



In Search of El dorado

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

Hello to Family & Friends

Angel of Goliad Hike and Bike Trail



It was a rough night. I did not get to bed until after 2:00 a.m. Before I even climbed into bed the wind picked up and started to rock the RV. The gusts had to be over 30 MPH. I could hear the slideout awning above me flapping away and a lot of creaking and groaning. It kept up for 2-3 hours and I'm not sure I slept during that time at all. I do remember waking up around six and not being able to fully go back to sleep. With about three hours of sleep I rolled out of bed at eight. No damage to the awning thankfully. After breakfast and a planning session I took off for the park.

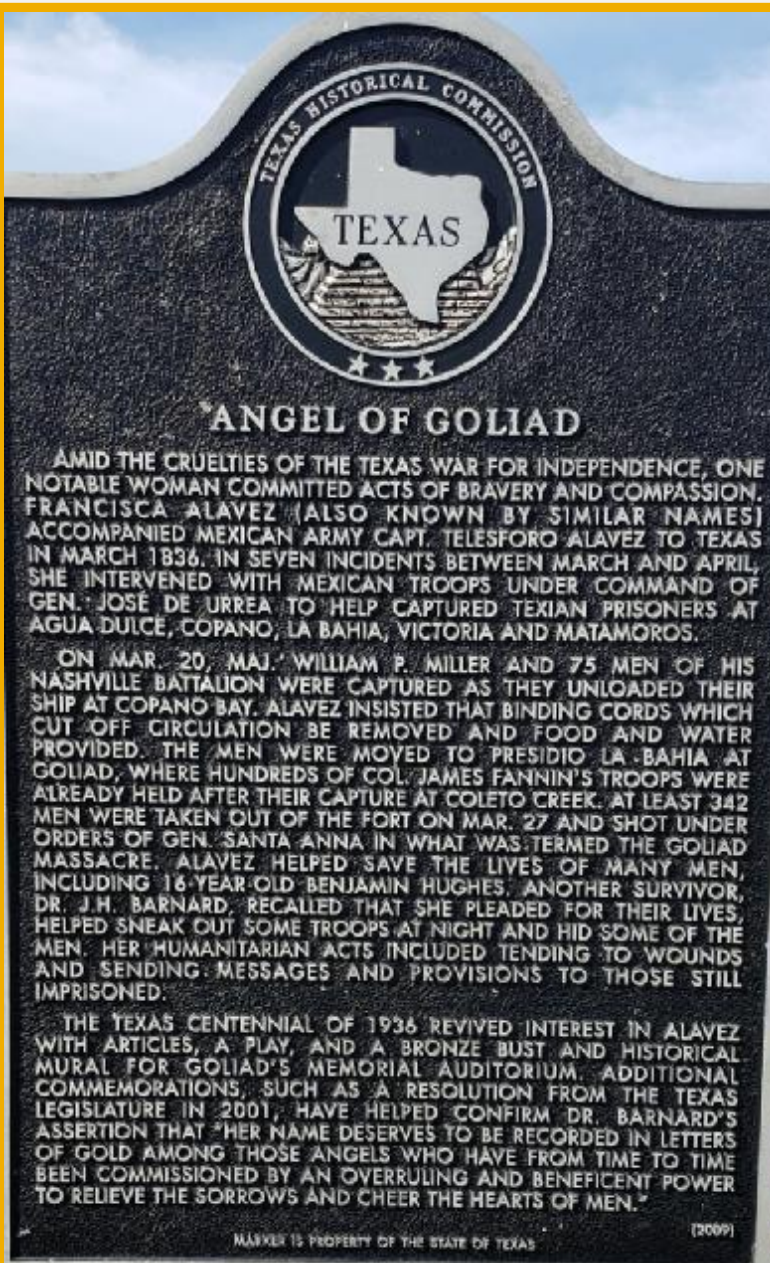
This bike trail starts here at Branch River Park, just down the street from the county courthouse. Let's face it, this trail is not really made for biking. Bridges with wood decking; another deck that would have been a spiral if it was round, with about eight U-turns down the hill then slowly up a rise, still wood planks, for another 200-300 feet before hitting pavement. Not too bad on an electric bike, but very difficult on a regular bike.



