

## ALPINE, TEXAS INFORMATION & HISTORY\*

**Alpine** is a city in and the [county seat](#) of [Brewster County, Texas, United States](#). The population was 5,786 people at the [2000 census](#), and had increased to 5,905 by 2010

The area had been a campsite for cattlemen tending their herds between 1878 and the spring of 1882, when a town of tents was created by railroad workers and their families. Because the section of the railroad was called Osborne, that was the name of the small community for a brief time. The railroad needed access to water from springs owned by brothers named Daniel and Thomas Murphy, so it entered into an agreement with the Murphys to change the name of the section and settlement to Murphyville in exchange for a contract to use the spring. In November 1883 the Murphys registered a plat for the town of Murphyville with the county clerk of Presidio County. The town's name was changed to Alpine on February 3, 1888 following a petition by its residents. At this time a description of the town mentioned a dozen houses, three saloons, a hotel and rooming house, a livery stable, a butcher shop, and a drugstore, which also housed the post office.

Alpine grew very slowly until Sul Ross State Normal College (now [Sul Ross State University](#)), was opened in 1921. The opening of the [Big Bend National Park](#) in the 1940s further spurred the growth of the town. The population was estimated at 396 in 1904. By 1927 it had risen to 3,000. The 1950 census reported Alpine's population at 5,256, but the 1960 census reported only 4,740 residents. A high of approximately 6,200 was reached by 1976. In 1980 residents numbered 5,465 and businesses 108. In 1990 the population was 5,637. Alpine is located on [U.S. Route 90](#) about 26 miles (42 km) east of [Marfa](#). According to the [United States Census Bureau](#), the city has a total area of 4.1 square miles (11 km<sup>2</sup>), all land.

*\*[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alpine,\\_Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alpine,_Texas)*

## MARFA, TEXAS INFORMATION & HISTORY\*

**Marfa** is a city in the high desert of the [Trans-Pecos](#) in far [West Texas](#), located between the [Davis Mountains](#) and [Big Bend National Park](#). It is the [county seat](#) of [Presidio County](#), and its population as of the [2010 United States Census](#) was 1,981. The city was founded in the early 1880s as a railroad stop; the population increased during World War II, but the growth stalled and reversed somewhat during the late 20th century. Today, Marfa is a tourist destination and a major center for [Minimalist art](#). Attractions include [Building 98](#), the [Chinati Foundation](#), artisan shops, historical architecture, a classic Texas town square, modern art installments, art galleries, and the [Marfa lights](#).

Marfa was founded in the early 1880s as a [railroad water stop](#). The town was named "Marfa" at the suggestion of the wife of a railroad executive. Although some historians have hypothesized that the name came from a character in [Fyodor Dostoevsky](#) novel [The Brothers Karamazov](#). Etymologist [Barry Popik](#) found that Marfa was actually named after Marfa Strogoff, a character in the [Jules Verne](#) novel [Michael Strogoff](#).<sup>[4][5]</sup> The town grew quickly during the 1920s. The [Marfa Army Airfield](#) served as a training facility for several thousand pilots during World War II, including the American actor [Robert Sterling](#), before closing in 1945. The base was also used as the training ground for many of the United States Army's [chemical mortar battalions](#).

According to the [United States Census Bureau](#), the town has a total area of 1.6 sq mi (4.1 km<sup>2</sup>), all land. The city is located in the [Chihuahuan Desert](#), an underdeveloped region of about 140,000 square miles (about 362,600 km<sup>2</sup>).

*\*[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marfa,\\_Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marfa,_Texas)*

## FORT DAVIS (JEFF DAVIS COUNTY), TEXAS INFORMATION & HISTORY\*

**Fort Davis** is a [census-designated place](#) in [Jeff Davis County, Texas, United States](#). The population was 1,050 at the [2000 census](#) and 1,041 according to a 2007 estimate. It is the [county seat](#) of [Jeff Davis County](#). It was the site of Fort Davis established in 1854 on the [San Antonio-El Paso Road](#) through west Texas and named after [Jefferson Davis](#), who was then the Secretary of War under President [Franklin Pierce](#). Fort Davis has the highest elevation above sea level of any [county seat](#) in Texas; the elevation is 5,050 feet.

