



# Dallas to Lubbock: A Deep Map

Presented to the West Texas Historical Association  
Annual Conference, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026

# Why “Dallas to Lubbock”? A very simple origin story

- 2015: Daughter enrolls at TTU
  - I began travelling (speeding) between Dallas and Lubbock
- 2019: After her graduation...
  - I slow down, wise up, look around, learn, tell and re-tell
- Central Challenge
  - Can I bring coherence to the otherwise unrelated people and places along 330 miles of Texas highways?<sup>2</sup>

# What's a "Deep Map"?<sup>1</sup>

- A "vertical" map; goes "deep"
- Social/natural/oral history and ecology of a place as interconnected
- Purposes:
  - Connect and re-connect with a place
  - Honor, protect and preserve a place
  - Demonstrate that any place is 'deep'
    - ...and interesting, meaningful, moral

THE CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED BESTSELLER

# William Least Heat-Moon

Author of *Roads to Quoz* and *Here, There, Elsewhere*

FOREWORD BY BILL McPhee

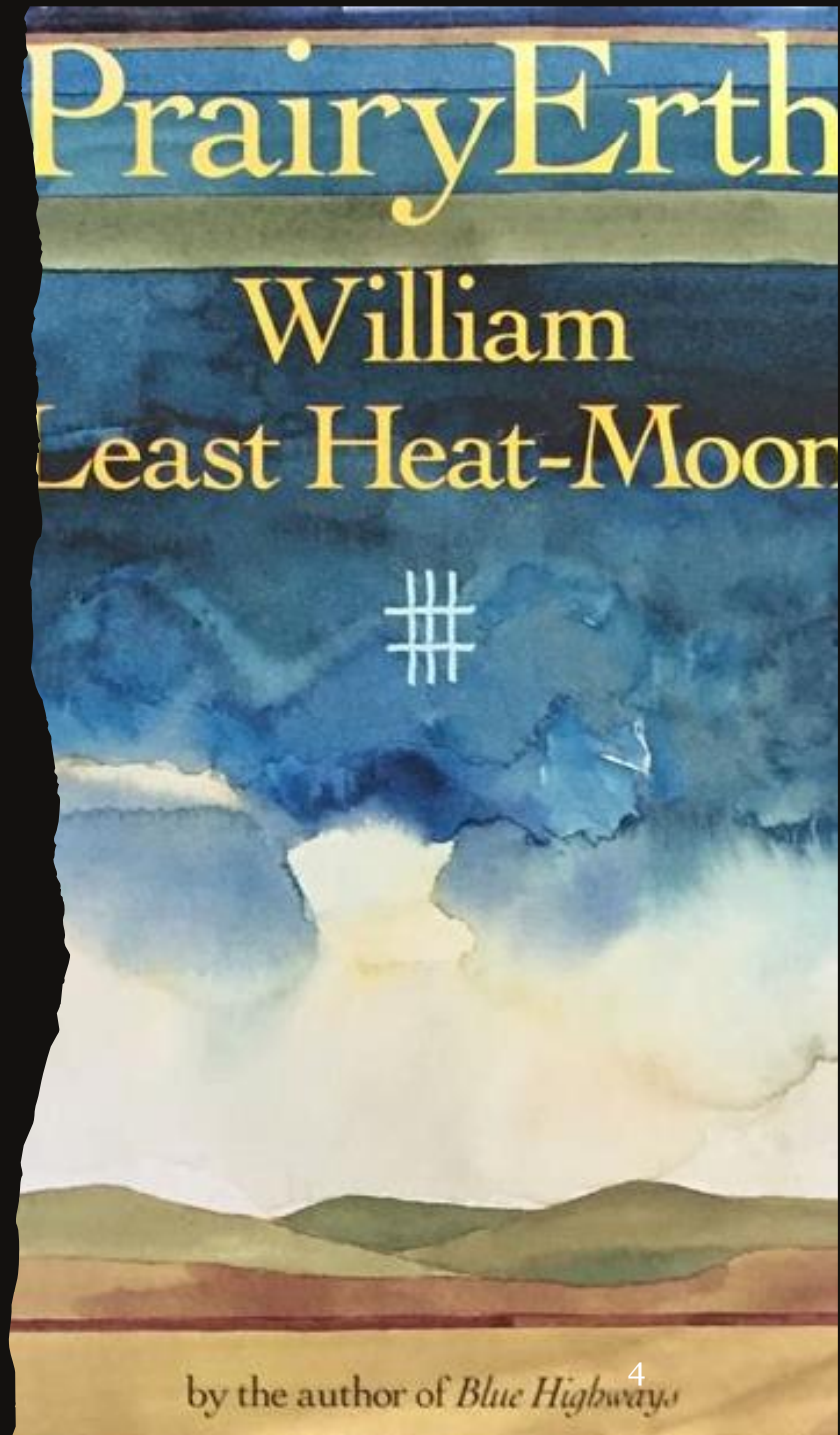
"A stunningly good book"  
—*New York Times Book Review*