The actions of Francisca Alvarez eventually dubbed her the title "Angel of Goliad." You can find a full sized statue of the Angel of Goliad near the Presidio La Bahía, which is approximately 1.5 miles from the start of this trail. Have fun and enjoy our Angel of Goliad Trail!



I have never seen so many ant hills in one place



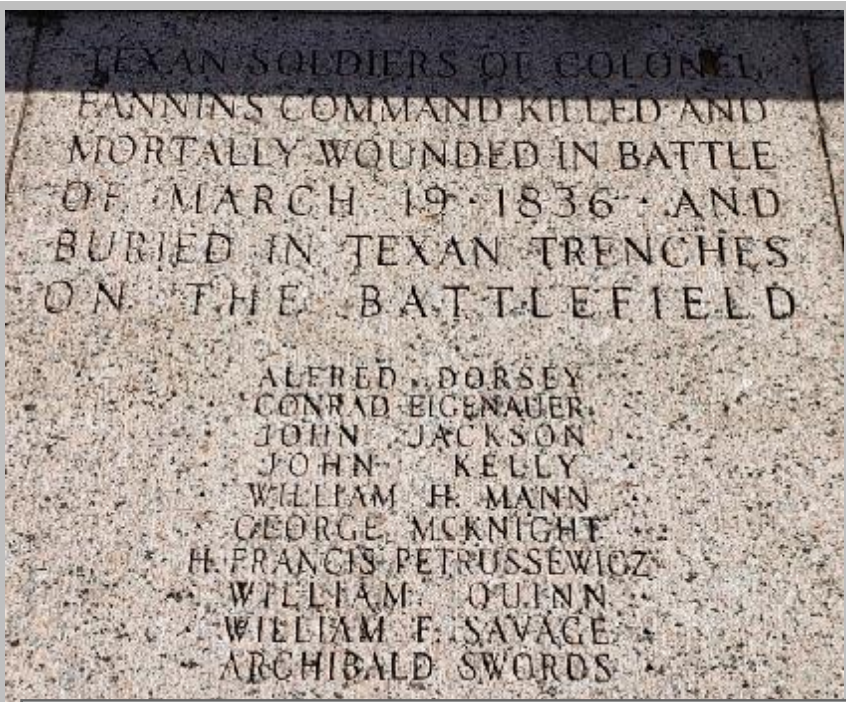
There is just no way to get a decent picture of this statue with the sun at its back



