

Confederate Reunion Ground

Wayside Program, Texas Historical Commission, Austin

Project Details

Scope: Exterior Wayside Interpretive Program; 2 miles of trails, 12 acres
Budget: \$ 19,110

Project Team

Development: Edward Malouf, Kim White, Dixie Hoover (THC)
Text Writing: Kim White
Design + Production: Edward Malouf, Carol Lieb
Graphics Pressing: Fossil Industries Inc.

This project celebrates the camaraderie of the veterans of the Confederate Army from Limestone County and the oil boom era times in the town of Mexia. The Lost Cause movement took root in Texas through organized reunion camps, of which this Joseph E. Johnston camp, was the 94th established nationally throughout the south. The reason this camp is being recognized today is in large part due to the efforts of a oil businessman who invested in the camp in the 1920s. Albert E. Humphreys formed a relationship with the community where his company provided recreational facilities and other amenities for the sole rights to pump water from the Navasota River which is fed by natural springs at that location. When the Texas Historical Commission took over management of the site they have been enhancing the visitor experience with exhibits and pathways.

CONFEDERATE REUNIONS IN LIMESTONE COUNTY

The Birth of the Joseph E. Johnston Camp 94, United Confederate Veterans

Beginning in 1866, Confederate veterans joined Union veterans from the American Civil War for annual reunions to bolster camaraderie, honor the memory of their war experiences, and provide aid to disabled veterans and families of fallen comrades from both sides. The United Confederate Veterans organization was officially formed in 1889.

Time to Fire "Old Val Verde"
 Veterans and the Silver Comet Band ready for the firing of Old Val Verde cannon at the end of a reunion event.

A Summer Tradition
 The reunions continued for several days giving the campers enjoyable time outdoors, like this group at Rado Steele Camp Lot 32 in 1923. Kitchens were set up in arbors, tables and chairs were set around, and there was plenty of food and entertainment for all with storytelling around the campfires every night.

Polk Pattern Battle Flag

Confederate Army, Alabama. He was the first to use it in Sewanee, Georgia. Polk was the exact flag used by the 1st Texas Infantry during the Battle of Gettysburg.

The Bonnie Blue Flag
Unofficial National Flag 1861

Adopted by the Confederate Army in 1861. It was the first flag to be used by the Confederate Army.

Confederate Second National Flag
"The Stainless Banner" 1863-1865

Adopted by the Confederate Army in 1863. It was the second flag to be used by the Confederate Army.

Confederate First National Flag
"The Stars and Bars" 1861-1865

Many of the designs considered by the Committee on Flag and Seal resembled the "Grand Old Flag" of the United States, with variations in bars and stars. After a lengthy review process, the selected design was immediately sewn and hoisted over the Capitol Building in Montgomery, Alabama, March 4, 1861. Six weeks later, it flew over Fort Sumter. The first version of the flag included seven stars for the original Confederate states; the final version, adopted in November 1861, had 13 stars—for the 11 Confederate states as well as for Kentucky and Missouri though those two states never left the Union.

By the end of 1861, more than 25,000 Texans had joined the Confederate army. During the war, nearly 90,000 Texans served in the Confederate military.

"OLD VAL VERDE"
 A Stirring Symbol to Rally Around

This three inch calibre rifle, named the "Old Val Verde" after the Confederate hero, General James W. Hays, was captured from Union soldiers by the 1st Texas Infantry and the 1st Louisiana Infantry, which fought to recapture a strategically important position and restore the honor of the fallen Confederate soldier.

Confederates brought the cannon to the Battle of Mansfield, Louisiana, in 1864. The cannon participated with the 1st Texas Infantry (1861) when the "Iron" Brigade and succeeded at the end of the Civil War. The 1st Texas Infantry's capture of the cannon at the Battle of Mansfield, Louisiana, was a significant event in the war.

Why do we remember a "cannon"?

The "Old Val Verde" is a symbol of the Confederate Army's bravery and sacrifice. It is a reminder of the many soldiers who fought and died for the Confederate cause.

Preserving the Banner

The "Old Val Verde" is a symbol of the Confederate Army's bravery and sacrifice. It is a reminder of the many soldiers who fought and died for the Confederate cause.