

# Driving Instructions

## DOWNTOWN and WREDE SCHOOL

Vereins Kirche (#1) at Market Square and White Oak School (#17) (Pioneer Museum) at 325 W Main St. Wrede School (#2), 3828 So. St. Hwy 16: Drive 3.8 miles on St. Hwy 16 So. (South Adams St.), turn right.

## ROUTE A (four schools)

2 1/2 - 3 1/2 hours: take 290 W from Market Square, until the "Y", keep right and follow US 87 N. Turn right and follow Cherry Mountain Loop. Cherry Mountain School (#16) is on the right. Continue on Cherry Mountain Loop to US 87N, turn right and almost immediately turn left onto Old Mason Rd; turn right onto Pecan Creek Rd. Stay to the right at the "Y" and Pecan Creek School (#15) is on right. Return to US 87 N, turn left, go to RR 2323. Turn right and follow to Cherry Spring School (#14) on left. Continue on RR 2323, take a right and follow Keese-Sagebiel Rd, Keese Rd and Welgehausen Rd. Take a right and follow FM 965. At bridge take a left onto Lower Crabapple Rd. Crabapple School (#13) is on right. Return to FM 965, take a left and return to Fredericksburg.

## ROUTE B (four schools)

2 - 3 hours: from Market Square take US 290 E, one block, turn left onto Hwy 16 N to RR1323. Take a right and follow to Willow City School (#12) on left. Continue on RR 1323 to RR 1631. Take a right and follow to North Grape Creek Rd. Take a left and follow to Rheingold School Rd. Take a right, Rheingold School (#10) is on right. Return to North Grape Creek Rd, follow until Nebgen School (#9) on left. Notice that the N Grape Creek Rd zigzags. Continue on

North Grape Creek Rd. Take a right onto RR 2721 to Cave Creek Rd. Take a right. Follow the road to Cave Creek School Rd, Cave Creek School (#11) is on left. Continue on Cave Creek Road to RR 1631. Take a left and return to Fredericksburg.

\*\*\* Suitable for bicycles

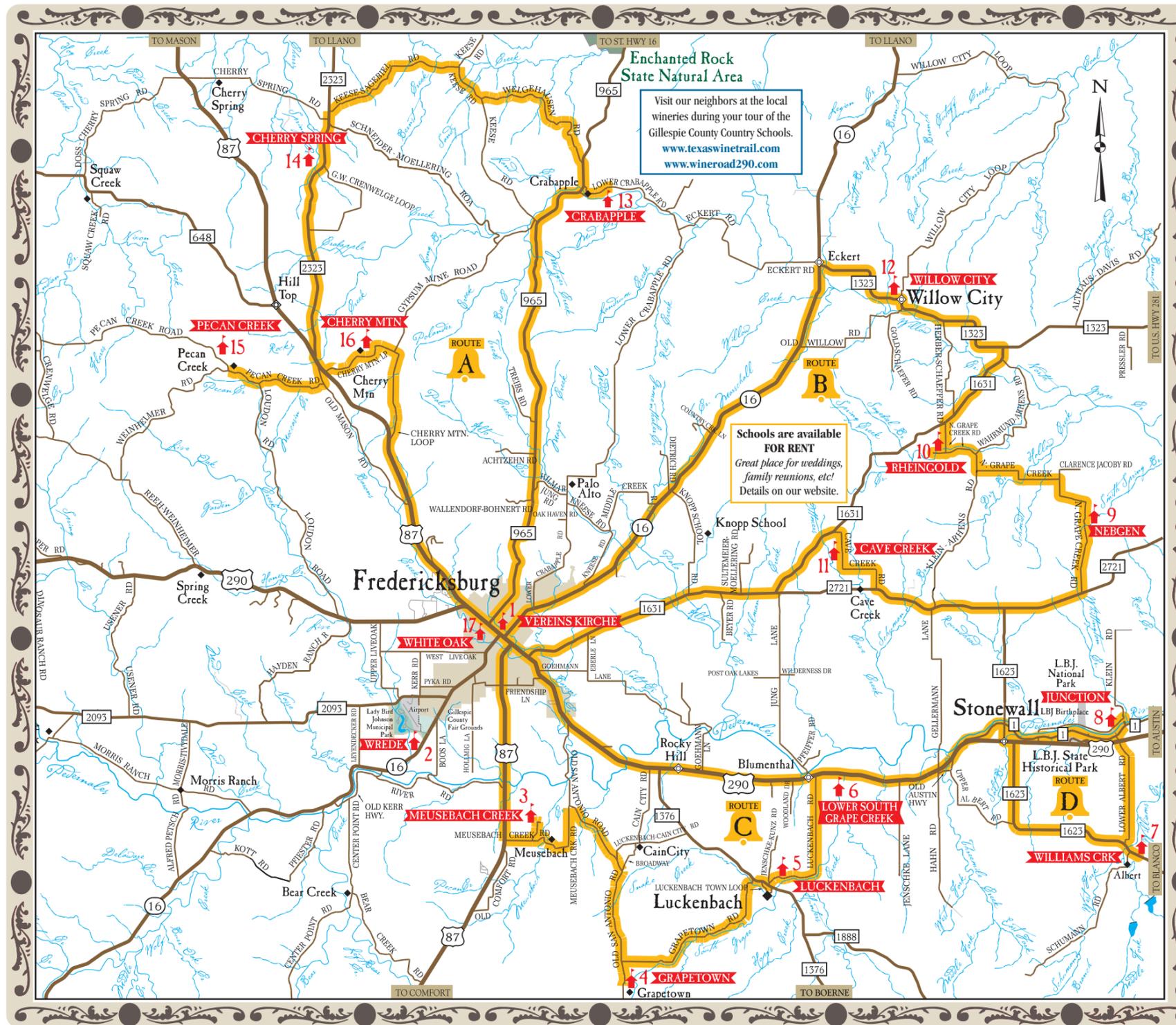
## ROUTE C (four schools)

