

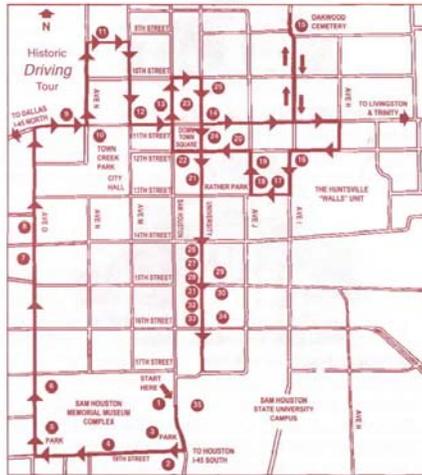


Historic

Step by Step DRIVING TOUR

Huntsville was founded in 1835 by Pleasant Gray. The town grew quickly with the majority of the prominent settlers moving here from Alabama, Tennessee and Virginia.

From the city's early inception, Huntsville was considered the center of education, law and was the home of many military leaders during the years of the Republic of Texas.



1. SAM HOUSTON MEMORIAL MUSEUM (1936-37)

Located on right - 19th Street at Sam Houston Avenue

This main building of the museum houses the largest collection of General Sam Houston's artifacts and is located on fifteen acres of Houston's original one hundred and seventy-four acre homestead that he purchased in 1847. Two of his homes are situated here near the spring which feeds this small pond.

The museum was begun in 1936 during the centennial celebration of Texas independence. Admission is free to the public. Open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. every day except Monday.



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Bureau Huntsville/Walker County
Chamber of Commerce (936) 295-8113

2. ELIJAH COLLARD LOG HOUSE (1834)

Located on left - 1215 19th Street

Elijah Collard was an early settler in Walker County, and originally built his home south of Huntsville near New Waverly. The building was moved to this site and restored in 1980-83.

The two-pen log structure with a dog run is a good example of area pioneer homes. It is now home to the Homestead Restaurant.



3. THE "WOODLAND HOME" AND LAW OFFICE (1848)

Sam Houston served in the U.S. Senate from 1846 to 1859; during this time he designed and built this home for his wife Margaret Lea Houston. His family lived here until 1858 when Sam Houston was elected Governor of Texas. He then sold the "Woodland" to pay for campaign debts.

The log building adjacent to the home served as Houston's law office. The kitchen building is a replica. (See National Historical Landmark)



4. STEAMBOAT HOUSE (1858)

After a short term as the Governor of Texas, Sam Houston was removed in 1861 after refusing to take the oath of allegiance to the Confederacy. He returned to Huntsville from Austin and leased this home in 1862. He died in the downstairs bedroom a year later and his funeral was held in the upstairs parlor.

The original site of the home, known as Buena Vista, was east of Oakwood Cemetery, just a short distance from where he was buried. The house was moved here in 1936 as a memorial to the great Texas leader. (See historical marker)

5. GAZEBO (1978-79)

Located on right - 19th Street at Avenue O

This plantation style gazebo was built during the celebration of Sam Houston State University's centennial anniversary which is designated on the weather vane above the copper roof and stain glass cupola.

This park is the site of outdoor concerts, weddings and family picnics and is located on the southwest corner of the Sam Houston Memorial Museum Complex.

6. PRITCHETT STADIUM (1930's)

This rock football stadium and rock walls were built during the depression by the Works Progress Administration. The stadium was used until 1986 for football and other sports.



7. J.P. GIBBS HOME (1927)

Located on left - 1404 Avenue O

Dr. James Philip Gibbs was the son of Sandford Gibbs, who was one of Huntsville's earliest leaders. Dr. Gibbs' medical practice was in Houston where he was the attending physician at the birth of industrialist, Howard Hughes.

He returned to Huntsville in 1926 to manage the family business. A year later he completed this home which was restored by his descendents.

8. PRITCHETT-KELLOGG HOME (1895)

Located on left - 1322 Avenue O

"Professor Joe" Pritchett joined the faculty of Sam Houston Normal Institute in 1888 and built his home here seven years later. The home was called "Oak Grove."

The house is Victorian in design with floor length windows opening onto the grand porch. This section of Huntsville was known as the Gibbs-Pritchett addition.

Dr. Pritchett also owned many acres of land west of the college where the Sam Houston Memorial Museum Complex is located. Pritchett Field is named in his honor.



9. WYNNE HOME (1883)

Located on left - 1428 11th Street

G. A. Wynne built this home as a wedding gift for his bride, Samuella Gibbs. It is situated on land given by her uncle, Sandford Gibbs.

