



El Camino Real de los Tejas was a road that could carry people from Nachitoches, Louisiana, to Mexico via San Antonio and was instrumental in the early settlement of Texas. Original traces of El Camino Real de los Tejas can be viewed at Mission Tejas State Park.

GET A GLIMPSE OF A  
DREAM REALIZED BY ONE  
FAMILY WHO TREKKED EL  
CAMINO REAL DE LOS  
TEJAS IN SEARCH OF  
WEALTH, OPPORTUNITY,  
AND ADVENTURE.



## INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

# RICE FAMILY LOG HOME

AT MISSION TEJAS STATE PARK



### IN APPRECIATION

The home was donated to Mission Tejas State Park in 1973 by surviving members of the Rice Family. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will be forever grateful for being given the opportunity to preserve this unique piece of history to share with park visitors.

### NEARBY POINTS OF INTEREST

Davy Crockett National Forest  
Caddoan Mounds State Historic Site  
El Camino Real de los Tejas (The King's Highway)

### PARK LOCATION

Mission Tejas State Park is located 21 miles northeast of Crockett and 12 miles southwest of Alto on SH 21 (the Old San Antonio Road). The park entrance is near Weches, where Park Road 44 intersects with SH 21. The park is open throughout the year. Call in advance to schedule a guided tour of the historic structures.

NOTE: Texas state law makes it unlawful for anyone to disturb in any way historic or prehistoric, archeological or paleontological sites, or any historic marker situated on lands controlled by the state of Texas.

### NUMBERS TO CALL

For all reservations, call (512) 389-8900  
For information only, call (800) 792-1112

Mission Tejas State Park  
120 State Park Road 44, Grapeland, Texas 75844  
(936) 687-2394 • [www.tpwd.texas.gov/missiontejas/](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/missiontejas/)

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Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.







The second and third rooms were constructed of logs hewn on both sides and joined at the corner with half dove-tail notching. This is considered the best technique for building log homes.

## THE RICE FAMILY HOME

According to tradition, Joseph Rice built Room 1 in 1828. It served as a multi-purpose dwelling in which the entire family cooked, ate, and slept. The upper level was probably used for sleeping. Access to the upper level was by means of a ladder.

Rice gave Room 1 to his grandson, John Rice in the 1860s. John and his wife, Nancy, supposedly raised the ceiling and two doors to accommodate tall furniture. They also painted the ceiling blue and added wallpaper.



COURTESY PEGGY HARKINS



Remnants of the wallpaper added by John and Nancy Rice.

Some say the blue paint will prevent wasps from building nests on the ceiling.

Sometime between 1828 and 1838, Rice added the dogtrot and Rooms 2 and 3. During hot weather, the family and visitors sat, ate, washed, and often slept in the dogtrot to take advantage of breezes funneled through the passageway. The dogtrot seems to have evolved in the American South during the 18th and 19th centuries.

When Rice first built the home, it may not have had any windows, or only a small, shuttered one like the one found in Room 2. Glass would have been added later as it became available. British tradition dictated that at least one full-sized window be cut in the front wall facing the porch. The centrally positioned doors also reflect British influence and distribute the structural load most effectively.

Porches were common in most Texas log homes and provided shade during the hot Texas summers as well as a storage area for saddles, riding gear, etc. during rainy weather.



Rooms 2 and 3 are joined by a double fireplace on the common wall. This type of construction is sometimes referred to as "saddlebag construction" because the roof of the house sits across the common chimney like saddlebags on a horse. There are many 19th century homes with dogtrots and some with saddlebag construction but the Rice Home is one of few with both.

## LOG BUILDINGS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

Texas log construction recalls a heritage that began in Europe during prehistoric times. Buildings made of horizontally laid logs fastened with corner notching may have originated during the Middle Stone Age in northern Europe. By the Bronze Age, the technique had spread throughout the extensively forested regions of that continent. Although forest clearance during medieval times led to the decline of log construction in Europe, it survived in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe.

Swedish immigrants likely were the first to use horizontal log construction in America during the 1630s and 1640s. But German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania during the 18th century probably made the most impact on the spread of log construction. They introduced the technique to the English, Welsh, and Scotch-Irish pioneers, who saw that log housing was well-suited to life in a forested environment. When the pioneers began to move westward and southward, they carried this construction technique with them, introducing it to Texas even before the establishment of Austin's colony.

