



In Search of El dorado

A daily journal of my travels and adventures in my.....Search for Eldorado

Hello to Family & Friends



I stayed overnight where I was parked most of yesterday, in the Cuero public parking lot. I can actually see the police department building from here. No issues.

First stop was the C of C again to get some answers.

Trees in the street - It turns out there about eleven of these trees in the roads throughout town. They have even started to have them named after someone, probably if the donation is big enough.

Turkeys – Just outside of Cuero there used to be very large turkey farms. In 1912 they started holding Turkeyfest. It was a big production. All the turkeys would be herded down Esplanade Rd. It became so big that they only held it once every four years (probably inspired by the Olympics which had just started in 1896). Nowadays the turkeys are gone, but Turkeyfest lives on, in a much smaller version. Now they raise racing turkeys and each September they take their turkey to Worthington, MN for a race. I guess Worthington is also big into turkeys. And each October Worthington brings their champ here. The best average of the two times is World Champion.



The Heart of South Texas – It is somewhat the same distance from Cuero to San Antonio, or Houston, or Austin, or Corpus Christie, or (was) Indianola, putting Cuero right in the middle, like a human heart.

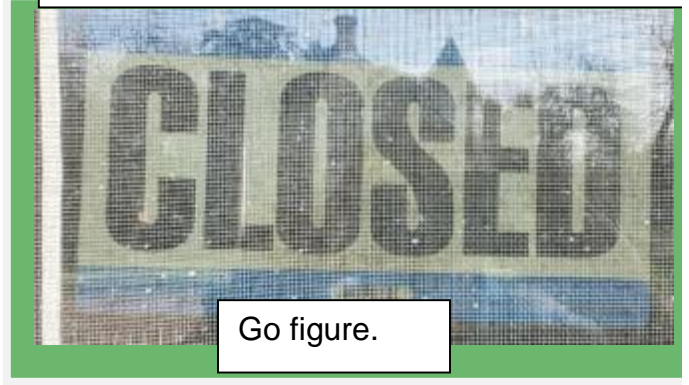
Bas relief of Coca Cola on City Hall – At one time Cuero was home to a large Coca Cola bottling plant and distribution center. City Hall took over one of their buildings when they moved operations out of town.

So now you have answers to all your questions. If you have any more, call them up yourself.





I double checked all the museum times last night. This one is open from 10-12 and 1-3, so I thought it would be better to visit this one first, because I know the Chisholm Trail will take longer.



Go figure.



Hey look, it's actually open! Hurrah!

What a difference the light makes on that statue. Very detailed.



I wonder how much that cash register cost back in the day. People would have come to your store just to see it.

I've always wondered what the Knights of Pythias referred to. I almost looked it up the other day during my walk and photos. Now here is the explanation. The patina on that emblem is great.

Knights of Pythias Emblem

FRIENDSHIP, CHARITY AND BENEVOLENCE



This original copper Knights of Pythias emblem was placed as an important component of our building's upper parapet upon completion of construction in 1903. The fraternal order's distinguishing principles, Friendship, Charity and Benevolence are shown with the initials FCB. A knight's helmet and axes, also prominently displayed, are symbols of strength. The building was the home of the Knights of Pythias Jewel Lodge No. 103, and included both ceremonial and public spaces.

The organization's name comes from the Greek legend of Damon and Pythias, a tale of two trusted friends willing to sacrifice their lives for one another. Founded in Washington, D.C. in 1864, the Knights of Pythias was the first fraternal organization to receive a charter under an Act of the United States Congress.

President Abraham Lincoln praised the mission of the new organization in a letter, *"for the reuniting of our brethren of the North and of the South, for teaching the people to love one another..."*

Removed before the 2004 exterior restoration of the Knights of Pythias Hall for safekeeping, a fiberglass replica of the emblem was created and installed in its place. The rich weathered patina on the original is the natural aging of over 100 years on the building's exterior.