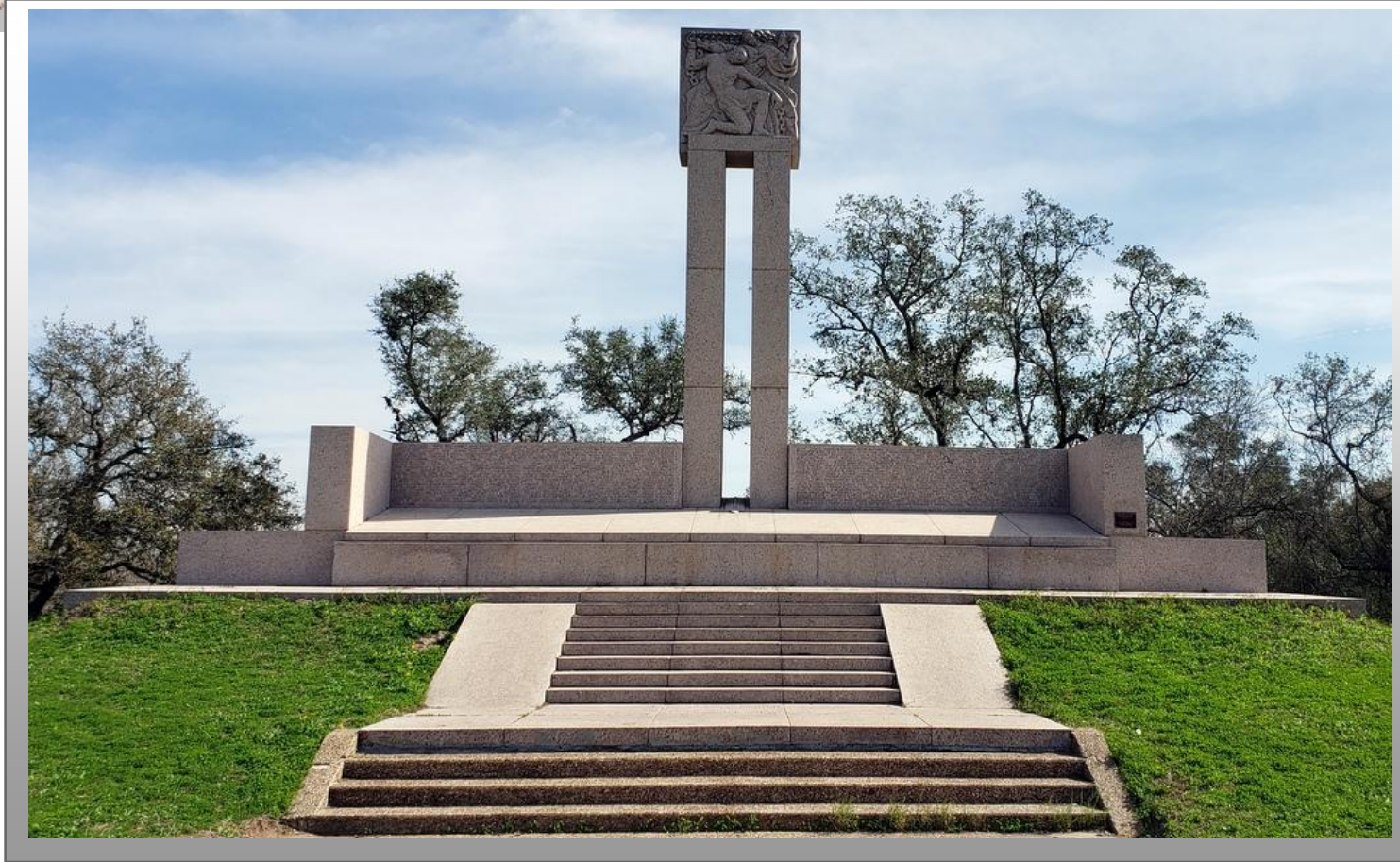
It was hard to read standing on top of it.

Erected by the State of Texas in honor of the Texan soldiers killed in the Battle of Coleto March Nineteenth 1836 under Colonel James Walker Fannin who were buried on the battlefield and of Colonel Fannin and his men executed March Twenty-Seven 1836 by order of General Santa Anna and their bodies burned. Beneath this monument repose their charred remains.

Remember Goliad



I was surprised to learn that an estimated 342 men were killed or executed here at Goliad, and that the combined total of Texans who lost their lives at the Alamo and at the Battle of San Jacinto combined is less than half that number. Probably because of Davy Crocket, Jim Bowie and a 13 day siege, the Alamo gets all the glory. I could find no movies about Goliad except a 2015 mini-series about the Texas Revolution (only 5 stars).



ZARAGOZA PLAZA

¡Viva el Cinco de Mayo!



In the Spanish colonization system, houses built outside the presidio fort walls by civilians and soldiers' families were intended to become a center of settlement. A diverse population - Spanish, Indian, African and European - flourished around the stone walls of Presidio La Bahía.

