don't miss a personal visit to this highlight on the Texas Independence Trail!

Between Kemah and Texas City, in front of a huge generating plant of Houston Lighting and Power Company, is a small man-made hill. At its summit a large terrazzo map shows features of the widespreading coastal plain.

## TEXAS CITY Pop. 41,403

Galveston County Alt. 12

Petroleum with its myriad plants, tanks and refineries again dominates the landscape of Texas City, but there are coastal visitor amenities too. Review the city's entry in *Texas! Live the Legend*, and for first-hand details, stop at the chamber of commerce, 625 Eighth Ave. North.

Students of historic disasters often make their way to the Texas City Library for details about one of the worst U.S. catastrophes in the 20th Century. In April of 1947, the French freighter *Grandcamp*, loading explosive ammonium nitrate, caught fire and exploded at a Texas City dock. Surrounding wharves, oil refineries, warehouses and chemical plants were demolished; hundreds of other fires were started, including several aboard adjacent ships. Hours later another burning ship exploded. The death toll was 576, with more than 3,000 others seriously injured. The library offers abundant articles and photos about the disaster.

## GALVESTON Pop. 61,902

Galveston County

On one of Texas' best known coastal islands, Galveston is a premiere visitor city! Emminent historic charm accents modern visitor amenities. To whet your sightseeing appetite, review Galveston's abundant attractions in the state travel guide. Then for details about

accommodations, superb dining, outstanding tours, and seaside recreation, stop at the city's Visitor Information Center in Moody Civic Center, Seawall Blvd. at 21st St. Your entire Trail experience will be enriched by a thorough exploration of Galveston.

Geologists say that Galveston, a sand barrier island, came along just in time for the pleasure of modern Texans. Unlike other parts of the state, where dinosaurs roamed a hundred million years ago, Galveston Island's formation can be traced back only some 5,000 years. By longshore drift of the Gulf of Mexico, it has been built with sand from the Mississippi River Basin.

You'll be roaming the beaches of Galveston. Watch for sand dollars, heavy white ark shells, fragile sea pens, beautiful angel wings, colorful busicons (often occupied by hermit crabs), and if you're lucky, perhaps a rare, glossy white wentletrap with ornamental ribs. You'll find bits of coral, driftwood, and sea beans from Jamiaca. To sort out the seaside abundance, bookstores should be able to provide *Texas Shells: A Field Guide*, by Jean Andrews.

The Trail route southwest along Galveston Island offers many beach-access opportunities. All Texas beaches are public, and may be enjoyed by all passers-by.

Six miles southwest of the city, Galveston Island State Park (a) is one of the area's most popular recreational sites. Review the park's list of visitor facilities in the state travel guide, and note the special feature of outdoor musicals that are presented nightly except Monday from late May through Labor Day. Two shows, *The Lone Star* and *Annie Get Your Gun* alternate nightly.

A toll bridge 24 miles southwest of Galveston crosses San Luis Pass. 3 In early days a stagecoach came here from Galveston (an all-day trip) and crossed by mule-drawn ferry. That vintage ferry washed away more than a hundred years ago, and there was no crossing until this bridge was built in 1966. The village of San Luis was established here in 1832, but shifting tidal currents filled the harbor with sand, and the village was abandoned by 1844.

Thirteen miles southwest of the bridge, Brazoria County provides visitors a park • with picnic tables, grills, and a beach for surf fishing. Bird watching can be rewarding here, too (or anywhere on West Galveston Island), since 95 percent of the known species of North American shore birds spend some time on the island.

This is the Surfside area, a seaside fishing and recreational community built on the site of historic Velasco, where the peace treaty between the new Republic of Texas and Mexico was signed in 1836. Velasco was virtually wiped out in an 1875 hurricane; when rebuilt, it was named Surfside. Two historical markers on the north side of the Trail tell the story of Velasco.

A high bridge crosses the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway into Freeport. Built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the waterway girdles the Gulf for 1,300 miles from Brownsville, Texas, to Florida, providing sheltered passage for barge and pleasure-boat traffic. Although the waterway is seen by the public at only a few spots, its annual transportation volume is enormous, carrying more tonnage than either the Panama Canal or the St. Lawrence Seaway.