1 1/2 - 2 hours: from Market Square take 290 E to US 87 South (turn right at the Nimitz Museum); follow and turn left onto Meusebach Creek Rd. Follow and turn left onto Kuhlmann Rd. Meusebach Creek School (#3) is on left. Return to Meusebach Creek Rd, take a left, follow it to Old San Antonio Rd. Take a right and follow road to Grapetown. Turn left. Grapetown School (#4) is on left. Return on Old San Antonio Rd and take a right onto Grapetown Rd, follow it to RR 1376, take right. Follow and turn left onto Luckenbach Rd. Luckenbach School (#5) is on left. Continue on Luckenbach Rd until US 290, take a right. On the right is Lower South Grape Creek School (#6). Return to Fredericksburg on US 290W

\*\*\* Suitable for bicycles

## ROUTE D (three schools)

1 1/2 - 2 hours: Take US 290 E to Lower South Grape Creek School (#6) on right. Continue on 290 E, take a left onto Ranch Road 1, follow and take a left onto Park Road 49, cross the Pedernales River. Junction School (#8) is on your left. Return on Ranch Road 1, take a right, take first left onto Lower Albert Rd, cross US 290, follow to RR 1623. Take a left, Williams Creek (Albert) School (#7) is on your left. Return on RR 1623 to US 290, take a left to Fredericksburg.



# Gillespie County Country Schools

As many as 44 rural schools were in operation around Fredericksburg, the county seat of Gillespie County, in the early 20th century. German immigrants had poured into the area that became known as the Texas Hill Country in the mid to late 1800's, starting with the settlement of New Braunfels in 1845 and Fredericksburg in 1846.

As families moved onto land more distant from town, the earliest rural educational efforts normally involved hiring a teacher to educate the children in private homes.

Eventually land was donated by a family in the area and a community school was built taking names descriptive of nearby natural landmarks such as Cave Creek, Crabapple, Pecan Creek or Lower South Grape Creek. The German heritage of Gillespie County is evident in other names like Luckenbach, Meuse-

12 of the schools continue to be used as community centers, polling places and festival sites, as well as being rented out as sites for social gatherings.

bach, Rheingold and Nebgen.

