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## WELCOME

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Located just minutes off I-10, Gonzales has a quaint small-town charm, yet is located close to Texas' biggest cities and all the amenities of big city life. Gonzales is centrally located one hour south of the state capital of Austin, an hour east of San Antonio, and just under two hours west of Houston. We have the perfect location for you to "Come and Visit" or to "Come and Live" deep in the heart of Texas.



PUBLISHER Lew Cohn

STAFF WRITER Vandy Van Epps

BOOKKEEPER Sanya Simmons

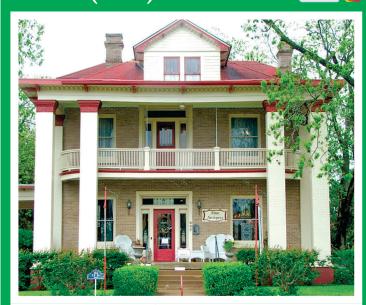
EDITORIAL DESIGN Marissa Ferreira

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Louis Decker (1977-2022).

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## HISTORY

# LEARN THE ORIGINS OF

# COME AND

The Come and Take It Celebration commemorates the firing of the first shot of the Texas revolution on Oct. 2, 1835, which took place near Gonzales. Come and help us celebrate history with the firing of the first shot!

he town of Gonzales was established by Empresario Green DeWitt in 1825, two and one-half miles east of the confluence of the San Marcos and Guadalupe Rivers. It was the westernmost Anglo settlement until the close of the

Texas Revolution and was named in honor of Don Rafael Gonzales, provisional governor of Coahuila, Mexico and Texas. The town was laid out in the shape of a cross, with seven squares.

During the colonial period of 1825 to

1835, there were many problems with Comanche and Tonkawa Indians, but Gonzales flourished. It was the thriving capital of the DeWitt colony by 1833. In 1831

the Mexican government loaned the citizens of Gonzales a sixpound cannon for protection against the Indians.

Under the leadership of Gen. Santa Anna, the government of Mexico was transformed into a military dictatorship, ignoring the Constitution of 1824, which had cost many lives and had secured liberties not previously enjoyed by the people. The state of Coahuila did not cooperate with Santa Anna's plans, and the state of Zacatecas rebelled, but was brutally crushed by the military. One of Santa Anna's "reforms" was to reduce the number of the

was to reduce the number of the militia to one soldier for every 500 inhabitants.

This arbitrary decree was a sufficient justification of Texas for her subsequent acts. Everyone



# Texas' Oldest Continuously Operated Weekly

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Gönzale Inquirer



Inquirer

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The Gonzales Inquirer, circa 1945



Gonsales

Bonzale

Judge Bird pr retirement aft

The Gonzales Inquirer, today

For 170 years, the Gonzales Inquirer has been a vital part of life in our county. Whether it has been our coverage of local politics, news, sports, births or obituaries, we have been the chronicler of life and history in this wonderful community for 170 continuous years, making us the oldest continuously operated weekly newspaper in Texas. We are proud of our history, just like we our proud of the glorious history of Gonzales in helping shape the formation of the great state of Texas. From the first shot fired to start the Texas Revolution to the Immortal 32, we are honored to be a part of this historic town. As we enter into our 171st year of continuous operation, we have rededicated ourselves to providing the best and most comprehensive news, sports and feature coverage ever provided to our community. In the past few years, the Inquirer has been awarded five first place awards for editorial writing, column writing, news coverage and headline writing along with 16 other awards for quality newspapering by the Texas Press Association or South Texas Press Association. Whether it's entertainment, community events, high school sports, or local news coverage, the Gonzales Inquirer is your indispensable source of news, information and business advertising for Gonzales County. See for yourself by subscribing, or follow us online at www.gonzalesinguirer.com or like us on Facebook to stay abreast of everything that is happening in our charming community. To subscribe to either our print or online digital version of the Gonzales Inquirer, call us at 830-672-2861 or go online at www.gonzalesinquirer.com to sign up. If you want to advertise or place a classified, call 830-672-2861 and we will bend over backwards to take care of your business needs. We are proud to be the community newspaper of Gonzales County. Come and Grow with us.

Lew Cohn, Publisher

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## HISTORY

who knows the Texans, or who has heard of them, would naturally conclude that they never would submit to be disarmed.

Along the coast Mexican garrisons stepped up their campaign to stop smuggling and collect customs duties. At Galveston they seized the Texas schooner Martha, loaded with supplies for the colonists. A message taken from a careless Mexican courier hinted that even more troops were on the way. Angrily the settlers burned some lumber ordered by newcomer Captain Tenorio at Anahuac.

William B. Travis had a better idea. Late in June he raised a company of 25 men and marched on Tenorio's headquarters. He dramatically gave the Mexicans 15 minutes to surrender or be put to the sword. Tenorio quickly capitulated.

Santa Anna decided that this was the time to finish off his enemies. During August he poured more troops into Texas and told his brother-in-law, General Martin Perfecto de Cos, to take personal command. Cos ordered the arrest of Travis and several other Texas troublemakers.

The Mexican leaders completely misinterpreted the situation. The Texans' real goal was to build a secure future without outside interference. They rebuked Travis because he seemed to be inviting a fight. Now they saw an infinitely greater threat: martial law, military occupation, the arrest of good friends.

Committees of safety sprang up in every town. The highly influential Telegraph and Texas Register hammered away for liberty and freedom. Then on Sept. 1 came an electrifying development — Stephen F. Austin suddenly reappeared from Mexican imprisonment.

Next week 1,000 people jammed the banquet given in his honor in Brazoria. The room fell silent as the trusted leader rose to speak. He had always preached moderation; after a year in Mexican jails, how did he feel?

He left little doubt. Santa Anna was destroying the people's rights.

Word had just come of a serious problem at Gonzales. The colonists there were shining up a small cannon given them years ago to ward off Native American raids.

In September of 1835, as political unrest grew, Mexican officials at San Antonio de Bexar demanded the cannon be returned. A corporal with five soldiers and an oxcart were first sent by Col. Ugartechea, Bexar military commander, to Gonzales. The corporal carried a request that the small reinforced cannon, a bronze six-pounder, be returned to the Mexican Army. Andrew Ponton refused to relinquish it, stalling for time, and the little cannon was buried in George W. Davis' peach orchard, near the Guadalupe River.



Soon, the Texans shed all pretense of ever surrendering the cannon. Joseph D. Clements delivered a message to the Mexican army: "I cannot, nor do I desire to deliver up the cannon...and only through force will we yield."

Lieutenant Castaneda and 150 mounted soldiers were sent to "take" the cannon. When the soldiers appeared on the west bank of the Guadalupe River, there were only 18 men in Gonzales, but these 'Old Eighteen' stood at the river in defiance, denied the Mexicans a crossing by hiding the ferry and sent out a call for volunteers to assist them.

Meanwhile, word was spreading that the Texans at Gonzales needed help. Volunteers responding to the call to arms rushed to the scene, and the little Texan force of 18 mushroomed to 150 by Sept. 30.

Also at this time, Sara Seely DeWitt and her daughter Evaline made a flag — back then referred to as the Old Cannon Flag — now called the Come and Take It flag. Depicted on a white cloth was a cannon with a lone star above it, and the words "come and take it" beneath the cannon.

On Oct. 1, 1835, Capt. Francisco Castaneda arrived from San Antonio with something less than 200 men. Ugartechea intended a show

## WELCOME

of force. Castaneda, blocked by the Guadalupe, demanded the ferry be restored, and the cannon handed over. There was some parleying, a demonstration by the Mexican cavalry near the town, and considerable yelling and taunting by the Texans, who dared the Mexicans to "come and take it!" echoing the words emblazoned on their newly created flag.

That night the Texans silently slipped across the Guadalupe and formed a defensive square. The Texans resumed their advance toward the Mexican camp in the fog shrouded dawn of Oct. 2. They were sure Castaneda planned to attack this day; they might as well hit him first. Quietly, they edged through the fog. With them was the cannon, dug up from the peach orchard, loaded with chains and scraps of iron.

The Texan militia blundered into the Mexican pickets, but in the dark and fog there could be no war. Everyone drew back and waited until daybreak.

The fog lifted suddenly, showing both forces drawn up on an open prairie. With the Come and Take It flag flying, the Gonzales cannon fired, and Capt. Castaneda immediately requested a parley, asking why he was being attacked.

Colonel Moore, commander of the Texans, explained that the Captain had demanded a cannon given to the Texans for 'the defense of themselves and the constitution and the laws of the country,' while he, Castaneda, 'was acting under orders of the tyrant Santa Anna, who had broken and trampled underfoot all the state and federal constitutions of Mexico, except that of Texas,' which last the Texans were prepared to defend.

Castaneda answered that 'he was himself a republican, as were two-thirds of the Mexican nation, but he was a professional officer of the government,' and while that government had indeed undergone certain surprising changes, it was the government, and the people of Texas were bound to submit to it.

Moore then suggested to the







Captain, if he were a republican, he should join the revolution against tyranny by surrendering his command, and join them in the fight. Castaneda replied that he would obey his orders. At this, Moore returned to his own lines and ordered the Texans to open fire. There was a brief skirmish, and the Mexican force abandoned the field and rode back toward San Antonio.

The Texas Revolution had begun. Gonzales became known as "The Lexington of Texas", where the first shot was fired, and where the first Texas Army of Volunteers gathered. A few months after the first shot, men and boys from the region would gather in Gonzales, sending the only reinforcements ever received at the Alamo.

