

# Dolph Briscoe Center for American History

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The Briscoe Center for American History is one of the nation's leading research centers for historical study. The center's archives, libraries, museums, and historic buildings are part of the the University of Texas at Austin's commitment to collecting, preserving, and making available the evidence of the past. The Briscoe Center promotes the university's teaching and research mission through classes and seminars, academic fellowships, faculty collaborations, and student internships. The center fosters public exploration of history through research services, exhibits, books, public programs, and digital humanities projects inspired by archival holdings.

The Office of the Director of the Briscoe Center is located in the Arno Nowotny Building, the oldest building on the Austin campus. The Briscoe Center has four additional divisions, each serving a unique purpose.

- The [Research and Collections Division](#) is located in Sid Richardson Hall Unit 2, on the main campus of the University. It is the Briscoe Center's main research facility and the repository for most of the Briscoe Center's book, manuscript, map, newspaper, photographic, sound, and ephemera collections. After a comprehensive renovation of its public spaces on the university campus in 2017, the Sid Richardson Hall location includes a first-class reading room for research; three exhibit galleries; and two classrooms for a variety of public and academic programs such as lectures, panel discussions, symposia, book talks, and film screenings. The Military History Institute, also located in Sid Richardson Hall, is an educational outreach and archival program.
- The [Sam Rayburn Museum](#) documents the life and career of former Texas congressman and Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Sam Rayburn (1882–1961). It is located in Rayburn's hometown of Bonham in northeast Texas.
- The [Briscoe-Garner Museum](#) in Uvalde, Texas, is dedicated to the remarkable lives of John Nance "Cactus Jack" Garner and Dolph Briscoe, both Uvalde natives and historically important political figures from Texas.
- [Winedale](#) is a complex of historical structures and modern facilities situated on 225 acres near Round Top, Texas. Winedale's mission is to foster an understanding of Texas history, culture, and native plants and landscapes through research, teaching, and public service.

The Briscoe Center's Texas history archives have no peer in size, quality, and diversity. Within its collections, the Briscoe Center has primary sources—documents, records, newspapers, photographs, maps, and oral histories—of great breadth and depth on almost all subjects related to the story of Texas. The Briscoe Center's Texana library of rare and scarce books on the history of Texas is the largest and most valuable collection of its kind. The Briscoe Center is also one of the nation's leading research centers for Southern history. Its Southern history holdings include the Littlefield Southern History Collection, the Natchez Trace Collection, the Parsons Collection on the Louisiana Purchase, and the Pugh Plantation (Louisiana) Archive.

The Briscoe Center has the largest congressional and political history collection outside Washington, D.C., with a special focus on Texas congressional and gubernatorial papers.

The Briscoe Center's photography holdings include the largest collection of photographs of the United States presidency outside Washington, D.C., as well as the largest existing collection of photographs of Martin Luther King, Jr. The Briscoe Center owns more than eight million

photographic images from the late 1840s to the present, including the Alamo daguerreotype, the oldest datable photograph taken in Texas. The collections place special emphasis on the archives of leading photojournalists.

The Briscoe Center is also one of the leading institutions in the United States for the study of news media history. Collections include the papers of media professionals (including Walter Cronkite, Dominick Dunne, Robert Trout, Morley Safer, Andy Rooney, and Harry Reasoner), the research archives of media industry leaders, and one of the largest newspaper collections in the United States, with original editions of some of the earliest known newspapers published in Texas. Another major research strength is the history of social justice movements in the United States, including the civil rights movement. Highlights include the papers of John Henry Faulk, James Farmer, and C. Wright Mills, and the historical archives of the *Texas Observer* and the Field Foundation.

The Briscoe Center's collections document more than three hundred years of United States military history, including America's involvement in foreign wars from Mexico to Iraq.

The American Energy History Collection provides a comprehensive view of the modern age and the influence of energy in business, society, politics, and culture. It includes the extensive ExxonMobil archives, the largest publicly available collection documenting a single energy company.

The Briscoe Center also has an extensive material culture collection made up of thousands of museum objects at the Briscoe Center's four sites. The collection includes rare historical artifacts, clothing, textiles, furniture, and other decorative arts dating from the Anglo-American settlement of Texas in the early nineteenth century to the present.

The Briscoe Center presents a wide variety of permanent and temporary exhibits drawn from its collections. Exhibit topics have encompassed Texas and Southern history, news media history, civil rights, women's history, decorative arts, the entertainment industry, and Texas music. The Briscoe Center offers exhibits of photographs on tour to museums across the country.

The Briscoe Center's [website](#) provides access to valuable resources to researchers worldwide. The site includes a digital media repository of more than twenty thousand photographs, maps, documents, and videos; finding aids to hundreds of major collections; and online exhibits.