

## **Blanco County, TX**

This small, hilly county is located on the Edwards Plateau, and boasts a population of around 10,500. The county was named for the beautiful Blanco River, which flows through the county lands.

The lands that would later comprise Blanco County were first continually inhabited by an indigenous people as early as 1150 CE. These peoples are believed to be the ancestors of the Lipan Apache. The lands began to be occupied by settlers of European descent and the Apache by the early 1800s, followed by clashes between the two groups, and later a third group, the Comanches.

Blanco County would later be formed in 1858 with the new town of Blanco as its county seat. During this period, agriculture and livestock were vital to the economy, based in wheat and Indian corn.

Blanco continued to serve as county seat until 1890, when the seat changed to Johnson City. Johnson City was formed around a cattle business begun by Samuel Ealy Johnson Sr., the grandfather of President Lyndon B. Johnson.

By 1910, cotton overtook wheat and corn as the most important crop, but other crops also began to grow in importance; namely peanuts, peaches, pecans, pears, plums, grapes, and figs.

However, because the terrain of Blanco County is generally hilly, the land is better suited for livestock than agriculture, and slowly, ranching and livestock overtook all others as the most important resource for the economy.

Today, farm and ranch supply stores are the most prominent businesses in the populous cities of Blanco and Johnson, but tourism is also a large economic draw.

Visitors to Blanco County come to see Blanco State Recreation Area, Pedernales Falls State Park, and Lyndon Baines Johnson birthplace, boyhood home, and ranch. As always, agriculture and cattle ranching remain important. Crops variety is reduced, focusing on wheat, hay, oats, peaches, and pecans. Livestock diversity has swelled, including sheep, cows, cattle, goats, and turkey.