

THE CHISHOLM TRAIL



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Texas Heritage Trails Program

The Texas Historical Commission is a leader in implementing and promoting heritage tourism efforts in Texas. The Texas Heritage Trails Program is the agency's top tourism initiative.

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**TEXAS
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Other states
were
carved or born,
Texas grew
from
hide and horn.



EXPLORING THE FOLKLORE AND LEGACY

Inset photo, front cover: TxDOT.
Background photo: Courtesy King Ranch Archives,
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From the poem "Cattle" by Berta Hart Nance.
Inset photo, above: Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.



FORT WORTH CVB

The Chisholm Trail

1835-36

The Texas Revolution

1845

The United States annexes Texas as the 28th state

1861-65

The American Civil War

1867

Joseph G. McCoy establishes a cattle-shipping terminal in Abilene, Kansas

1871

Approximately 700,000 cattle reach the Kansas railhead

1880-89

The Chisholm Trail era draws to a close during the 1880s

In the decades following the Civil War, more than six million cattle were herded out of Texas in one of the greatest migrations of animals ever known. These 19th-century cattle drives laid the foundation for Texas' wildly successful cattle industry and helped elevate the state out of post-Civil War despair and poverty. Today, our search for an American identity continually leads us back to the vision of the rugged and independent men and women of the cattle drive era.

Although a number of cattle drive routes existed during this period, none have penetrated the heart of popular imagination like the Chisholm Trail. Through songs, stories and mythical tales, the Chisholm Trail has become a vital feature of American identity.

Historians have long debated aspects of the Chisholm Trail's history, including the exact route and even its name. Although they may not agree on the specifics, most would not argue that the 20 years of cattle drives was one of the most colorful periods of Texas history. The purpose of this brochure is not to resolve these debates, but rather to help heritage tourists explore the history and lore associated with the legendary cattle-driving route. We hope you find the controversy part of the intrigue, and are inspired to investigate the historic sites, museums and attractions in the highlighted cities to reach your own conclusions.

Work on the cattle trail was often a grueling and lonely affair, but cowboys were a fraternity — proud of their rugged occupation and independent lifestyle.



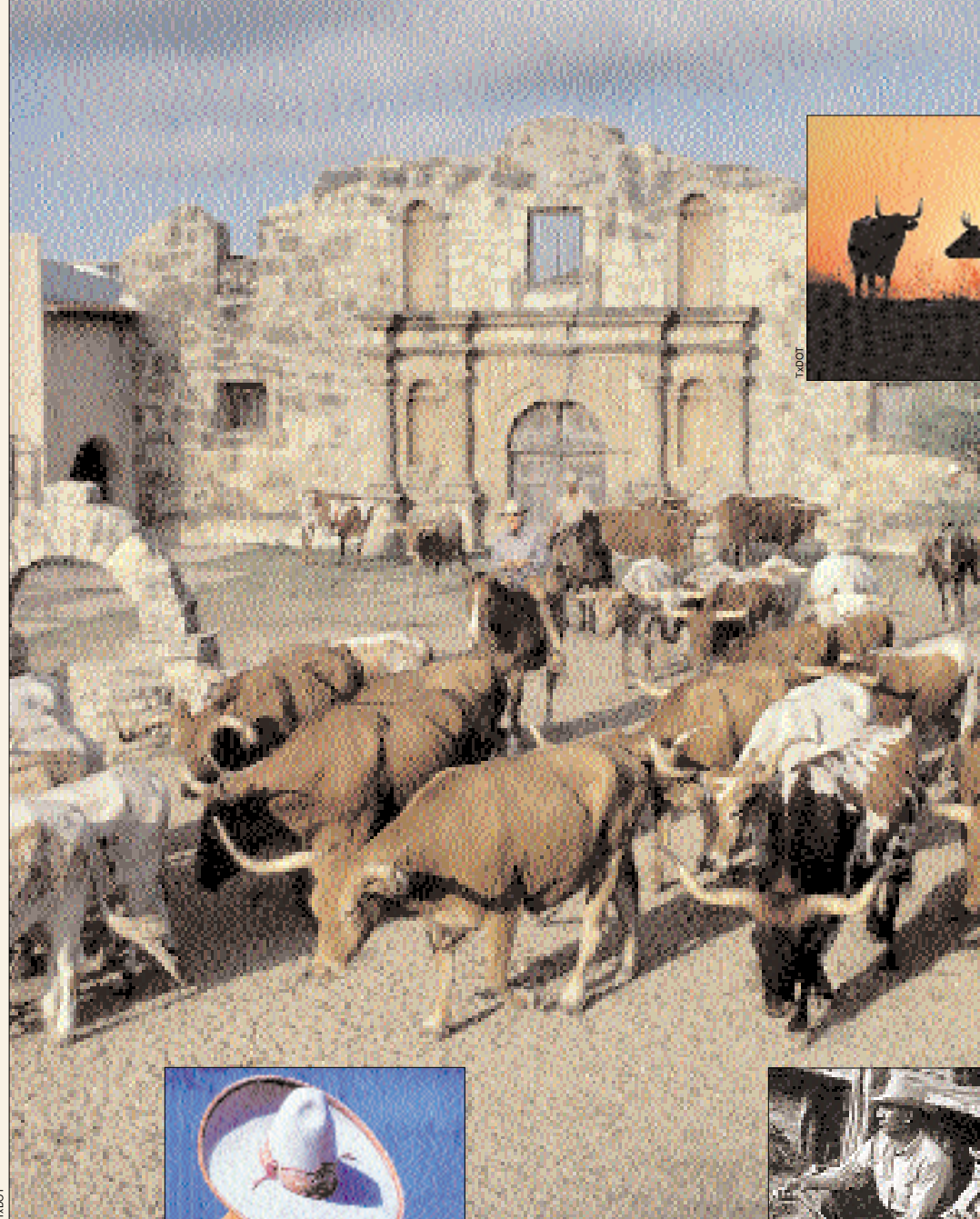
Copyright © 1992, Texas Historical Commission