Initially, the home was a Victorian style cottage and was later remodeled with Colonial Revival architecture. The home has been continuously occupied by the Wynne family.

10. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (Established 1925) - Present location, 1964

Located on right - 1327 11th Street

The visitor information center is located at the Chamber's front entrance. Additional guides and attraction literature are available 24 hours a day or stop by The Sam Houston Statue/Huntsville Visitor Center, 7600 Hwy. 75 South. The Huntsville-Walker County Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau: (800) 289-0389 or (936) 295-8113.



11. THOMASON-EASTHAM HOME (1859)

Located on left - 906 Avenue M (Between Avenue N and M)

James Thomason, veteran of the War of 1812, settled in Huntsville in 1854. The house has had many architectural styles, from Victorian to Neo-classical design to Southern Colonial design.

The home is now a bed and breakfast inn, called "The Whistler," and was restored by a family descendent. The eight room house is recorded in The Texas Family Land Heritage Register and has a Texas Historical Marker. (Pronounced E-SUM) - EASTHAM



12. GIBBS-POWELL HOME/COUNTY MUSEUM (1862)

Located on left - 1228 11th Street at Avenue M

Built by Thomas Gibbs, one of Huntsville's earliest businessmen, who was often visited here by Sam Houston.

The house is of classical Greek Revival design and the grounds include the original cedar trees. The home is a Texas recorded historic landmark & Texas Archeological Landmark.



13. FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH (1913) - BURNED 1918

Located far left - 1016 Sam Houston Avenue REBUILT 1919

The Methodist Church was established in 1842 with their first structure completed here in 1857. This towering Gothic revival structure is known for its pipe organ and stain glass window. This was the third building at this site. (See historical subject marker)



14. WILLIAM MOORE STATE BUILDING (1931)

Located on left - 1036 11th Street at University Avenue.

Originally built as the U.S. Post Office building. This Mediterranean revival styled structure is one of many identical buildings constructed throughout Texas.



15. OAKWOOD CEMETERY (1846)

Located on right - Avenue I (Spur 94) at 9th Street

This cemetery is located at the end of Texas' shortest highway, Spur 94 "Sam Houston Memorial Drive," which was dedicated in 1936. Oakwood is the final resting place for numerous persons of historical significance in Texas, including General Sam Houston. (See historical subject marker)

The Oakwood Walking Tour information guide is available at the Chamber of Commerce and The Sam Houston Statue/Huntsville Visitor Center.



16. HUNTSVILLE PRISON - "WALLS UNIT" (1848)

Located on south side of 11th Street - Avenue H at 12th Street

Texas' first permanent penitentiary was located here in 1849. The "south building" of the prison east wing was built in the 1890's and is the oldest cell block in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. (See historical marker on right side of 12th Street). The Prison Driving Tour guide is available at the Chamber of Commerce and the Sam Houston Statue/Huntsville Visitor Center.

17. FORMER T.D.C.J. DIRECTOR'S HOME (1951)

Located on right - 1206 Avenue I at 13th Street

This 5,600 square foot structure was previously the residence for the Director of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. It is the second building at this site which has housed prison managers since the 1880's. This home was built by inmate labor in 1951. It is currently being used as a conference center. The wrought iron fence has surrounded the home since 1893.



18. FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH (1955)

Located on right - 1229 Avenue J at 13th Street

Sam Houston was a member of this church (established in 1844) which was one of the earliest Baptist congregations in Texas. The first building at this site was completed in 1851.

The third church structure was built in 1924 under the guidance of Rev. C.F. Andrews, who was the father of actors Dana Andrews and Steve Forrest. After a fire in 1954, the church was rebuilt the following year. (See historical subject marker)

19. THOMASON-COLE HOME (1891)

Located on right - 1207 Avenue J

The Thomason family were early settlers of Walker County and moved here in 1854. Their youngest son, Dr. John W. Thomason, built this home in 1891. His daughter, Margaret, married Dr. Thomas Cole in 1939 and their son, Thomas, Jr. currently resides in the home which he and his wife restored during the early 1980's. The Victorian style home is listed on the National Register of Historic Sites.

The doctor's office adjacent to the home was built by Dr. J.W. Thomason in 1889, where he practiced medicine for over fifty years.