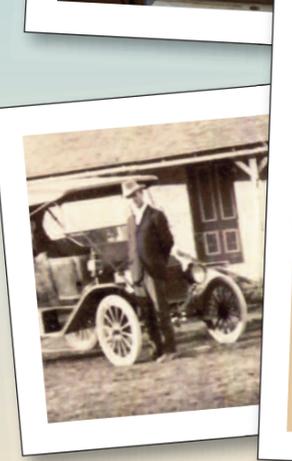
The Gilmer-Aikin Law of 1949 resulted in the consolidation of most rural schools in Texas, bringing a close to this era of public education.

Remarkably, the main buildings at only two of the 44 rural schools in Gillespie County were demolished over the decades.

In the 1950's, community clubs were organized and maintained some of the rural school properties in Gillespie County using their own funds, even though they were owned by the Fredericksburg Independent School District (FISD).

Short histories of the schools can be obtained at the Visitor Information Center in Fredericksburg, located at 302 East Austin Street, at each school and on our website: [www.historicschools.org](http://www.historicschools.org)

# GILLESPIE COUNTY Country Schools DRIVING TRAIL



The Friends of  
Gillespie County  
Country Schools  
P.O. Box 55  
Fredericksburg, TX 78624  
[www.historicschools.org](http://www.historicschools.org)  
(830) 685-3321



Map produced by The Friends of Gillespie County Country Schools

# The Schools

**#1 VEREINS KIRCHE** – 100 BLOCK OF WEST MAIN STREET - The original building was constructed in 1847 in the middle of what is now Main Street. Vereins Kirche means “church of the society” and refers to the Mainzer Adelsverein, the society of German nobles from the area of Mainz, Germany, who brought the settlers to the frontier in 1846. It served as a Lutheran and Catholic Church and as the first schoolhouse. The settlers had been promised public education and Mr. Johann Leyendecker was hired as the first teacher. The original building was demolished 1896 and a replica was built in 1936 on Market square. Today it is a museum. Admission fee for museum.

**#2 WREDE SCHOOL** - 3828 SOUTH STATE HIGHWAY 16 – Built in 1896. Consolidated in 1960. Lumber to build the school was hauled from Comfort, TX by wagon. Classes were first held on October 15, 1896 with an enrollment of 46 students. Enrollment over the years went as high as 53 students in the 1950’s. In 1949 the Pedernales School was consolidated with Wrede and shortly thereafter, students from Bear Creek School were consolidated with Wrede also. During 64 years, Wrede had 24 teachers. The salary for a teacher in 1896 was \$28 per month, and by 1959 a teacher might receive \$288 per month. Even though most students did not speak English when they entered first grade, speaking German on the school grounds was forbidden.

**#3 MEUSEBACH CREEK SCHOOL** - 515 KUHLMANN ROAD - First school built in the early 1800’s. Fourth built during the 1930’s. Consolidated in 1964. School records and pictures show that many rural schools were multicultural. The earliest evidence dates back to 1869 when Henry, Laura, Minnie, Ovie and George Washington, whose parents’ were freed slaves, attended Meusebach Creek School with other children from the area. It could be considered one of the first integrated schools in the South.

**#4 GRAPETOWN SCHOOL** – 7325 OLD SAN ANTONIO ROAD - 1859, the first school was held in the former Wm Doebbler home. 1869 log school built. 1884 present school built. Teacherage in 1887. Consolidated in 1949. One of four schools, which still has the original teacherage (the house where the teacher lived). This limestone two-room teacherage was built in 1887 and later a frame kitchen, storeroom and smokehouse was erected. Was used until 1949 when Grapetown School District was consolidated with Rocky Hill School District as part of the rural school consolidation in TX.