# Blue Highways

A Journey into America

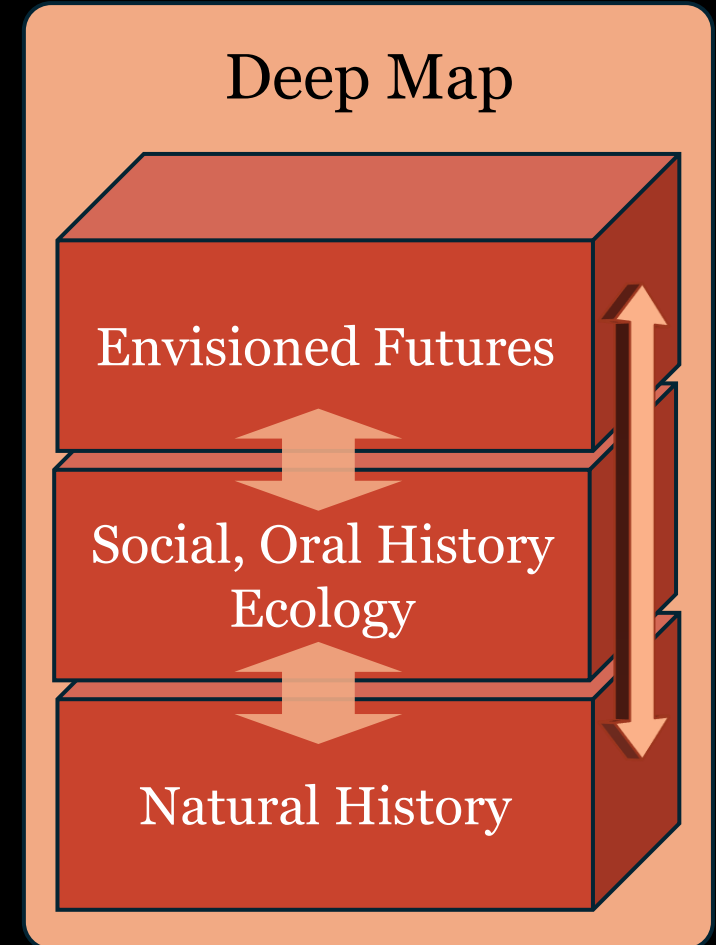
## Inspiration and Precedent

- William Least Heat-Moon (b. 1939)
  - Author
  - Originator of 'deep map' writing
  - *Blue Highways* (1982); *PrairyErth* (1991)
- John McPhee (b. 1931)
  - Author
  - Deep history of the American landscape
  - *Annals of the Former World* (1998; Pulitzer Prize, 1999)
- Studs Terkel (1912-2008)
  - Author; oral historian
  - Ordinary Americans, in their own voices
  - *Working* (1974)