5 Leather and horn wine canteen in shape of a bull. Country and date unknown.

Trails from Texas

Nine million cattle were driven over trails from Texas to northern markets between 1867 and 1890. In the early years most of those cattle came from South Texas, where they were raised by ranchers who practiced a system of open-range ranching characterized by unfenced pastures, annual roundups of cattle, and long trail drives to markets. The cowboys who tended these cattle and drove them north became iconic American heroes in the 1880s and 1890s.

The Chisholm Trail was the major route for cattle being moved north out of Texas. It had so many branches that it has been compared to a tree. The roots were feeder trails from all over South Texas, the trunk was the main trail north across Texas and Indian Territory, and the branches were trails that led to various railheads in Kansas. The Guadalupe River Valley and Cuero were on one of the South Texas feeder trails.

Open-range ranching was replaced in the 1890s by a system that made use of pastures fenced with barbed wire, windmills, and rail transportation to move cattle. But the cowboy hero that it gave birth to has remained part of our national heritage, and the cowboy's skills are still part of the legacy of the Guadalupe River Valley.

"In 1883, all the cattle in the world seemed to be coming up out of Texas. ... When I rode up on a little hill to look for the horses, I could see seven herds behind us. I knew that there were eight herds ahead of us, and I could see the dust from thirteen more of them on the other side of the river."

Teddy Blue Abbott on the North Platte River, 1883.

This is just crazy. Being able to see evidence of 31 herds of cattle at the same time. How was there any grass for them to graze on? I had no idea of the numbers.



Barbara Whittear

The Guadalupe River Valley

The Guadalupe River rises in the Hill Country of Texas and flows southeast 230 miles to the Gulf of Mexico. In its lower valley, its basin includes DeWitt, Gonzales, Goliad, Victoria, Refugio, Calhoun, Lavaca, and Karnes counties. These counties embrace segments of the Blackland Prairie, the Post-Oak Savannah, and the Coastal Prairie regions

of Texas, which provide some of the best grazing land in Texas. In 1860, there were forty times as many cattle as people in this region. One-fourth of all of the cattle in Texas grazed here. In the years following the Civil War, the lower Guadalupe River Valley became the cradle of Texas's beef cattle industry.

Grasses and Longhorns

In the early 1800s, the prairies of the lower Guadalupe River Valley were covered with nutritious native grasses, such as Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem, Indiangrass, Switchgrass, Eastern Gamagrass, and Gulf Cordgrass. These grasses have been present in the Guadalupe River Valley for at least 6,000 years. The Longhorn cattle that roamed these prairies were a more recent arrival. They were descended from the cattle brought to Mexico by the Spanish in the 1500s and introduced into Texas by Spanish settlers along the Rio Grande and at the missions around San Antonio and Goliad in the early 1700s. The Longhorns thrived on the native grasses.



Longhorn by Tom Lea
Courtesy of the Harry Ransom Center,
The University of Texas at Austin and the
Tom Lea Institute, El Paso, Texas

Livestock

After the Civil War a market for beef cattle developed in the North. Ranchers in the Guadalupe River Valley responded by driving herds of Longhorns, which were abundant in Texas, to northern markets. In the mid-1870s the Guadalupe River Valley ranchers started importing heavier breeds of English cattle such as Durhams, Angus, Devons, Sussexes, and Herefords, as well as Brahmas from India, to replace the tough, rangy Longhorns. They developed scientific breeding programs, which required fenced pastures, to improve their livestock so that their steers would bring higher prices on the beef market. By the early 1900s, the hardy Longhorn was almost extinct.

The Cracker, the Vaquero, and the Cowboy

Two Ranching Traditions



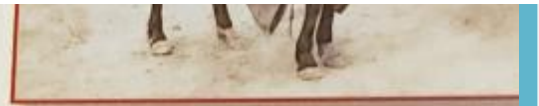
Two different open-range ranching traditions met and blended in the Guadalupe River Valley. The Mexican *vaqueros* who came north with the first settlers from Mexico relied on horsemanship and the *reata* or lariat to control cattle. The Southern Anglo-Americans who arrived later made use of dogs and stockwhips for the same purpose. Southern cowboys were called crackers, from the sound made by their whips. The cracker met the *vaquero* in the Guadalupe River Valley. The result was the Texas cowboy. Texas cowboys were white, black, and Mexican; what they had in common was their skill with horses and lariats and their instinctive understanding of cattle. The ambition of every boy who grew up here in the 1870s and 80s was to be a cowboy.