#### FREEPORT Pop. 13,444

Brazoria County Alt. 15

Freeport is the hub of several communities known jointly as Brazosport — an industrial, recreational, port and fishing area. An oil refinery signals the continuing prominence of that industry in Texas, and the Brazos River Harbor hosts a fleet of picturesque shrimp boats.

Review Freeport's listing in *Texas! Live the Legend*, take a snapshot at the shrimp boat monument, *Mystery*, beside the Trail highway, and visit the Brazosport Chamber of Commerce in Clute (one of the Brazosport communities) on Texas 332 just west of Texas 288 for information about attractions in the whole area.

Between Freeport and Brazoria highway signs indicate a number of significant historical markers.

A statue of Henry Smith on the Brazoria school grounds honors the man who was provisional governor of Texas in 1835 before independence, and later served in the Congress of the Texas Republic.

In West Columbia the Trail turns west on Texas 35, but no one interested in Texas history should miss a short side trip to one of Texas' foremost historical parks. Take Texas 35 east to 13th St. (FM 2852) which leads directly to Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historical Park.

The superb plantation mansion dates from 1836, and was later the home of James Stephen Hogg, the first native-born governor of Texas. It is a superb preservation, open daily for tours except Mon. and Wed. Review the summary under West Columbia in the state travel guide and visit the chamber of commerce in the replica of the first Capitol, 14th and Hamilton Sts. (open weekday mornings) for directions to other historic sites.

Historical markers dot the Trail highway between West Columbia and Bay City. Most of the Coastal Plains soils, deriving from marine origins, are rather dark mixtures of clay, silt and sand — quite rich and productive. But as the Trail crosses rivers such as the Brazos and San Bernard, even richer alluvial soils have been deposited by periodic floodings over thousands of years. The deep, black soils produce abundant cotton crops.



118210

INDEPENDENCE RASSERVAS

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).

Matagorda of 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. 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, if 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.

As the Trail leaves Palacios to rejoin Texas 35, fleets of shrimp boats and shipyards will be seen. Those interested in marine biology will enjoy a tour of the Marine Fisheries Research Station. (1) (Leave the Trail 7.5 miles west, then south 5 miles.) Some 20 miles west of Palacios near a roadside park note the trees (2) whose leaning forms are shaped by prevailing sea breezes.

At the eastern end of the Port Lavaca causeway in Point Comfort, a marker tells of historic Cox's Point. Behind the marker is an 1850's lighthouse, moved here from its original location near Palacios.

## PORT LAVACA Pop. 10,911

Calhoun County Alt. 19

The causeway across Lavaca Bay into Port Lavaca rises in the center to permit passage of shipping beneath. This structure replaces a bridge destroyed by Hurricane Carla in 1961. Portions of that old bridge are now fishing piers. On the Port Lavaca side, a 3,200-foot span is operated by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as a state fishing pier with bait and tackle concession, snack bar, lights, rest rooms, boat ramp and limited camping area. Nominal fee for fishing.

Just north of the western end of the causeway is the site of Linnville, established about 1831 around a warehouse handling goods for Mexican trade. A Comanche raid in 1840 destroyed the town and no evidence remains. But what is perhaps the greatest ''lost'' city of Texas is also nearby, Indianola accessible on a side trip about 14 miles south. It's a fascinating story about the awesome destructive power that can be generated by hurricanes. Read the Indianola account in Texas! Live the Legend, and also review Port Lavaca's highlights.

For complete visitor information and directions to the Indianola site, stop at the Port Lavaca-Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce on the Trail highway, across from offices of the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation.

West of Port Lavaca the Trail arrows through low coastal prairies; the highest point in Calhoun County is only 50 feet above sea level. To the west along the Texas 185 leg of the Trail is Green Lake 10 the largest natural freshwater lake in Texas, covering 10,000 acres. Named because of the water's greenish cast, the lake is unusual because, although close to San Antonio Bay, salt water never reaches the lake even at high tide. Birdlife abounds, and thousands of egrets are permanent residents.

