

The Lone Star State

Established 1845
28th state

EXTREMES

Highest: Guadalupe Peak, in west Texas, reaches 8,751 feet (2,667 m) high.

Coldest: The coldest day Texas ever saw was -23°F (-31°C) at Seminole in 1933.

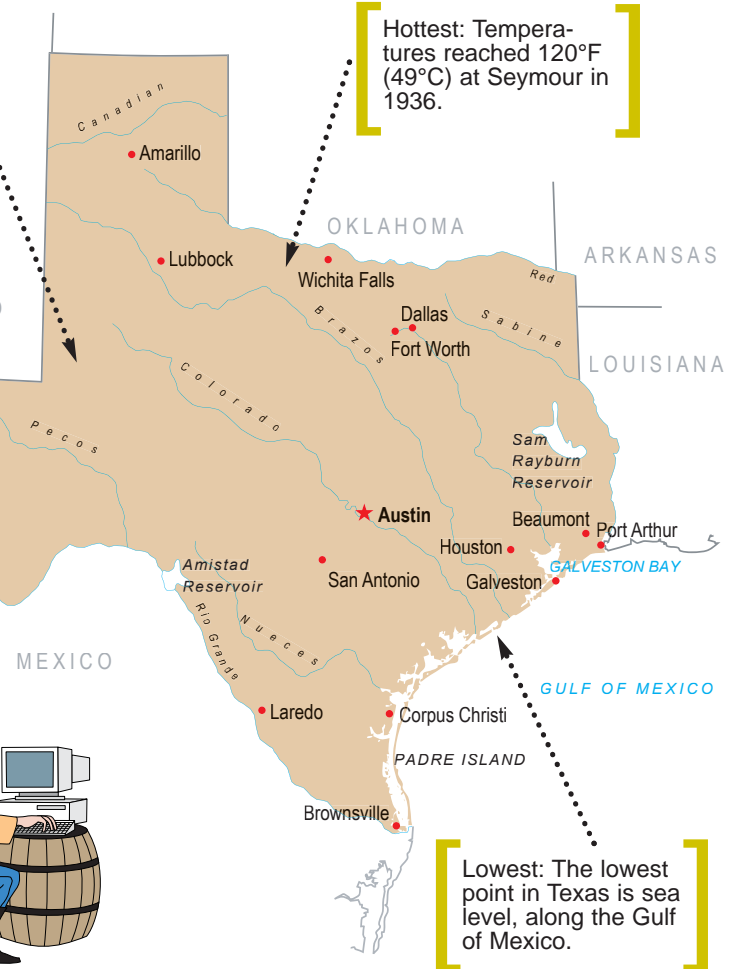
Hottest: Temperatures reached 120°F (49°C) at Seymour in 1936.

Climate

Texas's climate varies a lot. The Gulf Coast and parts of east Texas get most of the rainfall. Green Houston sees about 55 inches (140 cm) of rain per year—about double the state average of 27 inches (69 cm). Because of the humidity, you sometimes feel like you're taking a bath all day long. However, it doesn't get as hot there, and winters are mild. In west and southwest Texas, summers can scorch. Little rain falls—sometimes less than 10 inches (25 cm). The north and central parts of Texas have hot summers, too, but they get some rain. And tornadoes! More tornadoes hit Texas (mostly in the Red River Valley) than any other state. The coldest winters come in the Panhandle, where occasional northers blow in and make you think it's arctic tundra.

Geography

Texas is big. All told, Texas covers 267,277 square miles (692,247 sq km). Rivers help form Texas's boundaries. The Rio Grande is its Mexico border, the Red River its Oklahoma border, and the Sabine its Louisiana border. Texas has four major geographical areas. The Coastal Plains are flat. The Piney Woods in east Texas form part of the plain. They are home to forests and swamps called *bayous*—and yes, alligators. To the west, in the middle of the state, lie the Central Plains, a great grassland with some trees. Farmers and cattle ranchers like the rich soil and the oil. The High Plains are a dry and treeless grassland that cover the



Lowest: The lowest point in Texas is sea level, along the Gulf of Mexico.

Panhandle and some land to the south. West Texas is mostly desert and home to cacti, lizards, and wildcats. Texas's biggest mountains are found there.

Economy and Resources

If Texas were a country, its economy would still be as big as those of some of the biggest countries in the world. What makes business there so good? For one, lots of natural resources, like oil. Texas oil is pumped and then refined into gasoline and oil by-products like plastics, chemicals, and fertilizers. Cattle by the millions graze on the prairie grass and provide beef and leather. Crops like cotton, peanuts, and vegetables grow well in Texas's warm climate. Factories make ships, cars, and farm equipment. Computers and software have been a big part of Texas since the first computer (silicon) chip was invented there.

