

HISTORIC SITES IN DEWITT COUNTY

Information has been taken from inscriptions on historical markers, from the book DeWitt County History published by the DeWitt County Historical Commission, from the Texas State Association Handbook online, from The Cuero Record articles accessed on the University of North Texas Portal to Texas History, from websites, and from oral history.

CITY OF CUERO

1. DEWITT COUNTY COURTHOUSE

307 North Gonzales

A three-story sandstone and granite building with a six-story clock tower, this courthouse was begun in 1894 and completed in 1896. An elevator was installed in 1952. Extensive restoration was done in 2007, returning it to its original design. The previous two-story frame courthouse which burned in April, 1894, was moved across the Guadalupe on a ferry from Clinton, the county seat from 1850-1876. The first county seat in 1846 was at Cameron.

2. FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF CUERO

301 East Courthouse

Circuit riders held worship services for Methodists in three DeWitt County locations as early as 1841: Concrete, Clinton, and Irish Creek. A Cuero congregation was founded after the City of Cuero was incorporated, and a church building was erected on this site in 1886, replaced in 1929. Brother's Chapel, a church for African American Methodists built in 1892, was destroyed in the flood of 1998. Its members began meeting in the fellowship hall, and the two churches merged in 2000. The congregation voted to demolish the sanctuary on this site, as it had sustained extensive damage from water and termites. The present sanctuary was completed in 2004. The altar table, altar rail, lecturn, baptismal font, and pulpit from the previous building were kept as well as a circle cut from the floor of the old church sanctuary and used as an insert in the new narthex floor. Stained glass windows from Brother's Chapel separate the narthex from the sanctuary. The main entrance houses two bells, one from the previous church and one from Brother's Chapel. Records show that the church was dedicated in 2009, as Methodist tradition is to consecrate a building when it is completed and dedicate it when it is paid for.

3. FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CUERO

302 North McLeod

The first Presbyterian congregation in DeWitt County was Live Oak Presbyterian Church, formed on July 8, 1849, under a live oak tree at the Peebles home north of Cuero and moved to Clinton in 1851. Presbyterian congregations were formed in Concrete in 1855 and in Cuero in 1878. In 1883, the three congregations merged to form First Presbyterian Church of Cuero. The frame house of worship in Clinton was dismantled, floated across the Guadalupe River, and rebuilt on this site. A brick sanctuary was built in 1916 and replaced in 1969. In 1981, the

memorial windows from the former buildings were used in a new sanctuary. The street in front of the church was named McLeod in honor of Pastor W A McLeod who served the church from 1919-1947.

4. ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH AND SCHOOL

202 McLeod

The Cuero Land & Immigration Company donated land at this site when St Michael's Parish was established in 1875. A small frame church was erected in 1876, and construction began on a larger brick building in 1886, completed in 1894. The present church was built in 1931. St Michael's Parish has operated a Catholic School since 1877. A new school was built in 1912 and again in 1955. The school and church were remodeled in the 1960's, and the parish hall was built in 1973. The early childhood center and gym were added in 2013.

5. CUERO HERITAGE MUSEUM

124 E Church

Owned and operated by the City of Cuero in the former post office built in 1915. Exhibits include Cuero football, Turkey Trot, Coca Cola, and Brayton Flying Field

6. GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

401 North Esplanade Street

In 1874, the church building from Grace Church of Lavaca was moved to Cuero, located nearer downtown. In 1889, the present church was built on this site for a total cost of \$375. Gothic in style, with white clapboard siding and a cedar-shingled roof, the interior has a cathedral ceiling and three handsome stained glass chancel windows. The baptismal font was moved from the old church and is still in use today. The communion chalice used today was made in 1892 by smelting down silver from baby cups, pieces of jewelry, and other silver items donated by the congregation. Jewels that ring the bottom of the cup and stem are from donated jewelry. The engagement ring of Mrs. Carey McNelly, wife of Texas Ranger Captain Leander McNelly, adorns the top of the stem. The clapboard siding was covered with stucco in the 1920s, and a copper steeple was added in 1986.

7. ST MARKS LUTHERAN CHURCH

400 North Esplanade

German Lutherans were organized in Cuero by 1880. In January, 1887, services began on Sunday afternoons in Grace Episcopal Church. This site was purchased for construction of a building, and the first service in the congregation's own building was held on August 4, 1889. A copper ship's bell from the Lutheran Church in Indianola was installed. The English language was introduced into the Sunday School and evening services in 1902, but two services a month were conducted in the German language, beginning in 1917 for the benefit of the older members who "were not too familiar" with the English language. The present church building was

dedicated on Christmas Eve, 1939. The old copper bell was used as a prayer bell. The parsonage was built in 1953, and the fellowship hall in 1959.

8. CHISHOLM TRAIL HERITAGE MUSEUM IN THE KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS HALL

302 North Esplanade

An example of early 20th century architecture, Knights of Pythias Jewel Lodge No. 103, was built in 1903. The building is Richardsonian Romanesque in style with an asymmetrical façade and elaborate brickwork in its window arches. The Knights of Pythias was a fraternal order organized in 1864. The Rathbone Sisters was the associated auxiliary group for women. One of the rooms upstairs includes an opening with a sliding cover for officers to view those who approach the door seeking entry to the meeting. The ground floor was leased to various businesses, including a wholesale grocery and automobile dealerships. Sold in 1975, it housed an auto parts store before it was purchased in 2002 by The Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum, which opened to the public in 2013.

