

Stagecoaching In Texas

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There was a railroad head at Hempstead people would have to take the stagecoach to go on west.

<i>From</i>	<i>By way of</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Leaves</i>	<i>Arrives At</i>	<i>Contractors</i>	<i>Vehicles</i>
Hempstead	Chapel Hill, Brenham, LaGrange, Bastrop, etc.	Austin	Hempstead every day at 10 A.M.	Austin second day at 12 P.M.	Sawyer & Risher	4-horse coaches



Here are excerpts from the Texas State Historical Association,
Texas Almanac / “Stagecoaching In Texas”

The Austin-based firm of Risher & Sawyer operated two important routes in the 1850s, a line that connected Austin and San Antonio three times weekly and a Houston–Austin route. The Texas State Gazette offered its “best wishes for ... success” in 1852 when Col. George W. Grant had formed a company that would run a stage “every alternate day” from Austin to Houston, making the trip in only two days. One way from the Capital City (Austin) to Houston cost \$15.

By the early 1870s, Risher and Hall ran seven routes operating out of Austin, Brenham, Columbus, La Grange, San Antonio, Victoria and Waco. E.M. Sawyer and his brother Frederick, had four lines, including the one through Tyler.

Stagecoaches would carry as many as fifteen people, six would be inside the coach and as many as nine would be on top. The stage driver and coachman would have the best seat on the stage.



Stagecoach robberies happened so often it came to be considered something of a rite of passage to hand over one's money and valuables to a masked man with a gun on some lonely roadside. "At one time," wrote journalist Alexander Sweet in his humor sheet *Texas Siftings*, "the traveling public became so accustomed to going through the usual ceremonies that they complained to the stage companies if they came through unmolested. Being robbed came to be regarded as a vested right." The only thing that truly put an end to stagecoach robbing was the expansion of rail service in Texas. And then bandits took to robbing trains.



The Austin–Houston route normally would take two days, wet weather always made the trip more difficult. "On the river and creek bottoms, passengers were requested by the driver, politely or otherwise, to step out and down, and walk in the mud, packing rails to help the stage out of the mud. Then, the trip was made in five or six days."

Though the stagecoach era in Texas essentially ended by the mid-1880s with the widespread availability of faster and more comfortable travel by rail, stagecoaches endured as a means of transportation in some parts of the state well beyond the declared death of the frontier.

Midland historian Jack Scannell wrote in the *West Texas Historical Association's 1971 Yearbook* that: "Where the stagecoach led, the rails followed, and with the rails came settlers, new businesses, and prosperity. To the present day, the highways, railroads, and even the airlines follow the routes laid out by the pounding hooves and spinning wheels of the stagecoach."



By the 1850s Round Top had a tri-weekly stagecoach stop. From the 1850s to the 1880s there were three known stagecoach stations in the area. The Sam Lewis station in Winedale, the Townsends had one about a mile south of Round Top on La Bahia road, and an unknown person had one at Rocky Creek. (Where Round Top got its name from.)

To read more about Texas stagecoaches go to:
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Picture above is the Sam Lewis overnight station.

Winedale, Texas (Four miles from Round Top)