



INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

LYNDON B. JOHNSON

STATE PARK AND HISTORIC SITE

LYNDON'S LEGACY

Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site honors a Texan who achieved the nation's highest office. President Lyndon B. Johnson was born across the river from here on the LBJ Ranch and retired there after leaving the White House. To honor him and his Hill Country heritage, some of his friends raised money to purchase land directly across the Pedernales River from the LBJ Ranch. They donated that land to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 1965. It was LBJ's vision to have a place where people could enjoy and appreciate the land that shaped him. You can steward his legacy by:

- ✦ Preserve the integrity of the historic buildings by using them with respect.
- ✦ Hike only on designated trails and stay out of wildflower fields.
- ✦ Leave no trace. Keep your parks clean by picking up your trash.
- ✦ Get involved by volunteering at the park.

Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site
199 Park Road 52, Stonewall, TX 78671
(830) 644-2252
www.tpwd.texas.gov/lyndonbjohnson

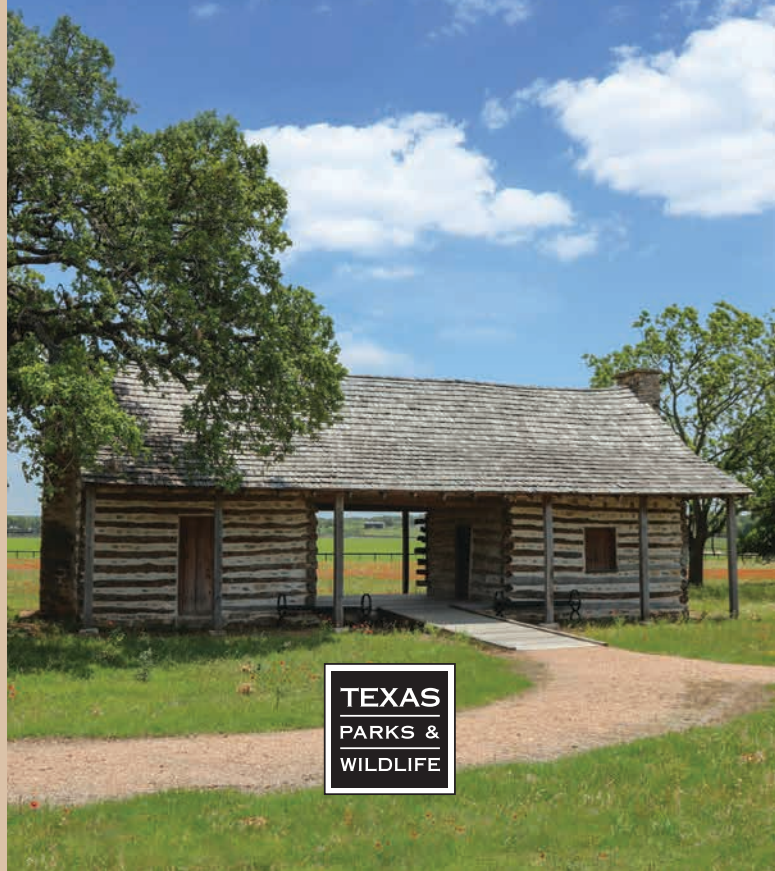


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LYNDON B. JOHNSON STATE PARK AND HISTORIC SITE CAPTURES THE ESSENCE OF THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY. THE 36TH PRESIDENT WANTED TO PRESERVE TEXAS ICONS, BRING HIS CHILDHOOD TO LIFE, AND PROVIDE A PLACE IN HIS HOMETOWN FOR RECREATION. VISIT WITH AMERICAN BISON OR TEXAS LONGHORNS, WALK ON TRAILS THROUGH WILDFLOWER FIELDS, CAST A LINE, PICNIC, AND STEP BACK IN TIME ON A GERMAN FARMSTEAD. THIS PARK IS YOUR PERFECT DAY TRIP DESTINATION!