History

From Coahuiltec to Comanche

Many Native Americans have lived in Texas, but their languages and lifestyles differed greatly. The Coahuiltec lived in the far south. They built homes of dried clay, called *adobe*, and planted beans. Farther up the coast, the Karankawa relied on the seafood they caught from their unique canoes. On the east, the Caddo lived in orderly, permanent villages. Many others, such as the Apache of central Texas, were nomadic and followed the buffalo, though on foot. The Comanche hunted buffalo on horseback. Their skill with horses made them a powerful force on the Texas frontier.

Remember the Alamo!

When Mexico revolted and became independent of Spain in 1821, Texas became part of Mexico. However, General Santa Anna took power in Mexico and tried to keep new settlers out of Texas with his army. By 1836, most Texans, including many Mexicans living there, had had enough. Stephen Austin and Sam Houston recruited men for a fight and took the city of San Antonio. But Santa Anna returned with more men and met 189 Texans at the Alamo, the old Mission San Antonio de Valero. These few fought off four thousand Mexican soldiers for 13 days. At the end, no one, including famed frontiersmen Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie, was left alive. However, a victory by Sam Houston at San Jacinto forced Santa Anna to surrender. Texas became its own country in 1836!



Six Flags over Texas

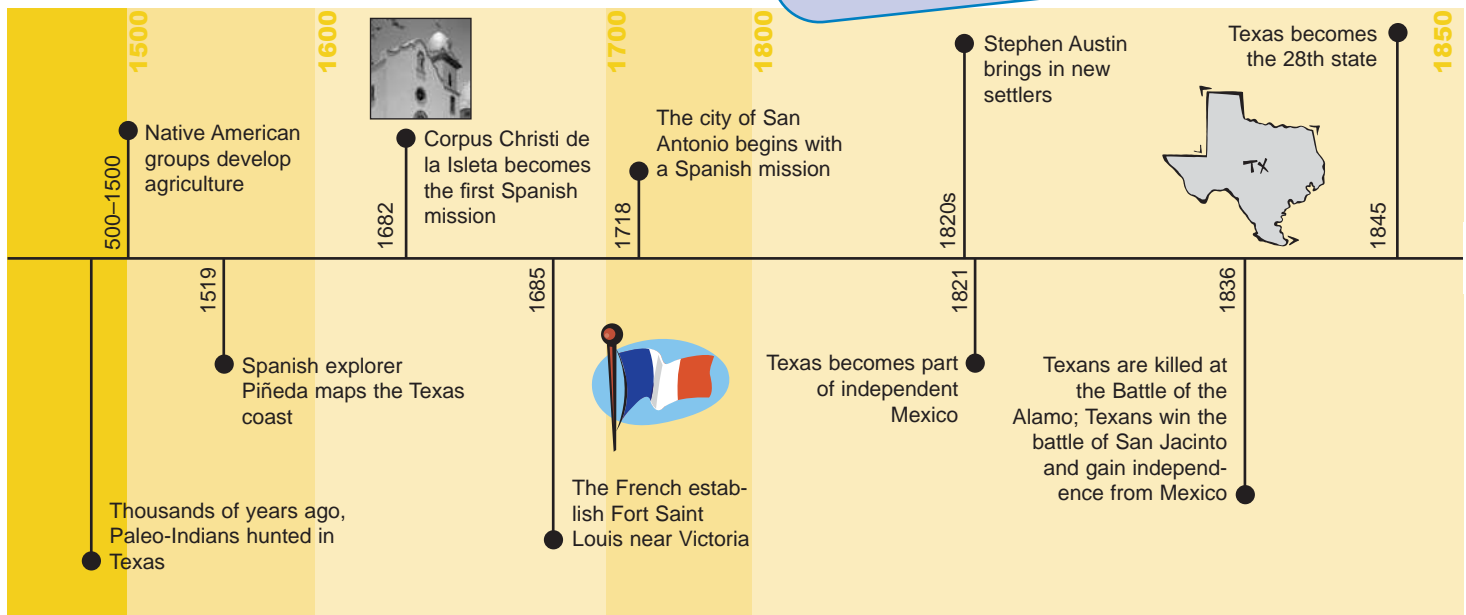
Texas has been a hot spot for a long time. It has belonged to many different countries! First Spain claimed it, then France, Spain again, and Mexico. It became an independent republic in 1836 and joined the United States in 1845. In 1861 it left the United States and joined the Confederate (Southern) States of America before finally rejoining the United States after the Civil War. In keeping with the tradition of independence, Texans still like to do things their own way today.