9. ENGLISH GERMAN SCHOOL

100 block of Courthouse Street at Terrell

There were no free public schools in Cuero prior to 1890. The large German population in the city established a tuition school in 1876. This school house was built soon after on a lot at what is now 201 East Newman Street donated by the Cuero Land & Immigration Company. In 1890 it was sold to the Cuero Graded School, and intermediate classes were taught there until John C French School was completed. As a residence, it was flooded in the Flood of 1998, and condemned to be demolished by the city. In 2014 it was salvaged and moved to its present location to become part of the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum's interpretation of life during the cattle drive era.

10. BUCHEL BANK BUILDING

106 North Esplanade

Operating a mercantile business, Otto Buchel began keeping citizens' valuables in the only safe in town and established a private bank on this site in 1873. The bank survived the Great Depression and other panics, hurricanes, and droughts. It operated as Buchel National Bank, Buchel Bank and Trust company, and Prosperity Bank before the building was sold in 2007. It now houses the DeWitt County Clerk's records.

11. PHARMACY AND MEDICAL MUSEUM OF TEXAS

114 E Main Street

Owned and operated by the City of Cuero, the museum is located in the Heaton Brothers Building, built in 1889. With ornate cabinetry and a pharmacist's compounding bench still intact, the building has always been used a pharmacy, the home of Heaton Brothers Drugstore, L L BATTERY Drugstore, and Valumart Pharmacy. Valumart was owned by Reuss Pharmacy which now operates at another location in Cuero. Joe Reuss, a fourth generation pharmacist and lifelong

resident of Cuero, donated the building and his collection of pharmaceutical items to the City of Cuero in 2013. His great grandfather started the first Reuss Pharmacy in Indianola in 1845 and moved it to Cuero after the hurricane of 1875. Reuss Pharmacy is the oldest operating pharmacy in Texas.

12. EARLY TEXAS BANDSTANDS

200 block of East Main Street between the library and the fire station

A replica of the first band stand erected in the park, the marker text details the importance of music throughout the history of DeWitt County.

13. CUERO LAND & IMMIGRATION COMPANY

200 block of East Main Street between the library and the fire station, Cuero

The Cuero Land & Immigration Company was formed in 1871 by Gustav Schleicher, Fletcher S Stockdale, Charles M Terrell, and John C French. They purchased 4,128 acres for development and gave 100 acres to the Gulf, Western Texas, and Pacific Railroad as incentive for the railroad to come to Cuero. In the week following the arrival of the first train, most of the downtown lots were sold. Sites were donated to churches, schools, and for public use, including this block, designated market square. Streets in Cuero are named for each of the founders.

14. BRAYTON FLYING FIELD MARKER

200 block of East Main between the library and the fire station, Cuero

The marker tells of the establishment of the civilian flying school which trained over 6,000 students between 1941 and 1944, including pilots in the U S Army Air Force and airmen from Allied countries. Brayton Flying School was located on FM 766, 2.5 miles from Reuss Blvd and Esplanade on land purchased by the city and leased to Clyde Brayton. A Texas Department of Corrections prison opened on a large part of the property in 1994 and utilizes some of the old hangars. Another hangar is privately owned and was most recently used by a manufacturing business. Cuero's animal control facility occupies a small portion of the property as well.

15. MORGAN STEAMSHIP LINE MARKER

600 E Morgan Avenue, Cuero

Marker tells how the first steamship service brought mail and settlers to Texas as early as 1835 and expanded into rail transportation which influenced the development of Cuero.

16. ROY HARMON DRIVE AND LEONARD ROY HARMON HISTORIAL MARKER

East Main Street into Municipal Park, marker located in front of the Park Clubhouse

The first black man to have a U S warship named for him was born and reared in Cuero. He sacrificed his life shielding an injured shipmate from enemy fire. The street that runs through Cuero Municipal Park was named for him. The marker in the circle in front of the Rock Clubhouse gives additional details about his life and service.

17. MUNICIPAL PARK CLUBHOUSE

210 Roy Harmon Drive in Cuero Municipal Park

J T Newman was elected mayor of Cuero in 1934, having run on a platform of seeking federal aid to help the city recover from the effects of the depression. With the aid of the Works Progress Administration and other federal relief programs, the clubhouse, lake, swimming pool, golf course, and baseball diamond were built at Cuero Municipal Park.

18. LET FREEDOM RING VETERANS' PARK

US 87 S, right on Leonard Roy Harmon Drive into Cuero Municipal Park

Dedicated in 2019, the park includes a bell and pavers with the names of about 1,000 veterans from all branches of the service. Six Harmony Park outdoor instruments suitable for playing by children and adults alike encourage viewers to spend a few minutes reflecting on service provided by these veterans.

19. CENTENNIAL MARKER FOR DEWITT COUNTY

US 87 S in Settler's Park across from Cuero High School Performing Arts Center

The larger of two markers erected in 1936 during centennial celebrations, this marker tells the history of the formation of DeWitt County and names many of the men who fought for Texas's independence and settled the area.

20. CUERO MARKER

US 87 S and Serendipity Lane

Marker gives brief description of the founding and history of Cuero.