Between Green Lake and Victoria, the Trail crosses the Heyser Oil Field pevidenced by a refinery to the west, nodding pump jacks and a pipeline pump station to the east.

Trail drivers will often have seen slim, white birds in roadside pastures — usually close to livestock. They are African cattle egrets, so named for their habit of staying close to livestock and feeding on insects (grasshoppers, locusts, etc.) disturbed by the animals' movement and grazing. The African birds appeared spontaneously in South America several decades ago. In Texas they became noticeable to the general public in the 1960s, and they're now prominent in pastures over much of the state's southern regions. Ornithologists believe egrets have reached the northern limit of comfortable habitat, and credit substantial benefit to the bird's insect diet.

# VICTORIA Victoria County Pop. 50,695 Alt. 93

Victoria is an especially historic town, founded by Spanish colonists in 1824. Anglo-American ranchers and German farmers supplemented the population in the later 1800s. The Victoria Memorial Square, just a block off the Trail at De Leon and Commercial Sts., is of special historical interest. The square includes graves of pioneers and a wind-driven grist mill whose parts were brought from Germany before the Civil War.

Visitor highlights include historical and art museums, the Texas Zoo, Riverside Park, and some charming residential areas of century-old homes. Review Victoria's summary in the state travel guide, and stop for first-hand details at the chamber of commerce, 1106 Rio Grande St.

At the west edge of Victoria where the Trail crosses the Guadalupe River, an historical marker notes that a ford here was used both by Indians and early settlers.

Ten miles west of the river, on the bank of Coleto Creek, is a pleasant roadside picnic area (b) with a marker summarizing the history of Victoria County.

Seven miles west of Coleto Creek there's an excellent side trip available to a site of primary significance to the Independence Trail's theme. Via FM 2506 south, it leads to Fannin Battleground State Park. There during the Texas struggle for independence in 1836, Col. James W. Fannin and some 400 Texans were outflanked and surrounded by a superior Mexican Army force led by Gen. Jose Urrea, one of Santa Anna's ablest commanders. Historical markers tell of the surrender, on what Fannin believed were honorable, prisoner-of-war terms. The tragic outcome will be summarized at the next city on the Texas Independence Trail. This historic site is a day-use park (no camping) with picnic pavilion, water and rest rooms.

# GOLIAD Pop. 1,990

Goliad County Alt. 187

Goliad was one of the most important cities in early Texas history. Trail travelers should plan to spend ample time here, exploring the locations of dramatic historical events amid superb restorations from the past. Review Goliad's substantial entry in *Texas! Live the Legend*.



In Goliad is restored Mission Espititu Santo in Goliad State Park. 13 The Spanish mission dates from 1749 and contains an excellent museum that interprets Spain's far-flung efforts to colonize the New World.

Also in Goliad is Presidio La Bahia a a Spanish fort that was founded to protect the nearby mission endeavors. It, too, is a superb restoration, the world's finest example of a frontier Spanish fort. It was here that Fannin and his troops were held briefly after their surrender to Mexican forces at nearby Coleto. A week later (Mar. 27, 1836) on orders of Santa Anna, the entire force of Texan prisoners was marched out and executed.

In Goliad itself another site of interest is the old court-house, whose former clock tower and turrets were destroyed in a 1942 hurricane, but handsome carved staircases and original wainscoting remain. On the courthouse lawn is the Hanging Tree, where it is said as many as five bodies hung at one time during the bloody Cart War of 1857.

At the corner of South Market and Franklin Sts. is Fannin Plaza with historical markers and a cannon from the Texas Revolution. Across the street in the Market House Museum building, the chamber of commerce can fill you in with visitor details and printed materials.

Northwest of Goliad the Independence Trail moves into the Reynolds Escarpment, whose rolling landscapes are far different from the flat coastal prairies.