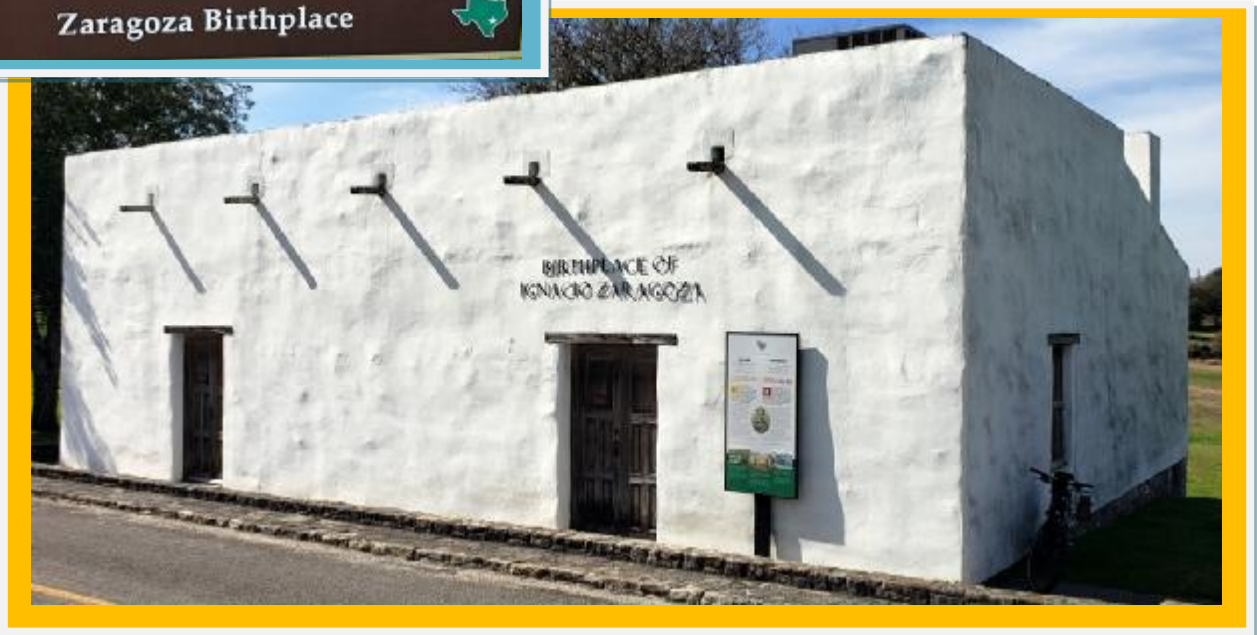
Ignacio Zaragoza was born in 1829 in one of the houses near Presidio La Bahía. His father, a presidial soldier, was reassigned frequently. He moved his family to other Texas presidios and finally to Matamoros in 1834. In Mexico, young Zaragoza became a military leader in the reform movements in the 1850s. In the battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862, his undermanned Mexican army defeated the French army, the supreme military force in the world at the time. The victory was a source of pride in Mexico and is now the focus of the international celebration of Cinco de Mayo.



**GENERAL IGNACIO ZARAGOZA
1829-1862
HERO OF CINCO DE MAYO**

I had never heard of the General before yesterday.

His victory over the invading French army at the Battle of Puebla, May 5, 1862, inspired the Mexican people in their long struggle to overthrow the foreign rule of Emperor Maximilian.



FATHER OF MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE

Hidalgo, a Mexican Catholic priest, called for a revolt against Spanish rule in 1810. He led an army of farmers, villagers, intellectuals, clergy, and native Indians towards Mexico City. Forces loyal to Spain captured Hidalgo and executed him. His sacrifice inspired others to continue the fight, and Mexico won its independence in 1821.

A

SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE INSPIRED THE COMMUNITY OF LA BAHÍA TO RENAME ITSELF AFTER A MEXICAN PATRIOT. THE CHANGE COINCIDENTALLY OCCURRED WEEKS BEFORE THE BIRTH OF A FUTURE NATIONAL HERO.

THE BIRTH OF A FUTURE NATIONAL HERO.

Residents petitioned the governor of the state of Coahuila and Texas to change La Bahía's name to Goliad. The new moniker was an anagram honoring Father Miguel Hidalgo, the priest who ignited the fight for Mexican independence. On February 4, 1829, the town of Goliad was born by official decree.

Military captain Miguel Gerónimo Zaragoza and María de Jesús Seguín were anticipating a change, too. On March 24th, the couple welcomed a second baby boy. They named him Ignacio.

