



Texas Resources

Family History Sources in the Lone Star State



Texas History

Native American tribes resided in the area when present-day Texas was settled in 1680 by the Spanish at Ysleta, now part of the city of El Paso. Between 1685 and 1700, Franciscan missions and Spanish military outposts (presidios) were established in east Texas at Nacogdoches, Goliad, and San Antonio.



On 2 October 1835, American colonists rebelling against the policies of the Mexican government under the leadership of Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna successfully held off Mexican forces at Gonzales, Texas, beginning the Texas War of Independence. In February of 1836, the famous battle took place at the Alamo in San Antonio. The defeat became a rallying cry and in April 1836, Texans defeated the Mexican forces at San Jacinto, securing their independence.

The Republic of Texas remained independent until it was annexed to the United States in 1845. Texas' legal entry as a U.S. state was 29 December 1845, although a formal ceremony transferring power from the Republic to the State of Texas wasn't held until 19 February 1846.

Texas admission to the United States spurred the Mexican-American War in 1846, which was fought over boundaries and territory to the west. It ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, in which Mexico ceded much of what is now the American southwest.

Texas Censuses

Federal censuses for Texas begin in 1850. Some Texas schedules survived for the mostly destroyed 1890 population schedules, including Ellis County (Justice Precinct 6, Mountain Peak, and Ovilla Precinct); Hood County (Precinct 5); Rusk County (No. 6 and Justice Precinct No. 7); Trinity County (town of Trinity and Justice Precinct 2); and Kaufman County (Kaufman).

Although Greer County in present-day Oklahoma functioned as part of Texas between 1886 and 1896, the 1890 census for this county was enumerated under Oklahoma Territory.

Some rancho censuses are available for the years between 1797 and 1826. An 1828 Padron which listed home, age, occupation, marital status, religion, and family members is available at the Texas State Library as part of the records group contained in the Nacogdoches Archives section for 1753-1836 on microfilm.

No censuses were taken under the Republic of Texas (1836-45), although an 1830 territorial census of Miller County, Arkansas included an area that is in present-day Texas. Tax records provide a substitute for the 1820s through 1840s.



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Significant Dates (through 1960)

1540–Coronado expedition explores parts of Texas.

1680–First European settlement at Ysleta.

1764–Typhus epidemic strikes El Paso, Texas.

1830–Mexico cuts off immigration to Texas from the U.S.

1833–Cholera epidemic.

1835–Texas War of Independence.

1836–Battle of the Alamo.

1839–Yellow fever epidemic.

1845–Statehood.

1846–48–Mexican-American War.

1849–Cholera epidemic.

1850–Buffalo Bayou, Brazos and Colorado Railway was chartered. It is the first railroad charter in Texas.

1853–Yellow fever epidemic in Galveston kills 523 people.

1858–Yellow fever epidemic in Houston.

1861–Texas secedes from the Union.

1861–Federal forces blockade Galveston. Many Galveston residents leave the city for Houston and other inland areas.

1862–Federal forces occupied Galveston beginning in October, but Confederates regained control on 1 January 1863.

1865–The last battle of the Civil War is fought at Palmito Ranch, Texas on 12 May 1865.

1866–Measles epidemic in Galveston.

1866–Cattle ranching industry grows quickly after the Civil War, increasing the number of cattle drives greatly for several decades until the proliferation of railroads makes them unnecessary.

1867–Yellow fever epidemic in Galveston.

1874–75–Red River War is fought in the Texas panhandle between Southern Plains tribes and U.S. forces.

1886–Hurricane strikes Indianola.

1900–The deadliest hurricane to strike the U.S. makes landfall in Galveston on 8 September 1900.

1901–An oil strike near Beaumont, Texas, ushers in an era of oil exploration and production in the state. The discovery paved the way for many more in the early 1900s and brought an influx of investors and workers into the state to work in the oilfields.

1907–Dengue fever epidemic in Brownsville.

1907–14–10,000 Jewish emigrants fleeing pogroms in Russia and Eastern Europe immigrate to Texas via Galveston.

1909–Hurricane at Velasco, Texas.

1915–Hurricane at Galveston kills 275 people.

1918–Texas women win the right to vote.

1918–Influenza epidemic.

1919–Hurricane at Corpus Christi.

1935–April 14th ("Black Sunday") dust storm extends from Texas to southern Canada.

1937–Gas leak causes school fire at New London that kills 295.

1943–Polio epidemic.

