

Comparison of Historical Markers in the Different States

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Abstract

Historical markers show the memory of the past. Historical markers' contents may vary due to local governments or the different time series. To know the historical markers' memorial topics in different places, this project collected Texas and Florida's existing records, analyzed the most frequent keywords. The result shows that the markers in these two states shared some common things, such as the positive correlation between population and the number of markers. Besides, Texas markers are more related to religion, while Florida markers are more connected to the environment. Results show that the topic varies within a state in different periods.

Background

Historical markers are the common and typical landscape elements scattered throughout the United States. Historical Markers can show how people remember their past and emphasize which part of history the local people think highly of.

To identify, memorialize, and commemorate people, places, and events, historical markers cover diverse topics, including architectural history, public buildings, religious sites, military affairs, or notable individuals. In different states, the historical markers varying by type, coverage, and numbers. Study Historical Markers can help us learn the emotion of local people and history of one place.

Objectives

This project aims to compare the topics and expression of history in different states' markers:

- Try to find the **similarities** or the **differences** between Texas and Florida in different time series.

Data

The project uses the firsthand data provided by these local historical organizations that included all markers in Texas (Texas Historical Commission (<https://atlas.thc.texas.gov/>)) and Florida (Florida Division of Historical Resource (<http://apps.flheritage.com/markers/map/>)).

We also added the demographic data, the railroad date to help us analysis the spatial distribution of historical markers. Besides, we referred some historical news to help us understand the stories and culture of these states.

Florida's data are interactive maps, there are no spreadsheet or GIS-friendly data for research, we referred to **Geocoding API** (<https://console.cloud.google.com/>), wrote some **python** code to help us download Florida's data

Pre-processing

To make these two datasets comparable in this project, we set some common characters for the datasets, including the **markers' address**, the **text** on the markers, and the **established time** of the markers. Finally, we generated 8659 historical markers from 16000 records for Texas and 904 records for Florida.

Download raw data	clean data	1 download GIS data	2 clean data remove 0 17202/14207
select and use only "in site"	16025/16819		
remove the private markers	15867/16025		
remove year is null or 0	15552/15867		
remove null text markers	14497/15552		
remove blank or unreadable markers	14334/14497		
remove the markersname = ?Name?	14317/14334		
remove N/A in the markertext	14280/14317		
remove the n.a. in markertext	14278/14280		

Fig.1 Data Pre-processing

To achieve the goals, we analyzed the keywords for all Texas historical markers and all Florida historical markers in **AntConc** and then got the words' frequency for their keywords (Right Table).

The first Texas historical marker was established in 1894, while Florida had the first historical marker in 1960. So, we take historical markers before 1960 as one period for Texas and then count a decade as a period for the rest of the markers.

As a result, Texas has **7** time periods, Florida has **6** time periods. We analyzed both words frequency and keywords for each time serious in each state.

Rank(positive)	TX	Note	Rank(Negative)	FL	Note
1	Texas	State Name	1	Florida	State Name
4	Church		2	Beach	Palm beach county
5	Congregation		4	semimole	Indian tribe
7	Houston	City in TX	7	Palm	Palm beach county
8	marquis		8	Pensacola	City in FL
9	Austin	City in TX	10	Cost	coast railway
10	San	City in TX	13	Key	Florida has many keys (islands), for example Key West (city in FL)
11	Baptist		14	island	
12	Galveston	City in TX	15	Jacksonville	City in FL
14	Dallas	City in TX	16	atlantic	
16	Antonio	City in TX	17	citrus	
19	Ranch		18	Augustine	City in FL
20	Mexican	Another country	19	johns	Miami-Dade County
21	family		20	Dade	Lemon city (city in FL)
22	Sanctuary		21	lemon	Another country
24	German	Another country	22	British	
			23	river	
			24	national	
			25	black	
			26	seminoles	Indian tribe
			27	winter	
			28	Gainesville	City in FL
			29	club	
			31	Melbourne	City in FL
			32	Spanish	Another country
			33	golf	golf club/class
			34	tropicalsouth	
			35	Jupiter	City in FL

