

Hands on History



**Explore Living History Interpretation
at State Parks and Historic Sites**

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Hands on History

Allow yourself to step back in time. Give us a chance to transport you to another era.

Historical interpreters invite you to experience and then share Texas's pasts. Come and enjoy the sights, smells, and sounds of these historic places.

Along your journey, you'll experience many surprises. A cannon shot, a lumbering yoke of oxen, men sitting around a campfire — all forms of Living History Interpretation.



1st Person Interpretation

You'll meet interpreters acting just like *then* is *now*. If they are "living" in, say, 1836, they tell stories, answer your questions, and discuss their lives — as they *are* in 1836. They talk with you just like you lived then, too. They never ever mention automobiles, electricity, or the Internet.

2nd Person Interpretation

Often dressed in period costumes, these interpreters show you how to make candy, feed chickens, pick corn, and do many more things, too. They answer every one of your questions while they focus solely on the job at hand.



3rd Person Interpretation

Interpreters greet you as their 21st-century *self*, but may don historical costumes. They talk about a wide variety of topics and demonstrate any number of tasks. During this kind of tour, you may get some hands-on training in Dutch-oven cooking or feeding the hogs.

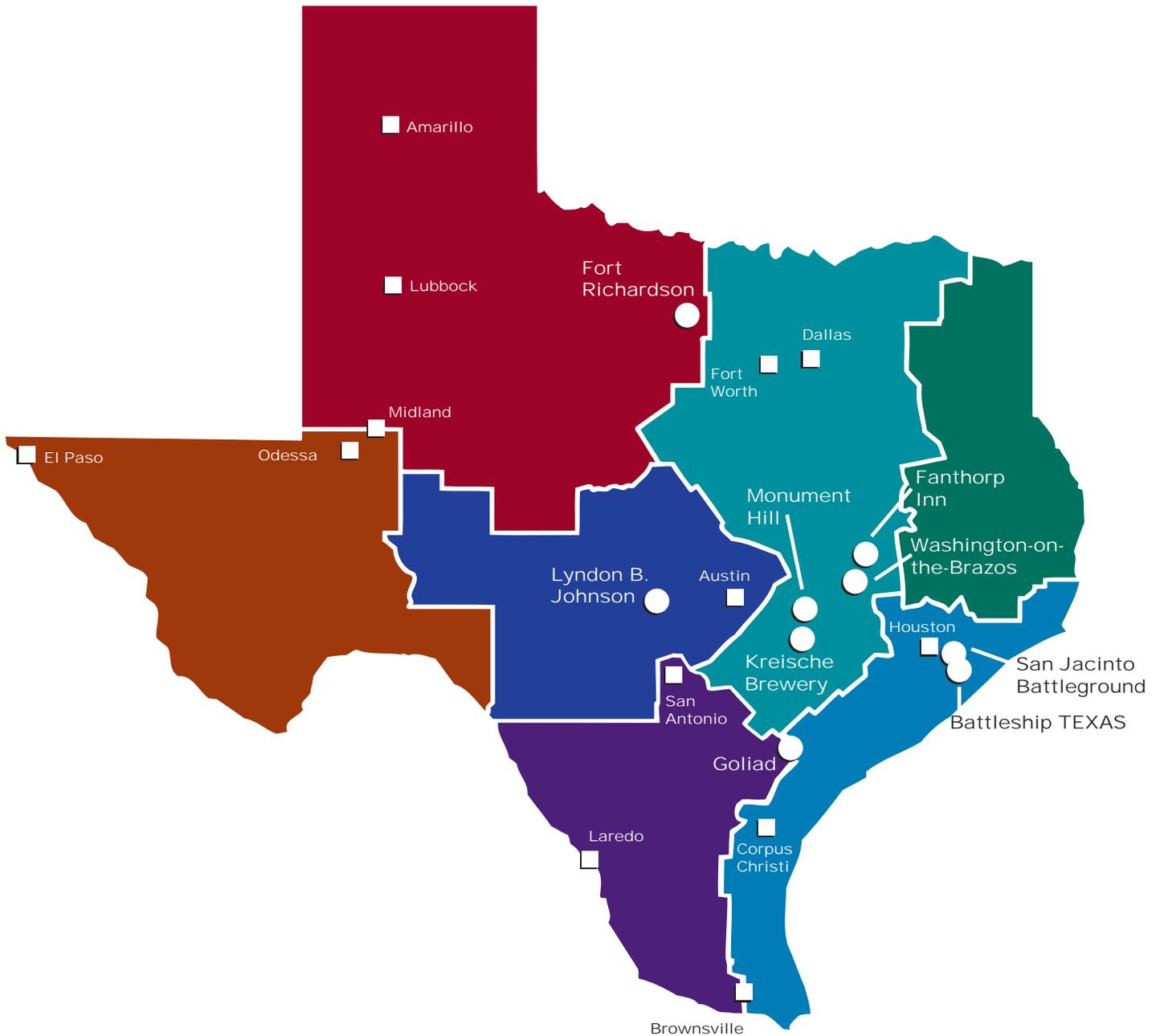
in-'tər-prə-tər — **One who translates material culture and human or natural phenomena to the public in a meaningful, provocative, and interesting way.**