Between Runge and Helena the Trail follows almost exactly the original Ox Cart Road that ran between the port of Indianola and San Antonio. The route is one of the oldest in Texas and was the focal point of the Cart War in 1857 when Texas freighters joined in attacking Mexican drivers. Some 70 were killed before the "war" (actually a labor dispute) was guelled by Texas Bangers.

(actually a labor dispute) was quelled by Texas Rangers.
The Cart Road crossed the Ojo de Agua (Eye of Water)
stream at Runge, and historical markers on the square
give details of this early Polish settlement.

Helena is nearly a ghost town. The reason is a fascinating bit of frontier lore that's capsuled in the state travel guide. An historical marker near the Trail intersection with Texas 80 also provides details. The town's former courthouse is now a museum of area history with early trail, ranch and household artifacts; open daily and Sunday afternoons.

Panna Maria is recognized as the oldest Polish settlement in North America. Several local historical markers tell the story of the community's founding in 1854, and of other Polish settlements that sprang from here. The local church with icons and other European accents is well worth a visit, as is the Historical Society Museum housed in what was once St. Joseph's School, believed to have been the first Polish private school in America.

Immediately north of Panna Maria is the center of uranium mining in Texas. Low, symmetrical hills on the north horizon are manmade — built of soil displaced during mining operations, shaped and seeded with grass for livestock grazing. Mining began here in 1960 following accidental discovery of the ore deposits during an aerial survey that was actually seeking oil-drilling sites.

From Panna Maria the Trail wanders through rural landscapes and small villages including Hobson, Falls City and Poth. Small cultivated fields alternate with improved, grassy pastures and native thickets choked with mesquite and pricky-pear cactus. Near Falls City travelers may note frequent dairy farms that provide much of San Antonio's milk supply.

## FLORESVILLE Pop. 4,381

Wilson County Alt. 389

Sandy soils of the area are especially suited to the production of peanuts, and the town's biggest festival salutes the lowly legume during the second week of each October. Can you visualize a *million* pounds of peanuts? Wilson County produces more than 31 million pounds each year.

Check the state travel guide for directions to a Canary Islanders cemetery here. Spanish colonists from the Canary Islands were the first civil settlers in Texas. The cemetery dates from the early 1730s, and many prominent Texas families proudly trace their lineage back to these first settlers.

West of Floresville the Trail again crosses the San Antonio River and continues through areas with vivid examples of land management. Some fields show the land's ''native'' appearance — thickets of mesquite, huisache, blackbrush, catclaw and prickley pear with only scattered clumps of sparse grass. Other fields show the remarkable transformation when brush has been cleared, the land leveled and planted to superior grass (often Coastal Bermuda). The soil that looked barren in the thickets produces luxuriant growths of grasses on which sleek cattle graze. Clearing, replanting and a rigorous regimen of maintenance are expensive, but result in productivity increases of over 600 percent.

Elmendorf in Bexar County was established in 1885 to take advantage of local clay deposits suitable for brisk making an industry still in svictores.

brick-making, an industry still in existence.
East of San Antonio the Trail passes through the town of Saint Hedwig, whose city limit signs appear to be in the country. It is a sprawling area whose business center a is east of the Trail on FM 1346. The village, dominated by a large church, appears at a distance much like a European village, and with good reason. It was settled by immigrants

from Gros Strehiltz in upper Silesia in 1852, and named for the patron saint of Silesia.

North of I-10, main artery between Houston and San Antonio, the Trail skirts the eastern edge of Randolph Air Force Base ② one of the nation's oldest.

According to the Independence Trail's theme, San Antonio should be a prominent feature — with its capture and recapture during the period of hostilities, and location of the hallowed Alamo. However, San Antonio lies on another route (the Hill Country Trail), and to avoid confusion, modern Texas Travel Trails don't cross. But folder formats needen't deter actual Trail drivers. Review San Antonio's abundant features in *Texas! Live the Legend*, and drive in for a visit. For details, stop at the city's Visitor Information Center, 321 Alamo Plaza.