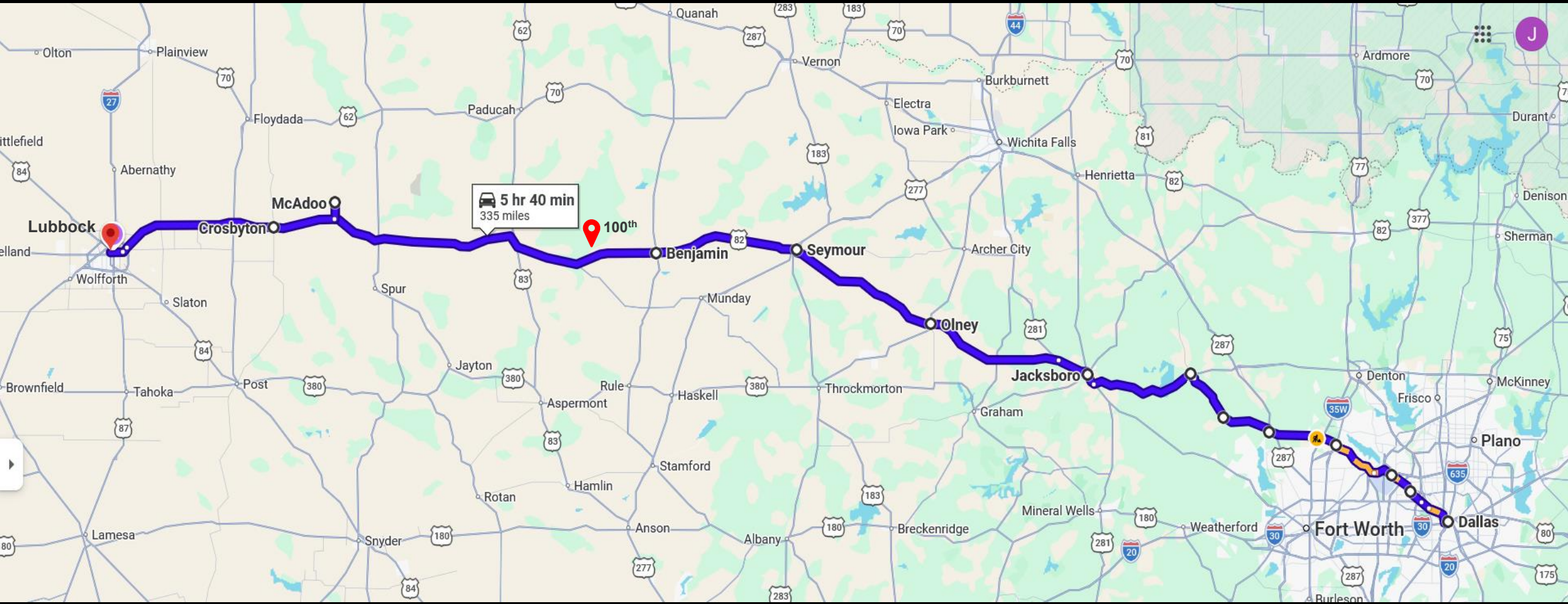
# My version of a deep map

- All the above, and...
- Future(s) of places
- Travel between places
- Thus, for me a deep map is
  - A collection of stories...
  - Of the interconnected past, present and envisioned futures of people and places...
  - And a guide for travelling between them