BORN ON THIS SITE WHEN IT WAS CALLED "BAHIA DEL ESPIRITU SANTO," IN 1855, AT THE HEAD OF AN ARMY OF MEXICAN VOLUNTEERS, CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEFEAT OF DICTATOR SANTA ANNA.

ALWAYS A LEADER IN THE DEFENSE OF HIS COUNTRY, ON MAY 5, 1862, DURING THE INVASION OF THE FRENCH FORCES OF NAPOLEON III AND MAXIMILIAN, IN THE BATTLE OF PUEBLA, HE LED 4,000 POORLY ARMED SOLDIERS TO DEFEAT 8,000 VETERAN FRENCH ZOUAVES. THIS HEROIC VICTORY GAVE MEXICO ITS GREAT NATIONAL PATRIOTIC ANNIVERSARY, "EL CINCO DE MAYO."

(1967)





NINE FLAGS OVER GOLIAD



The history of Presidio La Bahía and Goliad can be traced through the flags of the various nations that have controlled this region of South Texas. The frequent change of flags throughout the 18th and 19th centuries reflects the site's turbulent past.



United States Flag
1845–1861 & 1865 to Present



First Independence Flag (Bloody Arm)
1835



First Republic of Texas Flag (Green Flag)
1812–1813



Confederate States Flag
1861–1865



Second Republic of Texas Flag (James Long)
1821



French Flag
1685–1690



Republic of Texas Flag
1836–1845



Mexican Flag
1821–1836



Spanish Flag
1519–1685 & 1690–1821

PRESIDIO LA BAHÍA

One of the most fought-over sites in Texas

The presidio Nuestra Señora de Loreto was originally established near Matagorda Bay (La Bahía del Espíritu Santo) in 1721 to prevent future French landings in the area and to protect the mission Nuestra Señora del Espíritu Santo de Zúñiga. It was relocated twice before finally moving here to the San Antonio River in 1749. This location provided protection for missions Espíritu Santo and Rosario and became a center of civil settlement on travel routes from the Gulf coast to interior Texas.



The presidio was one of most fought-over sites in Texas. Every attempt to change the order of government in colonial Texas involved the capture of the fort. In 1812, it was the site of the longest siege in Texas military history. Nine years later, it was the target of an American force attempting to conquer Texas for the United States. The presidio chapel was the site of the signing of the first Texas declaration of independence in 1835. And during the Texas Revolution in 1836, it served briefly as the headquarters of the Texan forces under Fannin and then as their temporary prison after their defeat at the battle of Coleto.

That's right, yesterday when I mentioned the French, Spanish and Mexicans occupying the same site, I forgot that what started as Fort St Louis was moved three times to this present location.



GUARDIAN OF THE BAY

You are standing at the entrance to one of the most historic sites in Texas—Presidio Nuestra Señora Santa María de Loreto de la Bahía Espiritu Santo. Relocated to this site in 1749, the Presidio La Bahía witnessed Spanish Texas' rise and decline, battles between rebels and royalists, and the dramatic struggle for Texas's independence 1835–36. The fort was reconstructed in the 1960s by the Kathryn Stoner O'Connor Foundation, and appears today as it did at the time of the Texas Revolution.

The rich history of Presidio La Bahía is in many ways the story of Texas. Learn about the people who lived and died here as you pass through the museum and visit the grounds. You will be walking in the footprints of history!

"I have given strict orders to the commandant of La Bahía to observe greater vigilance in guarding not only the road from the interior but also the coast and adjacent islands."
— Spanish Governor Antonio Martínez, May 27, 1818

WHAT IS A PRESIDIO?

A presidio is a Spanish fort built to secure an area and to provide protection to nearby missions, their personnel, their Indian converts, and the local population. It represented the king's authority over the frontier. A military garrison of soldiers lived here with their families.

Most of you should already know this because of Father Kino in California 2020 and Arizona 2019. I toured several of the Spanish presidios in those states.

