Bastrop is the county seat.

**History:** Tonkawa Indian area; Comanches also present. Spanish fort established in 1804. County created in 1836, organized in 1837; named for Baron de Bastrop, who aided Moses and Stephen F. Austin in establishing the colony in the 1820s.

**Race/Ethnicity:** (In percent) Anglo, 53.6; Black, 7.7; Hispanic, 36.8; Asian, 1.0; Other, 2.1; Two or more races, 2.0.

Texas State Historical Association. *Texas Almanac.*
https://texasalmanac.com/topics/government/bastrop-county

The Austin Community College service area includes Bastrop County, excepting the territory within the Lexington Independent School District; the part of the Nixon-Smiley Consolidated Independent School District located in Gonzales County; the part of the San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District located in Guadalupe County; the part of the Elgin Independent School District located in Lee County; and the part of the Smithville Independent School District located in Fayette County

[Texas Education Code - EDUC § 130.166.](https://www.lege.state.tx.us/law/EDUC-130.166) Austin Community College District Service Area.

Submitted by Teresa Ashley
Blanco County

https://texasalmanac.com/topics/government/blanco-county
Johnson City is the county seat of Blanco County.

**History:** Lipan Apache area. Comanches were present when Anglo-Americans settled in the 1850s. County created in 1858 from Burnet, Comal, Gillespie, Hays counties, organized the same year; named for the Blanco (white) River.

**Race/Ethnicity:** (In percent), Anglo, 77.2; Black, 1.5; Hispanic, 19.2; Asian, 0.9; Other, 1.4; Two or more races, 1.6. 
https://texasalmanac.com/topics/government/blanco-county

**PEYTON, TEXAS** (Blanco County)
*Handbook of Texas Online*, Mary H. Ogilvie, "Peyton, TX (Blanco County)," accessed April 02, 2018, http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hrp77.

A notable pioneer came to **Blanco County** shortly after the war was over. Peyton Roberts was a freed slave from Virginia who homesteaded public land about eight miles east of Blanco. He was followed by other freed slaves, who together founded “Peyton Colony.” Among their enterprises was a lime kiln, where they made high-quality materials for mortar, to build the rock buildings of Blanco County. The kiln was re-constructed in the 1960s and can be seen today at a roadside park on RM 165. One of the settlers, named Jim Upshear, donated land for a log church. Its successor, the Mt. Horeb Baptist Church, is still in use.

http://texas-hill-country.com/issue/texas-hill-country-archive/article/blanco-and-blanco-county

Peyton Colony Schoolhouse  
http://www.texasescapes.com/TexasHillCountryTowns/Peyton-Colony-Texas.htm

Peyton Colony is included in *Ghost towns of Texas* by T, Lindsay Baker.  
Online **F387 .B35 1986 EBK** - Austin Community College  
917.640463 BA  Austin Public Library

Submitted by Patricia Scott and Teresa Ashley
Caldwell County

http://texasalmanac.com/topics/government/caldwell-county
Lockhart is the County Seat of Caldwell County.

**History:** Tonkawa area. Part of the DeWitt colony, Anglo-Americans settled in the 1830s. Mexican migration increased after 1890. County created from Bastrop and Gonzales counties and organized in 1848; named for frontiersman Mathew Caldwell.

**Race/Ethnicity:** (In percent) Anglo, 40.9; Black, 6.7; Hispanic, 50.9; Asian, 1.0; Other, 1.7; Two or more races, 1.8.

“The Congress of the Republic of Texas made the Caldwell County area part of Gonzales County in 1836. In the early years of the republic residents were threatened by Indian raids, but after the defeat of the Indians in the battle of Plum Creek in 1840 only minor skirmishes occurred.”

By 1847 the population in the northern part of Gonzales County had increased so much that residents petitioned the Texas legislature to establish a new county, Plum Creek County, with Lockhart Springs as county seat. In March 1848 the legislature approved the formation of the county from Bastrop and Gonzales counties but named it Caldwell instead of Plum Creek; the county seat was called Lockhart. Although the legislature did not say why the name Caldwell was chosen, it was probably in honor of Mathew Caldwell, a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence. The county seat was located on a tract of land that had been part of Byrd Lockhart's Plum Creek grant.

The **earliest schools** in Caldwell County were private institutions that met in someone's home or in space donated by Masonic lodges. Although the legislature established a system of public school districts in 1854, the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 delayed improvements in buildings and textbooks. Redistricting in 1875 and in 1884 made districts smaller and more numerous; most districts centered around established communities, allowing children to attend school near their home. It was not until the 1930s and 1940s that improved transportation made large-scale consolidation of schools into independent school districts possible. Until the mid-twentieth century, extensive schooling was for many children in Caldwell County a luxury that took second place to their duties on the family farm, and dropout rates were high. As late as 1940 only 8 percent of the population over twenty-five had completed high school. The percentage of adult residents who had finished school began to rise, however, as the job market expanded; it was nearly 15 percent in 1960, 58 percent in 1980, and 60.3 percent in 2000.

