

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Today in Texas history

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On this day in 1972, the first Kerrville Folk Festival opened in the Kerrville Municipal Auditorium. The three-day festival was the outgrowth of several Austin musical events held during the 1950s, '60s, and '70s.

That first festival drew 2,800 fans and featured 13 performers. By 1973 the event had expanded to five concerts over three nights, and 5,600 people jammed the overcrowded Kerrville Auditorium. The next year, the festival was moved outside, to a newly acquired 60-acre site nine miles south of Kerrville.

The warm ambience of the festival, the campfire singing, and the quality of the performers attracted worldwide attention. By the 1990s the festival had expanded to an 18-day schedule over three weekends, and attendance had grown to 25,000.

By 1993 more than two dozen of the early "unknown" performers at Kerrville had earned national recording contracts.