



# In Search of El dorado

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

## Hello to Family & Friends

Another January, and another winter adventure starts to take shape. This time I'm headed to Texas. Why Texas you ask? My reasons are purely financial. Morgan will be moving from Houston, to Burlington, Vermont in April. She and I are planning to visit Guadalupe Mountains and Carlsbad Caverns National Parks in March, and it's cheaper to fly her from Houston to El Paso than it is from Vermont to El Paso next year.

I left Wisconsin on Thursday, January 7<sup>th</sup> about 4 p.m. As I passed the East Troy exit on I43, about 4:30 p.m., a bright red light appeared on the RV dashboard – Oil overfill warning – Reduce oil level!!

I just had the oil changed on Tuesday. I pulled off in East Troy and Googled the problem. Some say remove a pint or so of oil; some say ignore and drive on as the oil is expanding now that it's warm and triggering the warning light. I turned the engine off and restarted and the warning went away.

I ventured forth!

Ten minutes later the warning light came on again. DARN!! I pulled off at the Elkhorn exit and called Jerry's, where I had the oil changed. It was now 4:45 and they asked me to bring it in and they would take care of it. I told them it would be about an hour, they close at 6:00, but they said that's ok. They will fix it when I get here.

Two hours later, at 6:45 p.m., I again drove past the Elkhorn exit. That's drove PAST!! Jerry's took out a little oil and I have not had a problem since. I guess that's why it's called an adventure.

Back on the road, I made it to a rest stop somewhere in Missouri around midnight and drove into Texarkana Friday as the sun was setting. You may remember this stop was on my itinerary back in 2018 when I visited Hot Springs National Park on my way down here to visit Morgan, but the weather was so cold I skipped all stops after Hot Springs and drove straight to Houston.



But am I in Texas? Or am I in Arkansas? Both. I am straddling the state line. What is even stranger is the next photo.





Along with me, this building is half in Texas and half in Arkansas.

Since the sun was setting I just drove another 30 minutes south to Atlanta, Atlanta, Texas that is, and spent the night in a WalMart parking lot. A half-dozen semis joined me there.





Historic Jefferson, Texas. I have to admit, I was impressed. There is a lot of history here, a lot to see, at least a dozen or more antique shops, a couple museums, a model train layout (you know how I love model trains), and we'll see what else. I started at the visitor center below. (It was open)



Since the town is relatively small, at least from a tourist standpoint, I left the RV in the VC parking lot and headed towards the main drag. The train depot below is pretty well known, but they are also closed at this time of the year.



Looking at the photo below, you can see there's a definite New Orleans French Quarter influence to the architecture. The arches and the wrought iron, balcony railings. Very NOLA'ish.





Although the young man in the VC mentioned a place I might like – “It’s up that way...no...that way....no..yeah..I think it’s up the street there...pretty sure.” He did say I had to visit the General Store. It was impressive with a little bit of everything, including an old fashioned soda fountain. I was tempted, but it was only 10:30 in the morning. Maybe this afternoon on my way back to the RV.



This was the museum I was looking forward to visiting, it sounds very intriguing. I stopped by and tried the door about 11:00 on this nice sunny Saturday morning. My luck holds true.

