

About Polk County



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POLK COUNTY. Polk County (J-22) is in the East Texas Timberlands region on the east bank of the Trinity River. Its geographical center is at 94°50' north latitude and 30°49' west longitude. The county seat, Livingston, straddles U.S. highways 59 and 190 about seventy-six miles northeast of Houston. The county comprises 1,061 square miles, ranging in elevation from 100 to 300 feet. The land gently rolls in the north and has light-colored, loamy surfaces and deep, reddish clay subsoils. To the south the topography is more level, with acidic, sandy to loamy surfaces and deep, reddish loam or clay subsoils. Along the Trinity River the soils are dark with loamy surfaces and cracking clay subsoils. Marine deposits indicate that the region was once under the sea. Pine and hardwood forests cover much of the area, but nearly 40 percent of the county is considered prime farmland. The Neches and Trinity rivers border the county, which is drained by seven primary streams: Menard, Sally, Tombigbee, Big Sandy, Long King, Piney, and Kickapoo creeks. Lake Livingston,^{qv} a man-made reservoir on the Trinity River, covers 82,600 acres. The average annual temperature is 67° F. Precipitation averages forty-eight inches annually, and the growing season lasts 250 days.

Before European settlement, Polk County was inhabited by the Hasinai Indians, a loose alliance of Caddo descent. The Alabama and Coushatta Indians crossed into the Big Thicket,^{qv} which covered much of the region, from Louisiana in the late eighteenth century. Unlike the Hasinai, they remained in the county, living on land given to them by the state of Texas in 1854. The Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation, enlarged by the federal government in 1928, is east of Livingston on U.S. Highway 190. Three streams in Polk County bear the names of Coushatta chiefs—Long King, Long Tom, and Tempe.^{qv} A third group, the Pakana Muskogees, of Creek descent, settled in Polk County in 1834; many moved to Oklahoma in 1899, and the remainder have joined the Alabama-Coushatta Indians.^{qv} The Big Thicket discouraged European settlement. Although the region now called Polk County was included in a vast royal land grant to Pánfilo de Narváez^{qv} as early as 1529, the Spanish largely neglected the area. A few roads following Indian trails were completed through the district, but no settlers came. About 100 American and Hispanic families received land grants from various empresarios and companies between 1831 and 1834, but few actually settled the land. The census of 1834 recorded only seven families in the Trinity River settlement of Smithfield (*see* ACE, TEXAS).

Polk County, named after President James K. Polk, was one of twenty-three counties formed by the first state legislature of Texas in 1846. The boundaries established on March 30 closely followed those of the old northern division of Liberty Municipality, a subdivision of the Department of Nacogdoches established by the Mexican government in 1830. On August 13, 1870, the part of Polk County west of the Trinity became San Jacinto County. The present area of Polk County was fixed on March 11, 1875, when a portion of Trinity County was annexed. Livingston, formerly Springfield, was selected by a vote as the county seat in 1846, and the first commissioners' court met there in September. The town is still the county seat. The new county filled rapidly with American settlers between 1835 and 1860. The first communities were concentrated on the Trinity River, but others quickly appeared along the primary creeks. Important pioneers include Pierre J. Menard,^{qv} who represented Liberty Municipality in the Consultation^{qv} at San Felipe, and George T. Wood,^{qv} governor of Texas from 1847 to 1849.

Plantations dominated the county economically and politically before the Civil War.^{qv} The population of the county in 1860 was 8,300, with a slave majority of 4,198. The county produced 9,307 bales of cotton in 1859. Polk County supported Hardin R. Runnels against Sam Houston^{qv} in 1859, then returned an overwhelming majority for presidential candidate John C. Breckinridge in 1860 and secession^{qv} in 1861. Eight companies from Polk County served the Confederacy, including an Indian unit led by planter and Confederate major Alexander Hamilton Washington.^{qv} Because it had been dependent on the plantation system the county was economically fragmented after the war. The number of farms nearly doubled, while the population stayed about the same and agricultural production decreased sharply. The corn crop declined by 30 percent between 1859 and 1869, and cotton exports in the same period

fell by half. Antebellum corn production was not equaled again until 1900, and cotton not until 1940. Cattle and hogs were a third fewer in 1869 than in 1859, but livestock, including mules, horses, and sheep, became a source of steady income through the turn of the century. The average value of a farm including land and buildings plummeted between 1859 and 1869 from \$7,377 to \$501 and stayed low long after the turn of the century; in 1929 a total of 2,300 farms in Polk County averaged \$1,911 in value.