**Jeff Davis County** is a [county](#) in the [U.S. State](#) of [Texas](#). As of the [2010 census](#), its population was 2,342. Its [county seat](#) is [Fort Davis](#). The county is named for [Jefferson Davis](#), the 23rd [United States Secretary of War](#) and [President of the Confederate States of America](#). It is one of the nine counties that comprise the [Trans-Pecos](#) region of [West Texas](#).

The county contains the 270,000-acre (1,100 km<sup>2</sup>) Texas [Davis Mountains American Viticultural Area](#), though only about 50 acres (0.2 km<sup>2</sup>) is currently under vine. The [McDonald Observatory](#) is located near Fort Davis, and is owned by the [University of Texas at Austin](#). [Prehistoric peoples](#) camped at Phantom Lake Spring, in northeastern Jeff Davis County, and may have used the springs for irrigation. Indian [pictographs](#) in The Painted Comanche Camp of Limpia Canyon were discovered by the Whiting and Smith Expedition of 1849.

In August 1861, [Mescalero Apaches](#) under Chief Nicolas made an attack on Fort Davis, driving off livestock and killing three people. In the ensuing chase by the cavalry, Nicolas ambushed the soldiers, killing them all. September 1868 at Horsehead Hills, a group of volunteer Mexicans and [Buffalo Soldiers](#) from Fort Davis attacked and destroyed a Mescalero village to recover captives and stolen livestock. January 1870, a group of soldiers attacked a Mescalero Apache village near Delaware Creek in the Guadalupe Mountains. July 1880 soldiers at Tinaja de las Palmas attacked a group of Mescaleros led by [Chief Victorio](#). August 1880, Buffalo Soldiers ambushed Victorio at Rattlesnake Springs. Victorio retreated to Mexico and was killed in October by Mexican soldiers. The last Indian depredation in the area was at Barry Scobee Mountain in 1881. In March 1849 lieutenants William H. C. Whiting and William F. Smith were sent out by Maj. Gen. William J. Worth of the Texas 8th Military Department to look for a route from [San Antonio](#) to [El Paso del Norte](#). A second party, led by Dr. John S. Ford and financed by a group of Austin merchants, pioneered a trail that ran north of the Davis Mountains before turning southward toward El Paso. June 1849 [Lt. Col. Joseph E. Johnston](#), attached to Bvt. Maj. Jefferson Van Horne's battalion, was sent for additional surveying. At El Paso, Horne established [Fort Bliss](#). [Texas Ranger Big Foot Wallace](#) escorted the San Antonio-El Paso Mail coach through the mountains. Fort Davis was established in 1854. The land was leased from Surveyor John James at \$300 a year. The fort was surrendered to the Confederacy in 1861, and abandoned in 1862

after Confederate defeat at [Glorieta Pass](#), [New Mexico](#), but was re-occupied by Federal troops July 1, 1867.

The legislature established Jeff Davis County on March 15, 1887. Fort Davis was named county seat. Cattle ranchers began operating in the county in the 1880s. The towns of [Valentine](#) and Chispa became supply centers for the ranchers and later railroad stops. Fort Davis has always been the county's largest town. By 1970, Madera Springs was known as the smallest town in Texas. [Fort Davis National Historic Site](#) was established in 1961. [Davis Mountains State Park](#) opened to the public in the 1930s. The [Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute](#) arboretum was established in 1974.

*\*[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort\\_Davis,\\_Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Davis,_Texas), \*[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeff\\_Davis\\_County,\\_Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeff_Davis_County,_Texas)*

## MARATHON, TEXAS INFORMATION & HISTORY\*

**Marathon** is a [census-designated place](#) (CDP) in [Brewster County](#), [Texas](#), [United States](#). The population was 470 in 2007, after growing from 455 in 2000, but had decreased to 430 by 2010. According to the [United States Census Bureau](#), the CDP has a total area of 5.2 square miles (13 km<sup>2</sup>), all of it land.

The high-end Gage Hotel is located in Marathon. The town was also a filming location for the movie [Paris, Texas](#) directed by [Wim Wenders](#). The 1985 [Kevin Costner](#) film, [Fandango](#), shot scenes in Marathon.