At Schertz the Trail aims eastward toward Seguin, passing through villages including Cibolo (Indian for 'buffalo''), said to have been the inspiration for O. Henry's story, 'The Smiling Valley of the Cibolo.''

# SEGUIN Pop. 17,845

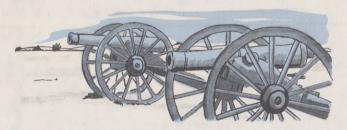
Guadalupe County Alt. 520

The city is named for Juan N. Seguin, a prominent Mexican-Texan who served in Sam Houston's army that won Texas independence, and who later held several distinguished positions in Texas city, republic and state governments. Today the city is experiencing substantial growth from the expansion of San Antonio.

Many pre-Texas Revolution homes and buildings are extant, offering excellent opportunities for historical sightseeing and exploration. Review Seguin's listing in the state travel guide, and for in-person details about visitor amenities, stop at the chamber of commerce, 427 N. Austin. St.

Between Seguin and Gonzales the Trail highway (FM 466) is a popular springtime sightseeing drive — pleasing pastoral landscapes accented by graceful live oaks, roadsides and meadows splashed with astonishing colors of massed bluebonnets, Indian paint brush, gaillardia and coreopsis.

At the community of Cost, a roadside marker 20 cites the first shot of the Texas Revolution on Oct. 2, 1835. Relations between Texas colonists and Mexican authorities had become increasingly strained. A small group of Mexican troops sought to reclaim a small cannon that had been loaned to the colonists for protection from raiding Indians. The Texans refused to return the cannon, challenging the Mexicans to "come and take it." Only a minor skirmish ensued, and the Mexican troops withdrew along this route, then known as Capote Road, toward San Antonio. A monument at the exact site of the confrontation 30 is a mile north of the Trail highway on Spur 95.



## GONZALES Pop. 7,152

Gonzales County Alt. 292

At the south end of the bridge over the Guadalupe River, a monument indicates the spot where Mexican authorities first demanded return of the cannon mentioned above. The dispute was apparently a mobile one, because it was several miles west (at Cost) where the first shots were fired.

The town is filled with historical markers — Santa Anna Mound where the Mexican army camped the next year, pursuing Sam Houston's forces after the fall of the Alamo — markers that cite the original Spanish plat of the town with streets and plazas much as they remain today, and plaques devoted to Civil War sites.

Review Gonzales highlights in the state travel guide, and visit the chamber of commerce in the restored old jail on the courthouse square downtown. Folders available there will guide you on a marked historical trail throughout the city.

Two miles northwest of Gonzales the Trail crosses the San Marcos River that begins some 40 miles north, issuing from huge springs at the Balcones Fault that marks the edge of the Texas Hill Country. There, Aquarena Springs is a tourist feature on the Texas Hill Country Trail.

Through Palmetto State Park the Independence Trail uses Park Road 1.1. This drive is of special interest to bontanists because of the large variety of plant life. Descriptive folders interpret the nature trails, as do the nature center's displays. Trailer sites are included in the camping and picnicking facilities; admission.

Near the center of the park area, just south on FM 1586, is the Texas Rehabilitation Center, better known as Gonzales Warm Springs Foundation.

The city of Luling is famous for its watermelons, and tons of the delectable fruit are shipped every year to points as far away as Alaska. The Luling Watermelon Thump, with appropriate pardes and contests (usually the last weekend in June), recognizes the economic and gastronomic merits of this member of the gourd family. Oil was discovered under the town itself in 1922, and today visitors will see pump jacks in and around town,

some in incongruous spots like church lawns, residential back yards and city parks.

Much of the land between Luling and Lockhart is devoted to livestock pastures. Communities along the way include Stairtown, Prairie Lea and Fentress. Prairie

Lea, founded about 1848, was populated largely by slaveholding families, and was site of a women's college in 1854. Fentress was once a popular family river-camp recreational area.

