GOLIAD STATE PARK

GOLIAD STATE PARK IS COMPRISED OF FOUR HISTORIC SITES THAT TOGETHER REVEAL 300 YEARS OF TEXAS HISTORY. THESE FOUR SITES HARBOR MEMORIES OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN, SPANISH, MEXICAN AND AMERICAN CULTURES. HERE THESE GROUPS COLLIDED, BUT FRAGMENTS OF THEIR CULTURES ENDURED, CREATING THE TEXAN IDENTITY.

OTHER HISTORIC SITES IN GOLIAD
Presidio La Bahía, one-quarter mile south of Goliad State Park on U.S. Highway 183
Goliad Courthouse Square Historic District and Market House Museum, one-quarter mile north of Goliad State Park off of U.S. Highway 183
Fannin Battleground, Nine miles east of Goliad off U.S. Highway 59

You may also want to inquire about joining Amigos of Goliad State Park, a not-for-profit friends group, to support the preservation of Goliad’s rich historical landscape.

Goliad State Park • 108 Park Road 6, Goliad, Texas 77963  (361) 645-3405  • www.tpwd.texas.gov/goliad

A RICH HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE

Missions Espíritu Santo and Rosario tell a story of faith, sacrifice and the creation of a distinctive ranching heritage. The missions also reveal the story of the Karankawa, Aranama and Tamique people’s traditional way of life. The birthplace of General Ignacio Zaragoza tells of a boy who became a military hero revered by people of two nations. The El Camino Real de los Tejas Visitors Center showcases the architecture inside the Keeper’s Cottage built by the talented men of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and guides guests down a historic trail.

The story begins with the roving bands of hunter-gatherers known to history as the Karankawa, Aranama and Tamique. Their world changed dramatically with the arrival of the French at Matagorda Bay and the thousands of Spaniards who followed. Intent on protecting their land holdings, the Spanish Crown and Roman Catholic Church reasoned that through mission settlements they could create a Spanish citizenry in the New World. They enthusiastically began “civilizing and Christianizing” the native people with the intention of making them Spanish citizens.

FURTHER READING
Sánchez Colín, Guillermo. *Ignacio Zaragoza: Evocación de un Héroe*. Editorial Porrúa, México, D.F.
The Texas State Historical Association. *The Handbook of Texas* (www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/).
MISSION NUESTRA SEÑORA DEL ESPÍRITU SANTO DE ZÚÑIGA

Franciscan priests established the first Mission Espíritu Santo at Matagorda Bay in 1722, adjacent to Presidio La Bahía. In 1749, after two other moves, both the mission and presidio were strategically relocated to opposite banks of the San Antonio River protecting Camino La Bahía, a major Spanish trade route to the north and east. Mission life was radically different from the natives' traditional culture. In return for food, shelter and protection from more aggressive tribes, they agreed to live in the mission, follow its discipline, and receive instruction in the Roman Catholic faith. The result over time was a gradual erosion and eventual replacement of their traditional culture with a distinctly new way of life.

Espíritu Santo’s chapel and grounds were the center of a busy community. Supervised by the Franciscan fathers, the men branded cattle, tilled the soil, chipped stone and made clay pots used for storage and cooking, ground corn into metates and mixed mortar. The women spun wool for clothing, made paper, inspired by their own connection to the stories they hear in the museum. Visitors can create their own architectural sketch on a piece of “blueprint” paper, inspired by their own connection to the stories they hear in the museum. They can then move through the three main rooms, they will encounter interpretive exhibits, as well as interactive elements that will help tell the story of El Camino Real, a story interwoven with that of the CCC architects who sought to faithfully recreate the bygone era of the Spanish empire through the mission restoration. Among other offerings, visitors have the chance to create their own architectural sketch on a piece of “blueprint” paper, inspired by their own connection to the stories they hear in the museum.

EL CAMINO REAL VISTORS CENTER

Repurposed today as an interpretive museum, the El Camino Real Visitors Center is the restored historic caretaker’s cottage built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), as well as one of Goliad’s hidden architectural jewels. As park visitors move through the three main rooms, they will encounter interpretive exhibits, as well as interactive elements that will help tell the story of El Camino Real, a story interwoven with that of the CCC architects who sought to faithfully recreate the bygone era of the Spanish empire through the mission restoration. Among other offerings, visitors have the chance to create their own architectural sketch on a piece of “blueprint” paper, inspired by their own connection to the stories they hear in the museum.

MISSION NUESTRA SEÑORA DEL ROSARIO

(Four miles west of Goliad on U.S. Highway 59)

Walking the grounds of Mission Rosario, visitors see evidence of a vanished people. Situated on a slightly elevated point with a panoramic view of cattle grazing in fields and the San Antonio River, the stabilized ruins of the mission walls are all that remain of one of Texas’ last intact Spanish mission archeological sites.

Established in 1754, Mission Rosario served the Karankawa people, a tall, robust, nomadic people whose territories stretched among the bays and estuaries of the Gulf coastal bend. The Franciscans were determined to build a mission for the Karankawa, and lured them to Rosario with promises of food and shelter. But regimented agricultural mission life had little permanent appeal to these wanderers; most returned to their traditional ways. Nonetheless, Rosario became the center of a large livestock operation. Ten years after its founding, the mission priests and native people managed more than 4,000 branded cattle. Mission Rosario was abandoned in 1781, briefly reopened in 1789 and closed for good in 1792.

Goliad County donated the site to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 1972. Recent preservation efforts have stabilized the mission walls. Archeological excavations provide important clues that tie construction periods to known periods of occupation.

VAQUEROS WERE THE ORIGINAL COWBOYS AND STARTED HERDING CATTLE IN NORTHERN MEXICO IN THE 1590S.

Artwork by Clemente Guzman III, TPWD.