Fast forward to current day Gonzales, the city will celebrate its 67th annual Come and Take It Celebration weekend. Initially started as a one-day event in 1956, Come and Take It swelled to a 10-day celebration in 1975 before it eventually took to its current three-day format the following year. The celebration honors the defiant Texian rebels that planted a "Come and Take It" flag in 1835. ★



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# SEARCH FOR **FOODS LEADS EX-PAT DEL CASTILLO JONES TO GONZALES**



n online search for his roots led one United States expatriate to come to Gonzales for the first time ever after discovering he is the great-great-great-great grandson of empresario Green DeWitt.

George del Castillo Jones and his wife, Danette, visited with employees at the Gonzales Inquirer and the Gonzales Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture and also perused historical texts at the Mary Elizabeth Tinsley Texas History Center at the Robert Lee Brothers Jr. Memorial Library.

The journey has been about "five years in the making," del Castillo Jones said.

"I've been working on my genealogy for about 15 years, but it finally got back far enough to find out about the Joneses," he said. "My mother is a Jones and she was born in Laredo, Texas, and we traced her roots back to Isham Green Jones, also known as Ice Jones, a captain with Terry's Texas Rangers. He was the son-in-law of Green DeWitt and Sarah Seeley DeWitt. He married their daughter, Minerva."

Performing genealogical searches through websites like Ancestry.com led del Castillo Jones to the DeWitt family, and especially, an extensive



Visit the Come & Take It Shop at the Visitor's Center for apparel, drinkware, books, souvenirs, and more! Open from 8 a.m. -5 .p.m. / Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. / Saturday, and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Sundays. Come in and say "Burn it Down!" in honor of the Runaway Scrape for a free prize with purchase.



THE COME AND TAKE IT SHOP • 304 ST. LOUIS STREET, GONZALES TEXAS



history of Green DeWitt, even prior to the start of the DeWitt Colony in Texas.

"I think he started in Kentucky, then moved to Ralls County, Missouri," del Castillo Jones said. "He had married Sarah and they had, I think, the first three or four children in Ralls County, where he was sheriff, before he got approved for a colony here by the Mexican government, with a lot of help from Stephen F. Austin and Baron de Bastrop."

It was in Saltillo, the capital of Coahuila y Tejas, that Green DeWitt was granted — on April 15, 1825 — a contract to bring 400 families to land that was southwest of the Austin Colony. For his efforts, some 75,000 acres of land were placed into escrow with a promise of 25 percent to be delivered upon the first 100 families settling and the rest to be delivered as he met other terms of his contract.

It was a fellow Missourian from St. Charles County — DeWitt's right-hand man and surveyorgeneral James Kerr — who laid out the DeWitt Colony capital across four leagues near the confluence of the San Marcos and Guadalupe rivers and named it after Don Rafael Gonzales, provisional governor of Coahuila y Tejas.

Unfortunately for DeWitt, a new law by the Mexican legislature in 1830 prohibited any further immigration from the United States to Texas and he could not meet the terms of his contract, which ended in 1831. Four years later, prior to the "first shot" in Gonzales that started the Texas Revolution, DeWitt died on May 18, 1835, in Monclova, Mexico.

"He was in Monclova trying to get more property or get approved for more families to come to DeWitt Colony and was doing business for the colony when he supposedly died from cholera," del Castillo Jones. "Another woman who wrote a book offers the hypothesis which makes good sense to me — that he was perhaps murdered by the Mexican Army and they were perhaps taking revenge on him for (incidents in Texas). That could be very possible.

"My wife suggested if he had cholera or was suspected of having it, he would have been



# **FOR THOSE ABOUT TO RUN** WE SALUTE YOU!

## GONZALES SERVES AS Starting Point for Annual Texas independence relay

Don't be surprised if you live near the Gonzales Memorial Museum and hear repeated loud booms and smell gun smoke throughout the day Saturday, March 25. It isn't the second coming of the Battle of Gonzales. The sound of cannon fire will fill the air for the Texas Independence Relay, which returns to the "birthplace of the Texas Revolution" for its starting point and will continue some 200 miles before ending in downtown Houston.

Teams of up to 12 runners will be announced by their chosen theme song and a cannon blast during staggered starts beginning at 6 a.m. and continuing until 2 p.m. Saturday in this relay that was begun in 2008 by the husband-and-wife team of







Jay and Joy Hilscher of Lone Star Relays LLC.

Team members run together twice during the race — once in Gonzales at the beginning and once approaching the San Jacinto monument — but otherwise the 40 legs of the journey are assigned to individual runners and team vans shuttle team members to designated points for pickup and drop-off and the exchange of team wristbands. These legs vary by length and elevation.

Completing a Texas Independence Relay becomes not only a physical test for runners, but also a strategic test for team and race organizers as well. It is also not uncommon for residents in the towns along the way to come out to cheer on racers and show them some hospitality during their brief stops in their communities.

It takes the majority of teams between 27 to 32 hours to completely finish the Texas Independence Relay. The fastest teams — some comprised of collegiate runners — do not depart until after 1 p.m. Saturday, but will overtake the slower runners around Fulshear and may finish the race around 9 a.m. Sunday, while the slowest teams may not finish until 4:30 p.m. or 5 p.m. Sunday.

The Texas Independence Relay is very similar to Oregon's Hood to Coast Relay, which inspired the Hilschers.

"The basics are the same as that race," Jay Hilscher said. "My wife and I wanted to do that one and kept trying to get friends to go with us, but that's a big ask to get 10 people to spend that much money to go out to Oregon. We then thought, 'Why doesn't Texas have a race like this?'

"We spent a good year and a half before the first Independence Relay marketing and talking about it. We were very slow in the beginning about what we did, like a frog in a pot. We were very slow to turn up the heat."

The race itself traces the route Sam Houston and the Texian army took during the "Runaway Scrape" as they burned down and moved from Gonzales following the losses at the Alamo and Goliad and eventually ended up at the site of the Battle of San Jacinto, where the Texians surprised and routed the Mexican Army, captured Santa Anna and gained their independence.

Of course, the cannon blast is reminiscent of the scene in Gonzales from Oct. 1, 1835, when a ragtag group of Texians dared the Mexican Army to "come and take" their six-pound cast-iron swivel cannon used for defense.

Some 115 teams more than 3,000 participants and spectators took part in the 2022 Texas Independence Relay with as many or more expected in 2023. Most of those are going to be experienced runners, Hilscher said.

"When you are a newer runner, just getting into running itself, you're going to be more interested in doing a 5K or marathon by yourself," Jay Hilscher said. "This race may seem a little weird and has such a social aspect where a newcomer would not be connected as much in the running scene. Most of our runners have been running for a



while. We do have a lot of teams who do this year after year and it is very common for most teams to have been doing it for their fifth or sixth year and we have five to 10 teams that have done it every year. In some aspects, it is very much like a family reunion."

The city of Gonzales entered into a contract with Lone Star

Relays LLC that allows use of the lawn at the Memorial Museum and permits the consumption of alcoholic beverages on March 24 during packet pickup for the racers and the closure of the 400 block of Smith Street on March 24-25 for the relay. The Gonzales Convention and Visitors Bureau also provided \$2,500 to Lone Star Relays LLC for advertising the event statewide.

"Gonzales has been a great partner for us," Jay Hilscher said. "We joke about how we are waking up everyone by the cannon blast going off every few minutes. We actually don't have the biggest cannons. It basically sounds like fireworks. It's not the same as a big cannon vou can feel from miles away. "That's something the teams look forward to every year. They know exactly what we're doing and how we do it every year and it is a blessing to have Gonzales be involved." **★** 



# **GONZALES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

or 26 years, the Gonzales Economic Development Corporation (GEDC) has served the residents of Gonzales by leading efforts to recruit and retain businesses and funding projects that have created jobs and enhanced the community's historical assets. Over the past year the GEDC board had an exceptional year capitalizing projects that align with the organization's mission to, "Drive business opportunity for Gonzales, Texas."

The corporation consistently works on projects and that demonstrate staff is laser focused on improving the community by working with new and existing companies, fostering entrepreneurship, and strengthening the workforce. We are a data source: we connect companies through business roundtables and work with our public and private schools and local colleges. We are in constant contact with other community boards including planning and zoning, tourism, and Main Street. Other GEDC initiatives center around supporting the City of Gonzales by cost-sharing infrastructure studies and funding repairs to historic structures.

In addition to being excellent stewards of the sales tax that fund the GEDC organization, this past year, increased our capacity to serve the community through organizational changes including adding staff, onboarding new board members, elected officials, and implementing new efficient internal business practices. We realize that economic development is a team sport our commitment to new businesses and existing businesses is that we will work hard gain your trust and investment here and will work equally harder to retain and grow your investment.

Gonzales is the home of Adams Extract and Spice, BYK, Kitchen Pride Mushroom Farm, Livestock Nutrition Center, Purina, Tyson Foods, and Snavely Forest Products, just to name a few. Both large and small businesses have understood our competitive business advantages for years. These include our proximality to the markets of San Antonio, Austin and Houston via Interstates I-10 and easy access I-10 and SH 130. We are truly multimodal with both an airport and railroad. We have land with industrial grade infrastructure, and guality educational institutions including a community college. But our most significant advantage is our people.