The population of Polk County grew steadily from 1880 to 1940, when it peaked at 20,635, then declined sharply until 1960, when it bottomed at 16,194. The trend then reversed once more, and by 1980 the population increased by half, to 24,407. The number of white inhabitants, a majority since 1870, closely follows the pattern for total population. The nonwhite population, primarily African Americans,^{qv} decreased by almost 40 percent with the formation of San Jacinto County, but increased again until 1940 before declining gradually to 3,861 in 1980 and 3,896 in 1990. The Indians resident in Polk County have remained only a few hundred in number. There are no large towns within the county; of the incorporated areas, Livingston increased from 1,851 inhabitants in 1940 to 5,019 by 1990, when Corrigan had 1,794 residents, Onalaska 728, Goodrich 239, and Seven Oaks 171.

Despite an overall increase in rural population, agriculture has played an increasingly minor role in the economy of Polk County. From a peak in 1929 of 2,300 farms employing 3,191 people, the number of active farming operations fell to 456 in 1978 before recovering to 530 employing less than 200 in 1982. No cotton production has been reported since 1969, and only 3,518 bushels of corn were grown in 1982. Cattle remained a steady enterprise, with 18,894 recorded in 1982, but hogs and sheep practically vanished after World War II.^{qv} Horses and mules were numerous at the turn of the century, but in 1982 only 619 horses, and no mules, were found in the county. Products such as wool, sugar, molasses, and sweet potatoes, common in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, were no longer cultivated; instead, many farms lay fallow or grew hay, 16,380 tons of which was produced in 1981. In 1990 the production of peaches, blueberries, and vegetables was becoming significant.

Lumber production occupies much of the land in Polk County. In the twentieth century the value of the lumber industry^{qv} increased remarkably. The greatest increase came after World War II, but the lumber boom helped ease the impact of the Great Depression^{qv} on the county. Although agricultural employment decreased, jobs in the timber and related service industries doubled between 1930 and 1940. Manufactures, mostly lumber, totaled \$859,657 in value in 1900, then \$2.9 million in 1939; by 1977 the timber industry in Polk County produced \$64.4 million in manufactures and employed almost 1,000 people. The rise in timber prices contributed greatly to the appreciation of land values; in 1982 only 9 percent of the available farmland was cultivated, but farmsteads averaged \$264,994 in value, despite a mean size of only 305 acres. In 1990 Polk County was the leading Texas county in lumber products and Christmas trees. The county also yields some oil and gas: 703,007 barrels of crude oil and 1.8 billion cubic feet of gas-well gas were produced in 1982; crude production in 1990 was 1,256,622 barrels.

Development of industry in Polk County was facilitated by a great improvement in transportation. Early commerce depended on a few roads or the Trinity River; by 1841 Drew's Landing and Smithfield were busy shipping points. The Houston, East and West Texas Railway was completed north across Polk County in 1881, and the tracks have been used by the Southern Pacific since 1961. Many small lines, such as the Moscow, Camden and San Augustine, were built by lumber companies during the timber boom, but most have been abandoned. The Trinity and Sabine established Corrigan in 1881, then became part of an east-west line of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas across the county in 1884. The Waco, Beaumont, Trinity and Sabine acquired the line in 1923, along with the Beaumont and Great Northern, first completed through Onalaska to Livingston in 1908. The rails from Corrigan east were abandoned in 1936, and from Livingston west in 1949, but, by the end of World War II, U.S. highways 59 and 287, through Livingston and Corrigan, were paved, and U.S. 190 from Livingston to Woodville, in neighboring Tyler County, was hard-surfaced by 1949. Only 2,551 motor vehicles were registered in Polk County in 1944; in 1990 the total of 28,311 reflected the effect of highway development^{qv} in the county.

