

**Terrell County Memorial Museum**  
201 W. Mansfield ~ PO Box 7  
Sanderson, Texas 79848 ~ 432-345-2936  
<http://terrellmuseum.info/>

Terrell County has a rich history as represented in the Terrell County Museum. Born as a railroad boomtown and engine servicing terminal with the coming of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1882, it was a shipping point for cattle, sheep and mohair products.

Every bit a Wild West town, Sanderson had a colorful and lurid history before finally becoming the county seat of the new Terrell County in 1905. With a background of outlaws, gambling, bawdy saloons and deadly shoot-outs, the lawless element was banished with the coming of the new sheriff and his tough deputies.

With the criminal element in check, the town was free to become a commercial center, with modern amenities not available in neighboring towns. The addition of a city water system in 1907 and a power generation plant in 1912 allowed the town to blossom in the forbidding Chihuahua Desert of West Texas.

The relatively high wages of the railroadmen and the entrepreneurial spirit of its early businessmen helped create an oasis, drawing many newcomers to the flourishing community. The citizens boasted of having the best hotel and department store between El Paso and San Antonio, and rightly, so. And that, along with pharmacies, auto dealers, milliners, haberdashers, grocery stores, mom-and-pop tiendas, beauty salons, barbershops, a newspaper and full-service printing shop, a contingent of motels, hotels, restaurants, auto service stations and other businesses, made Sanderson and Terrell County a mecca for area shoppers and those seeking a better life.

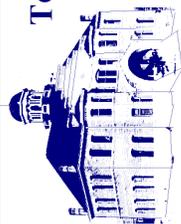
From the beginning of the county in 1905 until the present day, the county has maintained a top-rated school system, with modern facilities and the best staff in every generation. Sanderson has always valued its children and their education, and has made sure that they are properly prepared to make their way in the modern world.

Visit our museum and hear the story of Terrell County in full detail from knowledgeable staff. Visit our museum website, [terrellmuseum.info](http://terrellmuseum.info), and see displays of early photos and research materials. From here you can access our monthly newsletters and newspaper articles which bring the history of Terrell County to life.

**There is much to see and do in Terrell County. Be sure to put the Terrell County Courthouse and Museum in Sanderson, Texas, at the top of your list.**



**Terrell County Courthouse**  
105 East Hackberry  
Sanderson, TX 79848  
432-345-2291



# Terrell County Courthouse



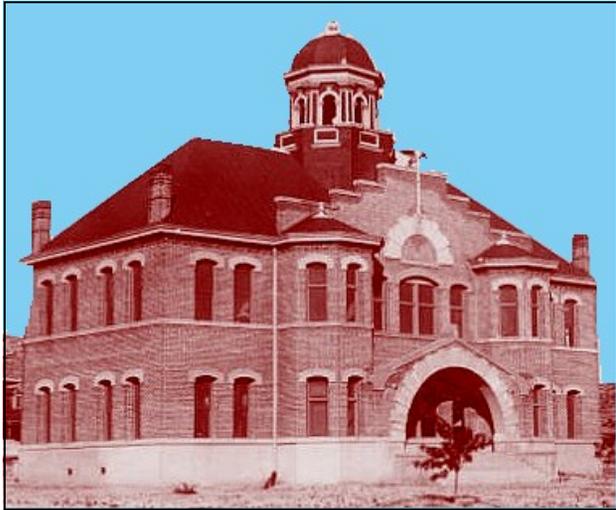
**105 East Hackberry**  
**Sanderson, TX 79848**  
**432-345-2291**

**Hours of Operation**  
**Monday-Friday: 8 to 12 & 1 to 5**  
**<http://co.terrell.tx.us/>**

**Terrell County Memorial Museum**  
**Monday-Thursday: 10 to 12 & 1 to 4**  
**432-345-2936**  
**<http://terrellmuseum.info>**

# Terrell County Courthouse

The Terrell County Courthouse in Sanderson, Texas, began life in 1906 as a completely different building from what is seen today. The original building was designed by architect Henry T. Phelps in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The district courtroom upstairs featured a paneled dome over the judge's bench,



with marvelous woodwork throughout. The building was equipped with the latest equipment, much of which is now in the county museum.

The fledgling county was served well by this imposing edifice, but by the late 1920s it was evident that the building was too small, and worse, in dilapidated condition. In 1930, choosing to go with a completely different style, the old building was demolished and replaced by a new one, using new materials and the best of salvageable materials from the old. Done in a modified Mediterranean style, the



new building was markedly different from the old.

In addition to demolishing the old courthouse, the old jail, which was a foreboding structure adjacent to the courthouse, was also removed and a third-floor addition was created for the jail and sheriff's office, atop the new courthouse.

The new building served through the war years and the 1950s. In the 1960s and '70s, with the advent of new heating and cooling systems and advanced communications, the courthouse was in need of modernization. The sheriff's office and jail had outgrown their quarters on the third floor, and it was time for a change.

In 1983, a major renovation was completed, moving law enforcement from the third floor into a new annex on the north side of the building. The third floor jail was removed and a hipped roof with Spanish terra cotta tile was added to give the building a true Mediterranean appearance. The Terrell County Courthouse is the only courthouse in the state of Texas constructed in this style.

Features inside the core building remain much as they were originally designed. The Clerk's, Treasurer's and Tax Offices have vaults with heavy ornate doors and metal shutters inside to protect against cataclysm. Most of the offices have

transoms over their doors, though now blocked and sealed, with original control mechanisms in place. The building was the pride of its citizenry and a handsome addition to the town.

In 2010, the Texas Historical Commission contacted Terrell County about renovating one more time, to restore the courthouse to its original, 1906 appearance. After a visit by the state architect, it was deemed too expensive to mount that kind of project with the funds available. The THC has been very successful at doing courthouse restorations in Texas, but in our case, to return the building to its former appearance would require totally demolishing the present structure and building anew using the old plans and historically correct materials.

So, blessed with good bones and a strong foundation, we shall sit tight, well able to go into the next century as the seat of government for the Cactus Capitol of Texas.