Marathon, the second-largest town in Brewster County, is located on the Southern Pacific Railroad at the intersection of U.S. highways 90 and 385, twenty-six miles southeast of Alpine in the northern part of the county. The town was founded when the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railway built across what was then part of Presidio County. A crew building east from El Paso reached the townsite in March 1882. The railroad turned Marathon into a shipping and supply point for area ranchers. In 1884 the population was estimated at fifty, and local businesses included four livestock breeders, one sheep breeder, and one saloon. At that time the principal products shipped from Marathon included livestock, wool, and large game animals, including deer, antelope, and bear. In 1887, when Brewster, Buchel, and Foley counties were formed out of Presidio County, Marathon was designated the county seat of Buchel County. In 1897, however, Buchel and Foley counties, which had never been organized, were disestablished, and their territory officially became part of Brewster County, which thus became the largest in Texas.

Marathon was the principal shipping point for most Brewster County ranchers because its location in the relatively flat Marathon basin was more accessible to cattle than Alpine. It also served the mining operations at Boquillas. In 1911, with the threat of raids from across the Rio Grande during the Mexican Revolution, Marathon became the local center of military operations. Capt. Douglas MacArthur's company was the first to arrive at Marathon, under a special order that authorized the movement of United States Army troops into Texas to aid the civil authorities in maintaining order. MacArthur's company was replaced by troops under Lt. George S. Patton. In 1914 the estimated population of Marathon had grown to 600.

For tourists coming from the north on U.S. Highway 385 or from the east on U.S. Highway 90, Marathon is the principal gateway to Big Bend National Park, thirty-six miles south.

*\*[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marathon,\\_Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marathon,_Texas), Marathon Chamber of Commerce*

## TERLINGUA & STUDY BUTTE, TEXAS INFORMATION & HISTORY\*

**Terlingua** is a mining district in southwestern [Brewster County, Texas, United States](#). It is located near the [Rio Grande](#) and the [Texas](#) villages of [Lajitas](#) and [Study Butte, Texas](#), as well as the [Mexican](#) village of Santa Elena. The discovery of [cinnabar](#), from which the [metal mercury](#) is extracted, in the mid-1880s brought miners to the area, creating a city of 2,000 people. The only remnants of the [mining](#) days are a [ghost town](#) of the Howard Perry-owned Chisos Mining Company and several nearby capped and abandoned mines, most notably the California Hill, the Rainbow, the 248 and the Study Butte mines. The mineral [terlinguaite](#) was first found in the vicinity of California Hill.

According to the historian Kenneth Baxter Ragsdale, "Facts concerning the discovery of [cinnabar](#) in the Terlingua area are so shrouded in legend and fabrication that it is impossible to cite the date and location of the first [quicksilver](#) recovery." The [cinnabar](#) was apparently known to [Native Americans](#), who prized its brilliant red color for body pigment. Various Mexican and American prospectors reportedly found cinnabar at Terlingua in the 1880s, but the remoteness and hostile Indians deterred mining.

Terlingua is located near the Rio Grande and the Texas villages of Lajitas and Study Butte as well as the Mexican village of Santa Elena.

**Terlingua Ghost Town** In the 1800s it was discovered that the area was plentiful in cinnabar, a red-mercury sulfide, from which mercury can be extracted. This caused an influx of miners to the area, but it wasn't until Jack Dawson's discovery and production of the area's first mercury in 1888 that it drew a population of 2,000. Cinnabar production peaked during the First World War and by the start of the Second World War the Chisos Mining Company had filed for bankruptcy and the miners began to trickle out. By the end of the war it was a bonafide ghost town. In the 1960s, however, people began returning to Terlingua. In 1967 the world's first Chili Cook-Off was held here, and thus Terlingua gave birth to the now famous event.

There is still a small but vibrant community currently in Bill and Lisa Ivey's Terlingua Ghost Town, accessible from heading south on Texas State Highway 118 that runs between Fort Davis, Alpine and the Big Bend National Park, then turning west on Texas Farm to Market Road 170 (the famed River Road) for approximately six miles. Great accommodations, great food.