Polk County developed its utilities during the period of increasing population between 1880 and 1940. The Livingston Telephone Company was organized on August 3, 1903, with forty telephones in service. Several private and municipal companies provided phone service to the county in the 1980s. The Livingston Power Plant began providing electricity at night in 1905 from a small wood-fired steam engine. Several local businessmen purchased the plant in 1907 and initiated daylight service in 1909. The Livingston Municipal Light Department still operates, but most rural households get electricity from Gulf States Utilities or Texas Power and Light Company. Entex, Incorporated, sells natural gas to county residents.

Education in the county began in 1843, when the Masons in Swartwout allowed their lodge to be used for a schoolhouse; they reopened the school when they moved to Livingston in 1849. Other areas of the county had such private schools until public schools were begun. In 1982 Polk County had six school districts with six elementary, two middle, and five high schools. Only 14.6 percent of the inhabitants over the age of twenty-four had finished high school in 1950, but by 1980 the figure had improved to 46 percent. The county has two newspapers, the *Corrigan Times* and the *Polk County Enterprise*. The parent

publication of the *Enterprise* was the *East Texas Pinery*, originally printed in Moscow in 1881. The *Enterprise* is now published in Livingston, where the first newspaper in the county, the *Rising Sun*, began in 1858. In 1980 the majority of the fifty-nine churches in the county were Southern Baptist, Baptist Missionary, and United Methodist. The county was voted dry in 1908, and liquor is still prohibited in some precincts.

Politics in Polk County remained Democratic from Reconstruction^{qv} to the 1950s. The county voted for Edmund J. Davis,^{qv} Radical Republican candidate for governor, in 1869, but repudiated that vote by supporting Richard Coke,^{qv} a Democrat, for governor in 1873. San Jacinto County, where most of Polk County's freedmen lived, separated from Polk County in 1870, and with it went most Republican support. A clear measure of the impact on the Polk County electorate is that the minority vote against Davis in 1869 equals almost exactly the majority returned against Republican Ulysses S. Grant in 1872. From 1956 through 1992, the county has supported only three Republican candidates for president: Dwight D. Eisenhower^{qv} in 1956, Richard Nixon in 1972, and Ronald Reagan in 1984. Edwin P. Hobby,^{qv} a native of Moscow, was governor of Texas from 1917 to 1921.

Polk County remains predominantly rural, but timber rather than agriculture has become the main enterprise. Rural inhabitants increased three times faster than urban residents within the county between 1970 and 1980, when 80 percent of the population lived in unincorporated areas. The lumber and related service industries absorb the greater part of the new work force. Polk County led the state for timber production with 38.4 million cubic feet, mostly pine, in 1981, but the next year was 218th among the 254 Texas counties in agricultural production. In 1990 Polk County had a population of 30,687.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Emma Haynes, *The History of Polk County* (MS, Sam Houston Regional Library, Liberty, Texas, 1937; rev. 1968). *History of Polk County* (2 vols., Livingston, Texas: Keen Printing, 1968). *A Pictorial History of Polk County, Texas, 1846-1910* (Livingston, Texas: Polk County Bicentennial Commission, 1976; rev. ed. 1978).

Richard B. McCaslin

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Comments to: comments.tsha@lib.utexas.edu

Eleven fire departments have the county covered:

Big Thicket	685-4455
Corrigan	398-2551
Goodrich	365-2121
Holiday Lakes	365-3131
Indian Reservation	563-4700
Indian Springs	563-4747
Livingston	327-4411
Onalaska	646-5111
Scenic Loop	566-4555

Segno	685-7195
South Polk County	685-7115



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County Profile Page

Polk County

County Courthouse / 100 West Church Street / Livingston, TX 77351-3290

(409) 327-8113 FAX: (409) 327-8113

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State Legislators	Primary/Secondary Schools	Census Quickfacts
County Commissioners	Post Secondary Schools	EPA County Map
Zipcode Lists/Contribution Links	Law Enforcement Agencies	
Political Graveyard	Courts	
	Local Media	