Just southwest of Lockhart, the Trail passes Lockhart State Park that offers swimming, golf, picnicking, nature trails, camping and RV sites. The park is near the site of a major Indian battle that occurred on Aug. 12, 1840. A huge war party of Comanches had swept down the Guadalupe Valley to the Gulf Coast (see Linnville mentioned earlier under Port Lavaca) — killing settlers, stealing horses, plundering and burning. A volunteer force of settlers, troops and Texas Rangers met the returning war party and defeated them at nearby Plum Creek.

# LOCKHART Pop. 7,953

Caldwell County Alt. 518

Although the Trail route only skirts the south edge of Lockhart, Trail drivers will enjoy a visit downtown to see the flamboyant county courthouse, c. 1893, and turn-of-the-century business houses. Review the town's highlights in the state travel guide, and visit the chamber of commerce at 107 E. San Antonio St. for details.

---

Between Lockhart and Bastrop, Trail travelers will be treated to a series of idyllic rural landscapes. Fine blooded horses and cattle graze lush pastures; neat cultivated fields make the most of rich, black soils, while silos and barns accent showplace farms and ranches.

There's an unusual off-the-trail opportunity for those who relish classic, vintage autos. The Central Texas Museum of Automotive History showcases nearly eight decades of automotive production. The museum is 12 miles south of the Trail on Texas 304 (not on Trail map).

# BASTROP Pop. 3,789

Bastrop County Alt. 374

From the historical standpoint, Bastrop is a small, choice treasure. From a modern visitor's standpoint, the town's quaint, old-fashioned ambience is equally choice. First, read in the state travel guide about the astonishing man for whom the town is named, and review the list of Bastrop's historical highlights. Then visit the local chamber of commerce for a wealth of local historical interpretation, and guidance along the town's Memorial Medallion Trail. The chamber is in the town's restored old jail, corner of Pine and Water Sts.

Off the Trail east of Bastrop, Loop 150 leads to Bastrop State Park on in the heart of the strange "Lost Pines." The forest of native loblolly pines, covering only some 70 square miles, is isolated by more than a hundred miles from the vast pine forests of East Texas. The park's rustic buildings and cabins are built of native stone, walnut, bois d'arc and cedar woods.

Park Road 1 connects Bastrop and Buescher 10 State Parks on a leisurly 10-mile drive through beautiful wooded hills. The road is accessible as a through route only by paying the park entrance fee.

The town of Smithville, at the eastern gateway to Buescher State Park, offers several handsome old homes. While not open to the public, they're well worth a drive-by look: the Burleson home at 207 E. Eighth, the Hill house at 502 Olive, and the Yerger Hill home at 400 Main St. with its huge magnolia tree.

Drivers will enjoy a pleasant pause at a scenic overlook in a roadside picnic area four miles east of Smithville. Three miles farther east, another picnic area is significant. Set in a group of live oaks on the south side of the highway, this was the very first roadside park to become an official part of the Texas highway system. In fact, according to current research, this site introduced the concept of roadside parks to the nation. Texas now has some 1,100 such miniature parks along its roadways.

## LA GRANGE Pop. 3,768

Fayette County Alt. 272

Fayette County's agricultural lands were settled primarily by groups of German and Czech immigrants in the mid-1800s. The town offers a number of provincial, "down home" historical accents, whose details may be obtained at the local chamber of commerce, 316 N. Jefferson (US 77 north). Review the town's features in *Texas!* Live the Legend, especially Monument Hill State Park. 

3

The scenic site, high above the Colorado River Valley, is the final resting place of casualties from two clashes with Mexican forces during the uneasy days of the Republic when hostilities were ever ready to erupt on both sides. One such clash was the ill-advised Mier Expedition that was to be a punitive thrust into Mexico. The tactic failed, and captive Texans were forced to participate in a bizarre death lottery. Blindfolded, each man drew a bean from a jar of white and black beans. A white bean meant internment; a black one, execution.



Bluffs on the Colorado River in this area expose Oakville sandstone deposited by Miocene rivers several million years ago. It's the same sandstone formation that's mined for uranium near Panna Maria (mentioned earlier between Goliad and Floresville).

