



## LITTLE-KNOWN FACTS

- WACO is the only radio station in the country whose call letters spell out the name of a city.
- There is no truth to the rumor that Dr Pepper soft drink is made with prune juice.
- Darwin the gorilla, a giant statue on Austin Avenue, sports new outfits throughout the year honoring special holidays and events.
- “The Waco Door” sculpture by famous Wacoan Robert Wilson, weighs more than six tons. It provides the perfect gateway to the sculpture walk at Art Center Waco.
- Telephus Telemachus Louis Augustus Albertus Johnson, who died in Waco in 1875, was originally buried in historic First Street Cemetery. His remains were later reinterred in Oakwood Cemetery, which laid to rest the myth that he was buried sitting at a poker table with a bottle of whiskey in one hand and a six-shooter in the other.
- In 1879, the first “bawdy house” was registered in the City of Waco. Prostitution became legal within a restricted area known as The Reservation, which extended from Washington Ave. to Jefferson Ave., and from the Brazos River to 2nd St. It was legal in that area only from 1889 to 1917 when it was closed during World War I as a condition for locating Camp MacArthur in Waco.
- In 1974, Baylor won the Southwest Conference football championship for the first time in 50 years. The bears won seven SWC Championships: 1915, 1916, 1922, 1924, 1974, 1980, & 1994. They have won two Big 12 Championships: 2013 & 2014.
- In 1978 the first mammoth skeleton was discovered near Waco in what is now one of the most important paleontological sites in the world. The site was designated Waco Mammoth National Monument on July 10, 2015.
- Beaver, bear, and buffalo still roamed the area when, on March 1, 1849, surveyor George B. Erath laid out the new town of Waco Village. Lots were sold for \$5 each in the village and farmland in the surrounding area sold for \$2 to \$3 per acre.

- One of Waco's first newspapers was the *Waco Examiner*, started in 1865.
- Waco was known as the "Athens on the Brazos" during the 1880s because it was fast becoming the hub of education in the Lone Star State. In 1881, Paul Quinn College moved to Waco in 1872. In 1882, a city tax was levied to fund the Waco Public Schools; and in 1886 Waco University and Baylor University consolidated locations in Waco.
- The invention of Dr Pepper at the Old Corner Drug Store in Waco in 1885 preceded the invention of Coca-Cola by one year.
- William L. Prather, who was raised in Waco, was President of the University of Texas (UT) in 1900. Prather often admonished his students that "the eyes of Texas are upon you." Inspired by these words, student John Long Sinclair, wrote lyrics to the tune of "I've Been Working on the Railroad" that eventually became the school song for UT. The song was first sung on May 16, 1903.
- The Hippodrome Theater, opened in 1914 as a select road show house, spent much of its life as "Hulsey's Hipp," operated by E. H. Hulsey to offer major vaudeville attractions and movies.
- The Waco Navigators, a professional baseball team, won the Texas League championship in 1914, 1915, and 1916.
- In 1970, one hundred years after its completion, the Waco Suspension Bridge became the first Waco edifice placed on the National Register of Historic Sites.
- The name Waco has been spelled at least 32 different ways, including Wacco, Wachos, Huaco, Hueco, Wacoah, Honechas, Houchas, Quchaco, Quaineo, Quintico, Wacha, Wacoes, Waecoe, Waeko, Wiko, Weko and Weeco.
- Waco's first hotel was built in 1849 when Shapley Prince Ross, one of Waco's founders, built a log hotel on the corner of 1st & Bridge Streets, the site of the present-day Hilton Waco. The hotel burned in 1871.
- McLennan County produced six Civil War Generals and sent over 2,200 troops to fight for the Confederacy out of a population of only about 8,000. Gravesites for some of these generals can be found at the 1st St. Cemetery in Ft. Fisher Park.

- The Chisholm Trail, leading to Wichita, Kansas, and the Shawnee Trail leading to Abilene, both crossed the Brazos River on the Waco Suspension Bridge. By 1871, between 600,000 and 700,000 steers had passed over the bridge, and the cattle drives continued through 1884.
- Jacob de Cordova, one of Waco's founders, was Jewish. In 1869, a Hebrew Benevolent Society was founded and B'nai B'rith helped construct the first synagogue in 1879.
- Over 2.7 million bricks, made from Brazos River sand, went into the construction of the Waco Suspension Bridge before its completion in 1870.
- Waco was home to the largest inland cotton market in the world in 1890, receiving 60,000 bales annually by wagon and 150,000 bales by rail.
- Over 8 million Texans visited Waco from 1894 to 1930 to attend the month-long Texas Cotton Palace Exposition.

The Masonic Grand Lodge of Texas, located in Waco, was built in 1904 .