21. ROY BENAVIDES MONUMENT

U S 87 S in Settler's Park across from Cuero High School

Master Sergeant Raul Perez "Roy" Benavides received the Medal of Honor for valorous actions in combat in South Vietnam in 1968. Born in Lindenau, he was raised in El Campo by his grandfather and aunt and uncle after both of his parents died when he was still a young child. In 1965, as an advisor to an Army of the Republic of Vietnam infantry regiment, he stepped on a land mine, was evacuated to Fort Sam Houston, and was told he would be discharged as he would never walk again. He began his own unsanctioned training ritual, walked out of the hospital in 1966, and returned to South Vietnam in 1968. He voluntarily responded to a call for help and when the wounded team was unable to come to the pickup zone, he jumped out of a helicopter with only a knife and his medical bag to help the trapped patrol. He is credited with saving the lives of at least eight men during a six-hour fight with the enemy. When he was evacuated to base camp, he was thought to be dead and placed in a body bag. When a doctor was about to zip up the bag, Benavides managed to spit in his face to let him know he was alive. He had a total of 37 separate bullet, bayonet, and shrapnel wounds. He eventually recovered and retired from the US Army in 1972. He received the Distinguished Service Cross and four Purple Hearts, but the Army Decorations Board required an eyewitness to award the Medal of Honor.

Just by chance, the radioman of Benavidez's Special Forces team living in the Fiji Islands, saw an account in an El Campo newspaper that was picked up the international press. He was the eyewitness that resulted in President Ronald Reagan presenting Roy P Benavidez with the Medal of Honor in 1981. The monument was erected in by the Roy P Benavides Memorial Foundation. A GI Joe, Roy P Benavidez Commemorative Edition was released in 2001.

22. HILLSIDE CEMETERY

End of East Reuss Blvd, Cuero

This municipal burial ground, established in 1875, now includes the once-segregated African American Cemetery, Evergreen. Civic leaders, including Charles Breeden, Judge Henry Clay Pleasants, Sheriff Tom Stell, and veterans of both the Confederate and Union armies are buried here.

23. DEWITT COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

312 East Broadway, Cuero

The historic Bates-Sheppard Home was designated a museum by the DeWitt County Commissioner's Court since 1973. A non-profit was organized in 2010 to assist with its management and support. An authentic two-room log cabin with dog run ca. 1865 was placed on the museum grounds in 1968. Permanent and seasonal exhibits depict various aspects of life throughout DeWitt County's history, including the area's ties to Old Indianola. The museum is open Tuesday – Friday, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Admission is free.

24. DAULE SCHOOL

301 Daule Street, Cuero

Prior to the 1890s, schools for black children were available in rural communities, but the first school for black children in the City of Cuero was founded in 1892. There were schools in Morgantown, on South Indianola Street, and on T L'Ouvertour Street before a school was built on this site in 1949 after the previous school was condemned by the State Board of Education. The school was named for Eugene A Daule, son of slaves who graduated from University of Baton Rouge in Louisiana. Retiring in 1931, he had worked tirelessly for forty years to educate the black children with resources that were clearly not equal to those of the other schools in town. In 1963, there was voluntary integration, and in 1965, there was mandatory integration. The building continued to be used by Cuero Independent School District for various programs. including special education classes, and for storage. The non-profit Tri-City Empowerment Council purchased the building in 2018 and plans to open a community center.

CITY OF NORDHEIM

1. JUBILEE PARK PAVILION

On Fourth Street between Elm and Broadway, Nordheim

Music was an important part of the social life of the German community in Nordheim. The first Brass Band in Nordheim was organized in 1896, and it gave many free concerts over the years. The park site was a gift to the city during its Silver Jubilee in 1922. The Park Committee erected the octagonal pavilion, 24 feet in diameter, with a flag pole on the top. Central Power and Light installed lights at no cost. High school band concerts, May Pole dances, and children's parties have been held. The Nordheim Garden Club has maintained the park in recent years.

2. NORDHEIM MUSEUM

SW corner of Broadway and Second Streets

Originally housed in the Old Fire Station on Second Street, the Nordheim Museum was officially dedicated in 1986. Local residents and visitors have showered the museum with family articles for exhibit, including instruments used by the famous Nordheim Brass Band, wedding dresses, and a feather Christmas tree with leaves made of green dyed feathers like trees first made in Germany. Microfilms of The Nordheim View are available for family research. Its impressive collections peculiar to the community's rich heritage are now displayed at 215 Broadway.

3. NORDHEIM SHOOTING CLUB

End of West Broadway, Nordheim

Nordheim's oldest organization still in existence, the Nordheim Shooting Club was formed in 1927 with the merger of the Nordheim Fortschritt Verein (Progress Club), organized in 1897, and the Nordheim Schuetzen Verein (Shooting Club), organized in 1902. The area's predominantly German population held regular target shoots, inviting neighboring shooting clubs to participate. The first hall was built in 1908 as a community amusement center modeled after the shooting clubs of Germany, The recreation hall built in 1939 is used today for banquets, reunions, and meeting places for various organizations.

4. PILOT KNOB CEMETERY

FM 239 SE .5 miles SE from SH 72 at FM 239 and Nordheim Cemetery Road

A high hill at the southern edge of Nordheim jutting up in the midst of surrounding prairie, Pilot Knob was a beacon for travelers on their way from Indianola to San Antonio. The first settlers held public gatherings on its flat top with sturdy live oak trees. The only buildings ever erected on the hill were a dance platform and a refreshment stand. By 1910, social activities had been moved down to the town. Older citizens say the land was supposed to be reserved for public use. Nordheim's cemetery occupies about one fourth of the top of the hill, but the rest is owned by private individuals.

5. BROADWAY BAR AND GRILL

208 Broadway

This building was built for Rahenaldt Hardware Store in 1903. The Broadway Bar opened here in 1933. The bar came from Germany circa 1903 and was located in two other buildings before 1933. Scenes for the movie *Paris, Texas* were filmed in the bar in 1984.