In the town of Warrenton is the handsome Neese Home immediately by the Trail highway. Built by a local merchant in 1869-70, the entire second floor was devoted to a ballroom. Tragically, the home's builder was killed during a robbery of his store just before his house was completed. Restored in 1974, the structure is now a community center for arts and civic gatherings. Period gardens are maintained in the 19th Century style.

A mile east of Warrenton is what Robert L. Ripley once called ''the smallest Catholic Church in the world.'' And a mile east of the church is the interesting Florida Chapel Cemetery whose monument styles and names are reminders of early German and Czech settlers in this area. There's also a marker at the original grave site of Joel W. Robison, one of the captors of Santa Anna after the Battle of San Jacinto. Robison's remains were later moved to the State Cemetery in Austin.

## ROUND TOP Pop. 87

Fayette County Alt. 390

The Independence Trail has visited several historic cities and towns, but none is quite like Round Top, an utterly charming eddy from the past. Historic preservation is the essence of the entire village — from log cabins to country stores to large, sturdy family homes built by prosperous German farmers. Architects, musicians, artists, historians and tourists flock here throughout the year. Visiting symphony orchestras perform here for five weeks each summer. The University of Texas maintains Winedale Historical Center for the study of ethnic cultural influences in Central Texas. Photo opportunities are outstanding!

Review Round Top's listing in *Texas! Live the Legend*. For firsthand information, visit the information center operated by Texas Pioneer Arts Foundation in Moore's Fort, a restored frontier bastion that dates from 1828.

----

From Round Top through Burton to Independence are some of the most handsome farms in the state. Painstaking methods of cultivation and conservation, a heritage of European farmers, have long been ways of life here. At the west edge of Gay Hill an historical marker tells of Thomas Affleck, a native of Scotland who came to the United States in 1832. His nearby farm had ornamental gardens, greenhouses and a lumber mill.

# INDEPENDENCE Pop. 140

Washington County Alt. 321

On the occasion of Texas' successful revolt in 1836, the town's name was changed from Cole's Settlement to reaffirm the foremost principal in Texas history: Independence. Visit the Baptist Historical Museum here, intersection of FM 390/50.

Across from the museum are graves of Nancy Moffette Lea and her daughter, Margaret, who was Sam Houston's wife. Mrs. Houston died in the yellow fever epidemic of

1867 some four years after Houston's death.

General Houston's widow lived in the second house on the south, east of the highway intersection. Just beyond are ruins of the Blanton Hotel, a stop on La Bahia Trail. Some delegates met here before going to Washington to sign the Texas Declaration of Independence.



West of Independence are the ruins of Old Baylor College. This was the Female Department, opened in 1846 under a Republic of Texas charter. The institution's third president was G.W. Baines, great-grandfather of Lyndon Baines Johnson. The site of the Male Department, across the river to the south, is marked just east of the highway.

The square at Independence was designed for a county courthouse, but in a heated election Brenham won the county seat location by two votes. The square in Independence remains vacant except for historical markers.

At the Spur 390 intersection with FM 390, the Sam Houston homesite is marked with a granite marker. The spring to the east served Indians and pioneers, and is an unfailing source of water today.

----

The Independence Trail doesn't enter Brenham. It is, however, only a three-mile drive from the FM 50/Texas 90 intersection to this historic city settled by German immigrants in the late 1860s. German influence is still prominent in customs such as Maifest each spring.

East of Brenham at the FM 912 intersection a marker tells the story of Washington-on-the-Brazos. The Independence Trail enters Washington and Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park on FM 1155, which parallels the Brazos River. A significant part of early Texas history was written at the pioneer village, now enclosed in the park. The park features a star-shaped museum and film presentation. Picnic sites and rest rooms are available. Refer to Washington in the state travel guide.

## CHAPPELL HILL Pop. 310

Washington County Alt. 317

At Chappell Hill it's possible, with just a little imagination, to step backward in history. A stroll along Main

11

Street will pass several antique stores and a former hotel, the Stagecoach Inn, built in 1847. More than 25 homes and other structures in Chappell Hill bear historical markers

Open on Sun. and Wed. afternoons is the Chappell Hill Historical Museum in the old school on Poplar Street at the site of the former Chappell Hill Female College.

the site of the former Chappell Hill Female College.