Texas State Historical Association. *Texas Almanac*, 2018
http://texasalmanac.com/topics/government/caldwell-county
After the Civil War many former slaves remained in the area. By 1870 the black population in the county had increased to 2,531, 38 percent of the total. With the exception of St. John Colony, which was established by former slaves in the early 1870s, there were no independent black communities in the county. Instead, separate church and school facilities were built in existing communities. The number of black residents increased steadily until 1900, although the number of whites who moved in was such that blacks as a percentage of the total population fell from 34 percent in 1880 to 26 percent in 1900. The black population fell slowly to 4,664 in 1930 and 2,582 in 1960, but remained at a stable 15 percent of the total number of residents. In 1980 the county’s 3,867 black residents represented slightly more than 16 percent of the total. By 2000 the percentage of black residents in the county had declined further to some 8.58 percent.

Immigrants from Mexico began arriving in Caldwell County in large numbers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The 1890 census reported 477 native Mexicans, representing 3 percent of the county's population; by 1910 the number totalled 4,113, or 17 percent of the population. Some became tenant farmers or sharecroppers, while others became part of a migratory labor force that helped to sustain the county's cotton-dependent economy. From the 1930s through the 1980s roughly a third of the county's population was of Mexican descent, increasing to 40 percent by 2000. Other large ancestry groups in the county were German and English, each of which made up 16 percent of the population in the 1980s.

Caldwell County's downward population trend reversed itself in the 1960s; it increased to 21,178 in 1970, 23,637 in 1980, 26,392 in 1990, 32,194 in 2000, and 39,810 in 2014. The majority of residents lived in three towns: Lockhart (13,098), Luling (5,626) and Martindale (1,166). Other communities include Dale (300), Fentress (380), Maxwell (500), and Prairie Lea (320). Mustang Ridge (930) is mostly in Travis County and Uhland (1,022) and Niederwald (577) are partly in Hays County. Part of San Marcos is also in Caldwell County. Ethnically, the population in the county is 42.6 percent white, 48.9 percent Hispanic, and 7.1 percent African American.

ST. JOHN COLONY, TEXAS. St. John Colony is on Farm Road 672 ten miles northeast of Lockhart in northeastern Caldwell County. It was begun in the early 1870s by a group of black families who came from Webberville with the Rev. John Henry Winn to purchase land. The community was first called Winn's Colony, but after the establishment of St. John Missionary Baptist Church in 1873, its name was changed to St. John Colony. The boundaries of the colony were somewhat nebulous, but it included an area of roughly 2,200 acres. St. John was the name given to the local school district in the 1870s, and it continued to be the focus of a common district until it was consolidated with Lockhart schools in the early 1960s. Residents maintained a school at the community until area public schools were integrated in 1966. The community had three churches in the 1980s, when about forty families lived in the area. In 2000 the population was 150.


Submitted by Patricia Scott and Teresa Ashley
San Marcos is the county seat of Hays County.

**History:** Tonkawa area, also some Apache and Comanche presence. Spanish authorities attempted the first permanent settlement in 1807. Mexican land grants in early 1830s to Juan Martín Veramendi, Juan Vicente Campos and Thomas Jefferson Chambers. County created in 1843 from Travis County, organized the same year; named for Capt. Jack Hays, a famous Texas Ranger.

**Race/Ethnicity:** (In percent) Anglo, 54.9; Black, 4.2; Hispanic, 38.1; Asian, 1.9; Other, 1.4; Two or more races, 2.2.

Texas State Historical Association. *Texas Almanac*, 2018
http://texasalmanac.com/topics/government/hays-county

Submitted by Teresa Ashley
Austin is the County Seat of Travis County and the Capital of Texas.

**History:** Tonkawa and Lipan Apache area; Comanches, Kiowas arrived about 1700. Spanish missions from East Texas temporarily relocated near Barton Springs in 1730 before removing to San Antonio. Anglo-Americans arrived in the early 1830s. County created in 1840, when Austin became Republic’s capital, from Bastrop County; organized in 1843; named for Alamo commander Col. William B. Travis; many other counties created from its original area.

**Race/Ethnicity:** (In percent) Anglo, 49.4; Black, 8.9; Hispanic, 33.8; Asian, 6.8; Other, 1.4; Two or more races, 2.5.

https://texasalmanac.com/topics/government/travis-county

The Austin Community College service area includes Travis County, excepting the territory within the Marble Falls Independent School District.

Texas Education Code - EDUC § 130.166. Austin Community College District Service Area.

https://codes.findlaw.com/tx/education-code/educ-sect-130-166.html

Submitted by Teresa Ashley
Williamson County

http://texasalmanac.com/topics/government/williamson-county
Georgetown is the county seat of Williamson County.

**History**: Tonkawa area; later, other tribes moved in. Comanches raided until the 1860s. Anglo-American settlement began in the late 1830s. County named for Robert M. Williamson, pioneer leader; created from Milam County and organized in 1848.