Population Summary								
07/01/98	07/01/97	07/01/96	07/01/95	07/01/94	07/01/93	07/01/92	07/01/91	90 Census
50,309	47,560	44,838	42,474	37,256	35,311	33,374	31,844	30,855

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- **Elected Officials** - these links take you to list of the elected officials who represent the county. The campaign contributions permit you to identify the individuals in the county who are active in the political process. The Political Graveyards lets you find out if any famous politicians are lying around.
- **Local Entities** - if the county has a homepage, the first link takes you to it. The other links provide lists of other local entities. These lists, in turn, have links to information about the entities.
- **Demographic Information** - these links provide you access to different sets of government information on the county. They includes charts, table, reports and maps.

Thursday April 11, 2002 at 18:45

For further information, contact the Webmaster ... webmaster@capitolimpact.com

Wednesday, November 29, 2000



Polk County, Texas



 [TXGenWeb Genealogy Project](#)  [USGenWeb Genealogy Project](#)

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Welcome to the **Polk County, Texas** USGenWeb Project Genealogy site. We adopted this site as part of the TXGenWeb Project. It is our goal to provide you with a great source for genealogical information on **Polk County, Texas**, so continue to visit our site on a regular basis and watch us grow. If you would like to volunteer to assist in some way, please [email](#) us for information.

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- [San Jacinto County, TXGenWeb](#)
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- [Tyler County, TXGenWeb](#)
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Check out the new message board!



Polk County Resource Information

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- [USGenWeb Census Project for Texas](#)

NEW! FREE Searchable Texas Records

Texas Death Records (1964-1998)	Texas Birth General Records (1926-1949)
Texas Divorce Records (1968-1997)	World War I Civilian Draft Registration
Texas Birth Summary Records (1950-1995)	Texas Marriage Records (1966-1997)



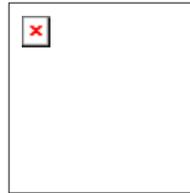
Enter or search for your ancestor's migration route to Polk County, TX.



Enter your ancestor's war history.



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The TXGenWeb Genealogy Project

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Butterflies of North America

Butterflies of Polk County, Texas

Species denoted with an asterisk (*) are unconfirmed or dubious records.

Swallowtails (Family Papilionidae)

Swallowtails (Subfamily Papilioninae)

- [Pipevine Swallowtail](#) -- (*Battus philenor*)
- [Zebra Swallowtail](#) -- (*Eurytides marcellus*)
- [Black Swallowtail](#) -- (*Papilio polyxenes*)

- [Giant Swallowtail](#) -- (*Papilio cresphontes*)
 - [Eastern Tiger Swallowtail](#) -- (*Papilio glaucus*)
 - [Spicebush Swallowtail](#) -- (*Papilio troilus*)
 - [Palamedes Swallowtail](#) -- (*Papilio palamedes*)
-

Whites and Sulphurs (Family Pieridae)

Whites (Subfamily Pierinae)

- [Checkered White](#) -- (*Pontia protodice*)
- [Cabbage White](#) -- (*Pieris rapae*)
- [Falcate Orangetip](#) -- (*Anthocharis midea*)

Sulphurs (Subfamily Coliadinae)

- [Orange Sulphur](#) -- (*Colias eurytheme*)
 - [Cloudless Sulphur](#) -- (*Phoebis sennae*)
 - [Large Orange Sulphur](#) -- (*Phoebis agarithe*)
 - [Little Yellow](#) -- (*Eurema lisa*)
 - [Sleepy Orange](#) -- (*Eurema nicippe*)
 - [Dainty Sulphur](#) -- (*Nathalis iole*)
-

Gossamer-wing Butterflies (Family Lycaenidae)

Harvesters (Subfamily Miletinae)

- [Harvester](#) -- (*Feniseca tarquinius*)

Hairstreaks (Subfamily Theclinae)