Our residents have a strong rural work ethic and our leadership team, made up of representatives from various infrastructure partners, elected and nonelected community leaders are committed to helping you reach both your personal and business goals. We invite you to Come And Take It, Come And Innovate and Come and Invest.

COME AND AND INNOVATE COME AND TAKE T COME AND T



# CAMPERS BRING Shakespeare To life in gonzales

## DECADE-LONG PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN WINEDALE, CRYSTAL THEATRE CONTINUES

partnership for the past 10 years between Camp Shakespeare at Winedale and the Crystal Theatre in Gonzales has seen young thespians ages 11-17 treading the boards at the venerable downtown venue as they explore the works of the immortal Bard of Stratford-on-Avon through performance.

After attending the two-week University of Texas residential summer camp, campers come to the Crystal twice each summer to perform usually one comedy and one tragedy.

Last year, two young Gonzaleans who are also members of the Crystal Theatre's Shakespeare Ninja performing group, Lena Salazar and Miguel Moreno, took part in a production of "As You Like It." They then travel to La Grange ISD for a performance before taking the stage one last time at the Shakespeare barn in Winedale.

"We've been hosting the Winedale Shakespeare campers for a decade now," said Barbara Crozier, director of the Shakespeare Ninja program at the Crystal. "The first was in 2012 when we had two young men who were part of our original five Ninjas taking part in Camp Shakespeare that year.

"One of the most important pieces that we've seen performed at the Crystal was when Camp Shakespeare performed "Merchant of Venice" in 2019, the year before the pandemic shut things down. It is a timeless piece with its themes of racial and religious struggles and strife."

Moreno was no stranger to Camp Shakespeare as he was featured, along with Ruby Hamilton, in the 2020 documentary "Take Pains. Be







Perfect" about the history of the University of Texas' Shakespeare at Winedale program founded by legendary professor Dr. James B. "Doc" Ayres in 1970.

The documentary began airing on PBS stations in April 2022 and can be seen for free at pbs.org/video/take-painsbe-perfect-a8uepq. It's title comes from a line spoken by the character Bottom to the rest of the "rude mechanicals" performing the "play within the play" in "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

At age 89, though he no longer runs the collegiate program, the spry Ayres continues to take part in Camp Shakespeare along with camp director Robin Grace Soto and still comes to the Crystal to oversee performances and to speak with attendees about Camp Shakespeare, which he began in 2000.

Camp Shakespeare at Winedale only takes 14 campers per session at a cost of \$1,700 per student. The youth stay at the Farmstead B&B in nearby Round Top and spend their day working on lines and characterizations, going through physical and vocal exercises, working on scenes, doing journal writing, relaxation exercises, making masks, taking part in problem solving, singing, dancing and even watching film sequences of Shakespeare's plays. Everything is done as a community. "All the elements of the program are intended to promote an understanding and appreciation of the works of Shakespeare, and of their extraordinarily complex and penetrating vision of human life," according to Soto. "Campers develop, test, and transcend their sense of self through their exploration of Shakespearean characters. What we pursue here is the conviction that anyone can live life more fully through a personal encounter with Shakespeare's art."

The best candidates for Camp Shakespeare are kids who "who work well with others, who are inventive, elastic, eager to play, explore and take risks, and are ready to rumble when they arrive." Applications are accepted from candidates anywhere, regardless of whether they attend public, private or home school and "experience with theater or with Shakespeare is not necessary. Commitment to working and playing with others is," according to Soto.

The Crystal Theatre Young Program may be the only one of its kind in Texas as it is dedicated to providing "arts-in-education opportunities for young people from all backgrounds" from the year-round Shakespeare Ninja Project to the Crystal Summer Youth Workshop as well as the Young Texians Troupe, which performs original Texas history ballads about the founding of Gonzales, the "Lexington of Texas." \*





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Feel the Difference

G onzales Healthcare Systems is dedicated to serving our community with state-of-the art services and equipment and meeting the needs of our growing community.

We as a healthcare system have evolved and have brought our community more services closer to home since opening the doors in 1978. There have been many new additions to our hospital over the years and in the future of Gonzales Healthcare Systems, there will continue to be updates to our facility, as well as bringing new services to the community.

Some of the highlights over the years include a remodeled emergency room, expansion of the outpatient area, remodeled inpatient rooms and nurses' station, expansion of Sievers Medical Clinic, creation of the Jane Johnson Women's Center and 3D mammography, construction of thrive Healthplex, and currently in the building phases: a new Waelder Medical Clinic.

Currently, Gonzales Healthcare Systems proudly offers these services to our community members: radiology, laboratory, pediatrics, family medicine, OB, an infusion center, occupational health, emergency room, surgery, home health, inpatient care, as well as thrive Healthplex which includes fitness, med spa, and therapy. The Surgical Clinic inside thrive houses our general surgeon, orthopedic surgeon, and cardiologist.

Gonzales Healthcare Systems also features a Specialty Clinic that houses many types of specialty physicians throughout the month. While not only providing great care, we offer the convenience of having these services available to our residents so there is no need to drive out of town. Our Specialty Clinic currently offers Neurosurgery, Urology, Podiatry, Nephrology and so much more! The monthly specialty calendar is printed in each "Gonzales Inquirer" edition.

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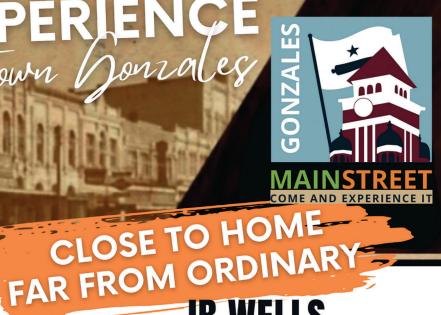
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June **JUNE 17** Juneteenth Celebration Independence Square

> JULY 4 Star Spangled Spectacular Independence Square

august AUGUST 5 Back-to-School Bash

Independence Square

SEPTEMBER 9 ( Rum Run -Downtown Businesses

**SEPTEMBER 23** 

Prince & Princess Royal Ball Main Street Fundraiser

October october 28 Happy Fall Y'all Texas Hero Square

NOVEMBER 26 November Small Business Saturday

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JUNETEENTH

FESTIVA

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May MAY 23 - 27 Texas Jr High Rodeo State Finals **JB** Wells Park

JUNE 19 - 24 June Santa Gertrudis National Cattle Show - Show Barn and Main Arena

July JULY 21 - 23 Gun Show & South Texas Mounted

Shooting - Main Arena JULY 24 - 29 Texas Youth Rodeo Association Finals JB Wells Park

October october 27 - 28 Spooky Trails on Santa Anna Mound

NOVEMBER 2 - 4 November

Rusted Gingham Barn Sale - Show Barn

# December DECEMBER 2 - 3

Winterfest Celebration & Lighted Christmas Parade - Independence Square Historic Homes Tours - Various Locations Stars in the Village - Pioneer Village





## **GONZALES FIRSTS**



Gonzales was the first Anglo-American Settlement west of the Colorado River, established 1825.

The first structure, the first public building in Gonzales was a fort, a source of shelter and security, built in 1827 by Byrd Lockhart.

(The Gonzales Ranging Company of Mounted Volunteers' was the first formal organization of a militia unit in the area of the DeWitt colony. They were the inspiration for the Texas Rangers.



The first flag in the Battle for Texas Independence, the 'Come and Take It' flag, was designed and created by Texas women in Gonzales, Texas in 1835.



The first Voluntary Army of Texas was formed on October 1, 1835, in Gonzales.



The First Shot in the Battle for Texas Independence was fired in Gonzales County on October 2, 1835.

The Immortal 32 of Gonzales were the first and only Texians to respond to Travis's call 'To the People of Texas and all Americans in the World' to defend the Alamo.

Gonzales is one of the first 23 counties in the Republic of Texas.



The first continually operated Sunday School in Texas was established by Thomas Pilgrim in Gonzales.



Gonzales College was the first institution of higher education in Texas to offer four-year degrees to women, making it of special importance to the history of education in the state.

- Gonzales has the first and only Texas History Museum District in Texas.
- The Eggleston House, built in 1848 was awarded the Texas Historical Commission's First Historical Marker.



LEARN MORE AT TOURGONZALES.COM

## COME AND TAKE IT ALL IN GONZALES POINTS OF INTEREST

#### Palmetto State Park

#### 78 Park Road 11 South/ (830) 672-3266

A little piece of the tropics lies just an hour from Austin and San Antonio. With multiple sources of water (including the San Marcos River), Palmetto State Park is a haven for a wide variety of animals and plants. Look for dwarf palmettos, the park's namesake, growing under the trees. You can swim, tube, fish and canoe here. Besides the flowing river, the park also has an oxbow lake, an artesian well and swamps. RV and Tent camping available.

#### Pioneer Village & Living History Center 2122 N. Saint Joseph Street / (830) 672-2157

Pioneer Village Living History Center houses a collection of 1800s and early 1900s era houses and buildings from Gonzales County. Each structure has been donated and carefully relocated to the grounds of The Village for its preservation. The furnishings and equipment found within these structures represent the cultural lifestyle of the pioneers who settled this area. Their annual evening event in December, Stars in The Village, is highly attended.

#### 3 Fort Waul

#### Marker located at the intersection of North St Joseph Street (Business State Highway 183) and Middle Buster Road (County Highway 510).