Dr. Thomas Cole, Sr. began his public practice here shortly after World War II. Dr. Cole had previously served as the medical director at "The Walls" prison unit. His son, Dr. Thomas Cole, Jr., joined his father's practice in 1974 and has continued service here to this day. The office is also listed on the National Register.



20. MASONIC LODGE (1909)

Located on right - 1030 12th Street

Forrest Lodge No. 19 was established in 1844 and is the eighth oldest Masonic Lodge in Texas. Early members included Sam Houston and Henderson Yoakum. Their first three buildings were built on the square and this fourth building was completed in 1909. (See historical subject marker)

* COURTHOUSE SQUARE (1848)

Located around 11th and 12th Street and Sam Houston Avenue and University Avenue - The latter was originally Main Street.

This area was originally called "Market Square" before Huntsville became the county seat of Walker County in 1846.

The first courthouse was erected in 1848 on land deeded by Huntsville founder Pleasant Gray for only one cent. The original penny is now located in the corner stone of the courthouse. This building is the fifth courthouse at this sight.

The buildings on the square offer a wide variety of architectural styles and were constructed from the 1860's to the 1930's. (See historical subject markers)

Antique stores, gift shops and many other businesses cater to visitor's needs and you are invited to stroll around the historic square.

The downtown square is undergoing a revitalization plan which is a joint effort of the public and private sectors of the community. A major component of the plan is the rehabilitation of the facades of the downtown buildings with restoration where that is possible with trompe l'oeil (trick the eye) painting of architectural details by renowned artist Richard Haas. The north side of the square was the first to be completed, followed by seven other buildings in the district.

21. HENRY OPERA HOUSE (1883)

Located on left - 1101-1103 12th Street at University Avenue

From 1883 to 1913, the Henry Opera House had a colorful stream of actors, musicians, lecturers, minstrels and magicians that brought merriment and culture to this isolated town thousands of miles from Broadway.

These road shows and home-talent concerts were performed here from nearly twenty years in the upstairs theatre. The original "foot lights" were oil lamps with tin reflectors until electricity became available in the late 1890's. The first motion pictures were shown here. (See historical subject marker)

22. FORMER SITE OF THE TEXAS PRISON MUSEUM

Located on left - 1113 12th Street

This prison museum, now located at 491 Hwy. 75, is the only one of its kind in Texas, and opened in 1989. The museum portrays life in prison and the "culture within a culture that developed behind the bars."

On display are many exhibits including: "Old Sparky" the Texas electric chair, confiscated inmate weapons, relics of escape attempts and fascinating facts about the characters of the past who served on both sides of the bars. This building was the original site of Huntsville State Bank (later the Huntsville National Bank) which was organized in 1907.



23. GIBBS STORE (1841)

Located on left - 1118 11th Street at Sam Houston Avenue

This site houses Gibbs Brothers and Company, which is the "oldest business in Texas in continuous operation by the same family at the same location." They celebrated their sesquicentenary September 4, 1991. The business was first opened as a mercantile store in 1841 by Thomas Gibbs and partner. The store was frequented by Sam Houston.

This brick structure was built in 1890 and housed the Gibbs National Bank (later the First National Bank) in the downstairs with the Gibbs office upstairs where it has remained for nearly one hundred years. (See historical subject marker located on the site of the original Gibbs store)

24. PLEASANT GRAY'S TRADING POST (1835)

Located on left - 1105 University Avenue

Pleasant Gray first explored this area in 1830-31 and returned here in 1835 to begin the town of Huntsville on land he acquired from the Mexican government. He built an Indian trading post and his home at this site just a few hundred yards south of a fresh spring, which he had discovered on his earlier expedition.

The home was later converted into an Inn for early travelers. Pleasant Gray left his business with his wife Hanna and started off for the California gold rush in 1848. He died along the way and is buried in Nebraska. (See historical subject marker)

25. FOUNDERS PARK (1994-STATE HISTORICAL MARKER)

Located at the southeast corner of University Avenue and 10th Street

A small park of abundant native plants and historical markers is found at the site of the original town spring where Huntsville founders traded with the friendly Bedias Indians in the early 1800's. Sculptures representing a Native American family flank the re-created spring.



Many of Huntsville's finest buildings have fallen victim to fire. Such was the case of the 1888 courthouse which was destroyed Christmas Eve night in 1968. The damage was severe due to the fact that the town's only fire alarm-siren was located on top of the courthouse. By the time the fire was reported it was too late, for the alarm had been disabled and silenced by the raging fire. When the volunteer fire department arrived there was little they could do to save the grand old building.