CITY OF YORKTOWN

1. DEWITT COUNTY CENTENNIAL MARKER

SH 72, E city limit of Yorktown

The smaller of two markers for DeWitt County erected in 1936 during centennial celebrations, this marker gives a brief history of the county's organization and its namesake Green DeWitt.

2. HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC CHURCH AND CEMETERY

Church at 1214 Zorn Road, Cemetery at Old FM 237 and Zorn Road

Polish families who arrived in Yorktown in the 1850s built a log church, the Church of the Immaculate Conception, in 1867. Damaged by a hurricane in 1886, it was rebuilt larger in 1887. Burned to the ground in 1914, only the cross on the top of the steeple and two statues on the face of the church survived. A red brick church was built and renamed Holy Cross Church. The cross from the previous church was placed on the steeple. Land for the cemetery was deeded to the Roman Catholic Church in 1867, the same year the first log church was built. Additional land was donated in 1916 to enlarge the cemetery. A focal point of the cemetery is the crucifixion monument donated by the Jendrzey family in 1937.

3. VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

600 block of East Main Street/SH 72

Illuminated at night, a Huey UH-8 helicopter is at the center of the memorial dedicated in 2012. It honors more than 500 DeWitt County residents who served during the Vietnam War, including 12 who lost their lives

4. YORKTOWN CO-FOUNDERS MARKER

NE Corner of Main and Eckhardt Streets

There are varying accounts of the history of Yorktown. The marker says it was founded by John York and Charles Eckhardt with York giving the site in 1847 and Eckhardt building the first house in 1848. Other accounts have Eckhardt and three business partners buying land from York and promising to name the town Yorktown. (DeWitt County History, published 1991) A G Hartman, in a story in the Yorktown News published in 1923, claimed to have built the first dwelling. In any case, the town lay on the Indianola Trail, the main freight route between Indianola and San Antonio. Midway between the two, it was an important relay and supply station for freighters and trail drivers. Residents were predominantly German with their love of music, theatrical performances, and social organizations or "vereins." The first postal service began in 1851, the post office in the homes or businesses of the post masters until 1957 when a brick post office building was built. Chartered in 1854, the town was incorporated in 1871. Though numerous tuition schools existed, beginning in 1853; the first public school was chartered by the state in 1878. The railroad arrived in 1886.

5. YORKTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

SE corner of Main and Eckhardt Street in Yorktown

Two buildings once used by C Eckhardt & Sons store house the Yorktown Historical Museum. The building on the corner has 24-inch walls constructed in 1871 of local sandstone and iron shutters and doors. An adjoining building, finished in 1876, is also constructed of local sandstone and has brick supporting arches fortified with cast iron. Its second story with brick walls was added later. Dedicated in 1978, the museum has on display many historical pictures, newspapers, and documents as well as furniture, clothing, appliances, tools, books and much more from days gone by.

6. WESTSIDE CEMETERY

North Mehnert Street/SH 119, left on 12th Street/ Westside Cemetery Road

In 1854, 18 men authorized Franz Hoppe to buy land from the York estate. In 1856, Hoppe deeded streets, public squares, and a cemetery tract to the public. Westside Cemetery occupies that tract and is a major burial ground for the City of Yorktown.

7. UPPER YORKTOWN CEMETERY

N Reidel Street/FM 240, past 13th St, Yorktown

Formally established in 1872 by Ann Friar where her husband Daniel Boone Friar was interred in 1858

8. SITE OF HOME OF CAPTAIN JOHN YORK

FM 237 7.5 miles from SH 72 to York Cemetery Road, right .5 miles

Marker details the contributions of John York to the Republic of Texas. Captain John York, for whom Yorktown was named, was elected captain of a company of 32 men who set out to track a band of raiding Indians in October, 1848. They came under heavy fire when the Indians ambushed them with muskets. James Madison Bell, York's son-in-law was shot, as well as his son James. As York tended to their wounds, he too was shot. James York survived, but Captain York and Bell are buried in a single grave marked by a broken obelisk in a cemetery on private property in a mott of trees that can be seen across the road from the marker.

CITY OF YOAKUM

1. HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

605 US 77A, .1 mile from SH 111

Lutherans met for worship in homes, the city hall, the old community opera house, and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church from 1888 till 1893 when a sanctuary was built at the corner of Hochheim and Schwab Streets. That church was destroyed by a tornado the month after its completion, and services were held that afternoon in a home. A new structure on the same site served the predominantly German congregation until 1952 when the sanctuary and two wings on this site were dedicated. The Children's Building was added in 1982.

2. ORIGINAL YOAKUM NATIONAL BANK BUILDING

207 W Grand

First National Bank of Yoakum, reorganized as Yoakum National Bank in 1907, operated in a building at this site from the early 1890s to 1971. Original elements still in the building, now an event venue, are the brass night deposit box, wood paneled doors opening into the lobby, the vault, and leaded stained glass windows in offices. A well-worn staircase with wooden banister leads to second floor offices with figured glass paneled doors, transoms, and double-hung sash windows.

3. DOWNTOWN YOAKUM HISTORICAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

100-200 W Grand Street, 400-500 Lott Street

Sitting on the DeWitt and Lavaca County line, four blocks intersected by W Grand and Lott Street are the home to many historic buildings, including the Green-Welhausen Building. Many have been restored and continue to house businesses.

4. GRAND THEATER

212 W May Street

Operated at this location from the early 1930s till 1991, the building was used as a church prior to its restoration and opening in 2016. Check yoakumgrandtheater.com for movie dates and times.