Featured Sites and Programs

The historic sites featured in this document are located in five of the state's travel regions, many just a short drive from major cities.

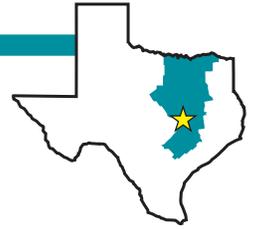
Check back often to find additional living history programs at other state parks and historic sites.

The Buffalo Soldiers programs are performed state-wide. More information can be found at http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/community_outreach_programs/buffalo_soldiers/



Barrington Living History Farm

at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site



Visit Barrington Living History Farm. You just might meet Anson Jones, the last president of the Republic of Texas.

There you'll see a working farm of 160 years ago when Mary and Anson Jones lived there with their family and slaves. Responsible for completing the difficult task of annexing Texas to the U.S., Jones also kept a diary about his cotton farm in the Brazos Valley and described the chores that needed to be done during each season.



Talk with our staff, dressed in period clothing, as they go about their work. Ask them questions about the farm, its original residents, and its history. Pitch in and help with the seasonal chores of the farm.

And don't forget to ask about the buildings — the original house finished in 1844, along with reconstructed outbuildings based upon vernacular buildings of the mid-nineteenth-century in Texas and generally described in Dr. Jones' journals. Feel what it may have been like to live and work in those spaces. Trek across the fields and tend to the animals.



Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm

at Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site

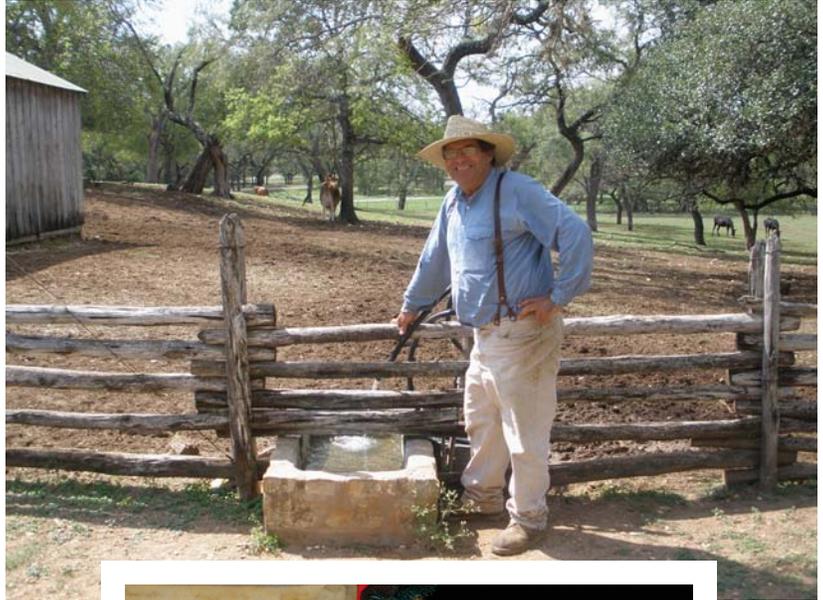


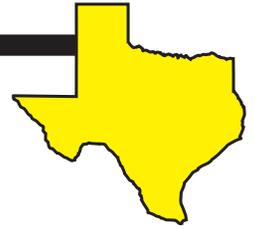
Don't miss the chance to experience farm life as a German-immigrant family in the Texas Hill Country in 1915. Watch as the farmer feeds the livestock, milks the cows, or plows the garden. Spend the day splitting wood, preparing sausage and bacon for the smokehouse, or making lye soap.

Amidst the labors, you might sniff the fragrant aroma of fresh bread or other treats baking in the wood-burning stove's oven, or hear the splash of the beater as fresh cream is churned into golden yellow butter. Join the farm women dressed in period garb as they gather eggs in the hen house and bring them into the kitchen.

The summer garden is thriving with green leaves of vegetables in rows upon rows. Feel the rich earth between your fingers and tune in to the songs of the birds nestling in one of the many live oak trees. You might also hear to the gentle bellow of sheep grazing in the meadow.