## MUSEUM OF MEASUREMENT AND TIME

### Hours of Operation

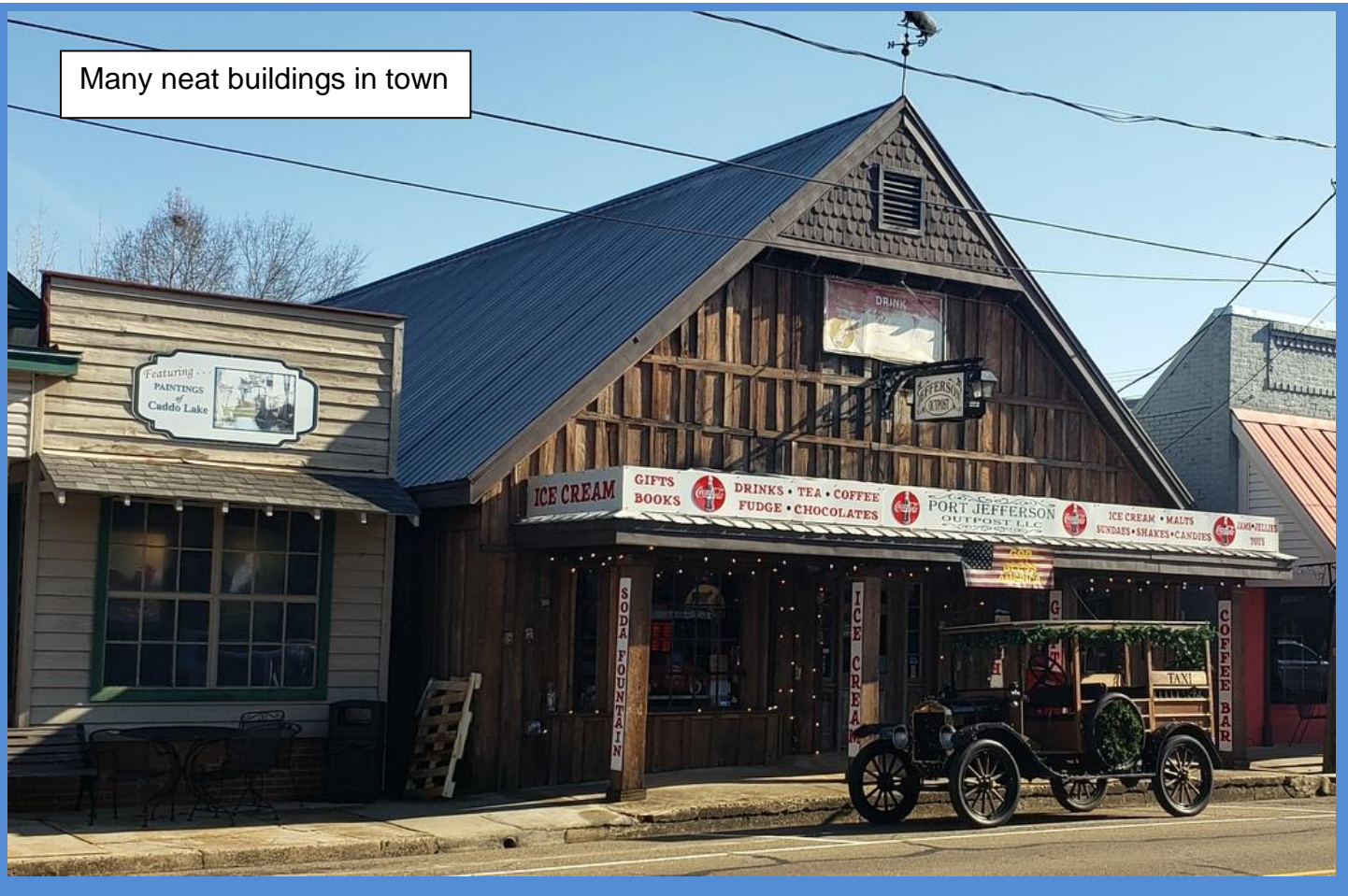
Thursday – Saturday 10:00 – 5:00  
Sunday 1:00 – 5:00