**#5 LUCKENBACH SCHOOL** - 3566 LUCKENBACH ROAD – First log schoolhouse 1855 with native limestone addition 1881. A new limestone school built in 1905. Limestone teacherage 1860s. Consolidated in 1964. An old-fashioned school bell summoned the children to class at 9 AM. Boys lined up

on the left and girls on the right to enter the one-room schoolhouse for grades 1st to 8th where older students helped the younger ones with grammar and math. During recess children played games such as Andy-over, Stink Base, Dodge, Drop the hankie, and Kick the can. At 4 PM, the older boys had to bring in firewood for the stove and the girls swept the floor. First graders were responsible for cleaning the erasers.

**#6 LOWER SOUTH GRAPE CREEK SCHOOL** - 10273 EAST US HIGHWAY 290 – Log cabin school built 1871. Present school built 1900. Consolidated in 1960. On holidays, such as Washington’s Birthday, Thanksgiving and Christmas, students presented programs. All parts were memorized with families and the community invited. Christmas plays were held inside this school with the front area having a curtain and the students using a side window for their entrance and exit. Santa Claus handed out oranges, apples and candy and lit the candles on the Christmas tree. One year his beard caught on fire. He quickly exited through the window and headed for the water well.

**#7 WILLIAMS CREEK (ALBERT) SCHOOL** – 5501 SOUTH RANCH ROAD 1623 - One-room log cabin school 1891. Limestone building built 1897. A bell was installed in the tower. Consolidated 1950. The curriculum consisted of arithmetic, reading, writing, spelling, history, geography and penmanship. During WWI, a new law required all subjects, except foreign languages, to be taught in English. German was not allowed spoken on the school grounds. On Fridays there would be spelling bees.

**#8 JUNCTION SCHOOL** – 144 STATE PARK ROAD 49 – located in US LBJ Natl Historical Park, 1048 State Park Rd 49, Stonewall, TX. The first school was located about 1 mile east of the present school, established 1882. It was a tent on the Pedernales at Christadelphian. Built in 1911. Consolidated in 1947. President Johnson returned to his school and asked his first teacher, Ms Kate Deadrich, to witness the signing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act on 11 April 1965. It was one of more than 60 education bills he signed that committed more than \$1.5 billion in Federal funds to public education.

**#9 NEBGEN SCHOOL** – 1718 NORTH GRAPE CREEK ROAD – Smith Valley School built of logs 1881. Lindemann School built 1901. Present one room frame Nebgen School erected in 1936. Consolidated in 1949. One of four schools that has a pavilion and stage, it was used for “school closings”. School closings a major community celebration with “Schulprüfung” (an oral and written “school exam”) in the morning. In the afternoon there were games and in the evening the adults put on a play followed by a dance. The men prepared BBQ, which was sold by the pound, and families provided their own side dishes.



**#10 RHEINGOLD SCHOOL** – 334 RHEINGOLD SCHOOL ROAD – Log schoolhouse 1873. Frame schoolhouse built in 1900. In addition to the main building each school had outhouses for boys and girls, which were placed at opposite sides of the property. A large wood burning cast iron heater heated the schoolhouse. Wood could either be thrust through the lid or through the door to the firebox. Water was often gotten from hand-dug wells or from a neighbor. Some schools had cistern water to drink. Students brought their own drinking cups, some folded up and kept them in the school desk.

**#11 CAVE CREEK SCHOOL** – 470 CAVE CREEK ROAD – Built in 1881. Consolidated in 1950. Many students rode horses, donkeys or mules or walked bare-footed to school during all kinds of weather. Saddles were stored in the saddle shed, and the animals stayed in the schoolyard or adjacent lot until school was dismissed. One student in the 1920’s rode a donkey that almost like clock work at 11:45 brayed dismissing everyone for lunch. During the end of the era several schools had buses, and parents brought children by car.

**#12 WILLOW CITY SCHOOL** – 2501 RANCH ROAD 1323 – First building built prior to 1876 was a one-room log cabin that washed away in the 1880’s flood. Second building could not support the large increase in number of students. In 1905 two community members donated land on higher ground for the current hickory sandstone two-story, three-room school building. Consolidated in 1961. Some students brought lunch in used lard or molasses half-gallon buckets with wire handles. Their names were engraved on the lid by using a nail and hammer to punch holes to write the letters. Lunches consisted of homemade bread, butter, jelly, cheese, boiled eggs, and dried meat or sausage in addition to fruit and cookies.