5. MUNICIPAL POWER PLANT

810 Front Street, Yoakum

Now the home of the Yoakum Public Library, this building was erected in 1932 as the city's power plant. Continuing to produce electricity until the early 1960s, it was a municipal machine shop until 1988 when it was offered to the Friends of the Library.

6. YOAKUM HERITAGE MUSEUM

312 Simpson Street, Yoakum

Established in 1981, the museum is housed in the 1912 Victorian home formerly owned by Mr and Mrs J K Elkins. Ongoing exhibits showcase Yoakum's history as a railroad hub, leather goods industrial center, and tomato growing and shipping center. There is a room dedicated to Yoakum's military past, and short term exhibits are also presented. The original carriage house utilized by the Elkins family is onsite.

7. ASBERRY SCHOOL

Aubrey and Pullium Streets on campus of Yoakum Intermediate School

Formerly known as the Yoakum Negro School, this school was renamed Asberry High School in 1948 for its principal, professor J D Asberry. Tradition states that the building was erected with money from the Rosenwald Fund, a philanthropic endeavor of the president of Sears, Roebuck

and Company, Julius Rosenwald. In addition to public school, training opportunities in canning, cooking, and agriculture were provided here. The African American community's social needs, religious meetings, and disaster relief were also met within these walls. The last senior class graduated in 1966. The building continues to be used by the intermediate campus.

NORTH OF CUERO

SITE OF CAMERON, FIRST COUNTY SEAT OF DEWITT COUNTY

FM 766 3 miles from Esplanade and Reuss Blvd

The first seat of county government, a log courthouse and county clerk's office were the only buildings erected. Nothing remains but the marker.

BELLEVUE CEMETERY/ CHEAPSIDE COMMUNITY

FM 766 7.5 miles from Esplanade & Reuss Blvd, left on Bellevue Cemetery Road 6 miles

The Bellevue Cemetery property is the forerunner of the Cheapside community, as it was the site of the first school and church in the area. Settlers, many of English descent, acquired 5 acres described in a deed dated 1876 to "trustees in trust for Church School and Grange." According to local oral history, there was a two-story building on the property, the upper floor used as a meeting room and the lower floor used as a school and by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which had been organized in 1874. The church and school were moved a mile and a half north to Cheapside, a village in Gonzales County named after a well-known street in London. Only the cemetery remains at this site. A cemetery association organized in 1895 has maintained the cemetery since that time.

SITE OF FRIAR-CARDWELL STAGE STAND

US 183 N 3 miles from Broadway

Daniel Boone Friar built a home and store in this area, the junction of the LaGrange-La Bahia and Victoria-Gonzales Roads. It served as a social, political, transportation, and trade center as well as an overnight stop on stagecoach lines between San Antonio and coastal towns. Crockett Cardwell acquired the building in 1849 and continued to operate it as stage stand, post office, and community meeting place until the town of Cuero was incorporated along the railroad line in 1873, and the center of community business moved there. The building was torn down in 1916.

BUCHEL COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL

US 183 N 5 miles from Broadway, left on Old Gonzales Road 1 mile

Settled as early as 1839, there was a post office in the area in 1842. A community school called Oak View was established in 1894 on land donated by Otto Buchel. This building, erected in 1921 was named in honor of Mr Buchel. The school closed in 1950, but the building continued to be used as a community center for many years.

LOCKHART COMMUNITY CEMETERY

US 183 N 5 miles from Broadway, left on Lockhart Cemetery Road
Oldest known African American burial ground in DeWitt County, New Hope Missionary Baptist Church sits among the graves

STEVENS CEMETERY

US 183 N 9 miles from Broadway; marker on US 183, cemetery down Stevens Cemetery Road
A family burial ground for Stevens, Stephens, and Steen family members, the first grave in 1851 was that of an infant Joseph Enoch Stevens.

SAN PEDRO CEMETERY

US 183 N 10 miles from Broadway
Historic Texas Cemetery established in 1920

TOWN OF CONCRETE AND CONCRETE COLLEGE

US 183 N 10 miles from Broadway
DeWitt County's earliest townsite, Concrete was surveyed in 1846. It lay on the Gonzales to Victoria stage route and had a large two-story hotel, seven stores, a blacksmith shop, a shoemaker's shop, and two churches. The Masonic Lodge was moved to Hochheim in the 1890s. Concrete College, one of the most respected schools in Texas in its day, was a state-chartered coed institution with dormitories for boarding students. It had primary and intermediate departments in addition to its college department that conferred Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees. The college operated from 1867-1881 with 250 students in 1873. It declined with the community after the railroad was built 10 miles south, and the City of Cuero became the predominant center of business. All that can be seen of the college today is the foundation outlines of some of the buildings and a Texas Historical Commission historical marker.

STAGECOACH INN

US 183 N 14.5 miles from Broadway
Built by Volentine Hoch, a German immigrant, the inn was constructed of hand-quarried native stone in 1856. On the Austin to Indianola stage line, drivers changed their horses, and passengers enjoyed the inn's food and hospitality.

CITY OF HOCHHEIM AND HOCHHEIM CEMETERY

US 183 N 15 miles from Broadway, City of Hochheim Road to Hochheim Cemetery Road
The Hochheim (Hoch's home) Community sprang up around Volentine Hoch's home and stagecoach inn. In 1876, Rachel S Crawford donated land for a cemetery, school and church. The first person buried in the cemetery was Mrs Crawford's husband when she had his body moved there from the Concrete Cemetery. The Old Hochheim School, a two-story building made of cypress, closed in 1938. It has been used by the Hochheim Masonic Lodge for over 100 years.