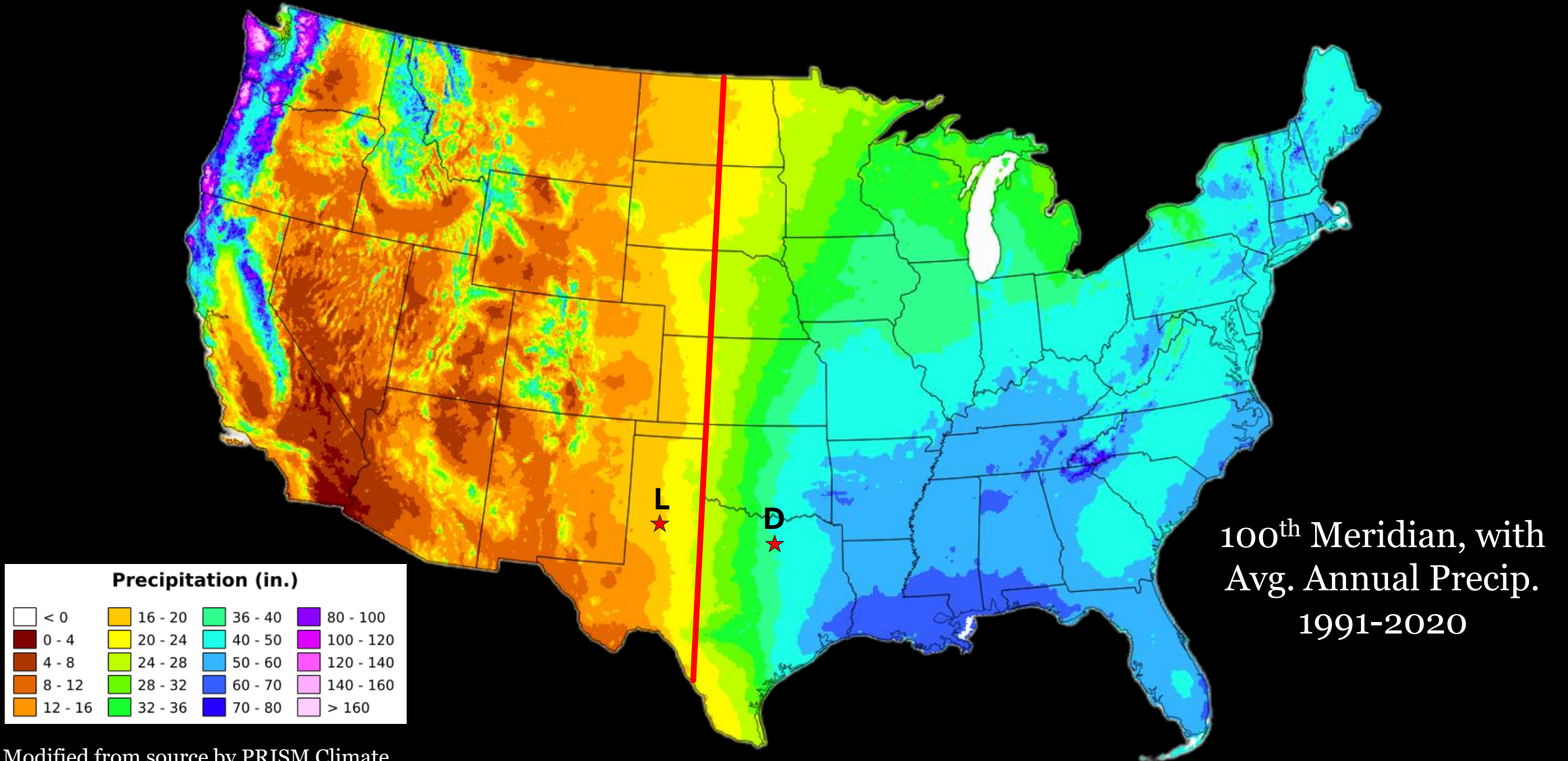




# SH114 - It's the only way to fly



# Crossing the 100<sup>th</sup> Meridian—this alone is sufficient for giving coherence to a journey from Dallas to Lubbock



Modified from source by PRISM Climate Group, Oregon State University

# Travelling from Dallas to Lubbock you will:

- Cross over the 100th meridian
  - With Africa's Sahel, the starkest line of demarcation—of aridity and population density—anywhere on the planet (Seager)
- Go from ~39 inches of annual rainfall to half that
  - From humid subtropical climate (Cfa) to semi-arid (BSk) (NOOA, 2023)
  - Travel through 10 Level-4 Ecoregions (EPA)
- Move from cramped to cozy<sup>3</sup>
  - ~90 ft. from your nearest neighbor in Dallas
  - ~1.2 miles apart in Guthrie
  - ~120 ft. in Lubbock
- Climb from 450 ft. to 3,200 ft.
- Re-trace the paths of some of America's last frontier settlers