The hardy breed of livestock known as the Texas Longhorn descended from Spanish Andalusian cattle brought over by early-16th-century explorers, missionaries and ranchers. By the 18th century, Spanish missions maintained the largest domesticated cattle herds, where they provided food, clothing and other products for Spaniards and Native Americans. Missions like San Antonio de Bexar and Mission Espíritu Santo were among the earliest ranches in Texas. Despite the ultimate decline of the missions, the ranches, vaqueros and Longhorns remained.

In the early 1800s, Spain lost control of the region and abandoned the area, but ranchero and vaquero traditions lingered, affecting the look, equipment and vernacular of America's cowboys. Terms like lasso, remuda, lariat, mustang, chaps and bandana became a part of everyday speech, and America's cowboys adopted the Spanish traditions of open-range ranching, branding and round-ups. After the Texas Revolution and the change in governmental control, many cattle were left to roam free in sparsely populated ranch land. Abundant food and water, and little human contact allowed the breed to adapt to the land and the cattle population grew into the millions.

**Come gather 'round me boys,
And I'll tell you a tale,
All about my troubles
On the old Chisholm Trail.**

— Lyrics from "The Old Chisholm Trail"



A drive across Texas offers travelers many opportunities to view the Longhorn, a Texas icon.

Fascination with the Longhorn has romanticized the animal, as evidenced by this movie set, left, in Bracketville.

Below, three generations of vaqueros work side-by-side at the King Ranch near Kingsville.



Heritage festivals, like the one shown left, commemorate the importance of the vaquero, a Spanish or Mexican cowboy.



KING RANCH, INC. ARCHIVES, KINGSVILLE, TEXAS

THE CATTLE MARKETS

As early as the 1840s, cattlemen searched out profitable markets for the Longhorns, but options were few. Some coastal ranchers shipped Longhorns on Morgan steamers or trailed herds overland to New Orleans and Shreveport. Other cattlemen drove their animals west to California to feed hungry gold miners, or to frontier forts and Indian reservations west of Fort Worth. During the Civil War, a handful of cattle drivers moved herds to hungry Confederate soldiers and civilians, but while a few cattle markets existed, they were meager in comparison to the overwhelming supply of cattle in Texas. By 1860, there were more than six times as many cattle as people in Texas. “Then dawned a time in Texas,” remarked one prominent cattleman, “that a man’s poverty was estimated by the number of cattle he possessed.”

Ultimately, the solution for Texas cattlemen rested directly north, where railroads snaking back to meat packing centers in the east were beginning to be established. As early as the 1840s, a major route (commonly referred to as the Shawnee Trail) extended out of Texas and into southern Missouri and south-eastern Kansas. Local dread over “Texas fever” — a tick-borne disease carried on Texas cattle that often sickened or killed local stock — led to the obstruction of Texas herds from entering or passing through many midwestern locales. Protective laws blocking the import of Texas Longhorns to sections of the Midwest, coupled with a surge of frontier settlement, ultimately forced the cattle trails further west.

In 1867, an Illinois livestock dealer named Joseph G. McCoy, working with the Kansas-Pacific Railroad, established a cattle-shipping terminal in Abilene, Kansas. McCoy knew that \$2 Longhorns in Texas were worth nearly 10 times that amount in the booming North. He was the first to exploit the expanding railroads to move the cattle to distant markets. To reach McCoy’s new shipping yard, cattle drivers used a route blazed by trader Jesse Chisholm, which extended from Wichita, Kansas, across the Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma) to the Red River. As a result, his name is indelibly linked to the great movement of Longhorns from South Texas to central Kansas.

The establishment of a cattle terminal along the newly laid railroad line in central Kansas was a perfect solution for Texas cattlemen. The route “up



Joseph G. McCoy

DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

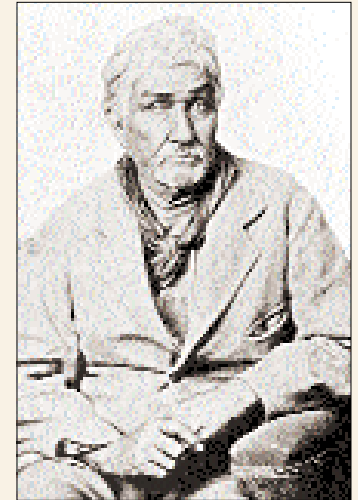
**By the grace of God,
we will make this
thing work.**

— Anonymous Texan, quoted in Alan M. Hoyt’s
History of the Texas Longhorn

the trail” to Abilene, Chisholm’s trail, skirted far enough west to avoid troublesome settlers and exploited a loophole in Texas fever laws. Joseph McCoy’s vision proved to be a spectacular success. In a few short years, millions of Longhorn cattle poured out of Texas. In 1871 alone, approximately 700,000 cattle

reached the Kansas railhead. Abilene was the first of the Kansas railway destinations, but as settlers advanced farther west, alternative shipping depots opened in other Kansas cities, such as Ellsworth, Newton and Wichita.

In Texas, there was no single route to the destination points in central Kansas, but the various starting points and tributary routes typically entered a main cattle drive stream that surged north toward Austin, Waco and Fort Worth before crossing the Red River at Spanish Fort or Red River Station. Until the second half of the 1870s — when Dodge City became the preeminent destination for Texas herds and forced trail driving even further west — the Chisholm Trail dominated the cattle-driving scene. It was during this period that Texas truly became a land of cattle kings and the image of the American cowboy first seeped into national consciousness.