The techniques of the cracker were developed in the Highlands of the British Isles and brought to South Carolina by British settlers in the 1600s. Both white and black South Carolinians worked cattle with dogs and stock whips and confined them in corrals

called cowpens. South Carolinians carried the techniques to Florida and across the coastal regions of Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. They were brought to Texas by both black and white immigrants from those regions.

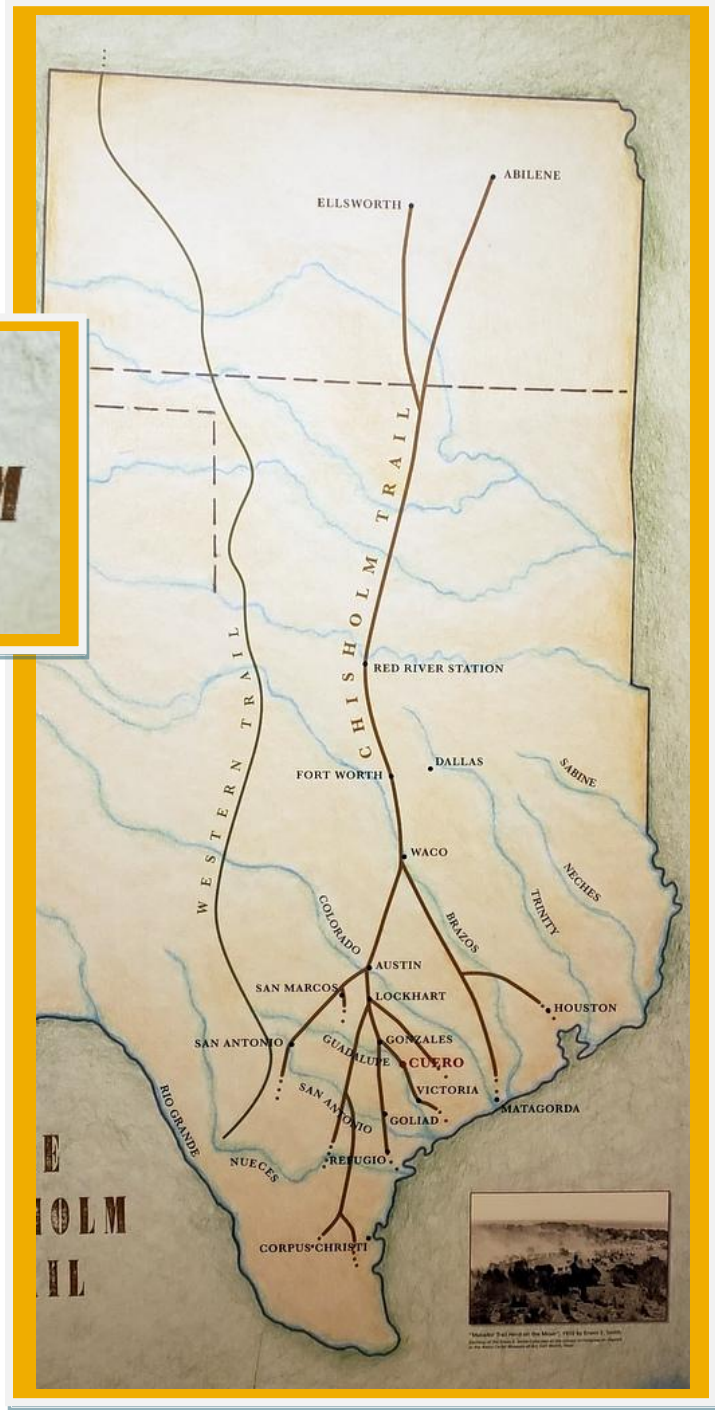
The *vaquero* worked cattle from horseback, using a lasso and a *desjarretadera*, or hocking knife. His tools and distinctive dress developed on the vast Mesa del Norte of Mexico in the 1500s, where cattle were raised to feed the silver-mining

towns of Mexico's northern frontier, and were brought to Texas along with the Longhorns by Spanish settlers in the 1700s. The two traditions met and blended in the Guadalupe River Valley, producing that unique creature, the Texas cowboy.