NO ADMISSION FEE  
DONATIONS APPRECIATED

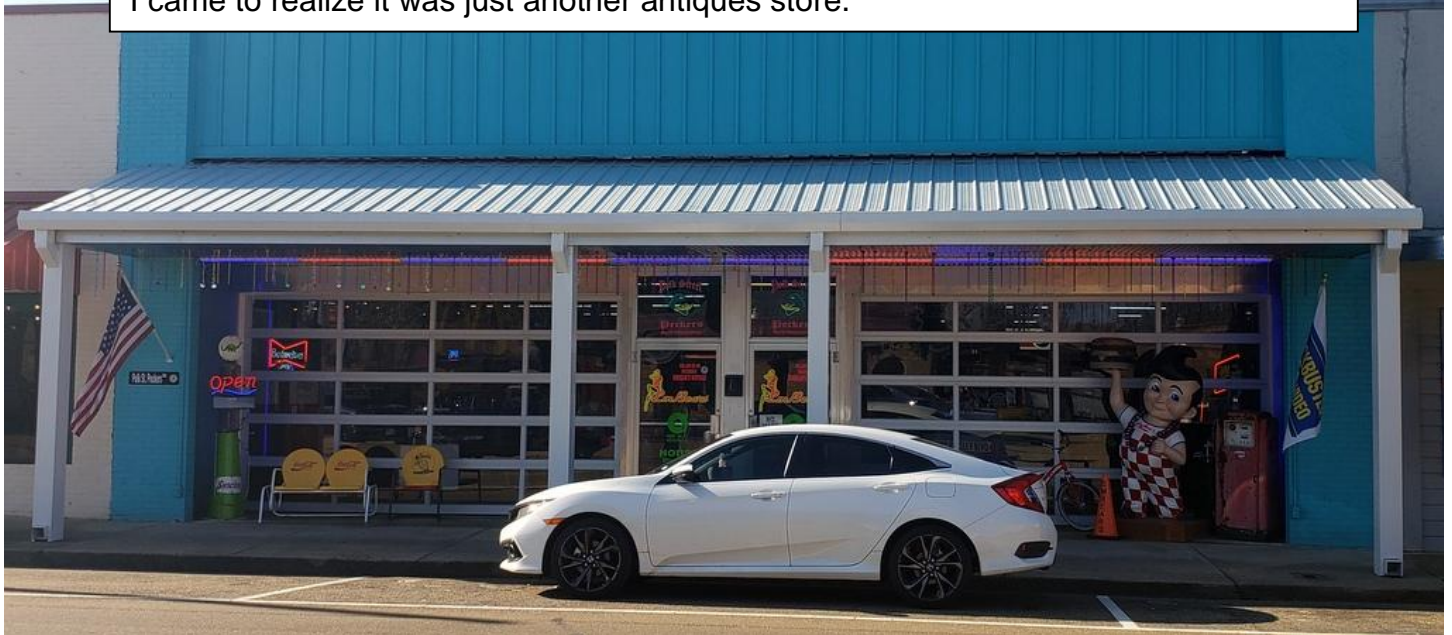




Many neat buildings in town



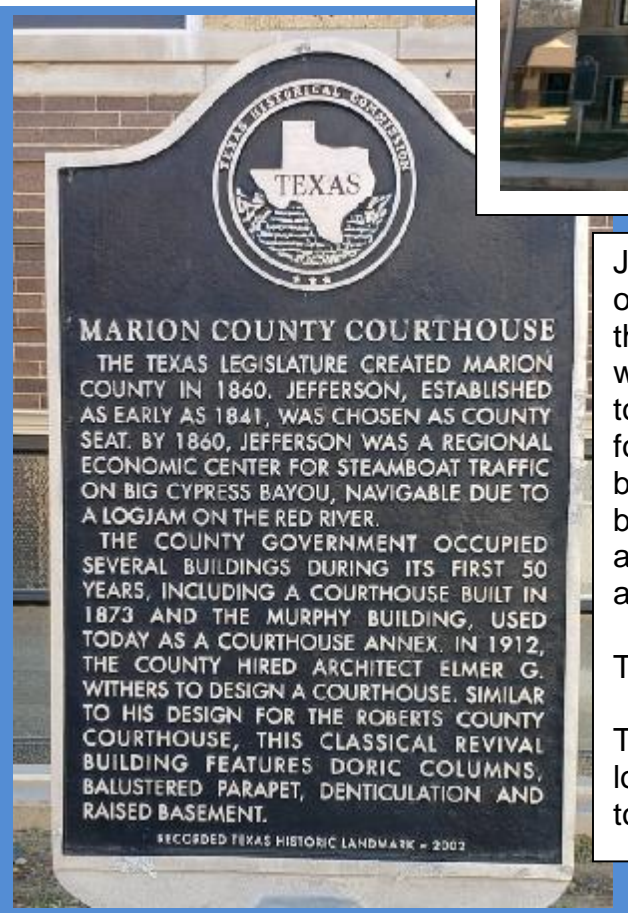
The shop below looked and sounded a lot more interesting than it was. Elvis songs I had not heard before were playing over the loudspeaker and a quick glance through the open door showed me chrome bumpers and an Elvis mannequin. Once I entered I came to realize it was just another antiques store.







A little more French Quarter influence



Jefferson is one of the oldest towns in Texas (we'll see the oldest one a little later today). It's somewhat unique in that the Big Cypress Bayou (they pronounce it buyo) became wider and deeper due to a logjam on the Red River. The town fathers dredged the bayou and made it wide enough for a riverboat to turn around, thus allowing freight to be brought in and (mostly) bales of cotton shipped out. People became rich and built big houses; citizens went on to fame and fortune as judges and politicians; the town grew in size and wealth.

