



How Streets Got Their Names

Perhaps the ultimate compliment to one's legacy is having a street named in one's honor. There is no escaping it, the names on which contributed to the San Marcos of today are around every corner, guarding every turn—guiding us, hopefully in the right direction, down a one-way street.

EDWARD GARY

This once quiet downtown street will become unrecognizable in the next few years with high-rise apartments and urbanization.

Within the first 24 hours of World War II—shortly following President Roosevelt's declaration of war against Japan and their allies, Germany and Italy—news about the late Lt. Arthur Edward Gary, the community's first wartime casualty, hits the home-front sooner than expected.

In remembrance of the city's first soldier killed in WWII action, the San Marcos Air Force Base was renamed the "Gary Air Force Base" on May 10, 1953 until the base's essential closure a decade later.

Soon after his re-election, on Nov. 20, 1964, President Johnson announced the assembly of a Job Corps facility in place of the abandoned base. What had been "Camp Gary" would soon become the "Gary Job Corps Center"—offering 2,200 men and women training in 26 different trades.

SESSOM

A hilly and winding San Marcos favorite. To the novice driver, it can be as scary as it is beautiful.

Not much is known about Michael Sessom's origins before he made his way to Texas in 1822. But sometime after the Tennessee-native arrived in the San Marcos River valley, the former Texas Ranger served as an interpreter

in the Spy Company commanded by Captain Thomas G. McGehee during the Texas Revolution and was a Spanish language-translator between Texians and Mexicans, as well as between Native Americans and whites.

Once his military career officially came to a close, Sessom would go on to become the community's first blacksmith after settling down with his wife, Elizabeth, along the river bottom. His shop was located about one block north of where the county courthouse sits today.

However, the legend behind Sessom extends beyond living a long and fruitful life. Years before his death, the Sessoms' youngest son David, a news dispatcher for the Confederate Army, was captured and murdered after a cedar-chopper named Mayes sold him

out for being a rumored Union Army spy. From there, torn between sorrow and rage, Sessom took matters into his own hands—an act he admitted to while in his final hours.

Hiding out in the brush just shy of morning light, Sessom waited outside of the man's camp who sold his son out and shot Mayes in the chest while he lit his morning fire. Native Americans were blamed for the murder.

LBJ Dr

It used to run directly through the TXST campus but, the quad got a little crowded for street traffic.

For obvious reasons, naming a street and dedicating a museum after Texas State alum Lyndon Baines Johnson, the 36th President of the United States, is perhaps the least the city could do in commemoration for what his livelihood left behind with both the university and community.

As a matter of fact, Johnson was the first recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the TXST Alumni Association in 1959. A few years later on Nov. 22, 1963,

Johnson went from distinguished alum and modest politician to the leader of the free world as he took the oath of office aboard Air Force One, as its four engines powered up for takeoff in light of President Kennedy's assassination earlier that afternoon.

Though, Americans will always pick and choose which legacy to remember Johnson by when it comes to his presidency—whether that be his signature legislations, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Great Society program, or the perhaps preventable landslide into the Vietnam War while upholding President Kennedy's promise to preserve the South Vietnamese government.

Regardless of politics, Lyndon Baines Johnson still remains the only U.S. President to graduate from any university in the Lone Star State.

BURLESON

The street is home to many 100+ year old homes, running through the historic district.

In 1848, State Sen. Edward Burleson—just a few years shy of when he, Merriman and Lindsey laid out the community surrounding the Rio de San Marcos—sponsored a bill while serving in the Texas Senate to establish Hays County, making San Marcos the county seat. He even donated his own previously purchased land for the courthouse to be built upon.

As a teenager, the North Carolina-native served as a private in the War of 1812. In the years leading up to 1841—before Burleson was elected as vice president of the Republic of Texas under Mirabeau B. Lamar—the soldier earned his way through the ranks, and achieved numerous accolades such as a slew of raids against the Comanches and Cherokees, as well as commanding the First Regiment at the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836. Once the skirmish ended, Burleson met Mexican General Juan N. Almonte to accept the leader's sword and the Mexican Army's surrender.

After an unsuccessful bid for the republic's presidency against Anson Jones in 1844, Burleson was elected senator from the 15th District in the First Legislature of the State of Texas the following year, and was unanimously elected president pro tem, too.