"Texas Cowboy, San Antonio"
 Courtesy of the Degoyler Library,
 Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas

**THE
 CHISHOLM
 TRAIL**



"Herd of Longhorns on the Plains", 1870 by Edwin S. Spaulding
 Courtesy of the Texas State Library and Archives

Castrating and Doctoring

Castration of male calves has been a technique of herd management for many centuries. Castrated calves are more docile and manageable when they became adult steers, and meat from steers is more marketable than meat from bulls. Castration also makes a certain degree of

I can see it now, the hands of every guy who's reading this have just started to move to cover his groin.

D 858 Castrating Knife, spring back, Each... \$1.25
D 860 Ziegler's Castrating Knife, Each... \$2.00
Postage, 4c.

Castrating Knife, Sears Roebuck Catalog, 1897

selective breeding possible. The operation was usually performed with a pocket knife. The severed testicles, dusted with flour and fried, were considered a delicacy and were called "mountain oysters." After the operation, the wound was brushed with pine tar to repel flies. By the twentieth century, calves were vaccinated to combat blackleg and screwworms after branding and castration.

And every female who's reading this is going 'oooooh, gross'

This was quite an elaborate Indian garb.



Explore the Chuck Wagon

1880s

To meet the demand for quality-built chuck wagons, wagon companies like Studebaker and Moline produced thousands of specialty chuck wagons. The \$200 Studebaker Roundup Wagon was prized for its tight (dust-free), metal-lined food storage areas.



Food truck,
New York City, 2011

TODAY

Food trucks, with their on-board kitchens and often gourmet-quality offerings, have become very popular on many city streets. These descendents of the hardscrabble chuck wagons now feed hungry urban cowboys everyday.