*\* [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terlingua,\\_Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terlingua,_Texas) <http://www.atlasobscura.com/places/terlingua-ghost-town>*

## LAJITAS, TEXAS INFORMATION & HISTORY\*

**Lajitas** is on the western edge of **Big Bend National Park** in southwestern Brewster County. It is at an altitude of 2,200 feet on a bluff overlooking the Rio Grande at the San Carlos ford of the old **Comanche Trail**. The name Lajitas is Spanish for "little flat rocks" and refers to the Boquillas flagstone of the area. The region was inhabited by Mexican Indians for many years. They were driven from the area by the Apaches and later by the Comanches during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Anglo-Americans first arrived in the mid-1800s

A number of cattle ranches and mining enterprises appeared in northern Chihuahua and Coahuila. These activities increased commerce across the Rio Grande into Texas; consequently, by 1900 Lajitas was designated a substation port of entry. Farming along the narrow floodplain of the river served to bring in more families, and by 1912 the town had a store, a saloon, a school with fifty pupils, and a customhouse. The crossing, a smooth rock bottom all the way across the river, was the best between Del Rio and El Paso.

H. W. McGuirk, the leading citizen of Lajitas from 1902 to 1917, operated the store-saloon, farmed, and helped manage the Terlingua Mining Company. He also funded the construction of a church and a school. Lajitas officially had a post office as early as 1901, but it did not become operational until McGuirk petitioned for its reestablishment in 1904. It was closed temporarily in 1910, reopened in 1916, and closed permanently in 1939. McGuirk sold his landholdings around Lajitas to Thomas V. Skaggs, who continued farming. Skaggs also became successful in a candelilla wax business, the Lajitas Wax Company. In 1916 the interruption of commerce by **Francisco (Pancho) Villa's** bandits brought Gen. **John J. Pershing's** troops to Lajitas, where they established a major cavalry post. In the 1980s a motel stood on the actual foundations of the post. The Lajitas property continued to change hands and in 1949 was bought by Rex Ivey, Jr., who hand-dug a well and installed a generator for the area's first electric lights. In 1977 Ivey sold part of the Lajitas area to Houston entrepreneur Walter M. Mischer, of Mischer Corporation; Mischer had begun development and restoration of the community in 1976, under the name of the corporation's subsidiary, Arrow Development Company.

In the mid-1980s Lajitas was a resort town with fifty residents and fifteen businesses. The old church had been restored, and there were three motels, a hotel, a restaurant, a golf course, a swimming pool, an RV park, and an airstrip. Just east of town was the Lajitas Museum, a large, modern building containing artifacts of the Big Bend area. The old trading post remained open. In 1990 the population was still reported as fifty. In 1995 the Big Bend area was becoming increasingly popular as a site for movie making. Lajitas, according to one producer, was just about the only place where "you can shoot 360 degrees," since Santa Fe and Sedona were "used up." At that time a TV miniseries, *Streets of Laredo*, starring James Garner, was being filmed in Lajitas. In 2000 the population was seventy-five. Today it is a picturesque thriving Golf Resort and Spa.

\* <http://lajitasgolfresort.com/>, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hnl05>

PRESIDIO, TEXAS INFORMATION & HISTORY\*

**Presidio** is a city in [Presidio County, Texas](#), United States. It stands on the [Rio Grande](#) (Río Bravo del Norte), on the opposite side of the U.S.-Mexico border from [Ojinaga, Chihuahua](#). The population was 4,167 at the [2000 census](#), and had increased to 5,106 as of the 2010 US census. Presidio is on the [Farm to Market Road 170](#), and [U.S. Route 67](#), 18 miles (29 km) south of Marfa in Presidio County. Presidio is about 250 miles southeast of [El Paso](#), 240 miles southwest of the junction of the [Rio Conchos](#) and [Rio Grande](#) at Presidio was settled thousands of years ago by hunting and gathering Indians. By 1200 AD, the local Indians had adopted agriculture and lived in small, closely knit settlements, which the Spaniards later called *pueblos*. (See [La Junta Indians](#))

