



Oldest Town IN TEXAS

NACOGDOCHES

Story | KATHRYN HUNTER

This Piney Woods small town, once among the region's largest and most important early settlements, is now a quaint and quiet escape for the Texas history lover.

Founded in 1779 by Spanish settlers, Nacogdoches played an important role in early Texas history. Oak Grove Cemetery, on Lanana Street, is the final resting place of Thomas Jefferson Rusk and three other signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence, as well as other notable figures. The town's roots go back even further; the

namesake Caddo Indian tribe the Nacogdoche are thought to have lived in the area as early as 800 A.D. Indian ceremonial and burial mounds dot the East Texas countryside, hidden beneath the guise of ordinary hills. The best example can be seen at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site near Alto.

These days, the town is often referred to by locals and visitors

alike as "Nac" and is known as the home of Stephen F. Austin State University. Special events take place throughout the year, such as the popular Nine Flags Festival (Nov. and Dec.), Texas Blueberry Festival (June) and Nacogdoches Heritage Festival (June). Other attractions range from Lake Nacogdoches and Lake Naconiche to the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden and Nac's characteristic brand of slow-paced country living. Visit Java Jack's Coffee House for a locally roasted, artisan brew (don't miss the "Red Dirt Blend") and grab a table at Clear Springs Restaurant for the real deal when it comes to catfish and chicken-fried steak. ♣

PAST TIMES (SEE & DO)

STERNE-HOYA HOUSE MUSEUM & LIBRARY

This dogtrot-style house, built in 1830, is the oldest still standing on its original site in the city. A collection of period antiques and heirlooms are on display, as well as a reference library with local history and genealogical information. ci.nacogdoches.tx.us

MILLARD'S CROSSING HISTORIC VILLAGE

A stroll through this reconstructed historic village provides a snapshot of early East Texas architecture, from log cabins to stately Victorian homes. Award-winning tours and hands-on activities for kids draw visitors of all ages. millardscrossing.org

OLD UNIVERSITY BUILDING

Known as "the mother of education in Texas," the old University building served many functions since its construction in 1859, from educational facility to Confederate hospital. Today the upper level is a museum. olduniversitybuilding.com