**Race/Ethnicity**: (In percent) Anglo, 60.6; Black, 6.9; Hispanic, 24.1; Asian, 6.7; Other, 1.1; Two or more races, 2.7.

http://texasalmanac.com/topics/government/williamson-county

The Austin Community College service area includes Williamson County, excepting the territory within the Florence, Granger, Hutto, Lexington, Taylor, and Thrall independent school districts.


Submitted by Teresa Ashley
Rosanky, TX – **Bastrop County**/ Two separate schools - the Ford School for black children

[http://www.bastropcountyhistoricalsociety.com/rosanky](http://www.bastropcountyhistoricalsociety.com/rosanky)

Smithville, TX history (**Bastrop County**) African Americans/ this paper does not offer a bibliography but some interesting information

[http://smithvilletexashistory.com/blackhist.html](http://smithvilletexashistory.com/blackhist.html)

Smithville, TX – **Bastrop County**/ this paper offers a short bibliography of personal stories by residents


Education of Blacks in the Austin area 1870’s – including TX A&M.

[https://www.tsl.texas.gov/exhibits/forever/representation/page8.html](https://www.tsl.texas.gov/exhibits/forever/representation/page8.html)

Separation followed gentrification & educational disparities - Why are so many African Americans leaving Austin?


Round Rock Historical Walking Tour – African Americans/ during February

Families of Color Who Settled in Blanco County

“A notable pioneer came to Blanco County shortly after the war was over. **Peyton Roberts** was a freed slave from Virginia who homesteaded public land about eight miles east of Blanco. He was followed by other freed slaves, who together founded ‘Peyton Colony.’ Among their enterprises was a lime kiln, where they made high-quality materials for mortar, to build the rock buildings of Blanco County. The kiln was re-constructed in the 1960s and can be seen today at a roadside park on RM 165. One of the settlers, named Jim Upshear, donated land for a log church. Its successor, the Mt. Horeb Baptist Church, is still in use.”

http://texas-hill-country.com/issue/texas-hill-country-archive/article/blanco-and-blanco-county

Submitted by Patricia Scott
Families of Color Who Settled in Caldwell County

Freedman’s settlements in Texas (Caldwell County – St John’s Colony) Several hundred Texas freedmen's settlements came into being between 1870 and 1890. Many established themselves on pockets of wilderness, cheap land, or neglected land previously little utilized for cotton agriculture. Some patterns of community origin are discernable, although their relative importance remains uncertain. As in the case of Barrett, Harris County, many settlements existed for years as squatter communities before residents formally purchased or preempted land. Ministers and their congregations took the lead in founding some communities, as at St. John Colony in Caldwell County.


Saint John’s Colony (Caldwell County) started with a group of Black farming families who came to the community from Webberville and purchased land here in the early 1870s. Since their leader was the Reverend John Henry Winn, the town was first called Winn’s Colony. After the building of the Saint John Missionary Baptist Church was established, the community was renamed. The community’s boundaries were somewhat hazy, but included an area of up to 2,200 acres of land. 40 families lived in the community in the 1980s and had three churches. In 2000, the population of the community was estimated as 150. Revolv.. https://www.revolvy.com/topic/Saint%20Johns%20Colony,%20Texas


Submitted by Patricia Scott
Families of Color Who Settled in Travis County

**Austin** - St. John District Association was known to be the largest association for African Americans. Moderator Campbell negotiated plans for an Orphan Home and School. He purchased three hundred and fifty (350) acres of land, and in 1906, built St. John Orphan Home, but not without struggle. The St. John Orphanage, which was located in North Austin on a tract of land, where Highland Campus is presently located.

See [History of St. John - Historical Highlights - St. John Regular Missionary Baptist District Association](#) in library guide, [Central Texas and Austin History: Ethnic Histories](#), under tab Blacks/African Americans.
Families of Color Who Settled in Williamson County

Fisher Family.
The Fisher family led by Agustus “Gus” Fisher, a former slave in Arkansas, is one of the earliest and most noted African-American Families in the county.

“Milas, Richard, and Nelson Miller owned land and started school, church, and community gathering place in Williamson County in an area known as Jenks Branch – Miller Community, TX.”

“Jenks Branch, a community and small stream in western Williamson County, named for John Jenks in whose survey the stream lies, where many large camp meetings were held after about 1870. Milas, Richard and Nelson Miller, three Negro brothers, purchased land in the area soon after the Civil War and helped other Negro families to settle there. Thus the community was also called Miller community. Milas Miller established a school consisting at first of a brush arbor, put up a building where both school and church services were held.”
“Others in Miller settlement included the Mason, Barton, Faubion, Schooley, Parks, Thomas, Huddleston, Hollingsworth, Pickett, Gant families, and Tom and Lila Inman, a freed slave and his wife who bought land almost on the Williamson-Travis County line and built a home with a spectacular view of the rugged but beautiful scenery.” Miller school consolidated with Liberty Hill in 1949. On another portion of Jenks Branch, James Branch and his family and a bachelor brother, Nicholas, settled about 1846, established a large ranch, and it was near the Branch home that the early camp meetings were held. The last camp meeting held there was in 1883.”

Submitted by Patricia Scott