Jesse Chisholm

THE OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



CHISHOLM OR CHISUM?

Jesse Chisholm —

The trail's namesake, he was an Indian trader who blazed a route from Wichita, Kansas, across the Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma) to the Red River. Later, cattlemen used the route to transport their cattle to profitable northern markets.

Thorton Chisholm —

A Texas trail driver from DeWitt County, he led an ambitious drive to St. Joseph, Missouri.

John Chisum —

A Texas cowman, he drove herds to Shreveport during the Civil War, supplying the South with beef. He established a ranch on the Concho River at the war's end and eventually ended up in New Mexico.

THE CHISHOLM TRAIL

Over the years, this popular trail-driving route was known by various names including:

- The Abilene Trail
- The Cattle Trail
- The Eastern Trail
- The Great Texas Cattle Trail
- The Kansas Trail
- McCoy's Trail

FORT WORTH CVB

THE END OF THE TRAIL

Trail drivers' reliance on the Chisholm Trail began to decline as early as the 1870s, less than a decade after Joseph McCoy established the shipping point at Abilene. This decline occurred for a variety of reasons:

- The construction of new rail lines to Texas
- The development of barbed wire and the establishment of homestead laws that closed off the open range
- A public demand for better grades of beef
- An oversupply of Longhorns, which glutted the market
- Texas fever quarantines in Kansas and Missouri

By the late 1880s, driving cattle north from Texas was no longer profitable and declined rapidly. Almost as quickly as the route to Abilene was established, the era of open-range cattle driving came to a close — the end of the Chisholm Trail had been reached.



TRUOT

The invention of barbed wire stopped roaming cattle and ultimately contributed to the end of the trail-driving era.



In cowtowns, cattle were driven into large pens then herded into railway cars along runways and ramps. Drawing left, courtesy General Research Division, the New York Public Library.

THE TEXAS COWBOY

From the end of the Civil War until the mid-1880s, tens of thousands of cowboys rode the cattle trails. Not all cowhands made the trek northward, but as one Lockhart drover put it, a man did not graduate from cowboy school until he “lit out” on at least one long ride. On the trail, few cowboys lived up to the rough and rowdy, drinking and brawling image popularized later in books, songs and movies. A cowhand had to be dependable under harsh conditions, quick to act and knowledgeable of Longhorn instincts. The cowboy was most often a hard-working laborer and nearly one in three were either Mexican or African American. A few adventurous young women also made the journey, sometimes disguised as boys.

When trail drivers reached their destination, a semblance of the popular cowboy image frequently surfaced. It was not uncommon for pistol shots to ring out in saloons and gambling halls in cowtowns like Fort Worth or Abilene after grueling months on the trail. For a cowboy, going up the trail at least once in a lifetime was an enviable distinction, one that separated him from the average ranch-bound cowhand. The drives

brought hardship and danger, but rewarded the cowboy with high adventure, cowtown celebrations and financial gain.



JOSEPH G. MCCOY'S HISTORICAL SKETCHES OF THE CATTLE TRADE



TKDOT

Cowboy garb fit the grueling tasks. The wide-brimmed hat, bandana, boots, spurs and chaps offered protection under the harshest conditions.

**I woke up one morning on the old Chisholm Trail,
Rope in my hand and a cow by the tail.
Feet in the stirrups and seat in the saddle,
I hung and rattled with them Longhorn cattle.**



— Lyrics from “The Old Chisholm Trail”



A few daring women drove cattle up the trail, some disguised as boys and others drove their own herds.

Former enslaved Africans and their descendents often sought opportunity on the trails after the Civil War.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Cattle drives usually started in early spring with herds numbering in the thousands. The drives moved at a pace of 10 to 12 miles a day from water hole to water hole and took three to four months to complete. Depending on the landscape, a cattle trail could span several miles to — at some river crossings — the width of a few Longhorns. Often weather, access to water and the availability of feeding grass altered the routes.

A large herd could require 12 men or more, with several saddle horses for each man. The trail boss — either a ranch crew member or a hired drover — organized and led the affair. He selected specific routes and rode ahead in search of water, grass and suitable campgrounds. The cook and his chuck wagon also moved ahead of the herds to make sure the meals and “ink-black” coffee were ready when the cowboys settled in for the evening. To protect and guide cattle along the trail, cowboys took the role of point men, swing men, flankers and drag men around the moving herds.

Many dangers faced cattle drivers and cowboys. Stampedes, caused by anything from lightning to a cowboy’s sneeze, were a common threat. A thunderstorm near Waco in 1876, for instance, caused a herd of 15,000 Longhorns to plunge into a steep ravine, killing several thousand cattle and injuring many riders.

Crossing rivers was always a dangerous affair, and blizzards, prairie fires and predatory animals presented risks as well.



TUDOT



The cook, or coosie, shown left on this vintage postcard, was second in charge behind the trail boss. His meals were often the main ingredients for making the harsh drives tolerable.



TUDOT

Bread, biscuits and pies were commonly baked in a Dutch oven, a large, heavy pot. The cook placed burning coals under the pot and on top of its lid, allowing the food to cook from both sides.

MENU

BREAKFAST

bread or biscuits, coffee

LUNCH

chili or stew, bread, water or coffee

SUPPER

steak with beans, potatoes with gravy, biscuits, water or coffee

All day on the prairie in the saddle I ride
Not even a dog, boys, to trot by my side.
My fire I kindle with chips gathered round
And boil my own coffee without being ground.
I wash in a puddle and wipe on a sack,
I carry my wardrobe right here
on my back.