- [Banded Hairstreak](#) -- (*Satyrium calanus*)
- [Southern Hairstreak](#) -- (*Fixsenia favonius*)
- [Frosted Elfin](#) -- (*Callophrys [Incisalia] irus*)
- [Henry's Elfin](#) -- (*Callophrys [Incisalia] henrici*)
- [Eastern Pine Elfin](#) -- (*Callophrys [Incisalia] nippon*)
- [Gray Hairstreak](#) -- (*Strymon melinus*)
- [Red-banded Hairstreak](#) -- (*Calycopis cecrops*)
- [Dusky-blue Groundstreak](#) -- (*Calycopis isobeon*)

Blues (Subfamily Polyommatainae)

- [Western Pygmy-Blue](#) -- (*Brephidium exile*)
 - [Eastern Tailed-Blue](#) -- (*Everes comyntas*)
 - [Spring Azure](#) -- (*Celastrina "ladon"*)
 - [Summer Azure](#) -- (*Celastrina neglecta*)
-

Brush-footed Butterflies (Family Nymphalidae)

Snouts (Subfamily Libytheinae)

- [American Snout](#) -- (*Libytheana carinenta*)

Heliconians and Fritillaries (Subfamily Heliconiinae)

- [Gulf Fritillary](#) -- (*Agraulis vanillae*)
- [Variegated Fritillary](#) -- (*Euptoieta claudia*)

True Brush-foots (Subfamily Nymphalinae)

- [Silvery Checkerspot](#) -- (*Chlosyne nycteis*)
- [Phaon Crescent](#) -- (*Phyciodes phaon*)
- [Pearl Crescent](#) -- (*Phyciodes tharos*)
- [Question Mark](#) -- (*Polygonia interrogationis*)
- [Eastern Comma](#) -- (*Polygonia comma*)
- [Mourning Cloak](#) -- (*Nymphalis antiopa*)
- [American Lady](#) -- (*Vanessa virginiensis*)
- [Painted Lady](#) -- (*Vanessa cardui*)
- [Red Admiral](#) -- (*Vanessa atalanta*)
- [Common Buckeye](#) -- (*Junonia coenia*)

Admirals and Relatives (Subfamily Limenitidinae)

- [Red-spotted Purple](#) -- (*Limenitis arthemis*)
- ['Astyanax' Red-spotted Purple](#) -- (*Limenitis arthemis astyanax* (incl. *arizonensis*))
- [Viceroy](#) -- (*Limenitis archippus*)

Leafwings (Subfamily Charaxinae)

- [Goatweed Leafwing](#) -- (*Anaea andria*)

Emperors (Subfamily Apaturinae)

- [Hackberry Emperor](#) -- (*Asterocampa celtis*)

Satyrs (Subfamily Satyrinae)

- [Southern Pearly Eye](#) -- (*Enodia portlandia*)
- [Creole Pearly Eye](#) -- (*Enodia creola*)
- [Gemmed Satyr](#) -- (*Cyllopsis gemma*)
- [Carolina Satyr](#) -- (*Hermeuptychia sosybius*)
- [Little Wood Satyr](#) -- (*Megisto cymela*)

Monarchs (Subfamily Danainae)

- [Monarch](#) -- (*Danaus plexippus*)
-

Skippers (Family Hesperidae)

Spread-wing Skippers (Subfamily Pyrginae)

- [Silver-spotted Skipper](#) -- (*Epargyreus clarus* (incl. *huachuca*))
- [Hoary Edge](#) -- (*Achalarus lyciades*)
- [Northern Cloudywing](#) -- (*Thorybes pylades*)
- [Confusing Cloudywing](#) -- (*Thorybes confusis*)
- [False Duskywing](#) -- (*Gesta invisus*)
- [Juvenal's Duskywing](#) -- (*Erynnis juvenalis*)
- [Horace's Duskywing](#) -- (*Erynnis horatius*)
- [Funereal Duskywing](#) -- (*Erynnis funeralis*)
- [Wild Indigo Duskywing](#) -- (*Erynnis baptisiae*)
- [Common Checkered-Skipper](#) -- (*Pyrgus communis*)
- [Tropical Checkered-Skipper](#) -- (*Pyrgus oileus*)