# Four topographical chapters of the journey

1. Dallas to Jacksboro—Crossing the Cross Timbers
2. Jacksboro to Seymour—Western Cross Timbers to the Rolling Plains
3. Seymour to Crosbyton—Climbing the Caprock
4. Crosbyton to Lubbock—High Plains Drifting

# Today: Two stops along the way

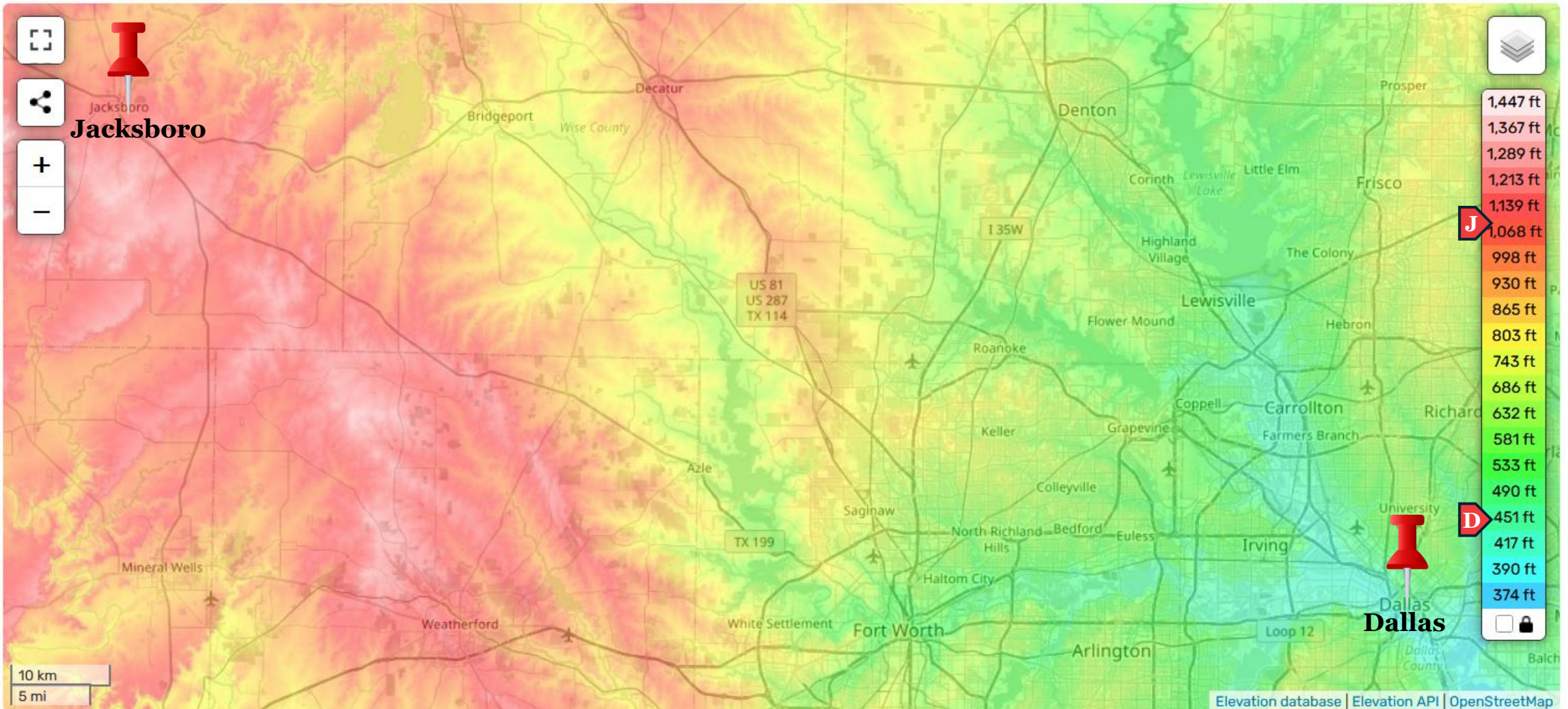
1. Dallas to Jacksboro--Crossing the Cross Timbers
  - Jacksboro
2. Jacksboro to Seymour—Western Cross Timbers to the Rolling Plains
3. Seymour to Crosbyton--Climbing the Caprock
  - Bub Eldredge, McAdoo
4. Crosbyton to Lubbock--High Plains Drifting