— “A Cowboy Song,” *Life on the Trail*

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Barbed wire: Fence wire that has sharp points

Boomtown: A town that grew quickly in population

Branding: The act of marking an animal's hide

Bronco buster: A cowboy who captures and tames wild horses

Chuck wagon: A wagon that carried food, supplies and cooking equipment on trail drives

Cow pony: A horse that has been tamed

Drag rider: A cowboy who rides at the rear of the herd to keep it moving

Dutch oven: A large, covered pot that was heated from the bottom and the top

Flank rider: A cowboy who rides at the side of the herd to keep it from spreading out

Open range: A large area of open grazing land

Point rider: A cowboy who rides at the front of the herd on a trail drive

Railhead: The end of a railway line

Remuda: The extra horses taken on the trail drive

Roundup: The act of collecting and sorting cattle for a trail drive

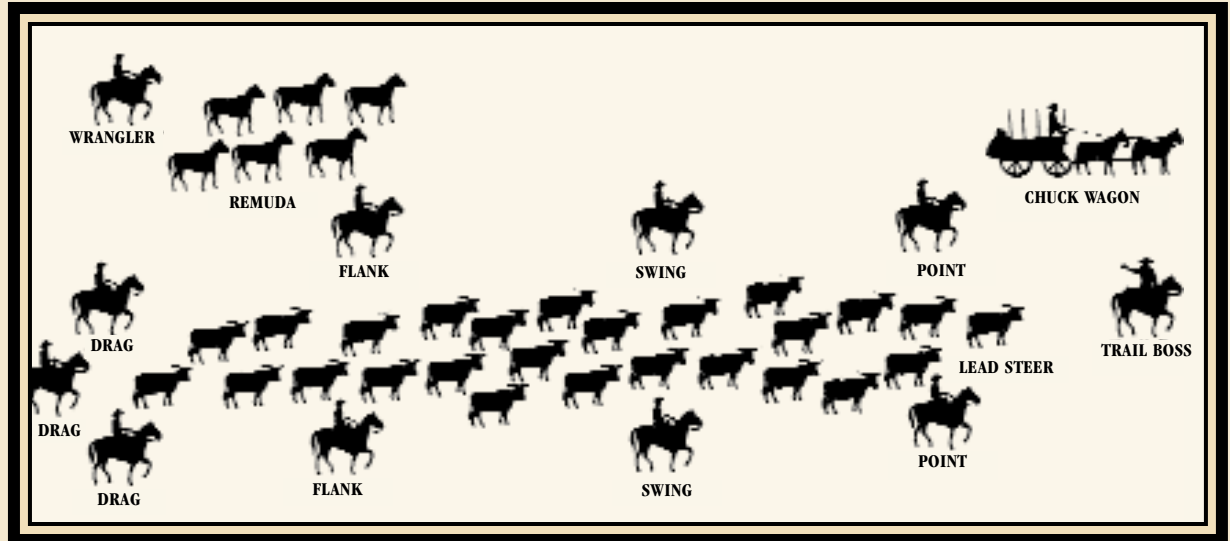
Stampede: (n) An event in which startled cattle suddenly run in all directions

Swing rider: A cowboy who rides alongside a herd to turn it in the right direction

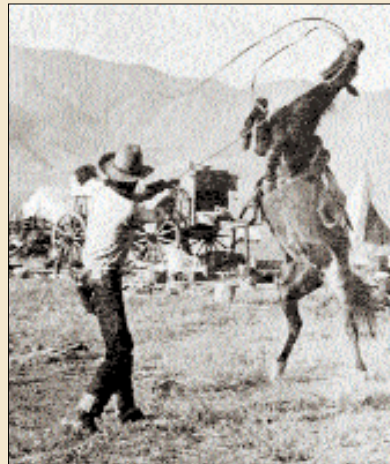
Texas fever: A disease carried by ticks that infected and killed cattle

Trail boss: The cowboy in charge of all other cowboys and cattle on the trail drive

Wrangler: The cowboy in charge of the remuda on the trail



Cowboys often advanced the herd in a formation shown in this diagram. While the trail boss rode ahead to scout for water and pasture, the cowhands rotated among the other positions.



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The wrangler, above, was an expert horseman in charge of controlling and tending to the remuda. Photo from *Trail Driving Days* by Dee Brown and Martin F. Schmitt.

The development of barbed wire closed off the open range and was a factor in the decline of the Chisholm Trail.



TADOT



Branding, left, is still the chosen method for marking cattle to identify ownership.

Glossary of Terms from *Life on the Trail*, reprinted with permission of Crabtree Publishing Company.

A cattle drive across a state as big as Texas must have seemed like an eternity to the men and women who made the journey. Although some of the following communities did not exist during the Chisholm Trail era, cowboys drove their herds through the vicinity, and ranching and cattle driving are part of the regional heritage.