This is what my RV would look like if I didn't work hurricanes

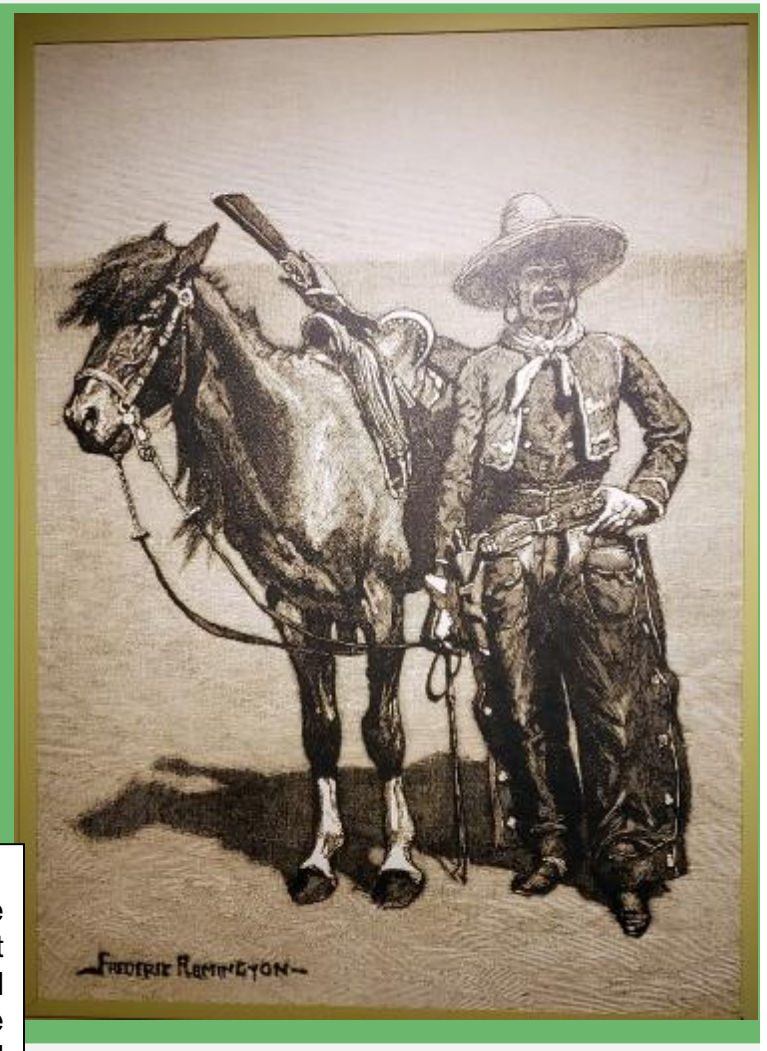




"Cowboys Around the Chuck Wagon", 1890s by Andrew Forbes

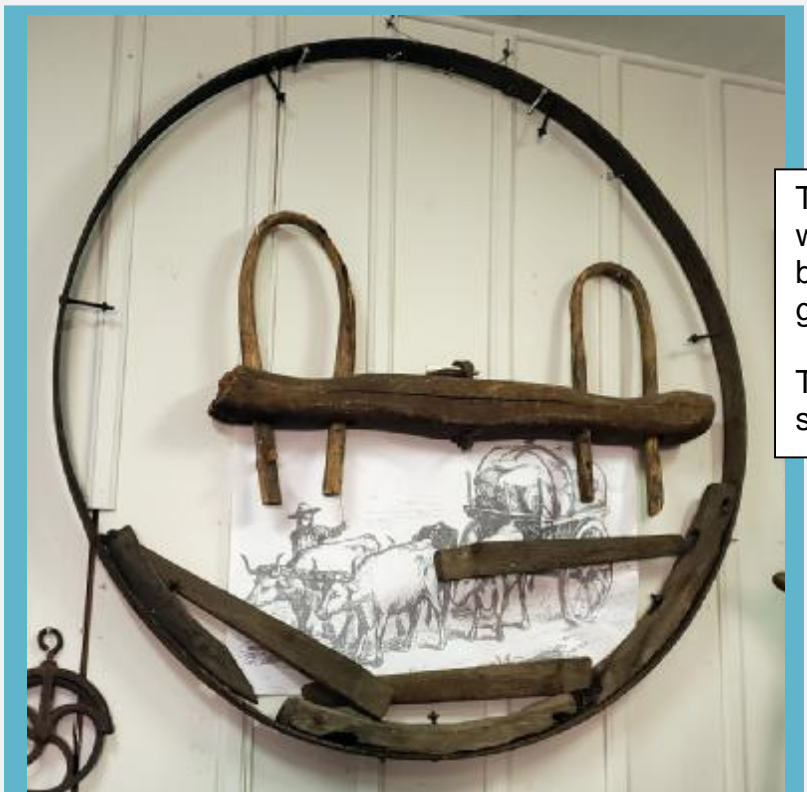
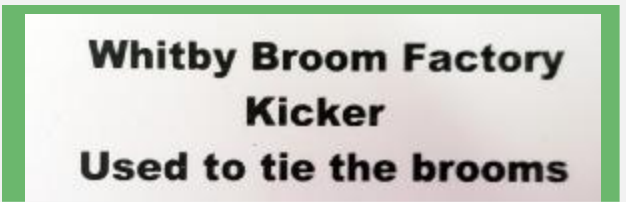
Courtesy of the Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Forbes Collection

When is the next round-up Steve?



The art to the right is a Frederic Remington. There was a short documentary made by the same guys that made *Lonesome Dove*, and that was the end. I spent a couple hours here and enjoyed it immensely. It was worth the wait. I ate lunch in the museum parking lot and then headed to my next stop below.





This was just a small, two room building with a couple interesting items, but a brochure told me it was the best place to gather information.