Then they blew up the log jam.

The bayou water level dropped and riverboats could no longer make the trip. After a decline of several years the town settled on tourism to replace the shipping of cotton.





Oddly enough I have heard of Carrie Nation, but I have not heard of singer Vernon Dalhart.



Excelsior House Pictured below

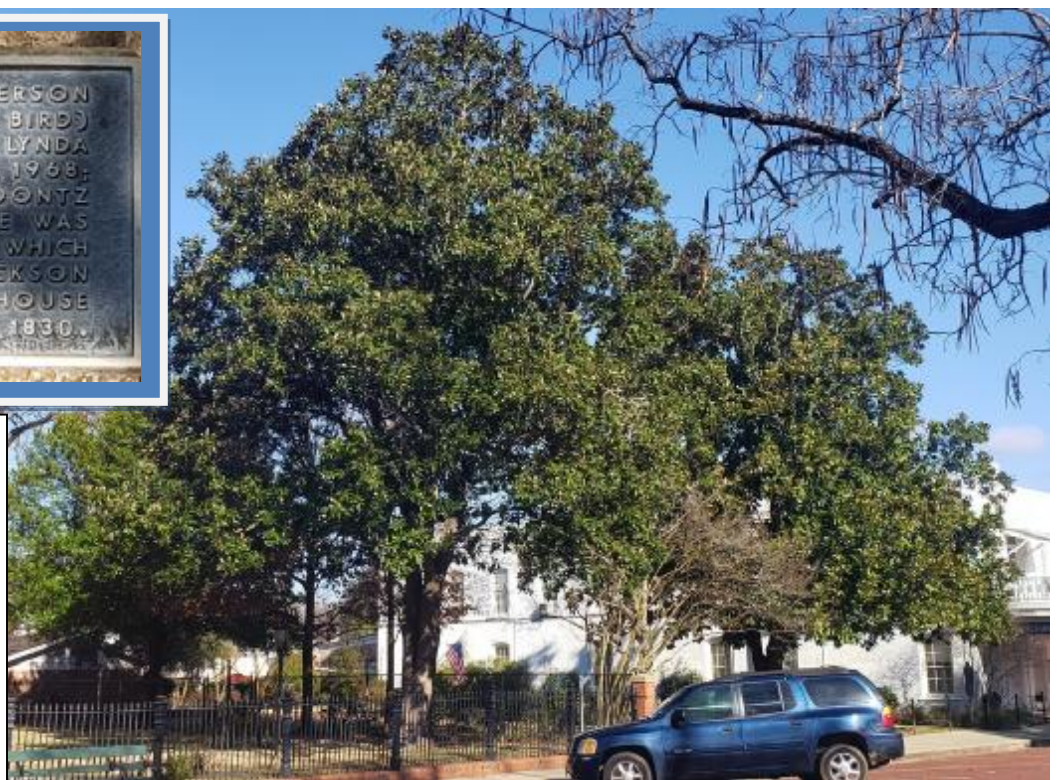
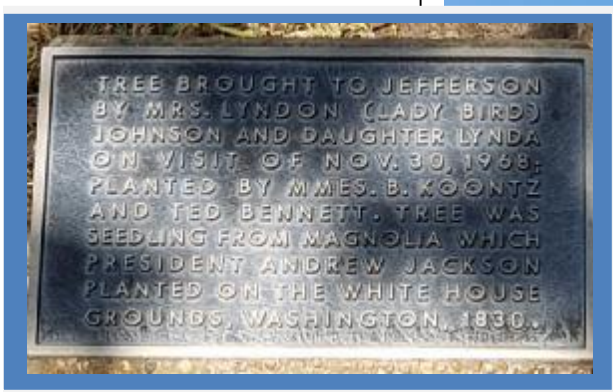