# Jacksboro

It's all about the rocks  
(and the trees)



# Travelling from the flatlands of Dallas, the ascent into Jacksboro is a modest but welcome change (~650ft.)



# Sandstone/limestone formations create the ascent

- Older, harder rocks under Jacksboro erode slower
  - Pennsylvanian Period, 300 Ma (BEG, 2026)
- Younger, softer rocks under Dallas erode faster
  - Cretaceous Period, 90Ma (Fisher, 1987)
- After ~40 million years of differential erosion Dallas sits ~650ft. lower than Jacksboro (BEG, 1972)

These same rocks, which lie just below the surface, largely determine the vegetation above<sup>4</sup>

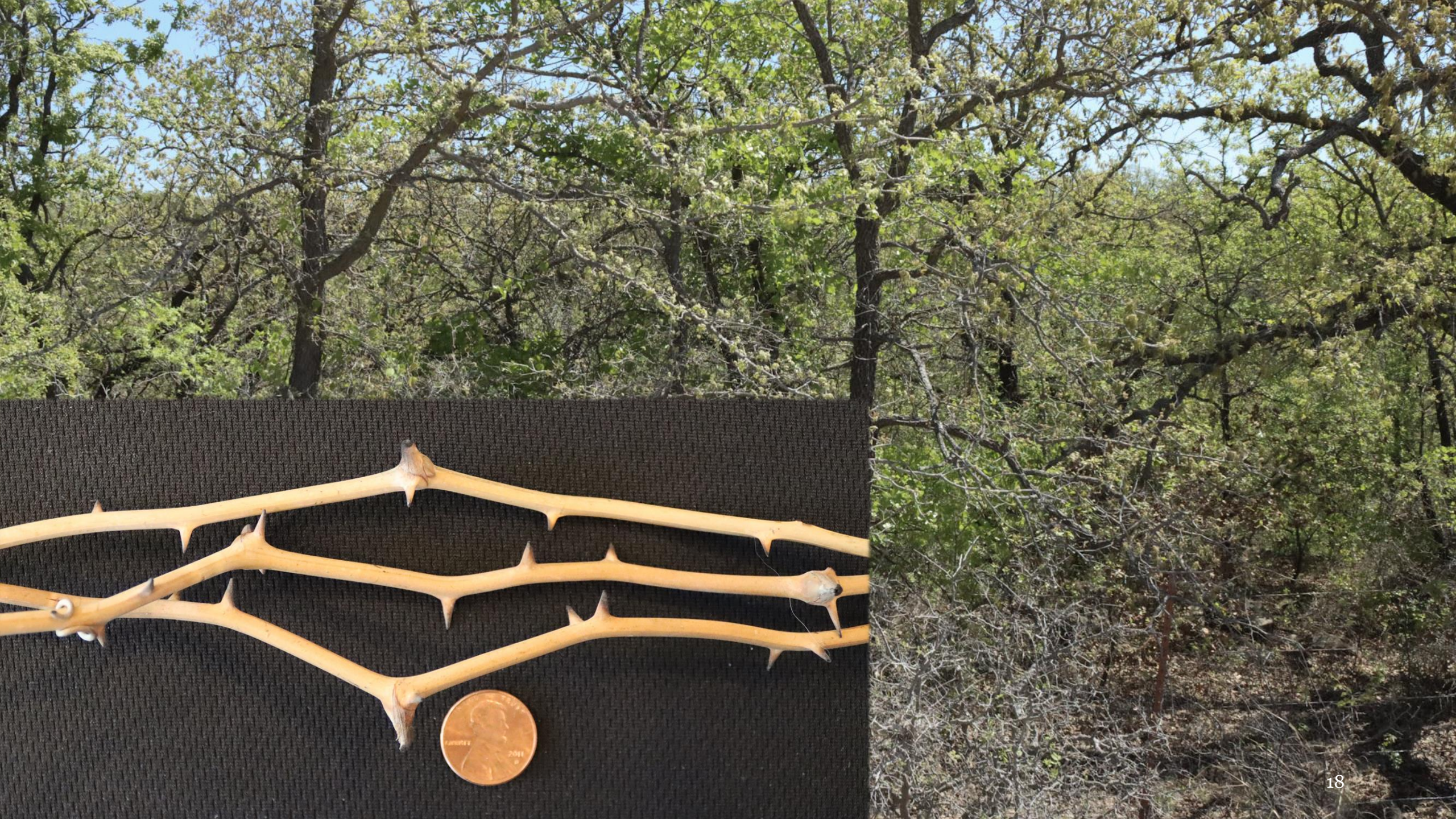
- Western Cross Timbers (WCT)<sup>5</sup>
  - Ancient, slow-growth forests of Blackjack Oak and Post Oak
  - Some Post Oaks 200-300 yrs. old, but only 30 ft. high
  - Multiple trunks per tree, in close proximity
  - Well-suited for thin soil and harsh conditions