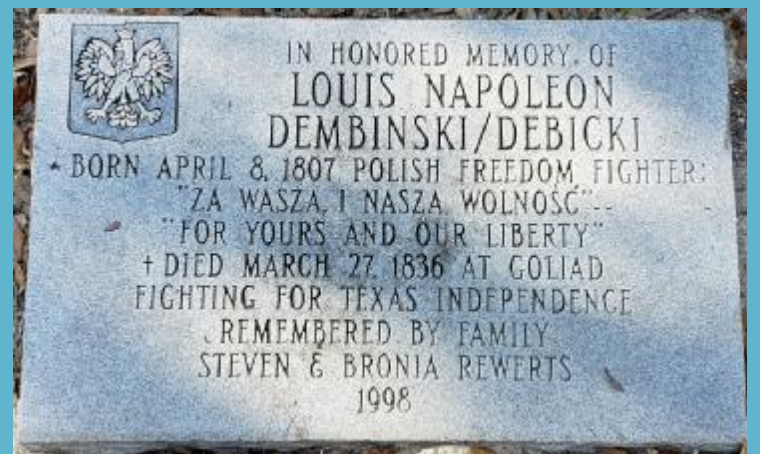
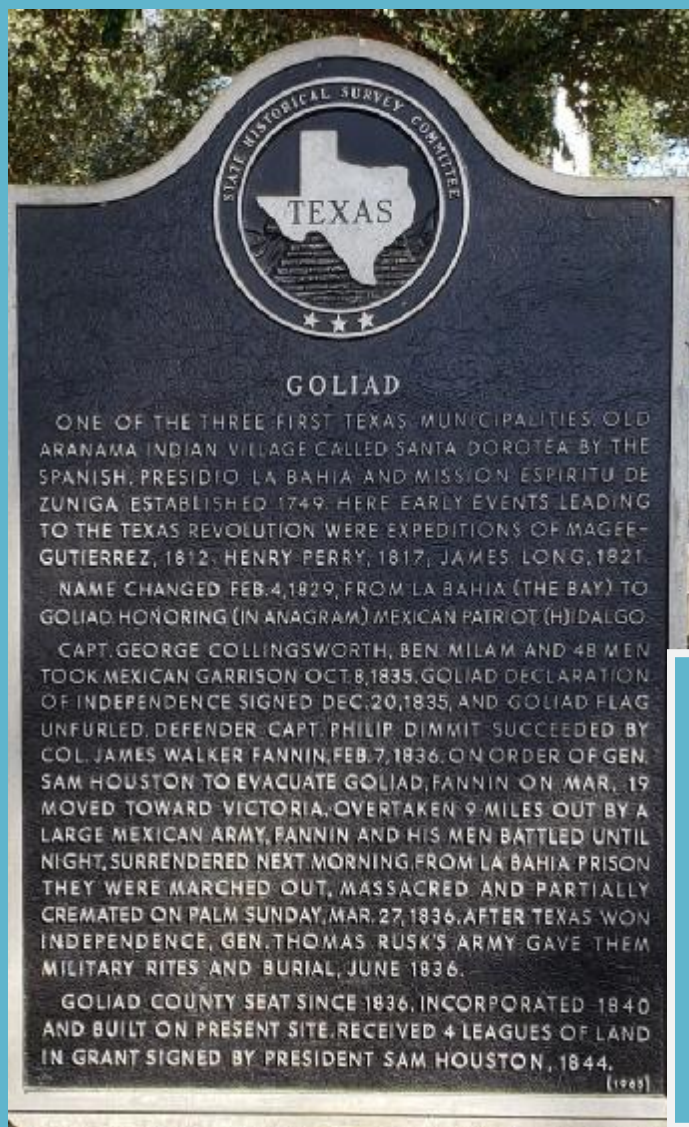
The wagon wheel rim on the wall is at least six feet in diameter.