The first Spaniards came to Presidio in 1535, [Álvar Núñez Cabeza De Vaca](#) and his three companions stopped at the Indian pueblo, placed a cross on the mountainside, and called the village *La Junta de las Cruces*. On December 10, 1582, [Antonio de Espejo](#) and his company arrived at the site and called the pueblo *San Juan Evangelista*. By 1681, the area of Presidio was known as *La Junta de los Ríos*, or the Junction of the Rivers. There were five Jumanos towns along the Rio Grande to the north of the junction, consisting largely of permanent houses. In 1683, [Juan Sabeata](#), the chief of the [Jumano](#) Indian nation, reported having seen a fiery cross on the mountain at Presidio and requested that a mission be established at La Junta. The settlement in 1684 became known as *La Navidad en Las Cruces*. The missions La Navidad en las Cruces, San Francisco de los Julimes, San Antonio de los Puliques, Apostol Santiago, and Santa María de la Redonda may have been established on the Texas side of the Rio Grande at La Junta. About 1760, a penal colony and military garrison of 60 men were established near Presidio. In 1830, the name of the area around Presidio was changed from *La Junta de los Rios* to *Presidio del Norte*. White American settlers came to Presidio in 1848 after the [Mexican War](#). Among them was John Spencer, who operated a horse ranch on the United States side of the Rio Grande near Presidio. Ben Leaton and Milton Faver, former scalp hunters for the Mexican government, built private forts in the area. The handful of Anglo settlers who came to the region were assimilated into the Hispanic population and their descendants are primarily Spanish speakers today.

During the Mexican Revolution, General [Pancho Villa](#) often used [Ojinaga](#) as his headquarters for operations and visited Presidio on numerous occasions.

In 1930, the [Kansas City, Mexico and Orient Railway](#) reached Presidio. The 1959 movie [Rio Bravo](#) featured the town.

As of 2007, Presidio's local economy is based largely upon employment at [Presidio Independent School District](#), United States Customs and Border Protection, and local retail businesses.

Formerly, Presidio was home to several truck-farming operations, focused mainly on onions and cantaloupes. Those operations ceased in the late 1990s.

In 2010, Presidio built the world's largest [sodium-sulfur battery](#) to provide power when the city's lone line to the [United States power grid](#) goes down.

\* [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidio,\\_Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidio,_Texas)

SHAFTER, TEXAS INFORMATION & HISTORY\*

**Shafter** is an [unincorporated community](#) in [Presidio County, Texas](#). The Texas Attorney General's Office gives a population of 11 as of the [2000 Census](#). It was named in honor of General [William Shafter](#), who at one point commanded the nearby (relatively speaking) [Fort Davis](#). In the early 1900s six silver mines were in operation near Shafter. When the mines closed the town died. It was later the location for several scenes in the 1971 movie [The Andromeda Strain](#).

Tucked in the Chinati Mountains on Cibolo Creek, nineteen miles north of Presidio, Shafter was once a bustling mining town with a population as high as four thousand. That was in 1940. It was in 1882 that John Spencer found silver near this location. He and General William B. Shafter, who had been stationed at Fort Davis, collaborated to establish the mining operation. Shafter was at the time a Colonel with the 9th Cavalry. When an assay commissioned by Colonel Shafter confirmed profitable amounts of silver were in Spencer's ore samples, he brought in two of his military associates, Lt. John L. Bullis and Lt. Louis Wilhelmi, to join the venture. Each would contribute, first, by acquiring acreage around Spencer's discovery. In all, four sections of land, or 2400 acres, were acquired. It was agreed that they and Spencer would all share equally in profits from the venture. Then, in June 1882, lacking sufficient capital to develop the acreage on their own, the partners leased a portion of their holdings to a mining group from California which had both the money and expertise to proceed. In 1883, this group established the Presidio Mining Company, which in turn contracted with three of the partners to acquire their interests in a stock-for-land trade. Shafter, Wilhelmi, and Spencer received 5,000 shares and a bonus of \$1,600 in cash to complete the trade. Bullis, asserting that his purchase money to buy the acreage had been from his wife's account, refused to join the transaction. This would later be cause for dispute.

The recorded production of the Shafter mines between 1883 and 1942 is 30,290,556 troy ounces of silver, 8,389,526 pounds of lead, and 5,981 troy ounces of gold.

For History and Information on BLOYS CAMP MEETING, CANDELARIA, RUIDOSO, REDFORD, SANDERSON, and other featured locations in the Big Bend area, see the Texas State Historical Association's website at: <http://www.tshaonline.org/>