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  - Ancient, slow-growth forests of Blackjack Oak and Post Oak
  - Some Post Oaks 200-300 yrs. old, but only 30 ft. high
  - Multiple trunks per tree, in close proximity
  - Well-suited for thin soil and harsh conditions
- Dense understory of tangled vines and briars
  - Also well-suited for thin, acidic soils and partial shade
  - Saw Greenbrier, Virginia Creeper, Mustang Grape, Poison Ivy
- ‘Cast Iron Forest’
  - Tree trunks in close proximity + dense understory = nearly impassible
  - “It was like struggling through forests of cast iron.” Washington Irving, *A Tour on the Prairies*, 1835 (p. 113)



COMMERCE OF THE PRAIRIES:

OR THE

*Journal of a Santa Fé Trader,*

DURING

EIGHT EXPEDITIONS ACROSS

THE GREAT WESTERN PRAIRIES,

AND

A RESIDENCE OF NEARLY NINE YEARS

IN

NORTHERN MEXICO.

Illustrated with Maps and Engravings

BY JOSIAH GREGG.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II

FOURTH EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:

J. W. MOORE, 193 CHESTNUT STREET.

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1849.

Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 1849, Vol. II, p. 199

“The underwood is so matted in many places with grape-vines, green-briars, etc., as to form almost impenetrable ‘roughs,’ which serve as hiding-places for wild beasts, as well as wild Indians; and would, in savage warfare, prove almost as formidable as the hammock of Florida”<sup>6</sup>

# Western Cross Timbers—Important role (actor?) in the history of Jacksboro and the region

- Oldest Post Oaks (300+ yrs) witnessed arrival of first Spanish explorers in 1716 (Francaviglia, 2000, p. 28)
- Major barrier to progress of settlers
- Cover for Indian raiding parties (Robinson, 2016)
  - Warren Wagon Train Massacre in 1871
  - First trial of a Native American Indian in a US Court
- But also, refuge for those same besieged settlers
  - Including survivors of the Warren Massacre, who alerted General Sherman in Fort Richardson, Jacksboro, leading to arrest and trial



# Buried Treasure

- Sandstone/limestone are “reservoir rock”
- Porosity and permeability make them a reservoir for oil and gas trapped thousands of feet below the surface
- Oils & Gas: A mainstay of the Jacksboro economy

The best reservoir rocks are: 1) porous (storage capacity; space within) and 2) permeable (flow capacity; space between)