The library, on Cedar Street, was organized in 1893.

Patrons have individual keys to the building. East of the FM 137/1155 intersection is the Lockhart Plantation Home — built in 1850 of cedar and walnut,

hand-cut from the 1,000-acre property.

In Bellville the Trail passes the new Austin County courthouse, built to replace the historic courthouse that burned in 1960. A half mile east of the Trail, on FM 529, is the 15-acre city park with swimming pool, playground, picnic tables and stock show barns.

#### SAN FELIPE Pop. 532

Austin County Alt. 155

Known as the ''Birthplace of Anglo-American settlement in Texas,'' San Felipe de Austin was named for Stephen F. Austin when founded in 1823. A marker just north of I-10 on FM 1458 tells the story of this historic city — of its being the first Anglo-American capital of Texas in 1823, and of its importance as the site of the 1832 and 1833 Conventions and the 1835 Consultation.

Stephen F. Austin State Park north of the city, is in two sections. The historic area at the old ferry crossing contains a replica of Austin's home, the old hand-dug well which first served the colonists and then Mexican troops after the colonists fled, other monuments, an interpretive center, and dominating all, the statue of Stephen F. Austin, "The Father of Texas." Admission. The J.J Josey Store, built in 1847, is now a museum

displaying merchandise of that era. Open weekends.

The recreational portion of the park includes a golf course, camping, picnic areas, fishing and swimming.

The Stephen F. Austin Park Association operates an information center at the San Felipe Post Office where literature and information are available.

South of I-10 is the community of Frydek, named by its Czech settlers for a Silesian city of the same name. The name, meaning "peaceful corner," fits this quiet farming community. Until recent years, worship services were conducted in the Czech language.

On the grounds of Our Lady of Frydek Church is a grot-

---

and friends of 67 men and women of the Frydek Parish who served in World War II, all of whom returned.

Six miles south of Frydek on the west side of the road is the Little Frynt Chapel on named by a settler from the

to of concrete and stone, built by the thankful families

is the Little Egypt Chapel named by a settler from the Egypt community in Wharton County. Note the trees that have grown together in the shape of an arch.

# RICHMOND/ROSENBERG Fort Bend County Pop. 9,692/17,995 Alt. 105

The twin cities were settled and populated by a variety of different ethnic and cultural groups — pioneers from Stephen F. Austin's "Old Three Hundred" colony, Southern plantation owners, Czechs, Negroes, Confedrate veterans, carpetbaggers, railroad and oil men. Refer to both cities in the state travel guide for visitor sites such as the Confederate Museum, the Fort Bend County Museum, and historic structures.

Local details are available at the county museum just south of the courthouse in Richmond, and at the Rosenberg Chamber of Commerce on the Trail at 4121 Avenue H.

En route to Houston the Trail passes the first sugar mill in Texas at Sugar Land. Primarily using raw cane from the Rio Grande Valley, the refinery also imports cane from various worldwide sources through the Port of Houston. Tours are available weekdays at 10 and 2.

The Trail's remaining few miles are caught up in the metropolitan vigor of Houston. Those who have driven the entire route have gained vivid insights into an epic period of Texas history — times and events that shaped the destiny both of the state and of the nation that Texas became a part of. Of course, this Trail has touched only a portion of the state's varied historical chronicles. Other Trails, listed below, explore other pages from the past, as well as dramatic landscapes of sightseeing grandeur. 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!

TEXAS BRAZOS TRAIL
TEXAS FOREST TRAIL
TEXAS FORTS TRAIL
TEXAS HILL COUNTRY TRAIL
TEXAS LAKES TRAIL
TEXAS MOUNTAIN TRAIL
TEXAS PECOS TRAIL
TEXAS PLAINS TRAIL
TEXAS TROPICAL TRAIL

STATE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION Travel & Information Division P.O. Box 5064 Austin, Texas 78763

Lithographed in U.S.A.