**#13 CRABAPPLE SCHOOL** – 14671 LOWER CRABAPPLE ROAD - Built 1878. Present school built 1882. First building served as teacherage. Between 1887 and 1910 first building also served as a post office. Typically the land for the schools was donated or bought for \$1. At Crabapple, Crockett Riley and Mathias Schmidt decided to have a footrace to see who would have the privilege of donating the land. Mathias Schmidt won, and the school was built on his land.

**#14 CHERRY SPRING SCHOOL** – 5973 RANCH ROAD 2323 – built in 1885, pavilion built in 1935. Consolidated in 1962. Community residents constructed school of limestone. The pavilion’s stage was used during the school year as a second classroom. At school closing time the wall at the stage’s front edge was moved back to form the backdrop for the plays. The canvas stage curtain painted with an outdoors scene and ads by local merchants is still in great condition. Lower grades occupied the pavilion classroom while older students through the 9th grade attended in the rock “Big Room”.

**#15 PECAN CREEK SCHOOL** – 3410 PECAN CREEK ROAD – First school built on Loudon Road 1883. Present school on Pecan Creek Road built in 1916. Consolidated in 1955. Wooden school desks were either double or single with

a shelf underneath for items such as cups, pens and books. Seating was arranged by grade. Several schools still have the original maps, world globes, bookcases, science cases and the teacher’s desk. One of the most important features was the “recitation bench” close to the teacher’s desk. Here a particular grade sat for their lesson or recitation.

**#16 CHERRY MOUNTAIN SCHOOL** – 2866 CHERRY MOUNTAIN LOOP - Log cabin school built 1883. Present built in 1926 of concrete Basse Block. Consolidated in 1949. Discipline was strict in the family homes and at school. There was a threat of the “switch” or paddle, but few children suffered this. Most common was that the “mischief” maker had to stay in the classroom during recess. Sometimes a pupil would have to stand facing the blackboard with the nose “stuck” in a chalk drawn ring. Standing in the corner or by the teacher’s desk was also common.

**#17 WHITE OAK SCHOOL** – 325 W MAIN STREET – Built in the 1920’s, consolidated in 1950. Moved to Pioneer Museum in 1990. Admission fee for museum. Box suppers were held as one way to earn money for the school. The young girls would decorate a box with crepe paper and create a work of art according to their artistic abilities and fill it with all sorts of good things to eat: sandwiches, cakes, fruit, etc. These boxes were then auctioned off to the men and sold to the highest bidder, who did not know by whom the box was created. After all the boxes were sold, they would share the contents of the box with the creator.

## Friends Formed for Preservation

Although it proved to be unfounded, the rumor that “they’re selling our schools” brought together a group of Gillespie County citizens who organized as the “Friends of Gillespie County Country Schools.” The “Friends” group is currently composed of some 500 members who are interested in preserving the traditions of the schools and the history of Gillespie County for future generations. Since that time, the ownership of 12 of the schools has been transferred to Gillespie County, and the schools are leased back to the 12 community clubs. The efforts of the Friends to preserve their schools, their community centers and their traditions are an outstanding example of a grassroots movement. Groups across Texas are now organizing to save rural schools in other regions of the state as a result of Proposition 13 and the work of the “Friends” in Gillespie County. For detailed histories and photos of the country schools in Gillespie County, visit [www.historicschools.org](http://www.historicschools.org). The annual Open House at the schools is held the first weekend of April each year. Donations to help with preservation of these sites, which are now on the National Register of Historic Places, are gladly accepted by the nonprofit Friends of Gillespie County Country Schools. See website above for details.

**Schools**

[www.HistoricSchools.org](http://www.HistoricSchools.org)

FACEBOOK/FRIENDS OF GILLESPIE COUNTY COUNTRY SCHOOLS

For additional info visit...

[VisitFredericksburgTx.com/History/preservationnation.org](http://VisitFredericksburgTx.com/History/preservationnation.org) [countryschoolassociation.org](http://countryschoolassociation.org)

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