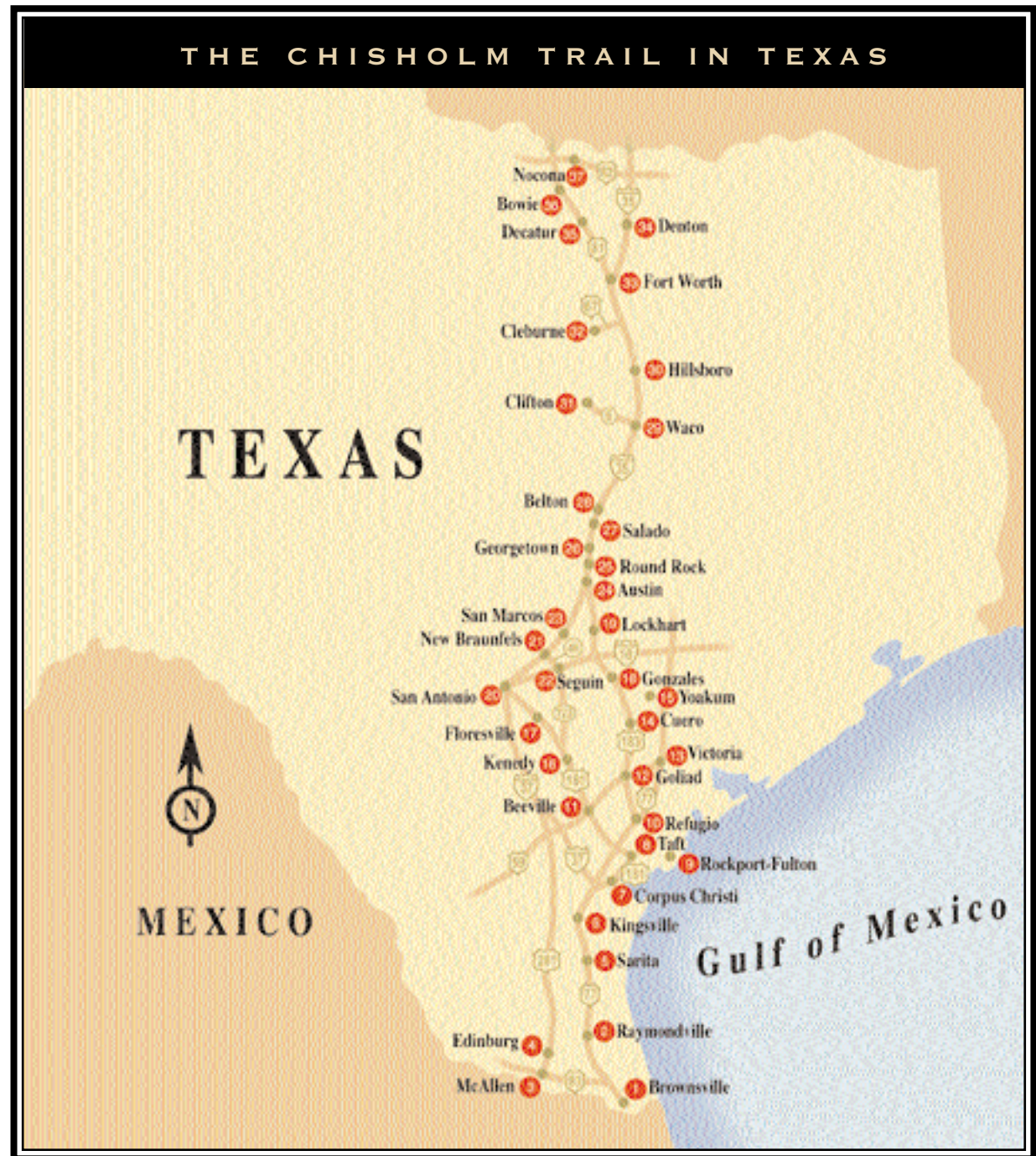
While it is impossible to list all the towns that played a role in the Chisholm Trail, these offer tourist attractions for today's visitors to experience and explore its history.

1 BROWNSVILLE

Cattle barons Richard King and Mifflin Kenedy, along with Charles Stillman, the founder of Brownsville, first earned their riches as Rio Grande steamboat captains. After the Mexican War, Stillman purchased portions of the massive Garza land grant north of Matamoros, Mexico, to start his new town. He later sold the ranch north of Brownsville to his partner Mifflin Kenedy. Today, the notable Stillman House and Museum in Brownsville is open for tours. To learn more about the city's rich military and ranching history, visit the Historic Brownsville Museum in the Old Southern Pacific Railroad Depot.



Stillman House and Museum



2 RAYMONDVILLE

Vast land grants linked the rich ranching history of Willacy County with Cameron, Hidalgo and Kenedy counties. Raymondville, the county seat and the county's largest city, remains a ranching and farming town. Visitors enjoy the annual Willacy County Livestock Show and Rodeo in January and the Riders/Ropers Rodeo each September.

3 McALLEN

Further west in Hidalgo County, U.S. 83 passes through historic ranchland and the city of McAllen, founded within the boundaries of the historic McAllen Ranch. The McAllen International Museum showcases traveling and permanent art exhibits, as well as science and natural history activities.

4 EDINBURG

Learn more about the rich history of the Rio Grande Valley at the Hidalgo County Historical Museum in Edinburg. Permanent exhibits feature Coahuiltecan Indians, Spanish colonialism and ranching history.



Hidalgo County Historical Museum

5 SARITA

As Anglo Americans settled in the region, tensions often flared between Mexican and Anglo ranchers, and cattle "skinning" raids were not uncommon. The immense King and Kenedy ranches cover much of Kenedy County, named after the pioneer rancher Mifflin Kenedy. The Kenedy Ranch, with 235,000 pristine acres, offers organized tours where visitors can view hundreds of birds and wildlife.



Green Jay, Kenedy Ranch

6 KINGSVILLE

The legendary King Ranch encompasses 825,000 acres across three coastal counties in an area larger than Rhode Island. Riverboat captain Richard King and Texas Ranger captain Gideon K. Lewis founded the ranch in 1853 along Santa Gertrudis Creek. The men purchased the Rincón de Santa Gertrudis land grant, established a "cow camp" and developed the land into one of the most influential, longstanding and sizable ranches in the world. The King Ranch, a National Historic Landmark, offers daily tours featuring the history of the ranch and its operations. Visitors can access the ranch from State Hwy. 141 West in Kingsville. After the tour, view an impressive collection of mementos from the well-known ranch at the King Ranch Museum, located in a renovated circa 1904 ice factory in downtown Kingsville.