Grass Skippers (Subfamily Hesperinae)

- [Swarthy Skipper](#) -- (*Nastra lherminier*)
 - [Clouded Skipper](#) -- (*Lerema accius*)
 - [Least Skipper](#) -- (*Ancyloxypha numitor*)
 - [Southern Skipperling](#) -- (*Copaeodes minima*)
 - [Fiery Skipper](#) -- (*Hylephila phyleus*)
 - [Whirlabout](#) -- (*Polites vibex*)
 - [Southern Broken-Dash](#) -- (*Wallengrenia otho*)
 - [Northern Broken-Dash](#) -- (*Wallengrenia egeremet*)
 - [Sachem](#) -- (*Atalopedes campestris*)
 - [Delaware Skipper](#) -- (*Anatrytone logan* (=delaware))
 - [Yehl Skipper](#) -- (*Poanes yehl*)
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 - [Common Roadside-Skipper](#) -- (*Amblyscirtes vialis*)
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 - [Ocola Skipper](#) -- (*Panoquina ocola*)
-

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Polk County Texas

Named for [James K. Polk \(1795-1849\)](#)

Polk County information:

- Population: **41,133** (2000); **30,687** (1990)
- Land area **1,057** square miles.
- County seat: **Livingston**
- [Capital Impact Gateway: Polk County](#) -- officials, addresses, and political, economic, education data
- [Census Bureau: Polk County](#) -- Tiger map, demographic data
- [Community Health Status Indicators: Polk County](#) -- statistics and reports from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration.
- [Polk County TXGenWeb page](#) -- genealogical, historical information and queries
(if this link doesn't work, find the new one through the [USGenWeb national site](#)).

Neighboring areas:

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The Political Graveyard:

- [Cemeteries and Memorial Sites of Politicians in Polk County](#)

Important Notes: Please Read!

1. This web site is about U.S. political history and cemeteries. For convenient presentation of this material, the site includes a page for each of the more than 3,000 counties in the U.S., as well as for various U.S. and foreign territories and countries. The Political Graveyard has no official connection with any of those areas or governments. For more information about this project, please see the [Main Page](#).
2. The list of cemeteries here is **not** comprehensive, nor is it intended to be. This site only lists about 5,000 cemeteries *where politicians are known to have been buried* (the number grows gradually as more research is done). There are an estimated **250,000** cemeteries in the United States. The closest thing to a complete list is the U.S. Geological Survey's [GNIS database](#), which lists about 109,000 cemeteries.

See also [Interment.Net](#)(Cemetery Records Online), which has collected millions of interment records from thousands of cemeteries.

3. Assignment of birthplaces, deathplaces, and cemeteries to counties is subject to error. The intent is to locate places according to current county names and boundaries. If you don't find what you're looking for, check other nearby counties, the [unassigned](#) page, or the [Gazetteer](#). Any corrections to county locations would be greatly appreciated. See contact information on the [Main Page](#).

Cemeteries and Memorial Sites of Politicians in Polk County

- [Segno Magnolia Cemetery](#)

Magnolia Cemetery

Segno, Polk County, Texas

Politicians buried here:

- **Henry W. Augustine** Served in the Texas Army during the Texas War of Independence; member of [Texas Republic Senate](#), 1837; member of [Texas Republic House of Representatives](#), 1840-41. In 1838, while commanding a company of the Texas Army in the Cherokee War, received an arrow wound in the leg which necessitated an amputation at the knee; the Congress of the Texas Republic, by special act, gave him a wooden leg. Interment at Magnolia Cemetery.

Go to [The Political Graveyard main page](#).



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Links to this or any other page are welcome, but specific page addresses may sometimes change as the site develops.

The Political Graveyard is created and maintained by Lawrence Kestenbaum, of Ann Arbor, Michigan (see [main page](#) for contact information). Web hosting is provided by Paul Haas, of Ypsilanti, Michigan. The site opened on July 1, 1996; the last full revision was done on May 13, 2001.