All of this and much more awaits visitors at Lyndon B. Johnson State Park & Historic Site's Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm.





The Buffalo Soldiers: The First Regular Army African American Soldiers

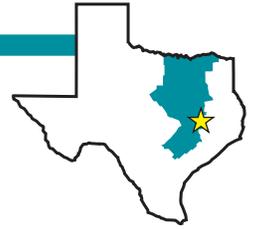
Buffalo Soldiers were the first Regular Army African American soldiers. They served from 1866 through 1948 when the U.S. military integrated. In Texas, they served from 1867 to the 1880s. Their posts ranged from Fort Brown in Brownsville to Fort Elliot in the northern Panhandle and west to Fort Bliss in El Paso. They protected settlers, mapped roads, guarded trail stations, and rebuilt frontier posts.

The Buffalo Soldier lives on through several presentations. One is called *Blazing New Trails Outdoor Educational Program* and it emphasizes outdoor skills training and instruction in state parks. Another, *Texas Buffalo Soldiers*, features the distinctly western experiences of the soldiers on the frontier where many diverse communities came together.

Catch one or both programs as the interpreters travel around the state.



Fanthorp Inn State Historic Site



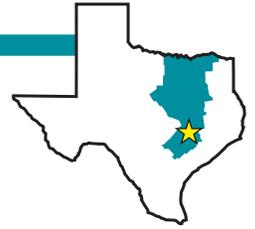
Even before Texas became a state, there was Fanthorp Inn. It sheltered many a traveler — from performers in a touring circus, to the likes of Sam Houston, Anson Jones, Zachary Taylor, Jefferson Davis, Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee. English immigrant Henry Fanthorp and his wife, Rachel, may have built the inn but it was a home-away-from-home to farmers in the region who regularly stopped to visit or to enjoy a hearty meal and a quenching whiskey.

One of the best period interiors in the entire state, the rooms at Fanthorp Inn show you what it was like to play poker, dine, and sleep in an original Texas inn. Hear stories of who-slept-here over 160 years ago.

Imagine a ride back in time on an authentic 1850 Concord stagecoach replica. There's one here.



Monument Hill State Historic Site and Kreische Brewery State Historic Site



Famous battles were never fought here. And yet, this spot is hallowed ground because men who perished in the continuing struggle for Texas independence from Mexico are entombed here. A colorful monument commemorates those who died in the Dawson Massacre (1842) and during the Black Bean Death Lottery (1842).

Because of these and other soldiers' sacrifices, Texas became independent — and a particularly attractive place for many European immigrants. One such individual was German immigrant Heinrich L. Kreische, who built his family's home and a brewery on this scenic hillside.

Although no one will offer you a beer, they will invite you to see the exhibits, stroll the grounds, and tour the house and brewery. In the house where Heinrich and his wife lived with their six children, you may explore the rooms featuring some of the very furnishings that the Kreisches owned. (Alas, they did not leave their beer recipe in what remains of the brewery.)

You will enjoy a very special day each September when people gather to honor Texas heroes who fought and died during Texas's struggle to become independent of Mexico. Texas Heroes Day features pioneer craft demonstrations, cannon and musket salutes, dulcimer music, historic flag display, and guided tours.



San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site



This is the place where on April 21, 1836 the rag-tag army of General Sam Houston triumphed over the stronger Mexican army of General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. A short but decisive battle, the victory assured Texas independence from Mexico. Each April, the San Jacinto Day Festival attracts those who want to stand with Sam Houston's Texas volunteers of 1836 or put themselves in the shoes of one of Santa Anna's soldiers. Enjoying the living history encampments, re-enactors in period costumes, demonstrations of weapons, and lots of activities for children are all part of an event-filled day.



Battleship *Texas* State Historic Site



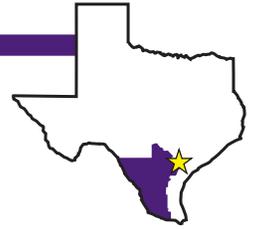
In 1948, the Battleship *Texas* became the first battleship memorial museum in the United States. That same year, on the anniversary of Texas Independence, the U.S.S. *Texas* was presented to the State of Texas and commissioned as the flagship of the Texas Navy.

Each December Battleship *Texas* hosts “Yuletide Texas: A Sailor’s Christmas.” Tour compartments decorated as they might have been by the ship’s sailors. You, too, can make ornaments or even write Santa a letter and send it directly to the North Pole via Morse code. Celebrate the season with live music, cider, and cookies.