- The 1953 Waco tornado was the most devastating tornado in Texas history in terms of death and injury. The F5 storm took 114 lives and injured over 1,000.
- Waco's 416-acre Cameron Park has some of the most technical and challenging mountain bike trails in the state and is part of the National Trails System
- The southwest part of Waco is located on the edge of the Balcones Fault, the same geological formation that carved the Texas Hill Country. Across the Brazos, on the northeast side, is rich, black farmland, called the "Blacklands" region in the geology of Texas. From the top of Lover's Leap in Cameron Park, one can see the vast differences from one side of the Brazos to the other.
- Waco was the same size as Dallas in 1870.
- Cargill Foods of Waco grows, processes and sells over 50 million pounds of turkey per year, 10 million pounds each of chicken and pork, and 4 million pounds of beef.
- Snickers candy bars are made in Waco.
- Waco is the birthplace of more Texas governors than any other city. Governors born here include Richard Coke, Sul Ross, Pat Neff, and Ann Richards

- William Cowper Brann (1855-1898) was the brilliant, vitriolic writer and publisher of the *Iconoclast*, a monthly newsletter with a national circulation. Brann called his publication “a journal of personal protest” and “A literary Gatling Gun.” Brann was killed in a duel with Tom Davis in downtown Waco and is buried in Oakwood Cemetery. A bullet hole mars his tombstone on which his name does not appear. In fact, the only word on the stone is “TRUTH”.
- The city of Hewitt was named in the film *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay*, including the fictional Hewitt Regional Airport. The scenes that took place in Hewitt were actually filmed in a different location.
- Hewitt Texas was ranked #44 by *CNNMoney Magazine's* 2007 Top 100 places to live
- The city of McGregor lies in two counties, as well as two metropolitan areas. The McLennan County portion of the city is part of the Waco Metropolitan Statistical Area, while the small portion that lies in Coryell County is part of the Killeen–Temple–Fort Hood Metropolitan Statistical Area.
- SpaceX has a rocket engine development and test facility in McGregor, Texas.
- In 1996 Baylor president, Dr. Sloan allowed dancing on campus. He danced the first dance with his wife. Previously the university had a ban on dancing although it was still practiced in music, theatre productions and cheerleading.
- The James C. Connally AFB was located just north of Waco. The present day the site is home to Texas State Technical College.
- Camp McArthur was located in north Waco. The site is currently the home of the Waco Center For Youth.
- On Oct. 16, 1929, Clyde Barrow was arrested in the company of two wanted men, William Turner and Frank Hardy, at the Roosevelt Hotel in Waco. Barrow claimed he had been picked up hitchhiking and he was unaware of Turner & Hardy’s reputations. Turner and Hardy went along with Barrow’s story of being an innocent bystander, and Barrow was released. Three months later in Dallas, Barrow, 20, met 19-year-old cafe waitress Bonnie Parker (1910-1934). The romance began, and the pair terrorized the Southwest for four years, robbing banks and stores and gunning down 13 civilians and lawmen along the way.
- Clyde Barrow was again arrested in Waco in connection with five car thefts and two burglaries in 1930. While awaiting trial, Barrow and two others

escaped from the McLennan County Jail, thanks to a gun smuggled in by Bonnie Parker.

- The university at the end of the film *Where the Heart is* (2000) that is supposed to be located on the East Coast is actually Baylor University in Waco, Texas.
- In 2014, *Texas Highways Magazine* readers voted Waco the #3 destination in Texas
- In 2010, *USAA Military.com* ranked Waco as the #1 city in the United States for military retirees.
- February 2015, *Realtor.com* named Waco the hottest real estate market in the country, based on the ratio of listing views to the number of listings. Active Waco listings on Realtor.com are viewed, on average, 335 times — the highest in the country. The national average is 73 page views per active listing.
- Greater Waco Chamber built America's First Green Chamber of Commerce building in 2008, and has received a LEED certification at the gold level for its headquarters and regional marketing center at 101 S. Third St. at Heritage Square.
- The ALICO Building (1911) in downtown Waco was a pioneer in the quest of the latest up-to-date technology in building construction. Known to be the tallest building West of the Mississippi and South of the Mason-Dixon Line until 1929. The 22-story building withstood the F5 tornado of 1953 and still stands a symbol of strength that weathers the ravages of weather and time.
- The McLennan County Courthouse (1902) was styled after St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. The Renaissance Revival structure is crowned with statues of eagles as well as Themis - the Greek goddess of divine law and justice, Justitia - the Roman goddess of justice and Liberty.
- The "Branding the Brazos" sculptures near the Waco Suspension Bridge represent a herd of cattle making their way along the Chisholm Trail from South Texas to Kansas. The herd consists of 25 bronze longhorn cattle and 3 bronze cowboys. The \$1.65 million project took Texas sculptor Robert Summers 8 years to complete.