NORTHEAST OF CUERO

1. VON HUGO-VONCLAUSEWITZ FAMILY CEMETERY

SH 111 W 4 miles from Dairy Queen in Yoakum

Two families who emigrated from the German state of Prussia used the nearby oak grove as a family cemetery. There are 14 known graves, the oldest dated 1875. Von Hugo and Von Clausewitz, as well as their wives, both countesses, are among the burials. There are no burials after St Ann's Cemetery was established in 1906.

2. ST ANN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH AND CEMETERY

SH 111 W 4.5 miles from Dairy Queen in Yoakum

Many Eastern European emigrants who settled in this area were of the Catholic faith. Land was deeded to the Diocese of San Antonio to establish a church and cemetery in 1906. Poth Cemetery, a small family burial ground with the earliest grave dated 1892, was included in St Ann's Cemetery. Distinct sections were set aside for burial of infants and parishioners of Mexican descent.

3. MOUNT ZION BAPTIST CHURCH

US 77A S 7.5 miles from Dairy Queen in Yoakum

Go east on Edgar Leesville Road .5 mile, right on Old Cuero Road .1 mile to driveway of Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church driveway.

Worship was held in a number of places from 1869 till 1890 when this church was built.

When it was renovated in 1956; the original twin bell towers were replaced by a steeple.

4. MAY-HICKEY HOME

FM 682 at intersection of SH 111 East and Edgar Street S 2 miles to first intersection with Rice Davis Road

Built in the 1840s, this house has an open dogtrot and stone chimneys on either end. One and one-half stories, it is constructed of hewn logs with chinking and covered with milled siding. On private property, it can be viewed looking south from this intersection.

5. COUNTY LINE SCHOOL, CHURCH, AND CEMETERY

FM 682 at intersection of SH 111 East and Edgar Street S 7.5 miles

The County Line School served students of families in both DeWitt and Lavaca counties. From the early 1860s to 1949, the school was housed in 5 different buildings at six different sites. The County Line Baptist Church met in the school until it disbanded in 1919. The oldest grave in the County Line Cemetery dates to 1867. The cemetery is all that is left of the community.

6. TERRYVILLE COMMUNITY, CHURCH AND CEMETERY

FM 682 at intersection of SH 111 East and Edgar Street S 8.5 miles to intersection with FM 1447

Most of the businesses in Terryville, including the post office established in 1869, moved to this site between 1881 and 1884. Only a Baptist Church and a few houses remain.

A historical marker marks the site of Old Terryville 3 miles farther, through two 90-degree turns on FM 682. Probably the first business in Old Terryville was the blacksmith shop Robert “Bob” Alexander from Mississippi built here in 1850. When James and John Terry built a mercantile store in 1852, the settlement became known as Terryville. The Terryville School was combined with the Hebron School when the Bear Creek School was built in 1884. By 1885, only the cemetery remained at Old Terryville.

7. HEBRON COMMUNITY, CHURCH, AND CEMETERY

FM 682 at intersection of SH 111 East and Edgar Street S 12.5 miles from, left on CR 437 (Hebron Church Road) 1 mile

The first wagon train of settlers from the United States arrived in the area in the 1840s. Their homes and their place of worship were log structures. In 1855, Adam Shows, a carpenter, was hired to build Hebron Church from lumber shipped from Florida to Texas and brought by ox cart from Indianola. His wife Nancy Shows is the first recorded burial in the Hebron Cemetery next to the church.

8. STRATTON COMMUNITY MARKER AND ALEXANDER CEMETERY

FM 682 at intersection of SH 111 East and Edgar Street S 8.6 miles, right on FM 1447 6.5 miles to marker at church, right on Baptist Church Road .5 mile, right on Matthew-Adams Road .5 mile to cemetery

The Primitive Baptist Church, established in 1883, and Alexander Cemetery are all that remain of the pioneer community of Stratton.

SOUTH OF CUERO

1. CLINTON COMMUNITY

US 183 S 3.5 miles from Main Street, left on Clinton Road

Clinton town site was laid out in 1846, the same year that DeWitt County was established. The county seat was in Cameron until it was moved to Clinton in 1848. It was moved back to Cameron briefly, then back to Clinton from 1850-1876. The courthouse in Clinton included a log cabin and two frame buildings, one of which was ferried across the Guadalupe River to Cuero. A once-thriving community, Clinton had a Masonic Lodge, two churches, many businesses, a hotel, several doctors, and both public and private schools. The decline of Clinton began as the county seat and many businesses moved to Cuero upon the railroad’s arrival there. The school closed in 1950. A cemetery on Clinton Cemetery Road remains, many prominent pioneers buried in the old section. An old well site can be seen from the road, a well where Sam Houston is reported to have made a speech. A THC historical marker was erected on US 183 S across from Clinton Road in 1967. It was knocked down during an automobile crash in 2020 and will be replaced as possible.

2. HOPKINSVILLE COMMUNITY

US 183 S 5.5 miles from Main Street to marker

A black community began in this area in 1872 when Henry Hopkins purchased his first 42 acres as a free man. He had come to Texas from Virginia with his mother and ten siblings in 1854 as the 17-year-old slave of Henry Clay Pleasants. Several of his brothers and sisters also owned land in the community. One of three trustees who organized Antioch Baptist Church in 1873, he sold the church 5 acres for \$1 in 1899, the land on which the present church stands. In 1881, Hopkins purchased half an acre and deeded it to the county judge for a free and public school. The school, located farther down Hopkinsville Road, backed up to Gerhold Road. It closed in 1956, and children began attending Daule Colored School.