Cowboys and Cattle Drives

There's a reason why Texas is famous for its barbecues and chili cook-offs: it's called beef. The open grasslands and plains of Texas *(cont. next page)*

Cultural Note

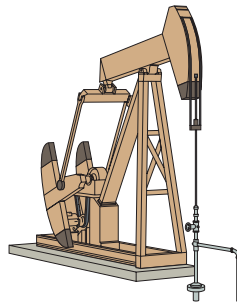
If you move to Texas, it won't take you long to figure out what Texans love: football. Whether it's high school, college, or professional, Texans eat it up. High school teams get amazing support from the community and even get play-by-play announcing. College games draw huge crowds, especially for rivals like the University of Texas Longhorns and the Texas A&M Aggies. The college championship Cotton Bowl is played in Dallas. The Dallas Cowboys, a professional team, have won the Super Bowl many times.



brought cowboys and ranchers by the thousands to raise cattle. After the Civil War, many former soldiers drifted west to Texas to make a living. Stray cattle from the days of the Spanish roamed wild in large herds and could be taken by anyone. Cowboys herded their cows through Texas up to Oklahoma and Kansas on the Chisholm Trail. Such cattle drives ended when the railroad came. But beef production never stopped. It's still a big Texas business.

Black Gold

Texas had its own gold rush in 1901. But it wasn't the kind of gold you want to put in your pocket. Texas gold was black. It was oil! The discovery of oil in Beaumont, where it gushed from a well for more than a week, led to explorations all over the state. In just a year, hundreds of companies formed. As America started making and buying cars, more and more oil was needed. And Texas was happy to oblige. With the oil needs of two world wars, Texas became a world capital of oil. Money from oil helped build new industries, including the computer industry.



Four Texas Presidents

Four modern Texans have been president. Dwight D. Eisenhower, born in Denison, helped the Allies win World War II before becoming president in 1953. Lyndon B. Johnson, vice president to John F. Kennedy, became president when Kennedy was shot

in Dallas in 1963. George Bush, elected in 1988, sent troops to fight in the Gulf War. His son, George W. Bush, served as Texas governor until he won the controversial 2000 presidential election.