Fort Waul, located on Waldrip Hill, a high, wide hill on the northern edge of the city of Gonzales, is one of the few remaining Confederate earthwork fortifications in Texas. The fort was intended to be a supply depot for the Confederate Army in the Western Subdistrict of Texas, as well as a defensive post on the Guadalupe River.

#### The Edwards High School Community Center & African American Museum

#### 1427 Fly Street / (830) 263-1611

The school was built in 1914 and served the African American children of Gonzales County until school desegregation in 1964. The school and gymnasium are owned by the Edwards Association. The gymnasium on the property has a beautiful and architecturally significant lamella vaulted roof. These roofs, patented in 1910 by Friedrich Zollinger, were popular between World Wars, when metal was in short supply.

Individual pieces were joined together with bolts or plates to form a rhomboid pattern. There is a museum in the classroom building. Tours are available when scheduled in advance.

#### **Gonzales County Archives & Record Center** 427 St. George Street / (830) 672-7970

An extensive collection of Gonzales County historical information available for researchers. This archive has items dating back to 1838. It is utilized by authors researching Texas History and families conducting genealogical research. The Archives are housed in the historic Randle-Rather building which opened as a department store in 1897.

#### **(3)** Independence Square

**Bounded by St. Joseph, St. George, St. Paul, & St. Lawrence Street.** Site of the annual "Come and Take It Celebration" celebrating our community's history. City of Gonzales Historic Fire Station two-story fire station built in 1908. It was originally constructed to house horse drawn equipment. It was remodeled in 1918 to accommodate a motor drawn pumper.

#### Market Square – Historic Riverside School 200 St. Lawrence Street

Opening in 1914, the Water Street Mexican School, later named Riverside School was built to provide classrooms for Mexican American children, it was designed to provide students with opportunities for success regardless of their heritage, economic status, or home language. The one-story brick schoolhouse originally housed 6 grades, and there were additions to the building and new facilities on the campus as enrollment grew. This included a surplus army building from Camp Swift and the former Stieren School both being moved here. The Riverside School was used by Hispanics until 1948 and then African American students until 1965.

#### B Texas Heroes Square

## Bounded by N. St Joseph Street, St. Lawrence Street, St. James Street, and St Louis Street.

The square honors the men of Gonzales that fought in the Texas Revolution. The 'Come and Take It' monument (by sculptor Pompeo Coppini) was built in 1910 through the efforts of the

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Gonzales Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. Marker text: Gonzales Town tract of 4 square leagues had 49 squares in Inner City. 7 of these squares for public use. This one was for municipal buildings but became a Plaza. Now called Texas Heroes Square, in honor of all Gonzales men who fought in the Texas Revolution. State Historical Survey Committee – 1966

#### Central Square – Gonzales County Courthouse, Gonzales County Jail Museum

#### **Gonzales County Courthouse**

#### 414 St. Joseph / (830) 672-2327

The courthouse, dating from 1895, was designed by noted Texas architect, J. Riely Gordon in the Romanesque Revival style made popular by architect H.H. Richardson. Our historic County Courthouse is open to the public and available for touring.

#### **Gonzales County Jail Museum**

#### 414 St. Lawrence Street (830) 263-4663

One of the most monumental county jails built in Texas in the nineteenth century, the former Gonzales County Jail is the largest extant from that century. Three story architectural jewel built at the height of the Victorian Era. The first prisoner was accepted in 1887. Used as a jail until 1975. The Old Jail now houses the Jail Museum highlighting the history of early law enforcement in Texas. Also, home to the Gonzales County Historical Commission and their historical archives. Open for tours and research.

#### () Church Square

#### Bounded by St. Paul, St. Louis, St. Peter, St. Lawrence.

Home of First United Methodist Church and First Baptist Church.

#### (1) Cemetery Square

#### Bounded by N Hamilton, St. Louis, N College and St. Lawrence.

Home of the St. James Catholic Church and Episcopal Church of the Messiah.

#### 🕲 Gonzales Memorial Museum , First Shot Cannon

#### 414 Smith Street / (830) 672-6350

The Gonzales Memorial Museum is a Texas Centennial Historical Memorial Museum that commemorates the Immortal 32 who died in the Alamo. The cannon which fired the first shot for Texas Independence on October 2, 1835, is prominently displayed. The structure is an elegant Art Deco complex which includes two exhibition wings, an outdoor 500-seat amphitheater, and a reflecting pool designed by the San Antonio architectural firm of Phelps and Dewees. The complex is constructed of shell limestone and trimmed in Cordova cream limestone. The central exterior entry features a monument comprised of pink granite and a bronze sculpture by artist Raoul Josset.

#### **(B)** The Eggleston House

#### 414 Smith Street

The Eggleston House was built in Gonzales after the Runaway Scrape and burning of the town in 1836. Horace Eggleston built this house in 1848 and it was one of the first erected. In 1954 the house was given to the city of Gonzales by Mr. and Mrs. E.E. Smith Jr. Open for self-guided tours. Considered the oldest home in Gonzales, County this is one of the finest examples of a preserved log cabin in the state.

#### W Kerr Creek Park & 18-hole Disc Golf Course

#### St. Louis Street from North Fair Street to Sarah Dewitt Drive/ (830) 672-3192

Kerr Creek Park is home to the historic Oak Forest Bridge and 18-hole disc golf course. The Oak Forest Bridge was built in 1913 over the Guadalupe River and was replaced in 2003. The bridge was relocated for a pedestrian bridge over Kerr Creek. The Disc Golf Course was established in 2003 and is home to the annual Gonzo Liberty Battle part of the Heart of Texas Tour Disc Golf qualifiers. It is a well-maintained course with rolling fairways. Score cards are available at the Parks and Recreation Office (1920 St. Joseph) or the Visitor's Center (304 St. Louis Street).

#### 🚯 Sam Houston Oak & Braches House

#### CR 361 Sam Houston Oak

The Sam Houston Oak is the site that Houston's army was camped at on March 11, 1836, when Susannah





Dickenson brought word of the fall of the Alamo. The Braches house is a Greek Revival style home that was a plantation house and stagecoach stop.

#### Bobert Lee Brothers, Jr. Memorial Library 301 Saint Joseph Street / (830) 672-6315

#### Mary Elizabeth Tinsley Texas History Center

One of the largest Texas History Book Collections in the state. Extensive resources for genealogical research.

#### Charles DuBose Gun & Militaria Collection

The Dubose Collection is the largest private collection of guns and militaria on display in the US. The exhibit includes many rare and one-of-a-kind items. In addition to guns, the collection includes holsters, trench art, commemoratives, flags, helmets and swords.

#### Vickie Bushong Collection of Texas Revolutionary Documents

The Vickie Bushong Collection is a significant private collection of Texas Revolutionary Documents. The collection includes the authentic signatures of David Crockett, William B. Travis and Santa Anna. Because of Bushong's family history, she became an avid collector of early maps of Texas, documents, currency and photographs from the Republic of Texas and of Quanah Parker.

#### Herbert Hensley Point & Arrowhead Collection

Impressive collection of artifacts found on a Gonzales County Farm in the early 1900's.

#### Gonzales Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture, Visitor's Center, Come and Take It Shop

#### 304 St. Louis Street / (830) 672-6532

Your resource for all things Gonzales! We can give you the information you need to visit or relocate. We have a great selection of Come and Take It souvenirs.

#### **B** Military Square

## Bounded by St. Joseph Street, St. Matthew Street , St. Paul Street, and St. Louis Street

Home of the Presbyterian Church of Gonzales & Community Butterfly Garden.

#### I.B. Wells Historic Home Museum

#### 833 Mitchell Street, / (830) 519-4048

Gonzales Rancher T.N. Matthews drove cattle up the Chisolm Trail. His cattle baron's mansion was built in 1885 and sold to J B Wells, another prominent cattleman, in 1890. It was quite a modern residence for its time with a fire escape, lightning rods, and indoor plumbing. The 15-room mansion has many pieces of Guadalupe River Valley black walnut furniture, hand crafted during the Republic of Texas. The site includes the original outdoor kitchen, barn, and carriage house. A 200-year-old sugar bowl that was buried in 1835 during the Runaway Scrape by Josephine Well's grandparents, the Hodges, to save it from the approaching Mexican Army is on display in the dining room. Josephine used this gift from her grandmother, Edith Nobles Hodges, to tell the story of the early settlement of Texas and the Republic era. The home is a designated Recorded Texas Historical Landmark. It is owned by The Daughters of the Republic of Texas and lovingly cared for by the Gonzales Chapter of DRT.

#### Independence Park – Golf Course, River Access, RV Camp Sites

#### William P Dooley Bypass Hwy 183/(830) 672-3192

Independence Park is located off Highway 183 on the banks of the Guadalupe River. This park includes three covered pavilions, little league fields, softball/baseball fields, soccer fields, basketball court, volleyball courts, swimming pool, a 21-site RV Park, show barn, rodeo arena, a 2.35-mile hike and bike trail and scenic views of the Guadalupe River. The park also hosts an attractive 9-hole golf course.

# J.B. Wells Park, Arena & Expo Center 2301 CR 197 / (830) 672-6558 J. B. Wells Parks

This 169-acre park boasts a covered pavilion, multi-purpose show barn, covered arena, practice arena, hike and bike trail, and 442 RV Hook-ups. J.B. Wells Park hosts many events throughout the year; bull riding, cutting horse events, team roping, barrel races, weddings, 4-H play days, Rusted Gingham Barn Sale, junior high and high school rodeos, stock shows, cattle sales, tractor pulls, concerts and much more.