Photomicrographs of sedimentary rocks



Limestone  
 Porous  
 Permeable



Sandstone (black arrow= flow)  
 Porous  
 Permeable



Limestone (black arrow = flow)  
 Porous  
 Permeable

Bub Eldredge

McAdoo, Texas

- Born in 1938, Bub carries with him almost 80% of the history of McAdoo, founded in 1915
- Principal, McAdoo H.S. ('66 to '85)
- Asst. Coach at McAdoo for three state championship teams ('60, '63, '64)
- Today: Bub manages 1,000 acres of crops and cattle



Bub Eldredge, McAdoo, TX

All this within Bub's lifetime:

- 1938: Battery power (wind-powered charger)
- 1951: Electricity arrives (Dickens Electric Cooperative)
- 2008: McAdoo Wind Farm begins operation
- 2022: Argo begins bitcoin mining in Dickens, TX, near Bub's acreage
- 2024: Galaxy-Helios begins repurposing Dickens facility to AI data processing center



Bub (r) with Coach Fabian "Doc" Lemley, 1955

Can I bring coherence to the otherwise  
unrelated people and places along 330 miles  
of Texas highways?

After a few years of work, the dots are  
beginning to connect!

I'd be honored to hear your story!

Thank you!

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- U.S. Census Bureau, QuickFacts, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts>

# Notes

1. This corresponds generally to the definition of ‘deep map’ according to author William Least Heat-Moon, who coined the term in *PrairyErth* (1991), but the practice has a longer lineage. Wallace Stegner's *Wolf Willow* (1962) and McPhee's geological narratives are regularly cited as precursors, and Bodenhamer, Corrigan, and Harris, in *Deep Maps and Spatial Narratives* (2015), called deep mapping "the essential next step" for humanities scholarship. The concept has also been traced to Clifford Geertz's "thick description" in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) — the idea that understanding a place requires layering context upon context until meaning emerges from the accumulation.
2. Paul Ricoeur, the French philosopher and historian, calls this process ‘configuration.’ It’s the act of taking all the scattered pieces of a journey — the changing land, the shifts in climate, the layered history — and shaping them into a coherent story that has a beginning, middle, and end. You’re actively giving form and meaning to raw experience. At the same time, there’s a caution: if you push the shaping too far, the story can slip into pure fiction and lose its grounding in the actual place and its history. (see References)
3. Calculated from US Census data (see U.S. Census in References)

# Notes

4. In soil science, when soils are thin, the underlying rock — called the parent material — exerts a particularly strong influence on what vegetation can grow. Around Jacksboro, the Pennsylvanian sandstone creates thin, slightly acidic, nutrient-poor soils that drain rapidly and offer limited rooting depth. As Francaviglia notes (2000, p. 18), the correlation between Cross Timbers vegetation and this sandstone was so strong that late-nineteenth-century geologists began using the term “Cross Timbers” for the sandstone formation itself, whether or not the actual forest was present. Because of these harsh soil conditions, only the toughest species — primarily post oak, blackjack oak, elm and hardy vines such as saw greenbrier — are able to thrive here.
5. In the Western Cross Timbers of Texas, post oaks commonly reach 200–300 years of age, while trees over 400 years old are more frequently documented in Oklahoma. Remarkably, these ancient trees often stand only 15 to 30 feet tall. According to the Ancient Cross Timbers Consortium and the University of Arkansas Tree-Ring Laboratory led by David Stahle, even a 200-year-old post oak may be only about 30 feet in height (American Forests 2017; see also Therrell and Stahle, 1998).
6. The 'hammock' Gregg refers to is a dense stand of hardwood trees found within Florida's wetlands. During the Seminole Wars (1817–1858), Seminole warriors used these as natural, hidden fortresses, and a place from which to launch ambush attacks, and to mount their defense against U.S. Army forces (Mahon, 1985)

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- 1 Caprock Escarpment, seen from [Farm to Market Road 669](#), Garza County, Texas. Author: [Leaflet](#). Public Domain.
- 11 Author
- 15-16 Cross Timbers. Photo courtesy of Dr. David Stahle, University of Arkansas Tree-Ring Laboratory. Used by permission.
- 18, 21, 25 Author
- 26 Photographer unknown, 1955

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