Fig.2 Key Words Comparison

worldlist	texas	church	first	school	county	he	cemetery	historic	family	war	jun
Before90s	texas	county	state	San	his	first	army	indians	de	jobs	december
60s	texas	first	country	historic	landmark	is/he	war	state	church	school	town
70s	texas[texas war]	first	church	his	county	school	historical	land	rev	landmark	family
90s	Church	Texas	first	school	he/she	county	home	landmark	historic	land	city
20s	Church	Texas	First	the	he	County	city				
2010	Church	Texas	School	his	first	county	he	family	city		

Fig.3 Texas Historical Markers in different time series

worldlist	florida	first	school	county	church	city	he	war	historic
60s	florida	first	church	country	his	war	town		
70s	florida	county	his	war	first	house	railroad	church	
80s	florida	he/his	county	historic	first	city	national	his	war
90s	florida	county	historic	first	church	city	war	historic	town
20s	florida	first	county	school	church	city	historic	war	
2010	florida	school	first	country	church	city			

Fig.4 Florida Historical Markers in different time series

Results: Similarities

❖ Similarities:

➤ The historical markers **positively correlate with the population**; the population density area has more historical markers.

- For example, the top 4 largest cities (Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, and Austin) in Texas (Fig.1).
- For Florida (Fig.2), the densely populated areas include the Palm Beach - Miami area, Tampa, and Orlando.

➤ The historical markers are **separated along with the highway and railroad**.

- For Texas, especially near Interstate highway 35 (Fig.1). I-35 is one of the major Interstate Highway in the central United States and a major cross-country, north-south route. I-35 can be split into the east part (Dallas – Fort Worth metroplex in Texas) and the west part in Minnesota. The I-35E runs through the Dallas–Fort Worth area to San Antonio, connecting the transportation transfer city (Dallas) in Texas and the oldest city (San Antonio) in Texas.
- For Florida, parts of the historical markers are established along the east coast area in Florida. The east coast's pleasant environment and convenient traffic network promote developed tourism. Most people will be there; this may facilitate the established historical markers.