#### Tomb of Gonzales Joe Bailey, AQA Foundation Sire

Born in Gonzales in 1919, Joe Bailey is designated as one of the American Quarter Horse Associations nineteen foundation sires. The site was awarded AQA Historical Marker status in 2007.

#### First Shot Monuments Historic District, Gonzales County 4049 TX-97

#### 4049 I X-97

Near here on October 2, 1835, was fired the first shot of the Texas Revolution of 1835-36 - the shot heard around the world. At Gonzales the Texans defied the Mexican government and refused their demand for the Gonzales cannon with the "Come and Take It" challenge until reinforcements arrived from other parts of DeWitt's Colony and from the colonies on the Colorado and Brazos. They then pursued the Mexicans from Gonzales to near this point and fired upon them with this cannon, driving them back to Bexar. This shot started the revolution and was directly responsible for adding more territory to the United States than was acquired by the freeing of the original thirteen colonies from England.



COME AND TAKE IT FLAGS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT THE VISITOR'S CENTER, 304 SAINT LOUIS STREET

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- American Grub

#### TEXAS







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# **SHOP GONZALES**

#### **•**≜ ANTIQUES

321 Popup/319 Saint Lawrence Discovery Architectural Antiques/409 Saint Francis Halamicek Auto Supply & Collectables / 626 Saint Joseph Main St. Marketplace / 515 Saint Joseph Peach Creek/627 Saint Paul Painted Pony / 614 Saint Joseph Plum Creek Mercantile/627 Saint Paul St #3551 Tin Star Antquities & Oddites / 617 Saint Paul

#### **BOUTIQUES**

Angels & Outlaws / 413 Saint George BZ's Country Petals / 616 Saint Lawrence CREW Men's Store / 1801 N Sarah Dewitt Dr Elandee Boutique / 620 N Saint Joseph Person's Flower Shop / 1214 Saint Louis Shear Designs Boutique / 805 N. Saint Joseph

#### ii GIFTS

Bluestem/4875 U.S. Highway 90A West Botas Matamoros/722 Saint Paul Hollerin Heifer Mercantile/617 Saint Paul Hearty Gourmet / 813 Saint Joseph Laurel Ridge Antiques/827 N Saint Joseph Mohrmann's Drug Store / 2405 Winding Way Dr

# **DINE GONZALES**

#### 📾 AMERICAN & BBQ

Andy's Bar B Q Stand / 1408 HWY 95 South Baker Boys BBQ / 1404 N Sarah Dewitt Dr Come & Take It Bar & Grill / 401 Saint George Come and Crepe It / 521 N. Saint Joseph Cow Palace Restaurant / 1801 N Sarah Dewitt Daylight Donuts / 2001 Water Diamond A/Goss BBQ / 18484 TX-80, Belmont Fire City Grill / 624 Saint James G G Steaks and Spirits / 216 Middle Buster Rd Gonzales Bistro / 320 St. George Gonzales Food Market / 311 Saint Lawrence Guerra Grill & Catering / 1303 Saint Lawrence Running M Bar and Grill/520 Saint Paul Sonny's Bar B-Q/1030 N Saint Joseph Toni's Food Store/209 Saint Lawrence

#### 🛆 MEXICAN

Acapulco Reasurant/607 E Sarah DeWitt Dr El Regio Buffet/513 Saint Andrew Matamores Taco Hut/201 N Saint Joseph Mi Lupita Taco House/613 Saint Joseph Mr.Taco/726 E Sarah DeWitt Dr Reyna's Taco/1801 E Sarah DeWitt Rodeo Restaurant/107 N Saint Joseph Taqueria Mi Puebito/21 Private Rd 3421 Taquitos 183/102 E Wallace

Painted Pony/614 Saint Joseph Spaces Sublime/507 Saint Joseph

Storey Jewelers/1606 E Sarah Dewitt Dr

The China Basket/617 Saint Joseph

A LIQUOR STORES

Meatheads/3187 SUS Highway 183

First Shot Liquor & Firearms/730 Seydler

D&DLiquor/102W.Wallace

**OTHER** 

Fehner / 1922 CR 197

#### I OTHER

Johnny's Cajun Cafe Food Trailer / 499 CR 327 La Bella Tavola Italian Grill / 601 N.Saint Joseph Texpresso / 104 U.S. 90 Alt W

#### 🖻 NIGHTLIFE

Memo's Hangout / 1402 Saint Louis Nufo's Bar / 216 Middle Buster Rd Spanky's Sport Bar / 2513 Harwood Bar Turn Around / 1430 Saint Paul



#### LEARN MORE AT TOURGONZALES.COM

# 

# **GONZALES & TJHRA:** A LONGTIME, WINNING COMBINATION







he Texas Junior High Rodeo Association (TJHRA) and Gonzales have had a long, beneficial history together that the city of Gonzales hopes will continue for many more years to come.

"We love when the rodeo comes to town," City Manager Tim Crow said. "It is like a home away from home for them. They are here for 10 days and we try to make sure they get the best hospitality they can get and hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable event."

Each May, hundreds of junior high students come to the confluence of the San Marcos and Guadalupe Rivers from all over the southwestern United States to compete in the TJHRA Texas state finals at JB Wells Park, Arena & Expo Center.

This year's state finals will be held from May 21-27 and could to be the biggest ever held, said TJHRA secretary Anne Dollery. Last year, a record 525 contestants took part in the event.

"It was the biggest one we've

ever had," Dollery said. "Last year, we added a fifth grade division to the rodeo and we filled nearly every event with contestants coming from all over Texas, New Mexico, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma. People started to come in Friday from 8 a.m to 7 p.m. Then, on Saturday, we opened at 7 a.m. and were open 24 hours a day as some of our people, especially those coming from the Panhandle, like to come in middle of night to avoid the heat.

"Every single RV space was rented out and lots of motel rooms were booked here in town. We have 888 possible stalls and had 885 of those rented out."

Events scheduled for 2023 include boys breakaway, boys goat tying, calf roping, chute dogging, girls breakaway, girls goat tying, pole bending, ribbon roping, rough stock, team roping and light rifle. The Top 10 contestants from each of the 10 regions in the state qualify for the state finals.

The top four in each event qualify

to compete in the junior high national finals in Perry, Ga.

Gonzales has become synonymous with TJHRA as the only city to serve as host site of the state finals. The city's current contract with TJHRA expires after the 2023 finals, but the city has invested a great deal into JB Wells to convince the organization to spurn any would-be suitors and remain at its longtime home.

"Gonzales is the birthplace of junior high rodeo," Dollery said. "When the junior high rodeo started, Gonzales offered to host it when no one else would and they stepped up and took it over and now it's been here the past 16-17 years in a row. We run a live feed of the rodeo and get people from all over the state and the nation watching rodeo in Gonzales.

"Our people love it here. They love the green grass areas we have and they feel like their kids are safe on site."

"We have had to make some improvements to the park," Crow added. "We added another pad for stalls since the rodeo has added fifth grade. We also did a lot of work on the RV sites, adding base material. In 2021, it rained and vehicles were getting stuck in the mud, but with the work the city and county crews have put in, that won't happen again. We have also changed out lighting in the park to make it even better and we hope that people will be pleased with what they see."

Both Crow and Dollery noted the rodeo gives a big economic shot in the arm to the city and the county. As many as 1,500 to 2,500 more people come into the community, generating commerce for local businesses, creating additional sales tax revenue and helping sustain employment.

"It is a huge impact on the city of Gonzales," said Dollery, who also ran the city's parks and recreation department for five years. "My rule of thumb is that you have to take the 525 contestants who are going to be here and multiple by at least three and that is how many people are in our community, spending money at the grocery stores or in the local businesses."

"It's a big economic impact to the community," Crow said. "We did a

study back in 2018 and now you have to add the numbers up even more with inflation and how the price of everything has skyrocketed, especially as there have been supply chain issues in recent years.

"In 2018, we had an estimated economic impact from the state finals of about \$341,000 in outside money coming into the community. That is probably closer to a half million dollars today when you factor in the cost of gas and food and everything going up.

"Hopefully everyone in the community can feel some of that, from our gas stations, to Walmart to HEB to our other businesses and restaurants," Crow added. "We have a lot of people who bring in trailers with sleeping quarters and they buy their supplies when they get here. Sometimes they go out to eat in our restaurants and sometimes they eat at the campsite what they bought in our stores."

Dollery said the rodeo always is looking for help from volunteers in the community. If interested, you can contact her at 979-412-2551 or email texasjuniorhighrodeo@gmail.com. ★



30 DISCOVER GONZALES COUNTY

# VICTORIA COLLEGE GONZALES CENTER ADDS ACADEMY

OF LIFFLONG LEARNING TO OFFERINGS



ver since Victoria College's Gonzales Center opened its doors in May 2007, residents of Gonzales and the surrounding communities have benefited from a variety of education and training

building on Sarah DeWitt Drive. Victoria College recently expanded its offerings to include an Academy of Lifelong Learning specifically for the Gonzales community.

opportunities at the "old armory"

The academy is a member-driven organization that provides members with common interests the opportunity to participate in study, discussions, and social interaction. The annual membership fee is \$50 and renews each September. The fee entitles members to participate in any of the academy activities at no additional charge, with the exception of a few activities that have a supply or travel fee.

