

To find your spring's history

Springs often played a major role in the lives of early Native Americans, as well as Spanish explorers and the first European settlers. Your spring might have its own story, including when and how it acquired its name.

You might have a personal story associated with your spring. The story need not be exciting or relevant to Texas history but could be interesting or fun for you and your family. One such story involves a family whose spring was the source of their drinking water. The story goes that one of the sons often went to the spring for a drink in the middle of the night. One dark night he accidentally swallowed a minnow, much to his brother's delight.

You, your children, or child's class could conduct interviews of long-time local residents, family, and former owners to develop a written, video, or oral history of your spring. Be sure to collect old photographs and take new ones.

Archival information on your spring and its history may be available at your county museum, local library, or from your County Historical Commission. Gunnar Brune's book, "Springs of Texas, Volume I," contains historical information about the springs he visited. This is available through Texas A&M University Press or your local library.

For documenting history yourself, the Texas Historical Commission has guidelines on how to collect oral histories. Call (512) 463-6100 and ask for "Fundamentals of Oral History, Texas Preservation Guidelines."

During the latter years of the 19th century in Gillespie County, a woman went to the family's spring to collect drinking water. While she was there, a band of Indians surrounded the cabin but did not disturb anything. Anxious, the woman crawled into the spring cave and stayed there until nightfall when she could safely return home, very wet and very cold.