



DAY TRIP TO THURBER

From Stephenville · Erath County, Texas



COAL MINING



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MUSEUM · SMOKESTACK

A ghost town of a few dozen people at I-20 exit 367, with a university museum, two restaurants and the old smokestack.

Thurber is an easy stop off I-20. Spend a couple of hours in the W. K. Gordon Center, then walk out to the smokestack, the miner's house and the cemetery, and eat at the Smokestack or New York Hill restaurant.

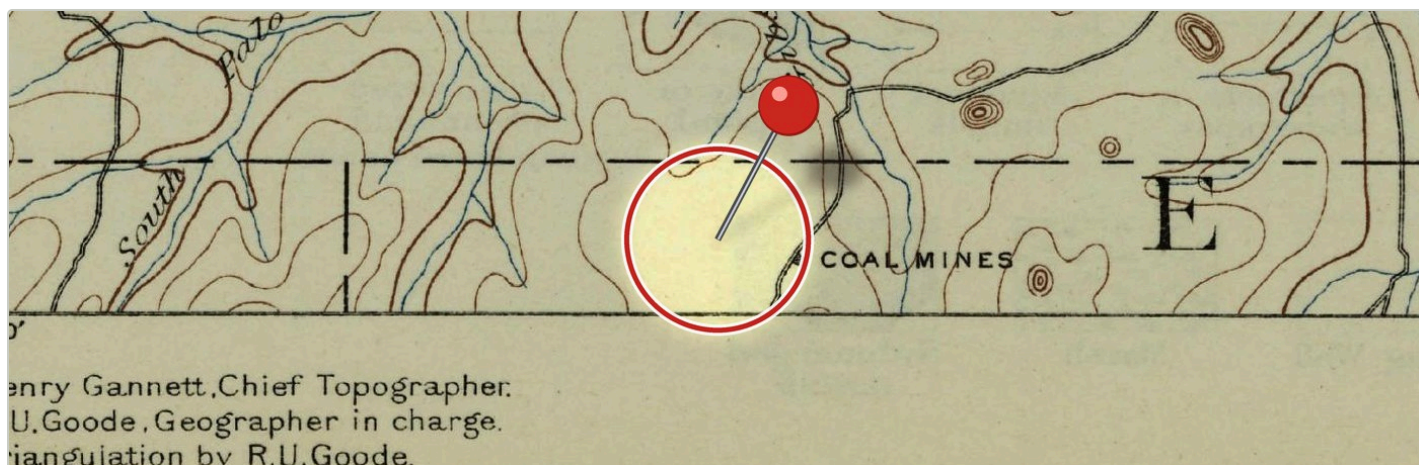
A SAMPLE DAY

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| ☐ 9:30 a.m. | Leave downtown Stephenville north on TX 108. It's about 40 minutes to exit 367. |
| ☐ 10:15 a.m. | The W. K. Gordon Center opens at 10. Allow an hour or two for the exhibits and the film. |
| ☐ Noon | Lunch at the Smokestack or New York Hill restaurant. |
| ☐ 1:30 p.m. | Walk to the smokestack, St. Barbara's Church and the miner's house, then drive to Thurber Cemetery. |
| ☐ 3 p.m. | Head back to Stephenville. |

From Fort Worth the drive is about 1 h 15 min on I-30 and I-20.

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **The smokestack.** It's the tallest thing for miles. Shoot it from the restaurant lot with the brick buildings in front.
- **The miner's house and rail car.** Simple frame and iron shapes that show how company workers lived.
- **The cemetery.** Over a thousand graves on the edge of town. Be respectful and stay on the paths.



USGS topographic map, 1891 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

DRIVE	27 mi, about 40 min each way from downtown Stephenville. From Fort Worth: 70 mi, about 1 h 17 min.
HOURS	W. K. Gordon Center: Tuesday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday 1 to 4 p.m. Closed Mondays (as of October 2026).
ADMISSION	\$5 adults, \$4 seniors and military, \$2.50 children 5 to 12, free under 5 (as of October 2026).
FOOD	The Gordon Center lists the Smokestack Restaurant, across I-20 from the museum, and the New York Hill Restaurant, both open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner.
RESTROOMS	The museum's website doesn't say. Ask at the front desk.
ROAD	Paved interstate and highway all the way.
ON FOOT	The smokestack, the church and the miner's house are a short walk apart near the exit.
WEBSITE	tarleton.edu/gordoncenter

BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the status with the land manager before you go; conditions change.
- Stay out of mine shafts, tunnels and unstable buildings.
- Leave artifacts where they lie. Removing them can be a crime.
- Carry water, a paper map and a charged phone; signal is often poor.

Coordinates 32.50722, -98.41722 • 32°30'26"N
98°25'02"W

Full guide abandonedtowns.com/texas/thurber/

Directions [Google Maps](#)

Details checked October 2026. Hours, prices and access change: confirm before you go.