Some of the topics included in this year's schedule CPR, beekeeping, and wine selection, to name a few; and, area tours to restaurants and Shiner Gaslight Theatre performances.

"We were excited to launch an Academy of Lifelong Learning here in the Gonzales community," said Vince Ortiz, manager of VC's Gonzales Center. "It naturally complements our other education and training offerings."

It is no secret that students who plan to attend a four-year university and earn a bachelor's degree can save money by enrolling in classes at VC's Gonzales Center. Art appreciation, biology, anatomy and physiology, composition, government, history, college algebra and psychology are popular among students seeking to earn an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science interdisciplinary degree and transfer to a university.

VC's Gonzales Center also offers job training courses that can lead to industry-recognized credentials in truck driving, welding, HVAC, electrical, nurse aide, pharmacy technician and medical assisting. Additionally, Victoria College graduates approximately 30 students from its Vocational Nursing Program in Gonzales each year.

Adult basic education, dual enrollment, financial aid, scholarships and advising services are also available.

For more information about Victoria College's offerings in Gonzales, call (830) 672-6251, visit VictoriaCollege.edu/GonzalesCenter or stop by VC's Gonzales Center located at 424 E. Sarah DeWitt Drive. ★

VICTORIA COLLEGE Industry-Recognized Credentials • Certificates Associate Degrees • College Transfer Path







G onzales is a diverse, unique and historical city, that hometown citizens rightly are proud to call home. Many may be unaware that the city is actually among the oldest cities in Texas. In a recent story online, the city was named as No. 9 on the Top 10 oldest cities in the state.

The city of Gonzales predates Texas, which was admitted to the United States of America in 1845, as the twenty-eighth state coming into the Union. The history of Texas goes all the way back to the 16th century with the Lone Star State being one of the most historically rich states. The beginning of history in the Lone Star State ranges from the first European settlers in 1528 and on through the Battle of the Alamo in 1836.

Gonzales, of course, has its own history of spearheading the Texas battle cry for independence, of which it is proud. There was also, and remains, a rich cultural Native American tribal history in the state.

Other Texas cities on the list include:

• **GEORGETOWN**, which though having human inhabitants as early as 11,500 BC, did not become the city of Georgetown until 1840. The town land was provided by George Washington Glasscock, who was honored, in turn, by the naming of the town. Georgetown is known for clean, pure water, and Southwestern University, which is one of the oldest institutions of higher learning in the state, deriving from charters dating back to 1840.

• **GONZALES**, ninth on the list, was established in 1825 with the colorful and interesting history of being the birthplace of the "Come and Take It" flag during the war for independence between Mexico and Texas. After being given, and asked to return, a cannon from the Mexican army, the residents of Gonzales did not surrender it. Instead, they recruited 140 Texans, forming a militia.

To show their rebellion and refusal to back down, they created a custom flag: a cannon drawing with "Come and Take It" scrawled below. In that showdown of wills, Gonzales residents became the first victors in what would become the Texas Revolution.

• **PORT ISABEL**, established in the 1770s as a small seaside community, was first a US Army fort, becoming a town after the Revolutionary War. A lighthouse in the small community would become center stage and play a role in the Civil War when the Confederacy sought to blind the Union troops by extinguishing the light that was intended to guide them through the water to land.

• **GOLIAD**, established in 1749, was named after Father Miguel Hidalgo, a key player in the War of Independence, with the name being an anagram of the patriotic priest's name, with the silent H removed. The most significant event occurring in this town historically was the Goliad massacre, when the Mexican army slaughtered prisoners of war from the Army of the Republic of Texas, with the numbers estimated at nearly 400 men killed during the event.

• Many things lend to the intrigue of **AUSTIN**, from world famous brisket

to the Texas state capitol, as well as being one of the oldest communities in Texas history, founded in 1730. Austin likes to consider itself the "weird" small town, but is actually a large city now, although when first founded, it was originally the home to the first Spanish mission, constructed in 1730.

Austin became settled and established by Europeans in the 1830s. The village of Waterloo, established in 1837, was selected as the capital in 1839, with the name changing to Austin (named for Stephen F. Austin) after that time. As the state capital, Austin saw swift expansion, becoming an officially designated city by the 1880s.

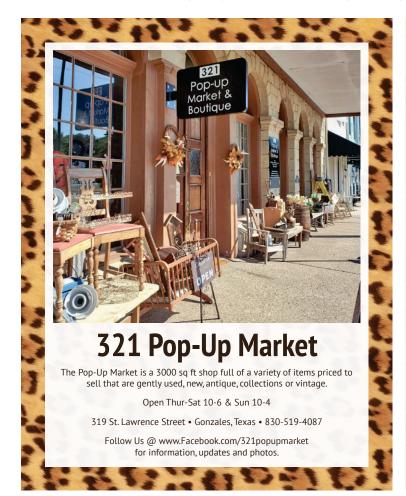
• SAN ANTONIO is one of the better-known cities in Texas, with the Riverwalk and an active tourist industry. While being among the most populous cities in the United States, San Antonio is also one of the oldest in Texas, having been established in 1718. Originally a Spanish mission, the city transformed into a metropolitan city; the city is, of course, known for the Mission San Antonio de Valero, commonly known as the Alamo Mission.

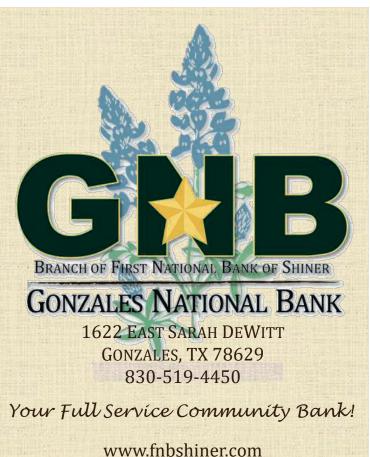
• SAN AUGUSTINE, located near Nacogdoches, was established in 1717 and is home to a Spanish mission that has become a museum: the Mission Dolores state historic site. Constructed in 1721, the Spanish mission-turnedmuseum highlights the ongoing relationships between the Native Americans and some of the very earliest immigrants to the state of Texas.

• NACOGDOCHES, settled in 1716, is often referred to as the oldest town in Texas; however, according to available data, there are older settlements, with this being heavily contested by residents who claim the city goes back for more than 10,000 years, dating back to the Caddo Indians. Although Nacogdoches frequently claims to be the oldest town in Texas, European settlers did not arrive there until the Spanish established a mission in the region in 1716. Either way, this town holds a firm grip on Texas history.

• YSLETA claims to be the very oldest settlement in Texas, though records indicate it was established 150 years after the oldest settlement on this list. Established in 1680 and now a part of El Paso, the village claims its ancestral history as being the long-term refugee camp for Native Americans, and not just a stop along the trail.

In 1535, Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, traveling from Spain, brought the first Europeans to the town that is now known as **PRESIDIO**, settling the first European colonies in the region, and now, the oldest known town in Texas. It is noteworthy, however, that the municipality lists the founding date claim as 1683 three years after Ysleta's founding date. ★







# **ARTIFACTS, BOOKS, & ANTIQUITIES** abound at Robert Lee Brothers Jr. Library

onzales is the birthplace of Texas Independence and what better way to embrace some of the history of this great state and city, but by enjoying historical artifacts, books, maps and unique art. The Robert Lee Brothers, Jr. Memorial Library has many exhibits featuring history and culture.

The main room in the library features the mural "Triumphal Entry Into Gonzales," painted by local artist Ida Harless McGarity.

One does not have to be an aesthete to appreciate this beautiful depiction of the Come & Take It Parade, with its realistic flair capturing several locals enjoying the annual celebration.

The beautiful Mary Elizabeth Tinsley Texas History Center is home to many historical artifacts. In the main room, the following items are showcased along the perimeter:



#### • The **SAM HOUSTON**

**LITHOGRAPH** created by Francis D'Avignon circa 1848 is one of only three known to exist, one in the Library of Congress and one in the National Portrait Gallery Collection, Smithsonian Institution.

#### The GOLIAD COLLECTION

features artifacts consisting of clothing buttons and musket balls are believed to be recovered from one of the massacre sites of Fannin's command.

#### • The HENSLEY HURT COLLECTION includes

hundreds of arrowheads and artifacts unearthed in Dewville, Gonzales County by Mr. Hensley Hurt in the 1930s.

Mary Elizabeth Tinsley (1921-2014) married into a family with strong ties to Green DeWitt's colony, early Gonzales, and the Texas Revolution. History and especially her personal connection to it were important factors in her life.

As her children became more independent, she began to assist the librarian at the Gonzales Library. The Gonzales Chamber of Commerce cited her as the 1973 Citizen of the Year for Civic Work, acknowledging her efforts in cultural and historical advancement.

In 1975, she became a member of the Gonzales Library Board and served in various capacities there until 1996. In addition to her Board responsibilities, most of her afternoons were spent as a volunteer at the library. She oversaw the microfilming of Gonzales Inquirer editions published from 1853-1931. She was especially proud of her leadership in the construction of the new library addition on St. Matthew Street dedicated in 1983, and of her work in preparing the library's holdings for the move.

She would be so pleased to see the Robert Lee Brothers, Jr. Memorial Library and to know that the Mary Elizabeth Tinsley Texas History Center, which now houses the second largest collection of Texas history books in the state, is a part of it.