3. SITE OF HOME OF ROBERT JUSTICE KLEBERG

US 183 S 11 miles from Main Street, right on Mueller Lang Road .5 miles

Marker details the contributions of Robert Justice Kleberg to the State of Texas.

4. ST JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND CEMETERY

US 183 S 11 miles from Main Street, left on Meyersville Road 2 miles

Fleeing the unrest and turmoil in Prussian wars, immigrants on a particularly stormy sea voyage in 1846 vowed to their God to build a church in His honor if they arrived safely in their new homeland. A little log church was built in 1850, in which services were held by Methodist pastors. A Lutheran missionary from Victoria organized the congregation in 1851, the beginning of St John Lutheran Evangelical Church of Meyersville. In 1867, a church built from stone quarried nearby, was dedicated to God as a thank offering for peace after the Civil War. A larger brick church built from cement bricks made on the church grounds was dedicated in 1921 and serves the congregation today. Some services were held in German until 1964. The Old Stone Church was restored in 1958 and houses many old Bibles, documents, books, and artifacts in display cases. The pulpit and altar stand in their original spots. In 1959, the Meyersville School was purchased and moved to the grounds for a Parish House. There are many unmarked graves in the cemetery. The earliest grave with known date is 1854. Descendants of the first German settlers continue to be buried here.

5. MEYERSVILLE AND MEYERSVILLE POST OFFICE

US 183 S 11 miles from Main Street, left on Meyersville Road 2.5 miles

Peter Bluntzer arrived in the area in 1843 and encouraged others to immigrate from Alsace. The Mainzer Adels-Verein (the Society for Protection of German Immigrants in Texas) was organized in 1844 by dukes and princes in Germany. Meyersville was the second German settlement in DeWitt County after Yorktown. Adolph Meyer and Fritz Hausman, 1846 arrivals, are considered co-founders. The stage would stop at Meyer's home and leave mail, leading to the establishment of a US post office in 1851 with Meyer appointed postmaster. In 1872, the post office was moved to its present location in the Isaac Egg Store. Egg was appointed postmaster in 1879, and members of his family served as postmasters until 2007.

6. STS PETER AND PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH AND CEMETERY

US 183 S 13 miles from Main Street, left on FM 237 2 miles

Coming from Olderen, Alsace, the Peter Bluntzer family was the first Catholic family to settle in the Meyersville area. They were on their way to Castroville with other colonists when a wagon accident caused them to halt their journey and live for a few years in Victoria before buying land on Coletto Creek. Bluntzer was so enamored with the country that he made several trips back to Alsace to bring numerous families to DeWitt County. The first mass in the community was said in the Bluntzer home. Sts Peter and Paul Catholic Church, a small log building dedicated in 1860, was the first Catholic Church in DeWitt County. A larger building dedicated in 1880 was destroyed by a storm. Rebuilt, it was destroyed by fire in 1938. The present church, dedicated in 1939, still serves the congregation. The cemetery contains the graves of many early Catholic immigrants from Alsace. Bluntzer himself is buried in San Patricio County.

7. FIVEMILE/RATCLIFFE/RABKE COMMUNITY

US 183 S 4 miles from Main Street, right on FM 2718 5 miles, another mile to church

Four families from Germany settled on Five Mile Creek in 1849. They were well educated and proficient in Latin. The community was called Latiner, but soon became known as Five Mile. The first school in the area was built on land donated by Gus Holzapfel. The school house was also a community center and a place of worship. In the 1880s, Edward Rabke's store housed a post office and a Woodmen of the World lodge. In 1921, a new school was built on the Ratcliffe farm. The Rabke Methodist Church and the cemetery are the only remaining landmarks of the community.

SOUTHEAST OF CUERO

1. TAYLOR FAMILY CEMETERY

US 87 S 2.5 miles from Esplanade, right on Taylor Road 1.5 miles

The Taylor Cemetery provides a record of two pioneer families, the Taylors and the Bennetts. The oldest burial was in 1830. Burials include Texas Rangers, veterans of many military conflicts, and victims of the Sutton-Taylor Feud.

2. BURNS STATION CEMETERY/IRISH CREEK/VERHELLE

US 87 S 6.5 miles from Esplanade, cemetery on private land

In 1826, Arthur Burns built a two-story log home near Irish Creek, the first home built in what is now DeWitt County. As the home was a stage stop on the Victoria to Gonzales Road, it became known as Burns Station. Beginning in the 1870s, the Gulf, West Texas and Pacific Railroad made a stop here, and in 1902, the depot was named Verhelle to honor a railroad official who never lived in the area. The cemetery on Irish Creek adjoined the Irish Creek Methodist Church. On private land, it is all that remains of the once thriving settlement.

3. THOMASTON COMMUNITY AND CEMETERY

US 87 S 11 miles from Esplanade, left on Loop 105 .5 miles to community, left on Fordtran Road, left to cemetery

A settlement present since 1848 on Price's Creek was the forerunner to Thomaston, named for state senator Nathan Thomas (1809-1891). Thomas sold land to the Gulf, West Texas and Pacific Railroad. Established in 1872, Thomaston was the first railroad town in DeWitt County. Land for a cemetery is said to have been donated in 1886, but the earliest marked grave has a date of 1871. The cemetery was expanded in 1917. The Thomaston Cemetery Association was formed in 1936, and a chain link fence was put up in the 1940s.

4. ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF ARNECKEVILLE AND ZION ARNECKEVILLE CEMETERY

FM 236 SE 7 miles from Esplanade, right on Zion Cemetery Road .5 miles

German immigrants who settled in Arneckeville travelled 8 miles, sometimes on foot, to attend St John Evangelical Lutheran Church of Meyersville. In 1860, the Meyersville pastor began to minister to the people in Arneckeville, and the first Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church of Arneckeville building was dedicated in 1868. The church, parsonage and cemetery now occupy 10 acres with large live oak trees surrounding the cemetery. The oldest marked grave in the cemetery is that of Pastor Sager.

5. ARNECKEVILLE

FM 236 SE 7.5 miles from Esplanade, left on Arneckeville Center Road .5 miles to school

Adam Christopher Henry Arneck opened this community's first general store in the 1850's. Originally known as Zionsville, the settlement was later named for Mr. Arnecke. In the late 1800's, it was a thriving community with blacksmith shops, doctors' offices, a cotton gin, a drug store, a post office, a hospital, a lodge hall, a school, and a church. Today the church is still in use, and the school building is a community center,

6. GOLLY HOLLOW SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

FM 236 SE 16 miles from Esplanade, right on South Golly Road 1.5 miles, right on Golly Road .5 miles

The first settlers came to this area about 1847. Families banded together to build the first school on private property in a low-lying area half a mile west of the present school building. It was named for Antone Golly, one of the early settlers. In 1884, Mrs. Theresa Hubersburger donated an acre of land at this site on higher ground. Needs of the teacher and students were met by the community, even after the school became part of the public school system. Water was hauled to the school on sleds until a cistern was bought and gutters installed to catch rain water. Bakery sales and three act plays raised money for extra supplies that the teachers would request. The school closed in 1946, but the Golly Hollow Community Club remained active, meeting at the school house for social events and helping their neighbors in times of need.

1. LINDENAU COMMUNITY AND CEMETERY

US 87 N 2.5 miles from SH 72, right on FM 953 .5 miles, left on Schlinke Road to cemetery, continue on FM 953 1 mile to Lindenau Rifle Club

Farmers, mostly German, settled on land purchased from John T Wofford in the late 1800s. The community was named Lindenau because the large oak trees reminded the German settlers of the linden trees that grow in Germany. St John Lutheran Cemetery was established in 1905. The name was changed to Lindenau Community Cemetery in 1972, and a cemetery association was formed. Many infants are buried in a separate children's section, as was common among Texas Germans. Lindenau Scheutzen Verein (Shooting Club) was formed in 1901. Members bought shares to build a hall which was used for shooting contests and for community feasts and dances. The club became the Lindenau Rifle Club, and a new hall was built in 1926. Community sausage feasts and private and public dances continue in the hall to this day.

2. WESTHOFF

US 87 N 11 miles from SH 72

A tent city for workers building the Texas and New Orleans Railroad, Bello (Beautiful View) was founded in 1906. The Post Office Department in Washington rejected the name Bello because there was already a town named Bella in Bell County. It was several years before the townspeople changed the name to Westhoff after William Westhoff, local merchant and political leader.

3. SHILOH COMMUNITY AND WOODS CEMETERY

SH 72 W 7.5 miles from US 87 to marker, cemetery at end of Woods Cemetery Road

Shiloh Cemetery, now called Woods Cemetery, is all that remains of the Shiloh community. The community got its name from a Methodist Church called Shiloh which was established in 1852 and held services until 1910.

4. GRUENAU TURN AND SCHEUTZEN VEREIN

SH 119 N 3.5 miles from SH 72, right on FM 108 3 miles, left on Gruneau Road 1 mile

The community of Gruenau, which means "green meadow," was settled around 1872.

Gymnastics, calisthenics, and target shooting were popular sports in Germany, and the German settlers organized the Turn and Scheutzen Verein (Gymnastics and Markmen's Association) in 1898 to provide exercise as well as social interaction. A permanent hall built in 1900 was replaced in 1927. The latter hall destroyed by fire in 2007 has been rebuilt and continues to be a gathering place for the community.

5. LITHUANIANS IN TEXAS MARKER

FM 119 S 3 miles from SH 72 in Yorktown at Alvis Road

David and Dora (Scholtze) Stanchos were among the earliest documented Lithuanian immigrants to America when they arrived in 1852. By 1874, they had been joined by 70 or more others.

They became U S citizens and eventually assimilated with the German population; their contributions have been largely overlooked. Many of these early settlers are buried in Jonischkies Cemetery south of Yorktown.

6. GARFIELD COMMUNITY AND GARFIELD SHOOTING CLUB

FM 2980/Garfield Road 10 miles from SH 72 SW of Yorktown

Named for President James A Garfield, the Garfield Shooting Club, patterned after German athletic associations much as Lindenau Rifle Club and Gruenau Turn and Scheutzen Verein, is the only public building left in the community.

7. SAINT ANN CEMETERY/SOCIEDAD CEMENTERIO UNION MEXICANA CEMETERY

North Street/Cabeza Road 1.5 miles from SH 72 in Nordheim

Because of segregation of Mexican Americans at the turn of the 19th century, many share croppers on the farms and ranches surrounding Nordheim needed a cemetery of their own in which to bury family members. This cemetery, established in 1907, contains more than 500 burials. There are 17 gravestones in the African American cemetery, but no burial records have been found.

8. CABEZA

North Street/Cabeza Road 6 miles NW from SH 72 in Nordheim

Hidden from view when the grass is high, a marker is all that is left of the community of Cabeza. Three large sheep and cattle ranches were established here on Cabeza Creek in the 1870s. The town that grew up had several stores, a post office, a blacksmith shop, a cotton gin, a church, and a school. As population declined, the school closed in 1950.