I forgot to ask if this is the actual flag those men were waving that started the revolution.



A good view of the museum



This presidio was a virtual ruin. The job they did to re-create it is amazing. I wonder if it was ever used as a movie set.



OUR LADY OF LORETO CHAPEL

The front of the church –
Catholic of course

OUR LADY OF LORETO CHAPEL

First Texas Declaration of Independence from Mexico
Signed on the Altar
December 20, 1835

*Services have been held in this Chapel
Almost continuously since its Establishment*

**SERVICES HELD EVERY SUNDAY
5:00PM**



The Our Lady of Loreto Chapel was completed in 1779 as a place for the soldiers at the presidio to worship. It is one of the oldest churches in the United States, and one of the few buildings in this country with its original groin vaulted ceiling in place.



Courtesy of Davis Enterprises
Our Lady of Loreto Chapel, built in 1779, is one of the oldest churches in the United States.

In December 1835, the chapel was the site of the signing of the first Texas Declaration of Independence from Mexico. In March 1836, the Texan prisoners were held in the chapel before their execution in the Goliad Massacre.

After the revolution, the chapel was used as a residence. From 1846 to 1853 Judge Pryor Lea and his family lived here.

In 1853, the Catholic Church acquired the chapel and the rest of Presidio La Bahía from the town of Goliad. The chapel has been an active church ever since and celebrates Catholic mass every Sunday. Today the church is overseen by the Catholic Diocese of Victoria, Texas. There are no tax dollars spent at Presidio La Bahía.

Two of the notable works of art of Our Lady of Loreto Chapel are the fresco behind the altar and the statue in the niche outside above the chapel entrance. As part of the general improvements to the chapel in 1946 Antonio Garcia of Corpus Christi, sometimes known as the “Michelangelo of South Texas,” painted the striking fresco behind the altar. The Statue in the outside niche is of Our Lady of Loreto and was sculpted by Lincoln Borglum, son of Gutzon Borglum of Mount Rushmore fame.



Antonio Garcia, painter



Fresco painted in 1946 by Antonio Garcia



In 1846, a Tennessee volunteer, George C. Furber passed by Presidio La Bahía on his way to Mexico and left the following note in his diary: “Amid the ruins, the old church, on the brow of the hill overlooking the valley, stands out, the strongest and most uninjured. ... Its walls, and lofty arched stone roof, are blackened by the smoke from the fires of those who, from time to time, have made it a stopping-place for a night. ... The roof of the whole is of stone, and the flat top is made of that durable cement, of which the older Spaniards were so good manufacturers ...”



Courtesy of Dono Bertone



Well, I guess we now know why this location was chosen, quite the view. You can see our next destination from here.

A STRATEGIC LOCATION

The view from this bastion makes it easy to see why the Spanish chose to locate Presidio La Bahía on this ground. The San Antonio River provided a ready water supply. The fort's garrison could easily watch over Mission Espíritu Santo, only a short distance to the northwest. Mounted soldiers set out from Presidio La Bahía on patrols to combat hostile Indians as well as keep out "foreigners" such as the French, the English, and, later, the Americans.

