Willkommen!
History Surrounds You

With over 700 historically significant structures in the Fredericksburg
historic district, history literally surrounds you. In order for this to
be a manageable walking tour, 30 sites were selected to give you
a flavor of the Fredericksburg story and the architectural styles that
have evolved over the decades.

This walking tour starts and ends at the Fredericksburg Visitor
Information Center, located at 302 East Austin Street. Ample
parking is available behind the center to leave your automobile while
you walk our town’s streets.

Along the way you will see examples of homes, commercial
buildings, civic structures and churches, as well as three examples
of the famous Fredericksburg Sunday Houses. Early architectural
styles will range from a log cabin to three examples of “fachwerk”
construction—the Kamendah House, the Walter Home and the
Kuesnemann House.

Limestone, readily available in the area, became the building
material of choice. Early limestone homes were simple such as
the Schrandt House and the Tustie Haus. After some affluence
was established, turn of the century rock homes, such as the
William Bierschwede Home, took on a grander scale. Many of the
notable limestone commercial structures along Main Street date
to the post-Civil War building boom.

Because of the immigration package that the first settlers of
Fredericksburg received (namely a town lot and acreage for a farm),
some of the town lots in the first residential areas were not built
upon for decades. As a result, one city block in Fredericksburg may
have a log cabin from the early days of settlement, a rock home
from the late 1880s, a craftsman 1930s cottage and a “hill country-
style” home built in the early 2000s.

Enjoy your stroll through
Fredericksburg and our history!
Fredericksburg History

Fredericksburg, the county seat of Gillespie County, is located 65 miles northwest of San Antonio, and 70 miles west of Austin, the state capital, at the intersection of US Highways 87 and 290 and Texas 16. Several farm-to-market and ranch roads traverse the county. Gillespie County is on the Edwards Plateau in the heart of that section known as the Texas Hill Country.

The “halfback” of Fredericksburg is its 3.5 mile-long, wide Main Street, which runs through the business district. Century-old native limestone homes and stores commercial buildings stand side-by-side with new structures, depicting a true blending of the traditional and the contemporary.

Fredericksburg is steeped in history. The town was founded May 8, 1846, by 120 German immigrants under the auspices of the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas. The first colonization was on New Braunfels in 1845. In 1846, Fort Martin Scott was established southeast of Fredericksburg.

The Commissioner General of the Society, also known as the “Adelverein,” was Baron Orffred Hans von Meusebach, a German nobleman who took the name of John O. Meusebach once settled in Fredericksburg. He was a skilled and capable man in handling the affairs of the colony, and was diplomatic in dealing with the Native Americans. The historic treaty he made with the Comanches on the San Saba River in 1847 was hailed state-wide as the major effort in bringing about peaceful relations with the Native Americans on the frontier.

The City of Fredericksburg derived its name from a German nobleman, Prince Friedrich of Prussia, who was the highest ranking member of the “Adelverein.” This society sponsored the colonization of the Fischer-Miller Grant in central Texas. Poor management by those who preceded Meusebach, however, defeated the original plan for colonization of larger areas north of Fredericksburg, except for those who settled in the Mason-Castell area.

During these early years, over 15,000 colonists from Germany landed at the Texas port of Indialand, also called Carlshaven. Most of them settled in the Central Texas. The trip from the Gulf Coast to the site of the colony was made in two-wheeled oxcarts and on foot. Transportation was scarce due to the war between Mexico and the United States, which involved almost all available teams.

Sickness and lack of food took a great toll on human life. Many never reached their destination. It was told that one could almost follow the travelers’ course by the graves of those who died of the dreaded cholera. With little more than determination, they set about the task of creating a new home in a new world—a land free of religious and political oppression. These sturdy colonists were confronted with many obstacles, chiefly sickness, inadequate food and almost no money.

Little, however, could be bought because there were few markets. After a year or so the Fredericksburg colony began to prosper. Native Americans were, as a rule, peaceful during the early years of the colony, due mainly to the diplomacy of John O. Meusebach.

Sunday houses

Small homes built by German settlers who lived in distant rural areas. Used over weekends by families while they tended or attended church.

A typical early Sunday house had one room with a lean-to kitchen and a half story above, which was reached by a ladder or stairway. Built during 1895—1905, most Sunday houses were frame but some were rock.

Homes found use during school sessions, periods of religious instruction or serious illness. Some of the larger ones made comfortable retirement homes for elderly German farmers.

About Gillespie County

Gillespie County was created on February 23, 1848, and named after Capt. R.A. Gillespie who fought and died at Monterrey during the war with Mexico in 1846. Originally, the county was four times its present size, containing parts of Blanco, Mason, Uvalde and Burnet counties. Reallocation of lands began in 1852, and by 1956, through an act of the Texas legislature, the present boundaries were established. Before Gillespie County was created, it was part of Bexar County.

Gillespie County comprises an area of 1,061 square miles. The altitude range of the county varies from 1,400 to 2,244 feet. There is a great variety of soil and vegetation in Gillespie County. Black soil covers lowlands, while other areas are mixed sandy loam, granite and sandy soils. Upland timber consists of cedar (juniper), mesquite and about six different species of oak. Lowlands have elm, hickory, cottonwood, reecome, willow and pecan trees. The many types of soil, adequate moisture, and moderate climate account for the diversified farming and ranching.

The County annually produces cattle, sheep, goats, hogs, horses and turkeys. Crops are oats, wheat, barley, sorghums and corn. Gillespie County ranks first in quality of many varieties of peaches grown here. Fishing sheds are located in Fredericksburg and Stonewall. Other fruits, including plums, apples and pecans, are grown on a smaller scale. Increasing acreage is being planted in vineyards. Also, hunting white-tailed deer and wild turkey is the leading sport of the Texas Hill Country.

In addition to agriculture, tourism and medical services are major components of the local economy.
LYNDON B. JOHNSON
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
111 East Main Street
956-217-5559

Visit this state and national park, which is located in the heart of downtown Fredericksburg, Texas. The park offers a variety of programs and events throughout the year, including guided tours, educational programs, and special events. The park is open daily from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. No admission fee.

TEXAS RANGERS HERITAGE CENTER
Fort Martin Scott
101 East Main Street
956-217-5559
www.tlrc.org

The Texas Rangers Heritage Center is located in the heart of downtown Fredericksburg, Texas. The center offers exhibits, artifacts, and multimedia presentations that tell the story of the Texas Rangers and their history. The center is open daily from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. No admission fee.

Historic Sites & Museums – Beyond Downtown

STOCKBRICK FARM
101 East Main Street
956-217-5559
www.farmwealth.org

Visit this historic farm that dates back to the 1840s. The farm is located on the banks of the Stock Brick River and offers a variety of programs and events throughout the year, including guided tours, educational programs, and special events. The farm is open daily from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. No admission fee.

GUADALUPE COUNTY COUNTRY SCHOOLS
DRIVING TOUR
www.guadalupecountytexas.com

View 12 historic country schools in Guadalupe County. A special map with highlighted routes will direct visitors to schools in a particular quadrant of the county. Driveways are winding, so you can expect to take one to two hours to complete the tour. Maps of the trail are available at the main Visitor Information Center at 301 East Austin Street in downtown Fredericksburg.

PORT MARTIN SCOTT HISTORIC SITE
101 East Main Street
956-217-5559
www.thmuseum.org

Visit this state and national park, which is located on the National Register Historic District. The park features exhibits and artifacts related to the history of the Texas Rangers and the Stock Brick River. The park is open daily from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. No admission fee.

Visit Information Center:
301 East Austin St.
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624
1-800-997-7560
www.VisitFredericksburgTX.com