King Ranch

7 CORPUS CHRISTI

By the 1860s, with more than 56,000 head of cattle, the industry was flourishing in Nueces County. The area became a gathering place for area trail drivers, and in the early 1870s, 10 meat-packing plants operated in the county. Corpus Christi emerged as a prominent gulf port that shipped cattle to New Orleans. The Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History delights visitors with exhibits on natural history, Gulf Coast artifacts and wildlife dioramas, including a display dedicated to cattle and horses. After viewing the museum's horse exhibit, visitors can try their hand at riding one at Mustang Island State Park.



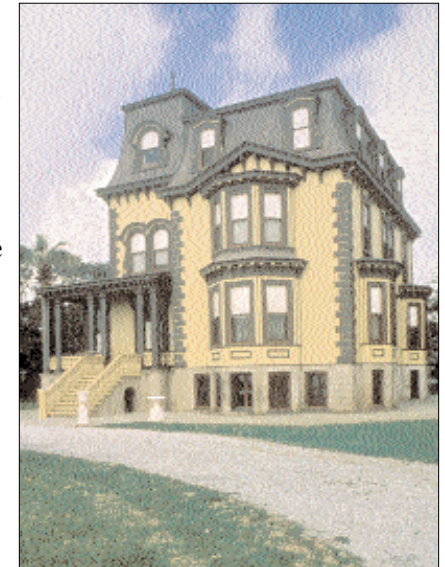
Mustang Island State Park

8 TAFT

In 1871, George Fulton, Thomas Coleman, Thomas Mathis and J.M. Mathis formed the Coleman, Mathis, Fulton Pasture Company, which built range fences and introduced new crops to South Texas. The Taft Ranch, as their holdings became known, was one of the largest cattle companies in Texas. The company's former headquarters now houses the Taft Blackland Museum. Exhibits range from antique farm and ranch equipment to early settler artifacts, as well as authentic memorabilia from the Taft Ranch.

9 ROCKPORT-FULTON

The cities of Rockport-Fulton were established in the 1860s as two separate cities. Rockport was a shipping point for hides, wool, bones and tallow. Area rancher George Ware Fulton settled the town that was named after him. The Fulton Mansion State Historic Site in Fulton is an outstanding example of the French Second Empire style of architecture.



Fulton Mansion State Historic Site

10 REFUGIO

During the Chisholm Trail era, Refugio was a thriving market for livestock produced in the area. Today, its proud ranching heritage is displayed at the Refugio County Museum, which provides an in-depth look at the history of the area and houses ranching artifacts, as well as Native American memorabilia.

11 BEEVILLE

To the Irish colonists who migrated to the Bee County area in the 1860s, the land was “stockmen’s paradise,” with more than 60,000 cattle. Drought in the early 1870s killed nearly half of them. Today, Bee, Refugio and Goliad counties host a rotating ranching heritage festival every April.

12 GOLIAD

The first great cattle ranch in Texas traces its beginnings to Nuestra Señora del Espíritu Santo de Zuñiga Mission, situated at what was to become the city of Goliad. The mission and nearby Presidio La Bahía, both established in 1721, comprise the only Spanish Colonial fort-mission complex left standing in the United States. Together they once controlled nearly 20,000 branded cattle, and even more unbranded ones. Visit Espíritu Santo at Goliad State Historic Site on U.S. 183. Presidio La Bahía stands nearby.



Presidio La Bahía

13 VICTORIA

One of the largest producers of cattle during the Chisholm Trail era, Victoria was home to many cattle drivers that ventured up the trail. One trail driver was Margaret Heffernan-Borland, one of few women to ride the trail. She left Victoria in the spring of 1873 and led a drive to Wichita, Kansas. Borland completed the drive, but died a few days later from an illness known as “trail fever.” She was returned to Texas and buried in Victoria. The Museum of the Coastal Bend, opening fall 2002, will highlight the history of Victoria and the surrounding region, including ranching exhibits.

14 CUERO

In 1866, trail boss Thornton Chisholm (not to be confused with trader Jesse Chisholm) gathered a herd belonging to Crockett Cardwell at Cardwell Flats and drove them north to Kansas and Missouri. Cuero offers attractions for visitors, including the DeWitt County Historical Museum, the Cuero Heritage Museum and the Cuero Livestock Show every March.



Cuero Heritage Museum

15 YOAKUM

Visitors to the “Leather Capital of the World,” learn about the city’s unique history at the Heritage Museum, which features a room commemorating the leather industry from the cattle-drive era to the present. The Land of Leather Days Festival, held in February, salutes this important industry.

16 KENEDY

The Karnes County area was originally part of a royal Spanish grant. In the 19th century, rancher Mifflin Kenedy purchased land to found the city of Kenedy. Today, the area east of Kenedy is the 33 Ranch, a 10,000-acre operation active since the 19th century. With more than 25 miles of scenic trails, the ranch is a popular place for visitors to hike, ride horseback, camp and experience ranch life.

17 FLORESVILLE

John Oatman Dewees, a leading cattleman during the trail driving years, owned a prominent ranch in Wilson and Atascosa counties. He partnered with James F. Ellison in 1869, and together they moved a total of more than 400,000 cattle up the trail by 1877. The ruins of Rancho de las Cabras are four miles south of Floresville, at the junction of Pico Creek and the San Antonio River.