The barracks





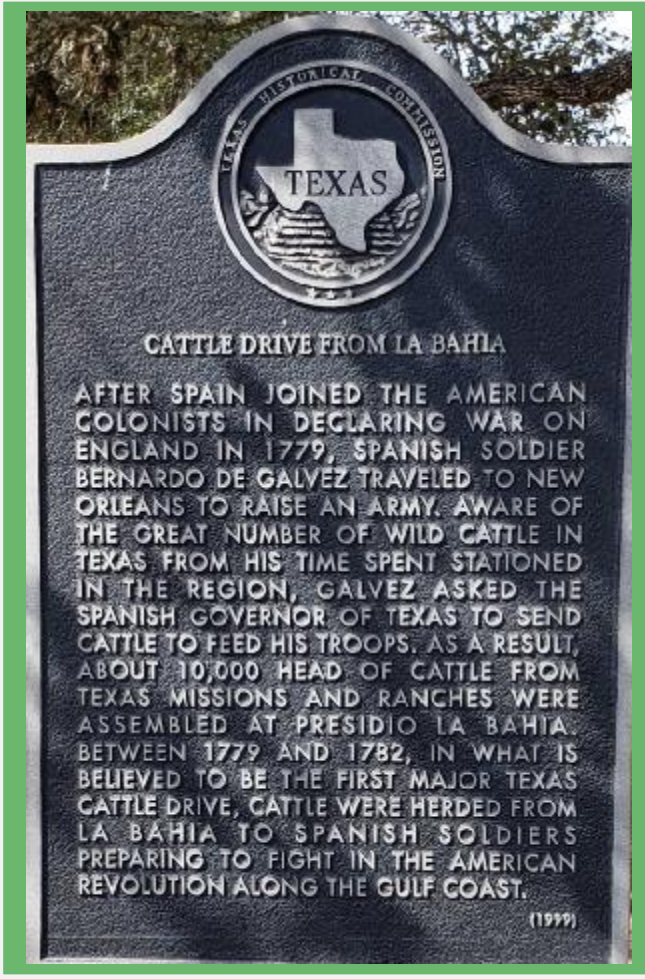
That is one large bellows



Below is a panoramic of the interior grounds of the presidio and my parting shot



That is the presidio at Goliad. I hopped back on my bike, back into the State Park, paid my \$4 at the ranger station, and started on my 'mission'. Ha Ha! Left is a stand-alone historical marker, right is the mission info.





The outside



The inside

It was probably the reality of just 3 hours of sleep hitting me, but I started to become very tired of museums. I imagine you guys are getting tired of museums also. Just think about it, you only see a small portion of the total, I include what I find interesting (being an average Joe I hope you are all in the same frame of mind with the content) but I read most of everything. My legs get sore standing in front of info boards and display cases. I need some scenery. Ok, enough complaining, back to the museum.

MODEL OF ESPÍRITU SANTO MISSION



CATTLE-

-THE WEALTH OF THE MISSION

The mission's cattle descended from herds brought by the earliest Spanish explorers. The missionaries found the environment of South Texas favorable for cattle ranching. As Texas's first great cattle ranch, Espiritu Santo claimed an estimated 40,000 head of cattle at its peak. Most of the herd roamed the mission's lands unbranded, causing disputes with neighboring Spanish settlements.

Rebuilding the Ruins



By the time the Civilian Conservation Corps arrived in 1935, the Mission was in ruins. The CCC reconstructed the structure with the help of Texas architect Raiford Stripling.

Workers cut local limestone and rebuilt the damaged walls. They mixed plaster and fired bricks made out of freshly dug clay in a kiln. You can see the remains of the quarry and kiln on a short walk down the Aranama Nature Trail.

These are some of the last remaining walls from the Mission's construction in 1758.



Abandoned and Neglected



In 1758, native people built the Mission from local limestone. After the Franciscan priests left, the Mission was largely abandoned. The structure crumbled, but the few remaining walls recalled a once-thriving community.

Look toward the Mission and see the different materials that make up the walls. By and large, the gray limestone walls are the remains of the 1758 construction, while the white plaster walls were reconstructed by the Works

I think they did a fantastic job of blending the old and the new.