You can enjoy special tours throughout the year by reservation. It is worth it to learn what Semaphore is or to become fluent in Morse code. You too can see what it was like to be a sailor onboard the Battleship *Texas*.



Goliad State Park and Historic Site



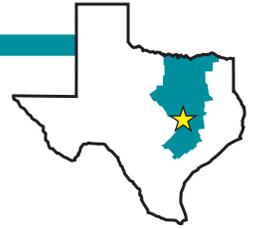
Nestled along the San Antonio River, Goliad State Park and Historic Site tells a rich and nuanced tale about faith and sacrifice in 18th-century Texas. Spanish explorers, African slaves, Catholic priests, local American Indian tribes are all part of the drama. As the Indians' way of life receded and cultures converged after conflict, a new form of ranching emerged. Centered here was an expansive ranch said to be the birthplace of a Texas icon, the Longhorn. Explore the site and learn more about these fascinating stories from our historical interpreters.

You can immerse yourself in the Spanish Colonial Era through year-round activities including lively guided tours, weaving and other craft demonstrations, traveling exhibits, and plays, performances, and concerts in the beautifully restored chapel.



Independence Hall

at Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site



During a blustery and cold March in 1836, leaders gathered at Washington to discuss a government apart from Mexico. Seventeen days later, they had declared themselves free from Mexico, wrote a constitution, and formed a government as fighting raged.

One of the capitols of the republic and later an important commercial port on the Brazos River, Washington languished when its citizens declined the railroad in the late 1850s and even today the landscape remains pastoral. Visitors may stroll down Ferry Street as once did Davy Crockett, Sam Houston, and William B. Travis and a host of others.

Every third Saturday, the interpretive staff of Independence Hall hosts a special program focusing on some particular aspect of Washington's colorful and unique past. Join us at the Birthplace of Texas and experience our rich history through hands-on interpretation.



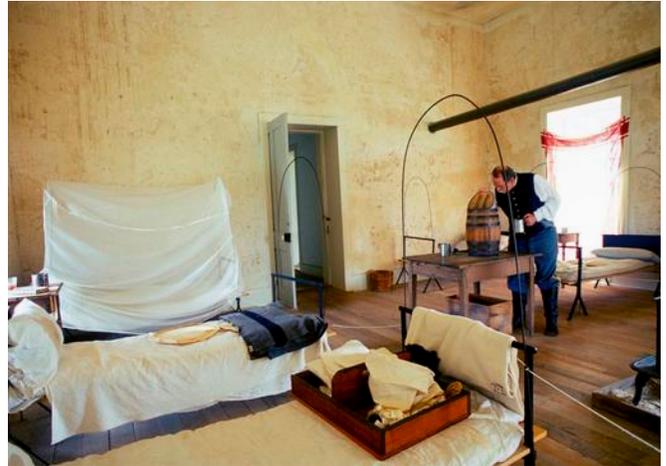
Fort Richardson State Park and Historic Site



If you were a settler wanting to “go west” after the American Civil War, then the soldiers stationed here were charged with keeping you safe. If you were a soldier at the time, you’d surely recognize the post hospital and the commanding officer’s quarters. Stay the night at a campsite on a wild land where American Indians once raided and where rowdy soldiers and corrupt carpetbaggers once lived and traveled.

The fort which boasts seven original buildings was used again in the 20th century: Battery F, 2nd Battalion, 131st Field Artillery Regiment, 36th Infantry Division, and Texas National Guard mobilized here in 1940. The men were at sea when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and were captured in Java, left behind when the Americans retreated to Australia. The unit was named the “Lost Battalion” and memorialized in the popular film, *The Bridge over the River Kwai*.

The Fort currently hosts at least three major living history events each year: February hosts “WWII Living History Day”, April features the 1870s period during “Fort Richardson Days”, and November promises a Civil War re-enactment program called “The Battle for Fort Richardson.”



Contributing Authors:

Jim Lauderdale, lead author and editor – Barrington Living History Farm State Historic Site

Eugene Bonds – Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm at Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site

Luis Padilla – Buffalo Soldier Heritage and Outreach Program, Interpretative Services

John Lindon – Fanthorp Inn State Historic Site

Dennis Smith – Monument Hill State Historic Site and Kreische Brewery State Historic Site

Tammy Zellner and Elizabeth Dodd-Ellis – Goliad State Park and Historic Site

Barbara Graf – San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site and Battleship *Texas* State Historic Site

Glenn Barnett – Fort Richardson State Historic Site

Scott McMahon – Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site

For more information visit **www.texasstateparks.org**



4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744

www.tpwd.state.tx.us



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