Austin



Houston



Eisenhower

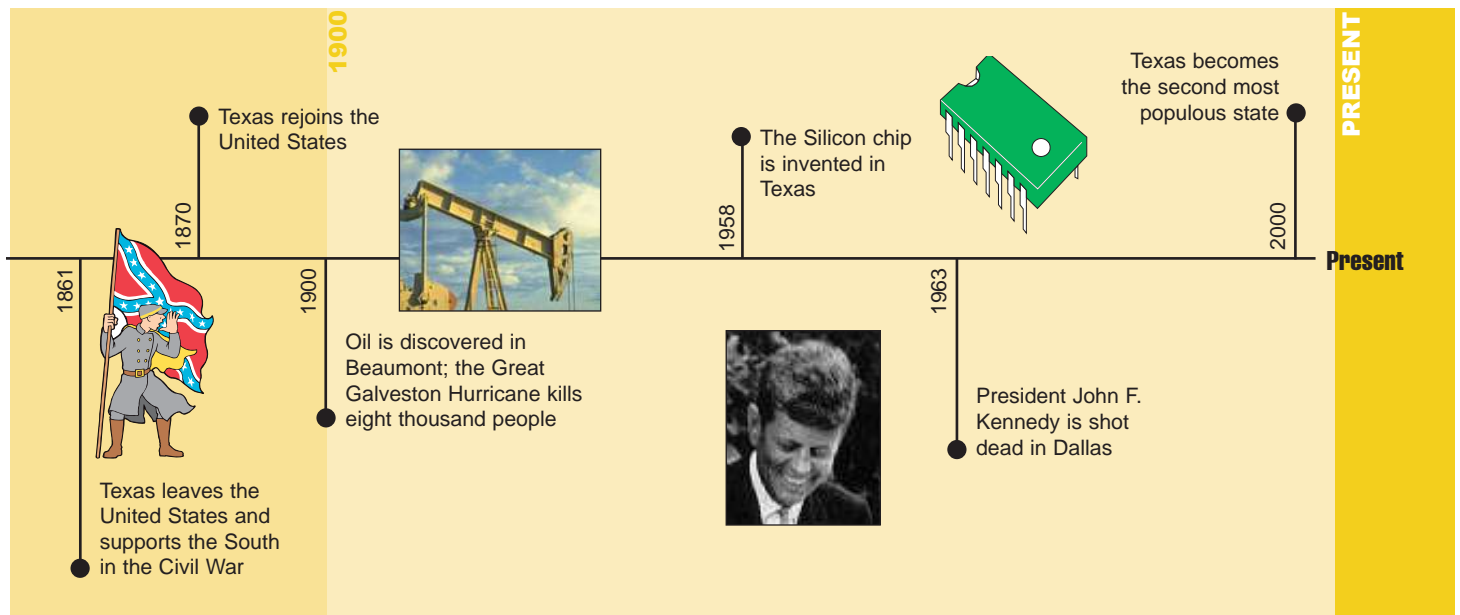


Ferguson



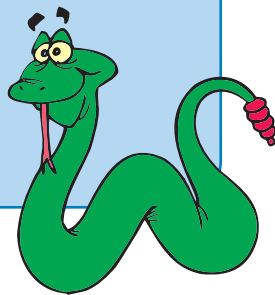
Famous People

- Sam Houston:** Leader of Texas independence from Mexico
- Stephen Austin:** Early Texas settler and founder
- Miriam Amanda (Ma) Ferguson:** First female governor of Texas
- Nolan Ryan:** Baseball pitcher and strikeout record holder
- Scott Joplin:** Musician who developed ragtime piano
- Van Cliburn:** World-class concert pianist
- Buddy Holly:** Early rock and roll star
- Willie Nelson:** Country singer and songwriter
- Sandra Cisneros:** Latina writer
- Katherine Ann Porter:** Pulitzer Prize-winning writer
- Barbara Jordan:** First African-American congresswoman from Texas
- Mildred (Babe) Didriksen Maharias:** One of the greatest all-around athletes
- Dwight D. Eisenhower:** 34th U.S. president



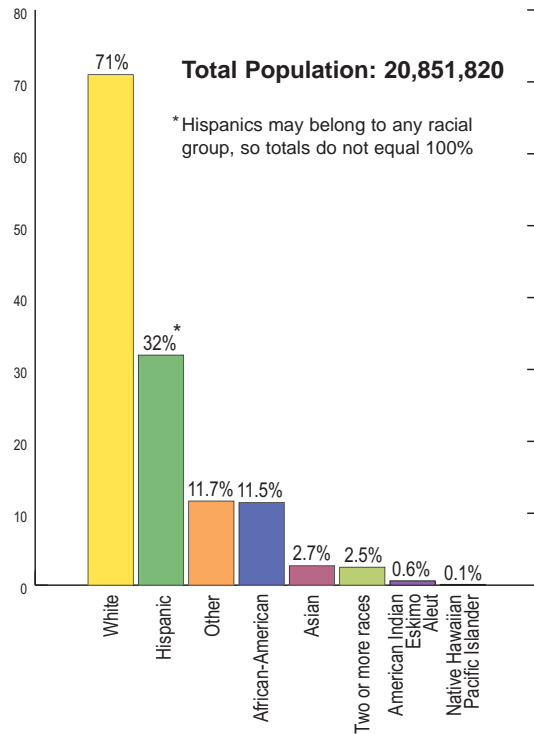
Did You Know?

- The privately owned King Ranch is bigger than the state of Rhode Island.
- Texas's native horny toad is actually a lizard and can shoot blood from its eyes.
- Bracken Cave, near San Antonio, is home to about 20 million bats.
- The town of Marfa has an eerie glowing light that divides in two and disappears.
- Texas has 15 kinds of rattlesnakes.
- Ima Hogg was the real name of a Texas governor's daughter.
- Texans fought a battle after the end of the Civil War because they hadn't heard the war was over.
- Texas has more counties than any other state.
- Many Texas roads or highways have the initials FM before the number (e.g., FM 1960). It's not a radio station; it means Farm-to-Market road.
- More than five thousand wildflower species grow in Texas.
- Texas has only one natural lake.
- Texas has had seven different capitals.



Population

In 1500, Texas was home to maybe 30,000 people of 20 different Native American groups. Today, Texas has more than 20 million people, and most live in cities. Early Texans came from other states or from Mexico. In the 1800s, African slaves and immigrants from overseas arrived. Germans, Czechs, and others wanting land for cattle and farms set up shop. Many groups settled in communities where they kept their language and identity. Spanish is the first language in many homes, especially in south Texas.



Government

Capital: Austin

U.S. Senators: 2

U.S. Representatives: 32

Counties: 254

State Symbols



State Insect
Monarch butterfly—It migrates like a bird.



State Flower
Bluebonnet—It can be seen along most Texas highways.



State Tree
Pecan tree—They provide the nuts that make famous pies.



State Bird
Mockingbird (mimus polyglottus)—It can imitate many human and animal sounds.

State Motto: Friendship—*Texas* comes from the Caddo Indian word *Tejas*, meaning “friendly.”

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