

## TEXAS HIGHWAYS--MASON CO.--WWH--MALLORY

HELP! STYLE QUESTIONS.....

MONTHS AND DAYS CARRY NO PERIOD, EXCEPT WHEN USED OUTSIDE OF THE BLANK-BLANK FORMAT? IS THAT RIGHT? EG., "SECOND SAT. OF NOV. (NOV. 14, 1998)"

### Mason County

Mason County is located in the Texas Hill Country 100 miles west of Austin. The county seat, Mason, is at the intersection of US 377 and US 87. For a free information packet (including a calendar of events and a list of accommodations, restaurants, and shops), write the Mason Chamber of Commerce, Box 156, Mason 76856; 915/347-5758. Walk-on guides available for bus tours by prior arrangement.

**The area code for places listed below is 915. All addresses, unless otherwise noted, are Mason 76856. All sites are wheelchair accessible, unless otherwise noted.**

#### Self-Guided Tours

The Chamber of Commerce, at 108 Ft. McKavitt St., has guides for a **walking tour** of downtown. They also offer driving guides to the April and May **Bluebonnet & Wildflower Country Lanes Tours**. Three scenic drives beginning in Mason take you along 120 miles of rural roads.

#### Sites

The historic **Seaquist House**, 400 Broad St., open during the April Bluebonnet Country Lanes Tours for 90-minute tours on Saturdays at 10 a.m., or anytime by appointment. Admission: \$5 per person. Call 347-5413. Not wheelchair accessible.

A reconstruction of the officer's quarters of **Fort Mason** is at 110 Spruce St. and offers a panoramic view of town. Always open for viewing, with interpretive tours by prior arrangement with the chamber of commerce.

View woodcarvings of noted artist **Gene Zesch** at Commercial Bank, 100 Moody, 347-6324. Hours: Mon-Fri 9-3, Sat 9-noon. See an exhibit on Mason native **Fred Gipson**, author of *Old Yeller*, at the M. Beven Eckert Memorial Library, 410 Post Hill St., 347-5446. Hours: Mon-Wed noon-7, Thu 1-5:30, Fri 9-1:30, Sat 10-noon.

**Odeon Theater**, 118 Moody, periodically shows classic films and live productions. For a schedule, write to the Odeon Preservation Assn., Box 700, or call Thom Canfield at 347-5911. **Schooley Saddlery** is at 108 S. Live Oak. Call 347-5407. Hours: Mon-Fri 8-5:30, Sat 8:30-1. **Davenport Pharmacy** is at 130 Ft. McKavitt. Hours: Mon-Fri 8:30-5:30. Call 347-6321.

### **Topaz**

Two ranches offer topaz hunting with a daily admission of \$10 per person; you keep what you find. Bring digging tools and dress comfortably. Not wheelchair accessible. **Garner Seaquist Ranch** also offers camping for \$5 a day (primitive) or \$10 with hookups. Pay fees and get gate key and directions at Nu-Way Gro., 317 Ft. McKavitt, 347-5713. Write to Seaquist Ranch, Box 35. Closed Oct-Dec for deer season. **Wayne Hofmann Ranch** offers free primitive camping; closed Nov-Dec for deer season. Pay fees and get gate key and directions from Wayne Loeffler, 347-6415. His house is located just west of Mason on Texas 29, a quarter-mile past where Texas 29 and US 377 split; look for the white house on the right.

Buy cut topaz at these stores on or near the square: **Country Collectibles**, 320 Ft. McKavitt St., 347-5249, open Mon-Sat 9-5, Sun noon-5; **Underwood Antique Mall**, 100 S. Live Oak, 347-5258, open Mon-Sat 10-5; **Benji's Books &**

**Gifts**, 208 Ft. McKavitt, 347-6323, open Mon-Sat 9-5; and **Antique Emporium**, 106 S. Live Oak, 347-5330, open Mon-Sat 10-5.

### **Accommodations/Dining**

Mason County offers a dozen or so bed and breakfasts. For a complete list, contact the chamber, but here are a few selections. Downtown, try **Mason Square B&B**, 214 Ft. McKavitt; write to Box 298, or call 347-6398 or 800/369-0405 (not wheelchair accessible). At the community of Art, look for the **Hasse House**, 7362 Texas 29, eight miles east of Mason; write to Box 58, or call 347-6463 or 888/414-2773. On the Llano River, try **Willow Creek Ranch B&B**, 14 miles south of Mason; for directions, write to Box 1599, or call 347-6781 or 888/281-7242 (email: willowcr@hctc.net); not wheelchair accessible. Call for rates and availability.

**Willow Creek Cafe**, 106 Ft. McKavitt, 347-6124, opens Thu-Sat 11-2 and 5-9, Sun 11-2. **Cooper's Pit BBQ**, 802 US 87 South, 347-6897, opens 10:30-5:30 daily. **Upper Willow Creek Store** cafe, 7898 Texas 29, Art 76820 (347-0019) is 10 miles east of Mason. Hours: Mon-Wed and Fri-Sat 8-5 (Fri-Sat, 8 a.m.-9 p.m. during deer season). For a complete list of the county's eateries, contact the chamber.

### **Bat Cave**

Approximately 16 miles from Mason on James River Rd. is the **Eckert James River Bat Cave Preserve**; open 6 p.m.-9 p.m. Thur-Sun, mid-May to mid-Oct. Time of bat exodus varies. Admission: free. For details and directions, call 347-5970; off-season, contact the Nature Conservancy of Texas, Box 164255, Austin 78716 (512/327-9472). Not wheelchair accessible.

### **Outdoor Recreation**

From Oct-Dec, Mason Co. features some of the top bow and gun **deer hunting** in Texas. The chamber sponsors a **Wild Game Dinner** the second Sat. of Nov. (Nov. 14, 1998) and also keeps a list of available leases. **Fishing** for bass,

sunfish, and catfish has been a Llano River tradition for generations, although floods in 1997 reduced fish populations. For angling guide service, write to Leonard Wilson, HCR 85, Box 10, Hext 76848; 915/456-6069. After moderate to heavy rainfall, try **canoeing** on the Llano. For rentals and put-in/take-out service, write to the Rock Bottom Canoe Co. (Box 564; 347-6440), located at Antiques and Crafts (beside Hemphill Insurance), 201 Westmoreland.

Long known as a haven for **tennis**, Mason hosts two major public tournaments annually: the four-day **Dr. Pepper Tournament**, beginning the fourth weekend in July (July 23-26, 1998) with junior and adult categories, and the **Over-the-Hill Tournament** (age 35 and older) the second weekend in Oct. (Oct. 10-11, 1998) Write to Coach Paul Smith, Mason High School, HC 10, Box 31-C; 347-5921.

#### **Read Books**

For more information on the history of Mason County, check out two new books: *Mason County* by the late Margaret Bierschwale, published in two volumes by the Mason Co. Historical Commission, Box 524, 347-6471 (call for price and orders), and *Fort Mason, Texas: Training Ground for Generals* by Jerry Ponder, Box 792, 347-6539 (\$19.71, including shipping, tax, and handling).