The ruins, originally a colonial ranch associated with Mission Espada near San Antonio, are now part of San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.

18 GONZALES

By 1870, 75,000 head of cattle roamed the open prairies of Gonzales County. Many local herds combined with cattle originating further south and east, and passed through on their trek north up the Chisholm Trail. In Gonzales, originally laid out with Spanish-style plazas, visitors can view a pre-Civil War college and homes built in the days of the Cattle Kingdom. At Pioneer Village Living History Center, experience pioneer life at a restored blacksmith shop, a broom factory, an 1830s log cabin and an 1870s cypress-sided church.



Pioneer Village Living History Center

19 LOCKHART

Vast herds of cattle moving north on the Chisholm Trail passed through Caldwell County. Two routes converged here, one heading north from Lockhart and another through the northwest corner of the county along the old San Antonio-Nacogdoches Road. In Lockhart, the Caldwell County Museum houses county memorabilia and offers exhibits detailing its involvement in the cattle-driving era. Lockhart, known as the “Barbecue Capital of Texas,” celebrates its heritage at the Chisholm Trail Roundup and Kiwanis Rodeo the second weekend in June each year. The festival has events and activities for everyone, including a fiddling contest, barbecue cook-off, parade and rodeo.

20 SAN ANTONIO

Drivers herding South Texas cattle north on the Chisholm Trail, and later toward Dodge City on the Western Trail, gathered their herds near San Antonio before starting their long journey. San Antonio is home to the Trail Drivers Association, organized in 1915 under the leadership of George W. Saunders. This mecca for Chisholm Trail enthusiasts offers the Texas Pioneers, Trail Drivers and Rangers Museum. The museum's Trail Drivers room, housed in historic Memorial Hall, provides an impressive collection of photographs, spurs, branding irons, saddles and other memorabilia related to drovers and the long cattle drives. For a taste of the Old West and wildlife exhibits from all over the world, visit the 1881 Buckhorn Saloon and Museum. Sip a soda or a longneck as you stroll through 33,000 square feet of Texas history artifacts and thrilling wildlife exhibits.



Buckhorn Saloon and Museum

TxDOT

21 NEW BRAUNFELS

Pressing north past San Antonio, Longhorns on the Chisholm Trail journeyed toward New Braunfels and Austin on a route that roughly parallels I-H 35. The rolling hills and the Guadalupe River attract hundreds of thousands of visitors to New Braunfels every year. Rich in German heritage, this town takes history and culture seriously. Chisholm Trail trekkers can tour the Sophienburg Museum featuring exhibits on the history of the area.

22 SEGUIN

Laid out in 1838 by a group of volunteers known as the Gonzales Rangers, Seguin is one of Texas' oldest towns. Stop in at the historic Moore House, whose original owner provided horses from the 27,000-acre El Capote Ranch for Theodore Roosevelt and his Rough Riders during the Spanish-American War.

23 SAN MARCOS

The springs of the San Marcos River quenched the thirst of thousands of cattle on their way up the trail. For a closer look, climb aboard a glass-bottom boat at Aquarena Center, an environmental and nature center situated at the headwaters of the river. Downtown, visitors can drive by the Ragsdale-Jackman-Yarbrough Home on West San Antonio Street, once owned by a prominent cattle driver who made more than a dozen treks up the trail.

24 AUSTIN

Herds of Chisholm Trail cattle crossed the Colorado River near Austin. Prominent Texas cattleman Col. Jesse Driskill settled here in the 1870s and established the landmark Driskill Hotel a decade later. Visitors to Austin can stay at the restored historic hotel for a closer look at a bygone era.



Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum

JIM BONNAR

Nearby sits the Littlefield Building, constructed by George Littlefield, a prominent cattleman, banker and philanthropist who drove cattle on the trail. The Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum features state-of-the-art exhibits and interactive experiences that trace Texas history, including extensive memorabilia dedicated to Texas' trail-driving days.

25 ROUND ROCK

Herds traveling through this area took several routes, but typically crossed Brushy Creek in Round Rock near the famous circular limestone rock that marked the low-water crossing point. Early wheel ruts from the wagons of settlers and cattlemen are still visible on the creek bottom today. The Chisholm Trail Historic District preserves many structures from "Old Town" Round Rock.

26 GEORGETOWN

Cattle that passed farther north typically crossed the San Gabriel River near Georgetown. Today, families can relax along the same river in San Gabriel Park or explore Georgetown's quaint historic town square, home to the distinctive Williamson County Courthouse.

27 SALADO

The limestone springs and abundant fish in Salado made the area a popular site for Indians, explorers, settlers and cattle drivers. Herds pushed through the heart of town and crossed Salado Creek at the springs near the present city bridge. The historic section of town offers fine dining and shopping nestled among handsome old houses.



Salado Creek

TxDOT

28 BELTON

Founded in 1850, Belton grew as a trading center for nearby farms and ranches. Its merchants made the city a favorite rest stop for cowboys herding Longhorns up the Chisholm Trail. Visitors can explore exciting exhibits that document the county's settlement and ranching history at the award-winning Bell County Historical Museum, housed in a restored beaux-arts-style building constructed as a Carnegie library in 1904.



Bell County Historical Museum

29 WACO

Large numbers of cattle moving along the Chisholm Trail crossed the Brazos River in Waco. The city's historic suspension bridge, completed in 1870, provided — for a toll — a convenient means for cattlemen to move herds across the wide river. The Waco Suspension Bridge, a National Historic Landmark, remains a centerpiece of the city. The Riverwalk, extending from the bridge to Fort Fisher Park and the popular Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, offers picnic spots and beautiful views of the Brazos River. The Mayborn Museum Complex at Baylor University amazes visitors with its extensive historical and cultural collections. The complex encompasses the Strecker Museum, an archive dedicated to geological, biological and anthropological collections; the Gov. Bill and Vera Daniel Historic Village, a turn-of-the-century Texas village with more than 20 buildings; and the Ollie Mae Moen Discovery Center, a hands-on activity center for children of all ages.