THE RIVER THAT RUNS THROUGH IT

The Pedernales River has anchored life for thousands of years. Prehistoric people relied on it to provide water, food, tools, and sometimes shelter in rock overhangs. Archeological sites tell us that Native Americans moved seasonally through the area, following the food and resources they needed. Their part of the story is thousands of years longer than the European settlers who named the river. The Spanish named it Pedernales (pronounced peder-nah-les), meaning flint, for the river rocks. German immigrants moved into the area in the mid-1800s, establishing homes near the dependable river.

Today, the river is a recreation destination throughout Central Texas, though river access is limited inside the park. It also provides drinking water, flowing into Lake Travis, a reservoir for the Austin area. Its value to humans, plants, and animals hasn't changed in centuries.

Red-eared slider



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TEXAS LEGENDS

Both the American bison and Texas longhorn represent distinct parts of Texas history, and together they tell a story of perseverance and conservation.

Bison, also called buffalo, once roamed the Great Plains with their range extending into Texas. Native American groups like the Comanche relied on the bison for food and supplies. In turn, the vast plains relied on the bison's nomadic grazing to renew the grassland.

Texas longhorns started out as feral cattle abandoned by the Spanish in the 1600s. Without management or attention for 200 years, they grew into a hardy, drought-tolerant breed. When European settlers started to move into Texas in the early 1800s, their cattle mingled with the cows that the Spanish had left behind. The result were Texas longhorns, with their namesake head gear.

Here at LBJ State Park and Historic Site, we provide a home for American bison and part of the Texas State Longhorn herd. We care for these animals because they provide us a tangible link to our past. You can see these magnificent beasts in fenced fields here and at several other state parks.

American bison



FARM LIFE

When you visit the Sauer-Beckmann Farm, you are stepping into a world that a young Lyndon B. Johnson would have experienced. Ten-year-old Lyndon would have seen the same activities you might see today: canning, caring for farm animals, cooking, cleaning, gardening, blacksmithing, and knitting. Park rangers wearing historical clothing do the chores that would have been done by the Beckmanns—the Johnson's German neighbors—in 1918.

The Beckmann family didn't start this farm—the Sauer family did. Johan Friedrich Sauer and his wife Christine Strackbein immigrated from Germany as children, grew up in Fredericksburg, and moved here with their four children in 1869. They built a log and rock cabin for the family. As their family grew, they added rooms to the original structure. By 1885, they completed a two-story stone dormitory for their



10 children. They also built the smokehouse and tank house. The Sauers farmed and raised cattle and sheep.

The Sauers sold their farm to Hermann Beckmann in 1900, who was buying the land for his two sons, Otto and Emil. He paid \$4,450 for 400 acres—about \$11 per acre! The sons lived and raised cotton on the farm to repay their father.

Emil married Emma Mayer in 1907 and they set up house on the farm. 1915 was a banner year for them because cotton prices went from 9 to 20 cents a pound in one month! With their cotton money, Emil and Emma bought out Otto's share in the farm and began making many of the improvements you can see at the farm today. They built a new barn, added a frame room onto the two-story stone structure, and built the Victorian house connected to the older structure by a large *durchgang*, or hallway.

The family sold pieces of the land over the years, including four acres to President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1951. Texas Parks and Wildlife acquired it in 1966 and restored the farm to its World War I-era prosperity—so you experience a German farm like LBJ did when he was a boy.



BEAUTIFUL BLOOMS

You can see one of the Johnson family's well-known contributions to nature every spring. The First Lady, Lady Bird Johnson, was passionate about native plants and flowers. The highways of Texas that turn blue and red with blooms each spring are one of the things she's remembered for. We have wildflowers here, too, through the spring and early summer. They serve as homes and cover for wildlife, food sources for pollinators, and are an important part of the area's economy.



Indian Blanket

This flower blankets the field later in the wildflower season, making for a stunning red-yellow sea of blossoms.

Horsemint

Look for this bloom in the late spring or early summer and take a whiff—it has a strong lemony scent.



Pink Evening Primrose

You'll need to get here early to see this flower bloom, since its flowers open in the evening.

Winecup

You can tell how this flower got its name! Bees and butterflies flock to the nectar of these blooms.