#### VICKIE LEA SANFORD BUSHONG COLLECTION

The Vickie Bushong Collection, along with a few pieces of the Henson Collection, are the largest private collection of Texas Revolutionary Documents on display. Vickie loved the town of Gonzales and



prior to her passing on June 5, 2018, she chose the Robert Lee Brothers, Jr. Memorial Library in Gonzales to display her incredible collection.

> She lived her life to the fullest and loved to surround herself with many friends. She also loved to host parties and her favorite last two were western dances featuring the Weldon

Henson Band. Vickie inspired Weldon's love for Texas history and helped him start a collection of his own.

Vickie was very proud of her Texas Heritage as a sixth generation Texan. Her family history dates back to Cynthia Ann Parker and Quanah Parker. Because of her family history, she became an avid collector of early maps of Texas, documents, currency and photographs from the Republic of Texas and of Quanah Parker.

#### **CHARLES DUBOSE COLLECTION**

The late Charles DuBose graduated from Gonzales High School and went on to Shriner Institute. He attended Southwest Texas State College and then entered the service for three years. He was stationed in Heidelberg, Germany with the Army Security Agency. He purchased some guns in Germany and that was the beginning of his fifty-year passion for collecting. He exhibited guns at over forty shows in Texas and his collection has grown to over 700 weapons. In addition to guns, he collected holsters as well as all sorts of militaria, including trench art, commemoratives, flags, helmets and other headgear, and swords. After being discharged he began a thirtythree-year career in the petroleum industry as a lab technician, eventually becoming a Senior Analyst. Upon retirement he returned to Gonzales. His late brother. Lawrence, was also a collector and several of the weapons displayed belonged to him.  $\star$ 



moment in tin

# COPMER NIVON DESIDENT 00

FORMER NIXON RESIDENT, 90, RETURNS TO SEE IMAGE ON PARK'S PLAQUE t was a moment that will remain frozen in time. A young Hispanic woman comes in from picking cotton in fields outside Nixon to get her bag weighed.

Eusebio Cortez' camera captured the image of 17-year-old Augustina Garza in 1948 without her knowing it. Neither of them could fathom that years later, her likeness would be engraved on a plaque at Nixon's Gladyne Finch Pocket Park in celebration of the town's diversity of culture.

Last year, Augustina Garza Juarez, now 90, got to see that plaque for the first time as she came to town with her daughter to celebrate the Nixon Latin American Cemetery Association's FUNDraiser at the Nixon-Smiley Livestock Showbarn.

She was met at the park by Nixon Mayor Dorothy Riojas, Cemetery Association member Ramon Benavides and Rancho/ Nixon Historic Association members Donald Hoffman and Pablo Aguirre.

# Sweet and Nostalgic

Take a step back in time with a sweet treat from the past while you shop unique treasures and gifts.

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"I love it," Garza Juarez said. "I was very surprised when (Benavides) called me. I wanted to cry. I think it is something beautiful all these people put together for me."

Garza Juarez's family were migrant workers who lived part-time in Nixon in the 1940s and 1950s and part-time in Arizona. They would come to Nixon in March to work in the cotton fields or at the chicken packing plants and leave for Arizona in September.

"At age 13, I started working at Chessher's Packing House," she said. "They were very good employers. They took a picture of me there, too. We were working on the line and one of the foremen wanted us to look like we were working."

Hoffman said years ago, there were two packing houses in Nixon. One, which still exists to this day, was Holmes Foods, which started in 1925 as an ice plant that began packing whole fryers and expanded to its present business.

The other, Chessher's, was located behind the Nixon fire station house off Third Street, not far from what is now the Gladyne Finch Pocket Park. At Chessher's, the workers would cut up chicken into pieces and pack them on the line.

Because her father got sick when she was very young, Garza Juarez had to stop attending school.

"I only went to the first grade because my dad was sick and me and my oldest brother had to quit school to go to work," she said. Her family moved away from Nixon for good in 1951 as she grew to adulthood.

Garza Juarez first learned of the existence of the photo Cortez took of her in 2001, when a relative brought a copy of it to her 50th anniversary party.

"She said, 'I didn't bring you anything. I just brought your picture," Garza Juarez said. "That was the first time I had ever seen the photo."

The last time she had come to Nixon had been almost 16 years ago for Nixon's centennial celebration of the city's incorporation.

"My sister from Ohio and I came here and spent a week and then I went back to Eloy, Arizona, where I live," Garza Juarez said.

But neither the pocket park nor the

plaque existed at that time.

In 2014, Finch presented the idea of a small park being built at the corner of Third and Nixon Avenue, across from the former Nixon City Hall. In 2016, the park was built, complete with a gazebo, trees, shrubs, planters, a fountain, and park benches.

When it came time to document the history of the town, a plaque was created to honor how Nixon is, as Hoffman says, "a town of many cultures" with European settlers who were English, German, French, Czech and Polish; the descendants of former African slaves; and Hispanic migrant workers who helped build the railroads and clear the pastures for planting cotton and who later worked in those fields and at the chicken slaughterhouses that grew up in Nixon.

"There was a collaboration and we were looking for pictures and I had that picture," Benavides said. "I told Paul, I'm going to send you various pictures and you choose from them. I don't know who picked it, I think it was Paul, but (the photo of Garza) was one of the ones picked." ★



ach year, Gonzales Main Street kicks off the Christmas season with Winterfest, an event filled with fun activities for the entire family. Winterfest features more than 30 food trucks, Santa's Market vendors for shopping, bands and many other activities.

The first Friday in December usually starts with the downtown business Jingle Mingle, where local businesses keep their doors open late to offer holiday shopping, followed by musical performances on the Main Street stage

> Last year, there was an inflatable snow globe at the Winterfest. This year, there will be other rides and games for kids, including a giant inflatable "snow mountain," carousel swing and Candyland obstacle course. Above: Winterfest features an annual tour of historic homes, like the J.B. Kennard House, located at 621 St. Louis St. FILE PHOTOS



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## MAIN STREET KICKS OFF CHRISTMAS SEASON

in Independence Square.

Get an early start that Saturday with Breakfast with Santa, sponsored by the Rotary Club, at First Methodist Church, 426 Saint Paul St. Advance tickets are required. Enjoy pancakes and a photo op with Saint Nick!

Independence Square then will play host to Santa's Market vendors with many events including photo ops, cookie decorating, hot cocoa and ornament making as well as writing letters to Santa.

VFW Post 4817 typically sponsors a stew, beans and chili cookoff and Bloody Mary contest while the Gonzales Elks Lodge sponsors a corn hole tournament.

Texas Hero Square plays host to kids rides and games, including a giant inflatable "snow mountain", carousel swing and obstacle course.

A historic homes tour is held both Saturday and Sunday, sponsored by the Historic Homes Association (advance tickets required, which may be purchased online at gonzaleshistorichomes.org or in person at Laurel Ridge, 827 Saint Joseph St.).

Homes on the tour can include the JB Wells House Museum (833 Mitchell St.); W.M. Atkinson House/Old Gonzales College (820 Saint Louis St.); Episcopal Church of the Messiah and Manse (721 Saint Louis St.); J.B. Kennard House (621 Saint Louis St.); and 1936 Magnolia Oil Station (624 Saint Lawrence St.)

The city of Gonzales tree lighting ceremony is held at the official city tree in Independence Sqwuare, followed by the annual Lighted Christmas Parade to finish out the festivities, and the entire community is invited to attend and to participate.

#### J B Wells Home 833 Mitchell Street | Gonzales, Texas



**Tours by Appointment** Leave message at 830-519-4048 Or call the Chamber at 830-672-6532

Admission fee \$5 adults, \$3 ages 8-18

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## DISCOVER AN ABUNDANCE OF TREASURES AT JB WELLS HOME

ee furnishinas brought from Tennessee in 1835 when Josephine Well's mother came to Texas as a child with her Hodges family. A cherry dresser survived the trip by oxcart with its mirror unbroken. A sugar bowl that came was buried the next year when the family fled the Mexican army after the fall of the Alamo.



It was reclaimed when they returned and later given to Josephine for a wedding present. She placed it on her dining room table and used it to tell her children the story of the hardships the family suffered on the Runaway Scrape.





# Gonzales ISD

Nestled in the quaint, unique, and flourishing City of Gonzales is a thriving school district full of heart and endless opportunities for students and staff. Gonzales Independent School District (GISD), known mainly by the locals as Apache Nation, proudly boasts vibrant orange and black hues throughout the city. The District is very much the heart of the community and plays a significant role in Growing Greatness. Winning awards, recognitions, and mentions are accolades that continue to make GISD a magnetic force for employing the best educators and serving approximately 2600 proud students in Pre-K-12. Gonzales ISD is home to an exceptionally creative and talented diverse pool of students.



#### **Leaving Lasting Impressions**

The vast majority of staff members in Gonzales ISD are homegrown. Staffers inspired by their personal experiences as Apaches who once completed their education in Gonzales went off to further their education at a higher education institution, came back to contribute to a community they love, and now give back to our district by leaving lasting impressions for our future generation.



#### **The Grand Vision**

When Dr. Elmer Avellaneda, "Dr. A" came to Gonzales in 2022 as the superintendent of schools, he thought, "Gonzales ISD is a great district and has the potential to be even greater. The visionary leader has made the City of Gonzales his home and the place to raise his children. Under his leadership, the district adopted a new strategic plan outlining the vision, mission, and goals of motivated GISD. Pouring into GISD, the superintendent has made education and safety and security two of his top priorities.





