

Historic San Ygnacio

Today Zapata County represents a unique blending of the old and the new. Just 15 miles north of Zapata, the town of San Ygnacio is one of the most historical villages along the Rio Grande. Complementing the historic ambiance of downtown, the neighborhoods contain over 10 historic homes and beautiful plaza which offers a delightful viewing area. Because of its unique antiquity and typical early Spanish Mexican architecture, San Ygnacio has been the setting for the filming of several motion pictures. The best known perhaps is *Viva Zapata* with Marlon Brando.

During the early 1900s San Ygnacio had several general stores, a post office, and a drugstore. In 1908 the population was 198. It increased to 400 by 1931 but dropped to 225 by the late 1940s. The town was used in the filming of *Viva Zapata* in 1951. San Ygnacio was scheduled to be purchased and abandoned with the construction of Falcon Dam but in April 1951 several hundred residents petitioned to have their lands excluded from condemnation actions on the grounds that their town site was sufficiently high above the maximum reservoir surface line to be safe from floods, since the floods of 1865, 1885, 1899, 1900, 1932, and 1948 had never reached any part of the community. The request was granted, but the great flood of 1953 caused widespread damage.

In 1972 the town was listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and a state historical marker commemorates the Treviño home. The historic district had thirty-six stone buildings constructed in the same style as those of old Revilla, now flooded by Falcon Dam. San Ygnacio is the last South Texas community to exhibit such a large collection of the once-numerous sandstone structures built in the middle and late nineteenth century. Many of the homes have been restored, and in 1982 the La Paz Museum was opened as the official Zapata County museum on the campus of the Arturo L. Benevides Elementary School, which was built in 1967 and enlarged in 1981. The museum houses a certified Regional Heritage Resource Center. The post office, established in 1876 by first postmaster Fernando Uribe, is now housed in the historic Trinidad Uribe home, built in 1874 and restored in 1984 by María Eva Uribe Ramírez. *

Historic Sight Seeing

United States Highway 83

Is one of the longest north-south **highways** in the **United States**, at 1885 miles. The highway's northern terminus is north of **Westhope, North Dakota** at the **Canadian** border, where it continues as Manitoba Provincial Highway 83. The southern terminus is in **Brownsville, Texas**, just short of the Mexican border. Highway 83 traverses the entire county of Zapata and parallels the Rio Grande River. Much of the land found along this route was part of an original land grant from the King of Spain dating back to the 1750's. As you drive along, you can find examples of our rich Hispanic culture:

Los Corralitos Ranch

Located 5 miles north of San Ygnacio on Highway 83 is registered as a National Historic Site. The ranch home, which is a replica of the original home site near Dolores, built between 1800 and 1850 has seen four different centuries 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21st. The solid masonry walls are 3 feet thick with large stones set in rough courses with smaller stones used to fill in the spaces between them. Rolling fields surrounded by white fence contain the vast wildlife found at the ranch. Spain governed this land from 1700 to 1800. Texans should acknowledge those who first settled what is now our National Historic Site.

Villa De Nuestra Senora De Los Dolores

In 1740 land was granted to José Vasquez Borrego for a new hacienda calle Villa de Nuestra Señora de los Dolores. After years of growth and years of frequent attacks by Indians, the Dolores hacienda was abandoned with most moving to the Corralitos section for better protection. A granite marker located on U.S. Highway 83 describes the history of the site.

San Francisco Ranch

A 40-acre Hispanic ranching site is called San Francisco that is located 2 miles north of San Ygnacio along the banks of the Rio Grande. It's rural wooded setting along the river is reminiscent of the days of an untamed, isolated frontier. The site consists of two Mexican sandstone buildings from the mid to late 19th century. The larger of the structure dates to 1850, the second built in 1874 still shows remnants of what may have been an original hipped roof with wooden shingles. This private residence was added to the National Register of Historic Sites in 1977.

Ramireno Historical Marker

Ramireno was located on land granted to Don José Luis Ramirez by the King of Spain in 1784. The community was relocated when Falcon Lake was flooded. A historical marker describes the history of the site.

Zapata

The Zapata courthouse plaza contains historical markers which explain the **colonization of the lower Rio Grande Valley**. There is also a marker for the **Mission Revilla A Visita** which was established in 1750 as part of the José de Escandón's project to settle the regions.

Zapata County Historical Trail –

LOPEÑO is on U.S. Highway 83 in southeastern Zapata County. It replaced old Lopeño and four other small farming and ranching communities-San Pedro, San José, Santa Fé and El Tigre-the residents of which were descendants of the settlers brought north in 1749 by Col. José de Escandón. When Falcon Dam was built in the early 1950's, the lake covered the old Lopeño site. Lopeño is named for Antonio López, husband of Doña Ysabel María Sánchez, to whom a 6,366-acre land grant, named Señor San José, was given by the King of Spain on July 16, 1767. During the early 1800's a parcel of this grant passed to the Ramírez family, founders of Falcon. In 1821 Benito Ramírez constructed a combination home, fort, and chapel, known later as Fort Lopeño, which stood until covered by the waters of Falcon Lake.

RAMIREÑO Ramireño is on U.S. Highway 83 and Ranch Road 3169 five miles southeast of San Ignacio and eight miles northwest of Zapata in Zapata County. Originally it was two miles south of its current site on the banks of the Rio Grande. The property was granted to José Luis Ramírez in 1784 by the King of Spain. It was not assigned in 1767, when most of the Revilla grants were made, because incursions of Comanche Indians made the area uninhabitable. Ramírez and his wife, María Bacilia Martínez, lived with their family in Revilla (Old Guerrero) until 1810, when they built a house of native hand-cut sandstone on their property across the river. A historical marker for old Ramireño was placed on Highway 83 in 1989.

BUSTAMANTE. Bustamante is on State Highway 16 twelve miles northeast of Zapata in central Zapata County. It was named for Pedro José Bustamante, to whom the Las Comitas land grant was made in 1802. The site was settled as the ranch headquarters in the 1870's. A post office was established there in 1913. In 1945 Bustamante had a population of fifty. Before 1960 several springs near the community furnished sweet water to area residents. In the 1990's the Comitas and Aguila oilfields were near the community.

FALCON is on U.S. Highway 83 two miles west of the Starr-Zapata county line. It was moved from an original Falcon at the junction of Medio Creek and the Rio Grande in southeast Zapata County during the flood in August 1953, which was caused by the completion of Falcon Dam in December 1952. Settlers had been brought to the area by Col. José de Escandón in the 1750's. The Spanish crown set the land aside for the colonists of Revilla, known as Guerrero, after Mexican independence. In the mid-1700's the King of Spain granted 6,123 acres to José Clemente Gutiérrez, who later sold the land to José Clemente Ramírez. In 1780 Ramírez married Margarita de la Garza Falcón, thus uniting two of the area's most distinguished families, and moved to the old site of Falcón. The place was called Ramireño de Abajo.