Waco Suspension Bridge

30 HILLSBORO

Cattle herds headed north through the northwest corner of Hill County and pushed on toward Fort Worth. Near present-day Lake Whitney, Kimball Bend Park is a reminder of Kimball's Crossing, an important cattle route. Today, it's a popular spot for boating, fishing and camping. Hillsboro, "The Antique Capital of I-35," was established in 1853 as a

principal trade center. Today, it boasts a restored courthouse, a bustling downtown square and magnificent Victorian homes.

31 CLIFTON

This city, situated along the Bosque River, was twice designated as one of the top 100 art communities in the nation. Several Clifton artists are members of the prestigious Cowboy Artists of America, and art shows are common. Clifton comes alive in July with competition and attractions at the Central Texas Fair and Rodeo.



Hill County Courthouse

32 CLEBURNE

In Johnson County, cattlemen often camped in the area now occupied by Cleburne State Park, located eight miles north of Kimball's Bend. The 498-acre park encompasses a 116-acre spring-fed lake, making it an ideal campsite for cowboys and cattle. While in Cleburne, visit the Layland Museum, which houses county and Texana relics.



Mural at Sundance Square

33 FORT WORTH

Fort Worth is branded Texas' premiere "cowtown," and rightly so. Herds of cattle that originated throughout the Chisholm corridor and South Texas poured through this location on their way up the trail. The Stockyards National Register Historic District is home to The Livestock Exchange Building, the Coliseum and the Stockyards Station. Twice daily, cowboys drive Longhorn cattle along Exchange Avenue. Don't miss the trailblazing "Texas Gold" bronze statue commemorating trail drives or the statue of Bill Pickett, African American rodeo star. Special events in the Stockyards include the Red Steagall Cowboy Gathering. In historic Sundance Square, the Chisholm Trail Mural — painted across the entire side of a Main Street building — provides a handsome backdrop for the area's numerous dining, shopping and cultural attractions.

Tarrant County Courthouse, Fort Worth



FORT WORTH CVB

The Cattle Raisers Museum is an essential stop for those interested in the history of the cattle and ranching industry in Texas. Interactive exhibits and a vast array of cowboy and ranching artifacts entertain cowboys and cowgirls alike. In Fort Worth's Cultural District, visit the Amon Carter Museum as well as the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame, which highlights the importance of women in ranching and houses a theater, state-of-the-art kiosks and a hands-on children's area.



Cattle Raisers Museum

34 DENTON

Established in 1857, Denton delights heritage tourists with its museums and historic homes. The Denton County Historical Museum displays artifacts and memorabilia depicting life at the turn of the century. The Denton County Courthouse-on-the-Square Museum, housed in the stately 1896 historic courthouse, recalls Denton's history through a variety of exhibits including numerous artifacts from area ranches.



35 DECATUR

In the late 1860s, merchants provided local ranchers with supplies and a market for their products. The Waggoner Mansion, or "El Castile," was built by cattle baron Dan Waggoner and overlooks the historic downtown. Children compete in Texas' largest Youth Fair and Rodeo, held here the first full week in April.

36 BOWIE

At Red River Station and Spanish Fort, Texas cattle heading to Abilene and other Kansas shipping points crossed the Red River into Oklahoma. Here, the Chisholm Trail Memorial Park pays tribute to the trail-driving era. A herd of nine life-size Longhorns and two roving cowboys recall those early cattle drives. Bowie also pays tribute to its ranching heritage through festivals and events including the Bowie Championship Pro Rodeo in May and Jim Bowie Days in June.



Rodeo Bull Rider

37 NOCONA

Nocona is internationally recognized for its high-quality saddles, boots and other leather goods. In June, the city hosts Western Swing Weekend. In September, the annual Chisholm Trail Ranch Rodeo is held at the Chisholm Trail Rodeo Arena, which highlights local cowboys demonstrating their horseback skills and talents in competition with other area ranch teams.

The trail-driving era in Texas created a land of cattle kings and made the cowboy an American icon. Today, relive the Chisholm Trail through museum exhibits and events.

INTERESTED IN SEEING MORE?

The cattle industry is an important part of Texas' heritage. The following attractions in other parts of the state highlight ranching history:

Fort Griffin State Park and Historic Site

1701 N. U.S. Hwy. 283, Albany
915/762-3592
www.tpwd.state.tx.us

George Ranch Historical Park

10215 FM 762, Richmond
281/343-0218
www.georgeranch.org

Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park

100 Lady Bird Lane, Johnson City
830/868-7128
www.nps.gov/lyjo/index.htm

National Ranching Heritage Center at Texas Tech University

3121 Fourth Street, Lubbock
806/742-0498
www.ttu.edu/RanchingHeritageCenter



George Ranch Historical Park



Wise County Courthouse, Decatur

THE CHISHOLM TRAIL



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Texas Heritage Trails Program

The Texas Historical Commission is a leader in implementing and promoting heritage tourism efforts in Texas. The Texas Heritage Trails Program is the agency's top tourism initiative.

For additional copies of this brochure, contact:



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Other states
were
carved or born,
Texas grew
from
hide and horn.



EXPLORING THE FOLKLORE AND LEGACY

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From the poem "Cattle" by Berta Hart Nance.
Inset photo, above: Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.