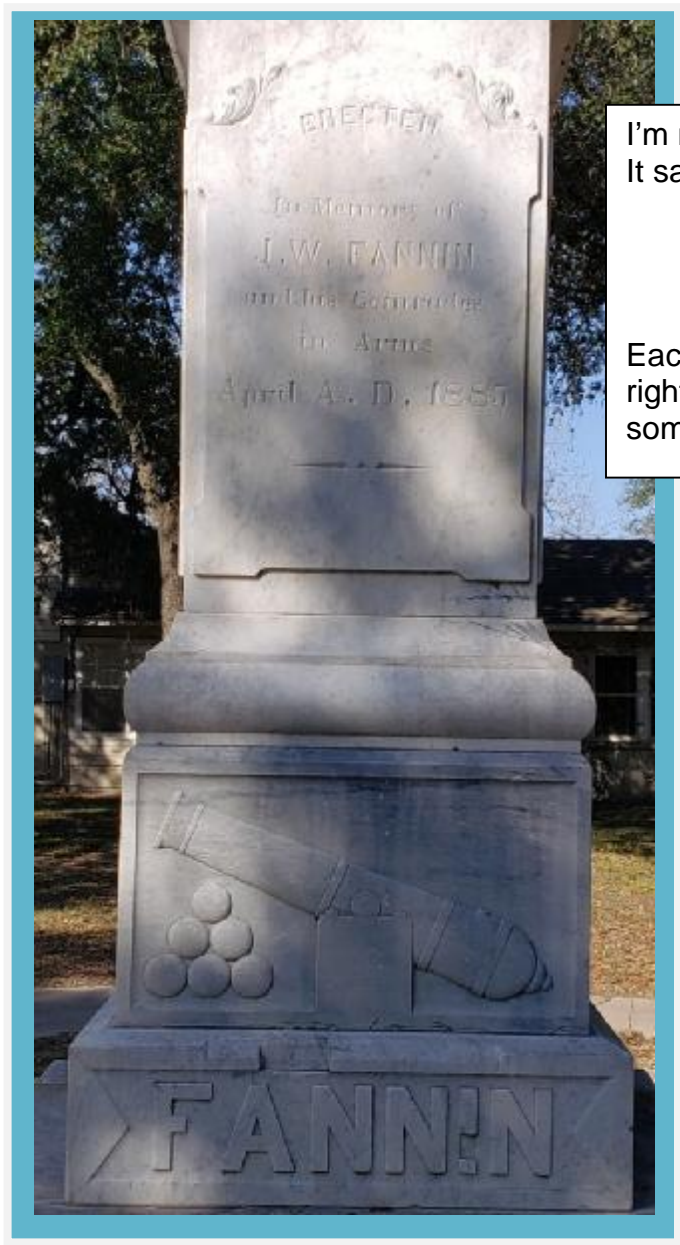
Origin of the name "Texas"

Tejas is the Spanish spelling of a Caddo Indian word *taysha*, which means "friend" or "ally." In the 17th century the Spanish knew the westernmost Caddo peoples as "the great kingdom of Tejas" and the name lived on to become the name of the 28th state of the United States--*Texas*

If you remember, I made a comment earlier that Texas was not a Spanish word - I prefer to think of it as being half right.

After the museum I noticed this park across the street and walked over to take a look. It was rather strange since there is a large memorial to Fannin over by the Presidio. My research never revealed anything about this park.





I'm not sure if you can read it or not.

It says

“Erected in Memory of J.W. Fannin
and his Comrades in Arms
April A.D. 1885”

Each side says something different, even standing right below I could not read two of the sides. I saw something about The Alamo, but that was it.

There were two of these cannons in the park also. It's somewhat awe-inspiring that these cannons were actually used to fight for Texas Independence 185 years ago.





Ok folks, here's a first. I had already taken over 70 photos, and since I didn't want to make my night longer I found this big, wide open field on the county fairgrounds and played with my drone. You can just see the RV on the left. I didn't notice it at first, but there are a couple turkey vultures on top of the light pole and one flying around. I was worried they might attack the drone.





What is it with trees in the streets down here? If I turn around I can see three more in the next two blocks. Weird.

The train whistle I heard last night was coming from two diesel locomotives pulling 147 empty coal cars with another two diesel pushers in the rear. I assume they were from the nearby power plant.

The weather is supposed to be great tomorrow and hopefully I will be able to get on the bike and also do a little hiking.

Until next time.....