HUTCHISON

Like much of downtown, this road is getting a big facelift. The unassuming street will soon be a welcoming walkway for curious visitors and locals.

If it were not for the actions of Major William O. Hutchison (sometimes spelt "Hutchinson"), then the Hays County seat may have moved to Cannonville while San Marcos was still in its nubbility. Before Hutchison earned his local prominence as one of the county's most accomplished early day lawyers,

he served as a Major in the 32nd Texas Cavalry for the Confederate Army, during the Civil War.

Once Hutchison's lengthy legal career was in the wraps, he was eventually elected to the Texas State Senate as a representative of the Populist Party (otherwise known as the People's Party), a political rarity at the time. His platform spoke for the poor farmers throughout the South and sought for a radical form of agrarianism and hostility to banks, railroads and elites in general—or the Party in its entirety stood for those exact representations, at least.

Like the Populist Party just shy of the turn of the twentieth century, though, Hutchison's health faded. He was buried on Valentine's Day 1900.

LINDSEY

Running parallel to Burleson and Hutchison, the old historic neighborhoods are worth admiring on a Sunday afternoon.

Born on May 17, 1801 in Jefferson County, Georgia, William F. Lindsey began his livelihood as a farmer and gold prospector before uprooting his family for the Lone Star state in 1836. Soon after, the prospector met Robert Trimble, eventually leading the professional duo to Galveston Island as surveyors under the authority of the Congress of the Republic of Texas.

But by the summer of 1839, following a relocation to San Antonio the previous year, the 38-year-old, silver-tongued Lindsey—who, by then, was the Bexar County surveyor—sought out Maria Veramendi, the inheritor of the land surrounding the Rio de San Marcos, for the sake of a business proposition.

At the time, the heiress had yet to see the lush slab of nature left by her late father (the city's future site), and a deal was easily agreed upon between Lindsey and Veramendi's husband, Rafael Garza.

Only a year later, a San Antonian named Nathaniel Lewis bought Veramendi and her husband's share—resulting in an eventual sale of Lewis' newly acquired portion to Edward Burleson and Dr. Eli T. Merriman in 1845. From this point on, three of the most prominent figures in San Marcos' early history began to officially collaborate together while raising the settlement's frame.

On Nov. 16, 1852—not even a decade into the community's existence—Lindsey died at the age of 51 and was buried in a local cemetery.

CHARLES AUSTIN

It cuts through the heart of TXST Athletics, connecting Hopkins & Aquarena. Best used for tailgating during baseball games.

As his personal website states, Charles Austin "has achieved a level of success of which most people can only dream." On top of his gold medal finish in the high jump competition during the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia, Austin still maintains the American and Olympic high jump record, two World Championships and nine winning accolades for national track and field competition. That being said, it's hard to argue the point that a better athlete has ever walked Texas State's campus than Austin. Especially considering the adversity he faced while struggling during his first few years competing in the NCAA. By his senior year at SWT, Austin had already surpassed all of the university's high jump records, won the NCAA Outdoor Championship and was ranked as the leading college high jumper in the nation—all while earning his degree in business administration before graduating in 1991.

San Marcos still remains a place to call home for Austin, his wife and their three sons. To boot, he owns So High Sports and Fitness—where he is always looking to use "discipline, self-motivation, dedication and knowledge to help create a positive and rewarding lifestyle for others."

HOPKINS

Once, the main thoroughfare to the Hill Country, it's home to the majority of nightlife downtown and the epicenter for Mardi Gras On The Square.

Desmond Pulaski Hopkins was a jack of several trades: a county official and city councilman, lieutenant in the Texas Cavalry, Hays County district clerk, county commissioner and an amateur historian.

Hopkins originally found his way into San Marcos in June 1855. In reference to his early venture into the community, Hopkins is quoted saying, "Owing to my good looks, I soon obtained a job (in town)—eight dollars a month with board and washing. A job and board and washing always went together."

While holding these various positions, he would also contribute an array of articles on Texas history to several local newspapers, Dallas Herald and San Antonio Express. On Jan. 13, 1918, the San Antonio Express published his diary from 1862, while serving as a Confederate soldier.

Though, in tune with Hopkins' gift for gab, he developed a sense of wisdom recognized by those around him in his later years. Upon retiring, he said, "I also 'blowed' in the brass band three years, but I don't blow any more." For Hopkins, the parade was over.

SMTX

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