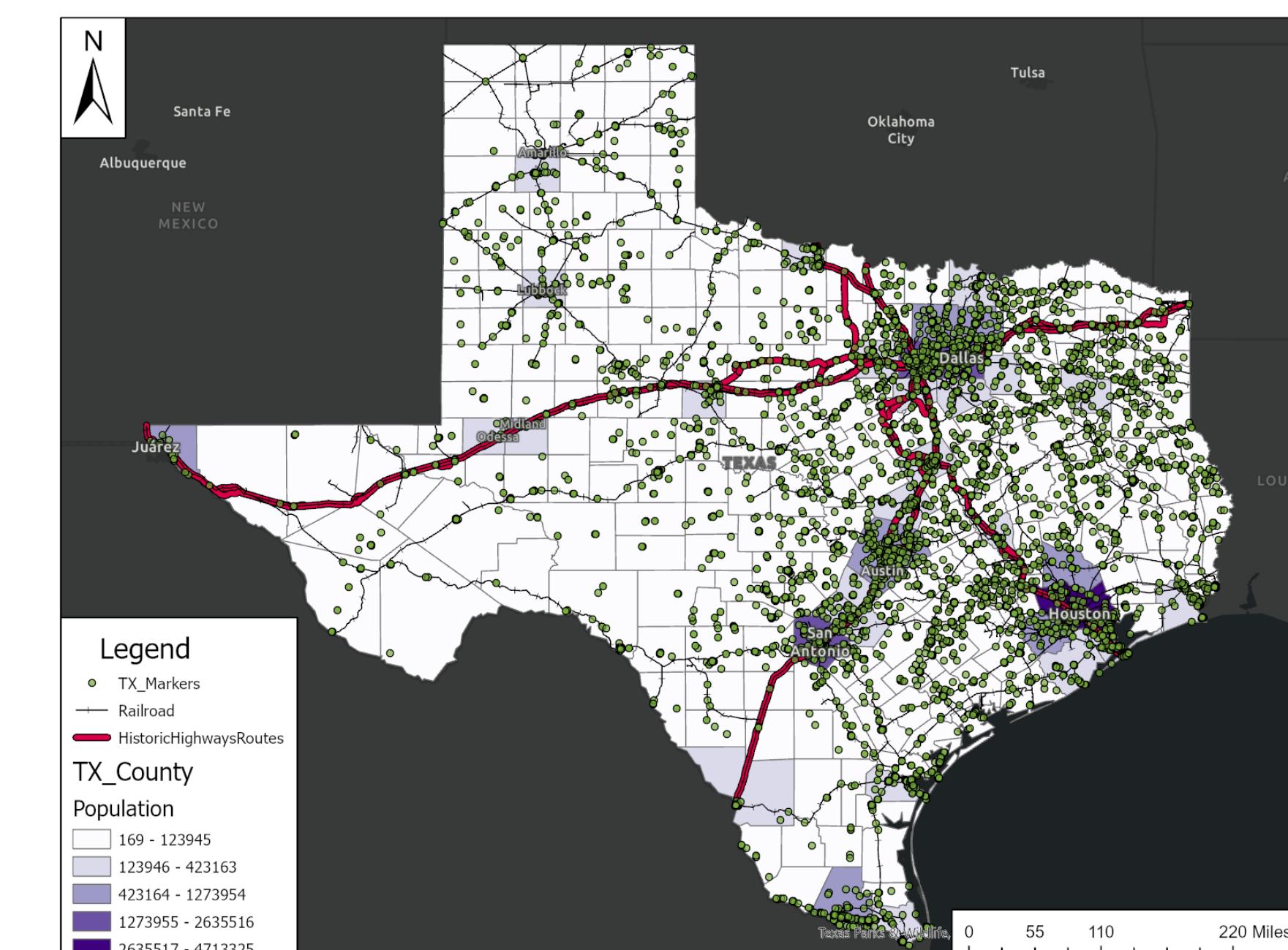


Fig.5. Texas Historical Markers Spatial Distribution

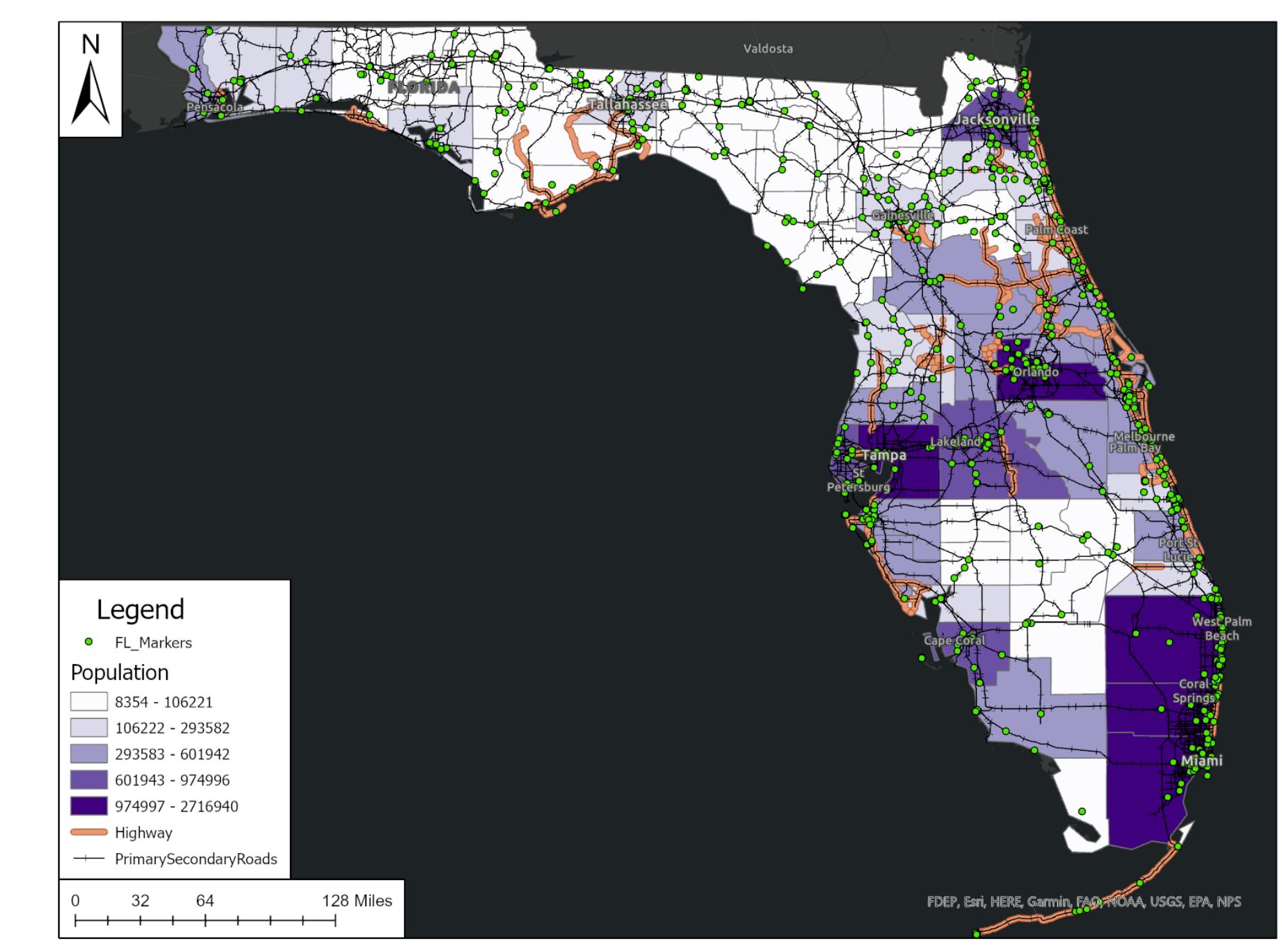


Fig.6 Florida Historical Markers Spatial Distribution

Results: Differences

❖ Differences:

➤ Most of the cities' names mentioned in **Texas** markers are the **top 10 largest cities** (Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, and Austin) in Texas, but not all of the cities in the Florida Historical Marker are in the top ten Florida, The most frequent city mentioned in **Florida** is **Pensacola**, a small city in the northwest part of Florida.

➤ **Mexican** and **German** were mentioned on **Texas** markers. More military words with Mexican, which related most to the Texas Revolution/ Texas War of Independence; Mexican Revolution/ Mexican War of Independence. More immigration words with German on Texas historical markers mentioned Church, catholic, immigration a lot in the markers with German. While **British**, **Seminole(s)**, and **Spanish** were mentioned a lot on **Florida**'s markers. Most markers with Seminole(s) are related to the Seminole War (the First Seminole War, the Second Seminole War, and the Third Seminole War).

➤ For the rest of the keywords on the list, **Church-related** words are more frequently shown on **Texas** markers, and the **Environmental-related** words are more frequently mentioned on **Florida** markers. Besides, some people's names also appear on the top 35 keywords for Texas (Marquis) and Florida (Johns) markers.

Why Pensacola in FL?

Pensacola is America's First Settlement. It was established in 1559 by Don Tristan de Luna and Spanish settlers.

The name Pensacola came from the Spanish word for the Native American people they found in this area in the 1500's when Panfilo de Narvaez and Hernando de Soto were stomping around.

When Florida Became a British Colony, Pensacola was the capital of West Florida.

Fort Pickens is one of four military forts designed to protect Pensacola in the 1800s.

Pensacola, Florida celebrated its 460th birthday in 2019

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