1947–Explosion in Texas City kills more than 500.

1957–Hurricane Audrey strikes near Texas-Louisiana state line.

Population

1850	212,592
1860	604,215
1870	818,579
1880	1,591,749
1890	2,235,527
1900	3,048,710
1910	3,896,542
1920	4,663,228
1930	5,824,715
1940	6,414,824
1950	7,711,194
1960	9,579,677
1970	11,196,730
1980	14,229,191
1990	16,986,335



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Texas Vital Records

- Vital records began in some Texas counties as early as 1840s in a few cases, but the majority of counties did not keep birth and death records until it became mandatory in 1903. Marriage records for the most part began earlier. For a list of Texas county seats with the dates when vital records began being kept on the local level, see the [Ancestry.com Wiki](#).
- [Texas Department of State Health Services](#): Holds records of births and deaths from 1903. Marriage and divorce records are available from the county where the event was recorded; however, the Vital Records Department can verify marriages and divorces from the mid-1960s to 2008. Indexes of marriage applications and divorce indexes are available for download from the web site. See the vital records [FAQ](#) for more information.
- [Texas State Library and Archives – Vital statistic indexes](#): The FAQ provides information about indexes and records available at the Archives and how to request a search for a specific name.

Texas Vital Records on Ancestry.com

- [Texas Birth Index, 1903-1997](#)
- [Texas, Birth Certificates, 1903-1932](#)
- [Texas, Marriage Collection, 1814-1909 and 1966-2011 \(Indexes\)](#)
- [Texas, Divorce Index, 1968-2011](#)
- [Texas, Death Certificates, 1903-1982](#)
- [Texas Death Index, 1903-2000](#)
- [Web: Texas, Find A Grave Index, 1761-2012](#)

Other State resources

- [Texas State Library and Archives Commission](#)
 - [Texas Heritage Online](#)
- [Texas State Genealogical Society](#)
- [Texas State Historical Association](#)
 - [The Handbook of Texas Online](#)
- [Texas USGenWeb Project](#)

More Texas Resources on Ancestry.com

- [Texas, Voter Registration Lists, 1867-1869](#)

These are great because they not only place your ancestor in a particular county and precinct, it asked how long they had been in the precinct, county, and state—particularly helpful in these post-Civil War years.

No.	DATE OF REGISTRY.	NAMES	PLACE OF RESIDENCE.	PRECINCT.	TIME OF RESIDENCE.		
					IN STATE.	IN COUNTY.	IN PRECINCT.
101	Arrechea	J. M. Davis	Arrechea	Arrechea	3 yrs	3 yrs	3 yrs
102		Alonso	Arrechea	Arrechea	16	16	16
103		Alonso	Arrechea	Arrechea	16	16	16
104		Alonso	Arrechea	Arrechea	16	16	16
105		Alonso	Arrechea	Arrechea	16	16	16
106		Alonso	Arrechea	Arrechea	16	16	16
107		Alonso	Arrechea	Arrechea	16	16	16
108		Alonso	Arrechea	Arrechea	16	16	16
109		Alonso	Arrechea	Arrechea	16	16	16



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Special Collections

City Directories

Use the browse box in the upper right corner to determine what directories are available for your ancestor's area. If they lived in a rural area, check to see if that area was included with a larger city in the vicinity.

Other Collections

- Texas, Land Title Abstracts, 1700-2008
Abstracts of original titles located in the archives of the Texas General Land Office in Austin, Texas.
- Texas, Conduct Registers, 1875-1945
- Texas, Prison Employee Ledgers, 1861-1938
- Texas, Bonds and Oaths of Office, 1846-1920
Officers taking out bonds or swearing oaths included both elected and appointed public officials, and you will find records for tax assessors, county surveyors, customs officials, district clerks, district attorneys, comptrollers, sheriffs, registrars, justices of the peace, and others. The records also include oaths of loyalty to the United States required during the Reconstruction years following the Civil War.
- Texas, Memorials and Petitions, 1834-1929
In this collection you can find a lot of surprises—pension requests, stock laws, liquor levies, requests for bridges, poor relief, divorce, permission for free blacks to settle in the state, town incorporations, judicial district changes, appropriations, and myriad other items.
- Texas, Capitol Building Payroll, 1882-1888
- Texas, Court of Criminal Appeal Indexes, 1892-1947
- Texas Newspapers on Newspapers.com

[View all Texas collections on Ancestry.com](#)

