

NARRATIVE TEXTS

Scottish Texans

Scots came to Texas as individuals and very small groups of families, not as colonists. Their notable activities and few settlement patterns showed them in the light of rigorous uniqueness rather than the clan-forming reputation known in Europe.

Some of the first Scots in Texas were explorers, mapmakers, and naturalists. Later Scots came as families and developers.

In the 1880s a number of Scottish stonecutters were contracted to make the journey to Texas as a group. Texas granite had been chosen for much of the new state capitol design, and native Scots brought experience with hard stone. Originally hired as strikebreakers themselves, the Scots faced other labor disputes while on the capitol job, but they cut and finished much of the stone for the present building. A few stayed in Texas and added their skills to later construction projects.

From 1890 to 1936, the Matador Land and Cattle Company, operating in the Panhandle and backed with Scottish money, was led by manager Murdo Mackenzie. The Matador herd, 70,000 at its peak, was long regarded as one of the best in the United States.

Beginning just before the start of the 20th century, Texas Scots organized. By 1890 the Universal Order of Scottish Clans had a few lodges in Texas and was well established several decades later. The Scottish Society of Texas, dating from 1963 with a representation of more than 50 clans, holds annual Highland Games. “The Gathering of the Clans” is an often-held competition of field events, piping, and dancing in Salado.

These events, new only to Texas, provide Scottish identity for individuals who otherwise blend easily into Texas culture.



The annual Gathering of the Scottish Clans of Texas, 1971



Scottish stonecutters working on the Texas capitol in Austin, 1880s