26. BARR HOME (1895)

Located on right - 1404 University Avenue at 14th Street
William Y. Barr built his home here on what was once called "Depot Hill." The train depot was located only a block east of here and Mr. Barr worked there as the railroad depot agent.

He served as City Alderman from 1892-95 and worked to establish adequate waterworks for fire protection. He also served as Worshipful Master for the local Masonic Lodge.

27. ROGERS-RUSSELL HOME (1844-45)

Located on right - 1418 University Avenue
Colonel George Washington Rogers built this home in Huntsville, in 1844-45 and it is the oldest home in Huntsville. He was the city's first treasurer and was appointed to secure funds and construct the first Walker County courthouse building.

He served in the 1846 War with Mexico and was second in command of Captain James Gillaspie's Company. He donated the land which was the site of Austin College.



28. ASHFORD HOME (circa 1905)

Located on right - 1428 University Avenue
This grand fourteen room house was built by James G. Ashford who was a leading businessman and politician in Huntsville. He was elected to two terms as mayor (1897-99) and was the president of Huntsville State Bank, which he also organized.

He owned a furniture store on the square and operated a funeral home at this site.



29. JOSEY-KING HOME (1894)

Located on left - 1425 University Avenue at 15th Street
William C. Josey's family first occupied this home which was built on the site of Henderson Yoakum's home.

The Josey family, early settlers in Walker County, came here in 1854. As philanthropists, the family did much to improve the community.

William's sister, Mollye Josey King, moved here with her husband J. Robert King, and the King family has owned the home ever since.

The brick facade was added to the frame house in the 1920's or 30's.

30. DR. JOHN BRANCH HOUSE (1847-48)

Located on left - 15th Street & University Avenue
Moved here in 1997 from Interstate 45 one block where it was originally built to the east where the college clinic is now located on Avenue J.

31. ROYAL-STANLEY HOUSE (1848)

Located on right - 1502 University Avenue
Peter Royal built this house which was originally located one block east of this site and situated across from the train depot.

He was known as "Uncle Peter" and was a master brickmason. Many of Huntsville's early brick buildings were built by this fine craftsman.

The home has been completely restored to its original design.



32. THE TEMPLE (1872)

Located on right - 1512 University Avenue
The residence is fondly called the "Temple." The structure resembles a "Planters House" located in the fields of Southern plantations.

The house is actually the center section and main entrance of a large Greek Revival home that was moved here from Lovelady, Texas.

33. BOWMAN CEDAR LOG HOUSE (1831)

Located on right - 1514 University Avenue
This fine example of a pioneer home was built by John Bowman, who was an "old three hundred" (the original 300 colonists) and moved to Texas with Stephen F. Austin. Bowman was an early settler of Grimes County where he built this single pen cedar log home.

Before the home was relocated here, the structure was completely disassembled with each log numbered.

It was restored at this site and appears as it did in the early 1830's.

When Texas became a state in 1845, the permanent location of the capitol city was in question. The citizens of Huntsville rallied to have its location here and ambitiously named this hill (present site of SHSU) as "Capitol Hill." The issue was decided by popular vote in a state wide election in 1850 and Austin won by a narrow margin.

34. ROBERT KITTRELL HOME (1870)

Located on left - 15th Street & University Avenue
As a freedman, Robert Kittrell built this home shortly after the Civil War. The structure is a classic example of Greek Revival design, and was relocated here in 1998 from its original site in north Huntsville.



35. AUSTIN COLLEGE BUILDING (1852)

Located on top of Capitol Hill - SHSU Campus
This building is the "oldest educational building in continuous use west of the Mississippi River." General Sam Houston was in attendance of the cornerstone laying ceremony in 1851.

Austin College was chartered in 1849 by the Presbyterian Church and housed the state's first law school. It remained in Huntsville for twenty five years and relocated to Sherman, Texas in 1876.

Sam Houston Normal Institute was established in 1879 in the Austin College building. The school expanded and constructed a high Victorian Gothic structure adjacent to the Austin College building, later called "Old Main."

In 1982, Old Main was destroyed by fire and the Austin College building was also heavily damaged. The building was recently restored to its former glory and once again the Austin College Building is the crowning queen of Capitol Hill. There is now a park on the foundation of the Old Main site.

You are invited to visit the Sam Houston State University campus and stroll through the quadrangle, centrally located by the Austin College building and the Administration building. For more SHSU information or additional sites of interest, contact the Admissions Visitor Center at 294-1844.