WORKSHOP



MAYORDOMO'S OFFICE

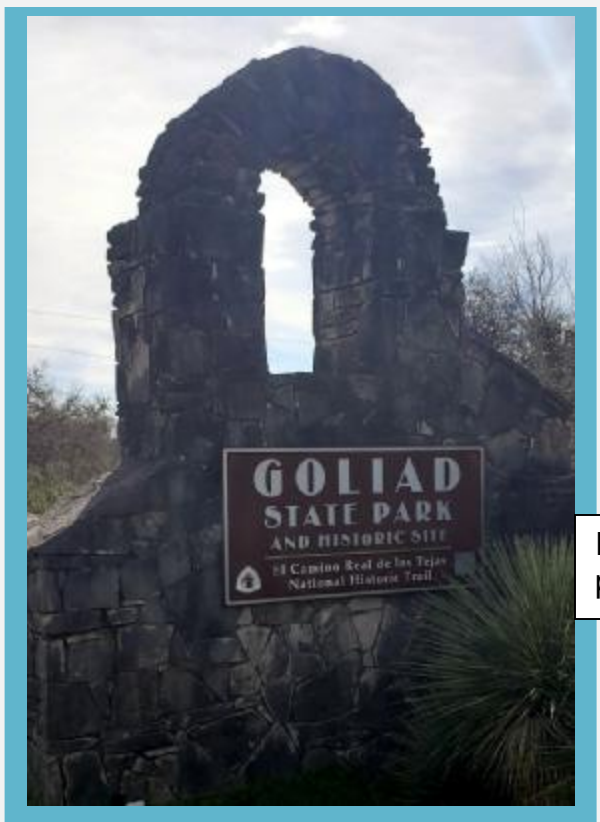
The mayordomo, an Indian convert selected by the missionaries, was overseer for the workshop. This room, refurnished to appear much as a mayordomo's office might have looked in the 18th century, was where daily work assignments were made, mission records kept, and tools and implements issued. This was the secular center of the mission, just as the church was the religious center.





Above – Most of the ceilings are made this way

Right – A crude sundial. Looking closely you can see the lines for 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. According to their clock it's about 12:40 p.m. According to my phone its 2:09 p.m. I guess they just wanted to get more out of their work day.



I neglected to put the entry photo at the front, sorry.

GOLIAD STATE PARK AND HISTORIC SITE

TEXAS
PARKS &
RECREATION

El Camino Real de los Tejas
Visitors Center



The Custodian's Cottage at Goliad
State Park and Historic Site



This house is anything but ordinary.
Designed by architects from the National Park
Service and built by workers from the Civilian
Conservation Corps, this unique building sits
at a crossroads of history.

Handmade Furniture

Equipped with a full woodshop, CCC artisans were able to replicate the ornate carvings of Spanish colonial furniture. The furniture in the Custodian's Cottage is all original and designed specifically for this house.





I have never seen stairs built like this before. And above they used half logs for the stringers. I don't think they're very practical, but they are unique.

Earning their Way

By 1933, the devastation of the Great Depression affected millions of American families. Jobs were scarce. Drought destroyed farmers' crops and rural populations saw steep drops in agricultural prices. Communities suffered. People began to lose hope. In response, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created a number of federal work programs. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) put unemployed men to work on forestry, soil conservation, and park building projects.

Of course, with all the National Parks and Monuments you have joined me in visiting, we all know about the CCC. My uncle Jerry was in the CCC back in the 30's and worked in northern Wisconsin.



I do enjoy a well designed enclosed patio



I believe there is even a book about the County Courthouses of Texas. This one was built in 1899.

I am attempting to upload a drone video to YouTube and place a link in this newsletter that you can click on to see it. It may work, it may not. If it does, keep in mind it took me about four hours to put it together. The color quality is poor due to six different videos being stitched together and being played at 2x and 4x normal speed. If I didn't speed them up it would be pretty boring. Another factor – I am running out of power for the laptop and might not be able to upload it.

I left Goliad heading east to Rockport to see a Roadside America sight. Naturally, my Tom Tom took me to the wrong place. I was still 14 miles away when I had 'arrived at my destination'. The sun would have been down by the time I really arrived, so I turned around and headed to a WalMart in Aransas Pass for the night.

Nearby is the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, but it's mostly birds which I have only a passing interest in. Maybe a trip to the visitor center? Who knows, I might enjoy it.

Once I parked I just had to take a nap. I felt much better afterwards, but I just let out a huge yawn.

Temp is supposed to get down to 48 tonight.

I'm just killing time until the upload is complete.

Almost forgot. The video was made yesterday, but I ran out of patience early this morning and went to bed. The white building you see is the Mission we toured today. Wish me luck

<https://youtu.be/XuEAoUem7Yk>

Until next time.....