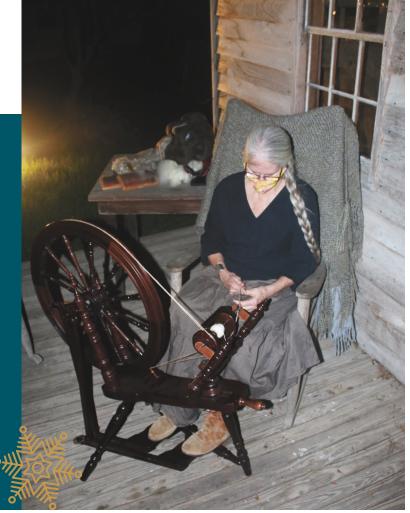
#### STARS COME ALIVE IN THE VILLAGE

Experience pioneer life during the happiest time of year at the Gonzales Pioneer Village annual Stars in the Village event, which is offered on three separate dates to give all community members and visitors a chance to join in the fun.

The event is always offered the first Saturday of December, during Winterfest, and then again the following Saturday and Sunday. This event is hosted by and held at the Gonzales Pioneer Village, 2122 N Saint Joseph St.

The family-friendly fest features candle making, churning butter, spinning, making corn shuck dolls, ornament making, popping popcorn around the campfire, hot chocolate, wassail and holiday cookies, as well as roasting marshmallows around the campfire.

For further information on this Stars in the Village event, visit pioneervillage1835.com or call the office during open hours at 830-672-2157. ★



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## HISTORIC GONZALES

## ROOTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

thrown in a mass grave with all the cholera victims, which is why his body was never found and returned. Of course, Sarah Seely DeWitt is right here in Green DeWitt cemetery, which is now on the (JB Wells) rodeo grounds."

Interestingly, del Castillo Jones — who continues the Spanish tradition of using surnames from both parents — actually should be known as Gonzales Jones.

"I'm actually a Gonzales through my father," he said. "My father was Gonzales del Castillo, but when they immigrated to the United States, immigration didn't known anything about having two last names. They thought Gonzales was his middle name, so they gave him del Castillo as his last name.

"He and his brother, who immigrated with him, they were smart," he added. "They said, 'Well, wait a minute, maybe del Castillo will be more advantageous for us here. It sounds more exotic when you say it that way and they both had aspirations for business, so they thought it'd be a catchy name."

George's mother was born and raised in Texas, but her mother was a Mexican national from Coahuila, so she spend some time living in Mexico with her mother. It was in Mexico City she met his father, who was working for American Airlines.

"They decided to move to the United States, where I was born, so they could afford to live," del Castillo said.

After years of living in the United States, once both del Castillo and his wife had retired, they decided to move to Mexico, where they live along Lake Chapala, near Guadalajara. You could say del Castillo is following in the footsteps of his great-greatgreat-great grandfather, but instead of settling Texas, he has settled into Mexico.

"We moved there because it is a lot more affordable to live, so you could say the great-great-great-great grandson of Green DeWitt has been 'colonizing' Mexico, so to speak," he joked. "We love it there and I am actually working on my dual citizenship now."

He said he loved his visit to Gonzales but there was just one sad thing about it.

"Unfortunately, my mother didn't live long enough to know this family heritage," del Castillo said. ★



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## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

**GONZALES CITY HALL** 830-672-2815

**NIXON CITY HALL** 830-582-1924

**WAELDER CITY HALL** 830-788-7331

**CITY OF SMILEY** 830-587-6220

GONZALES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 830-672-6532

GONZALES INQUIRER NEWSPAPER 830-672-2861

GONZALES COUNTY COURTHOUSE 830-672-2327

**GONZALES ISD** 830-672-9551 NIXON-SMILEY CISD 830-582-1536

**WAELDER ISD:** 830-239-5600

GONZALES COUNTY GAME WARDEN 830-857-5436 Gonzales County Sheriff's Office: 830-672-6524

CITY OF GONZALES POLICE DEPARTMENT 830-672-8686

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New Life Assembly of God Corner of Church St. & Jessie Smith St., Gonzales

BAPTIST Clark Baptist Church FM 794, Gonzales

Country Baptist Church Highway 87, Smiley

Eastside Baptist Church Seydler Street, Gonzales

Efeso Iglesia Bautista Highway 87, Smiley

Elm Grove Baptist Church 4337 FM 1115 Waelder, TX, 78959 First Baptist Church 422 St. Paul, Gonzales

First Baptist Church 403 N. Texas, Nixon

First Baptist Church Highway 108 N., Smiley

**First Baptist Church** 406 N. Avenue E, Waelder

Greater Palestine Baptist Church S. of 90A (sign on Hwy 80)

#### Greater Rising Star Baptist Church

Harwood Baptist Church North of Post Office, Harwood

Iglesia Bautista Macedonia 201 S. Congress, Nixon

Iglesia Bautista Memorial Highway 97, Waelder

Leesville Baptist Church E. of Highway 80 on CR 121 Memorial Heights Baptist Church 1330 N. College, Gonzales

> Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church 100 Capes, Gonzales

> Oak Valley Baptist Church Highway 97, Bebe

Old Moulton Baptist Church 1121 N. College, Gonzales

Providence Missionary Baptist Church 1020 St. Andrew, Gonzales

> Stratton Primitive Baptist FM 1447, 9 miles east of Cuero

**St. James Baptist Church** Hwy 80, north of Belmont.

St. Paul Baptist Church SE 2nd Street, Waelder

Shiner Baptist Church Union Lea Baptist Church St. Andrew St., Gonzales Union Valley Baptist Church FM 1681, NW of Nixon

**CATHOLIC** St. James Catholic Church 417 N. College, Gonzales

Sacred Heart Catholic Church St. John St., Gonzales

St. Joseph Catholic Church 207 S. Washington, Nixon

St. Patrick Catholic Church Waelder

St. Phillip Catholic Church Highway 87, Smiley

**CHRISTIAN** First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) 712 Crockett, Luling

**CHURCHES OF CHRIST** Church of Christ 1323 Seydler St., Gonzales

Church of Christ (Iglesia de Cristo) 201 E. Second St. Nixon

> Church of Christ E. 3rd & Texas, Nixon

Church of Christ, Belmont

CHURCHES OF GOD Community Church of God 1020 St. Louis, Gonzales

Gonzales Memorial Church of God in Christ 1113 Hastings, Gonzales

**New Beginnings** 1020 St. Louis, Gonzales

New Way Church of God in Christ 514 St. Andrew, Gonzales

EPISCOPAL Episcopal Church of the Messiah 721 S. Louis, Gonzales

**EVANGELICAL** La Vos del Evangelio, **Mision Capilla del Pueblo** W. Central at Hwy. 87, Nixon **FULL GOSPEL** Camp Valley Full Gospel Hwy 80, 7 mi. north of Nixon

> **Full Gospel Church** 1426 Fisher, Gonzales

JEWISH Adat Haderech, a Messianic shul HashemYeshua1@yahoo.com

> **LUTHERAN** First Evangelical Lutheran 1206 St. Joseph, Gonzales

Abiding Word Lutheran Church LCMS 1310 St. Louis, Gonzales

> METHODIST Belmont United Methodist Highway 90A, Belmont

> **Dewville United Methodist** West of FM 1117 on CR 121

**First United Methodist** 426 St. Paul, Gonzales

First United Methodist 410 N. Franklin, Nixon

Harris Chapel United Methodist S. Liberty St., Nixon

Harwood Methodist Church Harwood

Henson Chapel United Methodist 1113 St. Andrew, Gonzales

Monthalia United Methodist CR 112 off Highway 97

**Smiley United Methodist** 1 blk. S. of Hwy. 87, Smiley

Webster Chapel A.M.E. 1027 Church St., Gonzales

NON-DENOMINATIONAL Agape Ministries 512 St. James, Gonzales

**Bread of Life Ministries** 613 St. Joseph, Gonzales

**Christ the King Church** 1262 U.S. Highway 77, South Hallettsville Cowboy Church of Gonzales County J.B. Wells Show Barn

El Centro Cristiano "Agua Viva" 403 Highway 90 W, Waelder

Emmanuel Fellowship 1817 St. Lawrence, Gonzales

Encouraging Word Christian Fellowship Highway 80, Leesville

> Lighthouse Church of Our Lord 1805 Weimar, Gonzales

New Life Temple for Jesus Christ 16214 US 90 W, Harwood

River of Life Christian Fellowship 207 Steele St., Smiley

Two Rivers Bible Church 1600 Sarah DeWitt Dr., Suite 210, Gonzales

> INTER-DENOMINATIONAL Faith Family Church 1812 Cartwheel Dr., Gonzales

PENTECOSTAL FaithTemple Hwy. 80 (N. Nixon Ave.), Nixon

HolyTemple of Jesus Christ No. 2 1515 Dallas, Gonzales

Iglesia Pentecostes Filadelfia 893 S. Magnolia Ave., Luling

Temple Bethel Pentecostal 1104 S. Paul, Gonzales

Thompsonville Community Church CR 423, Thompsonville Between Harwood & Waelder off old Hwy. 90

Life Changing Church of Gonzales 3.3 miles north on Hwy 183, right on CR 235, then right on CR 236

> PRESBYTERIAN Pilgrim Presbyterian Church CR 210 off FM 1116

Presbyterian Church of Gonzales 414 St. Louis, Gonzales

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