This one was closed due to covid

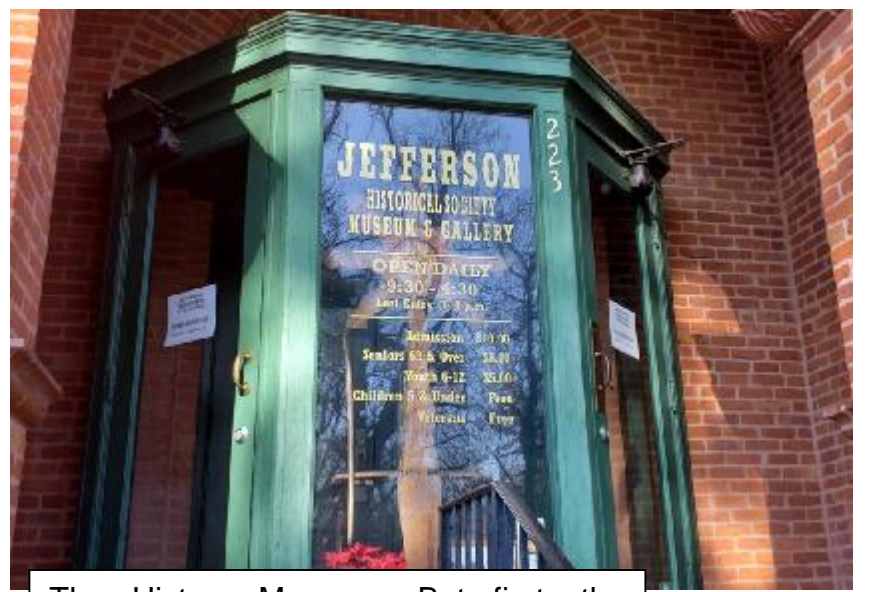






All of the buildings and other sights above I had no prior knowledge of. My itinerary only had the Time Museum, the train depot and the Historic Museum we will see shortly. I was very glad to have stopped and taken a walk around.





The History Museum. But first, the model train layout, in a building designed and built explicitly for the layout.





The miniature Texas & Pacific Railway train chugs along more than 190 feet of rail on a 14-by-48-foot layout. It moves through a 1950s West Texas landscape with buttes, outcroppings, two villages, oil wells, ranches, handmade trees and miniature people. As the train moves from one town to another you see a dog chasing a cat, a truck traveling up a caliche road beside the tracks, tiny stores, a workman repairing a window, a dentist's office and a pawnshop. The layout, painstakingly created by hand over a 30-year period by R.D. Moses of Fort Worth, was donated to the Jefferson Historical Museum. It was very detailed, but could not match the North County Railroad near Oceanside, California last year, but it was good.



Then on into the museum itself.

Ok, a little thought on museums. Remember, my newsletter, my website, my opinions. I will be visiting a lot of museums over the next few weeks as I work my way down the Texas Gulf Coast (I can hear the groans all the way from Texas).



I like museums. But I'm a visual kind of guy. The 1860 dress from Miss Jones, the typewriter used by Joe Smith, Belle McDonalds rag doll collection – all with small but long paper placards with their provenance, display case after display case, can really get boring, at least for me. Maybe some people will read all those placards, but I zipped through this museum, all 4 floors, in about 20 minutes. My most interesting find was the info on the Caddo Community.



# Independent but United

While the Caddo are often referred to as if they were a single, unified group, they actually considered themselves a collection of many named extended family groups who shared a common culture of strict social rank. The scattered Caddo came together at mound centers like Caddoan Mounds during sacred and festive times.

- ❖ **Xinesi** — This head of the larger alliance of family groups was born into his job, lived at the mound center and served as an intermediary with God (Caddi Ayo).
- ❖ **Caddi** — Each village had a head man called a caddi who was also born into his job.
- ❖ **Canahas** — These village elders advised the caddi.

- ❖ **Tammas** — Tammas were enforcers who made sure people obeyed the caddi and behaved properly.
- ❖ **Connas** — As village priests, connas cured the sick and performed daily rituals.
- ❖ **Common People** — Farmers and craftspeople, commoners also provided the labor to build the sacred mounds.



This depiction of a mound center and village shows a xinesi living on a mound made for important people.

This was new knowledge for me. I had never heard of any of these tribes. The photo to the right is probably why.

# A Time of Crying

Visiting Caddo country briefly in 1542, Europeans brought Old World crops like peaches and watermelon, which the Caddo quickly adopted. They also brought smallpox, measles and cholera to which the Caddo had no resistance. Three generations later, these diseases had killed as many as 95% of the Caddo. What do you think it felt like to be Caddo during this time?

DO NOT  
**SPIT ON THE FLOOR**  
TO DO SO MAY  
**SPREAD DISEASE**

I thought this sign, on the way down to the basement, was rather apropos of the times

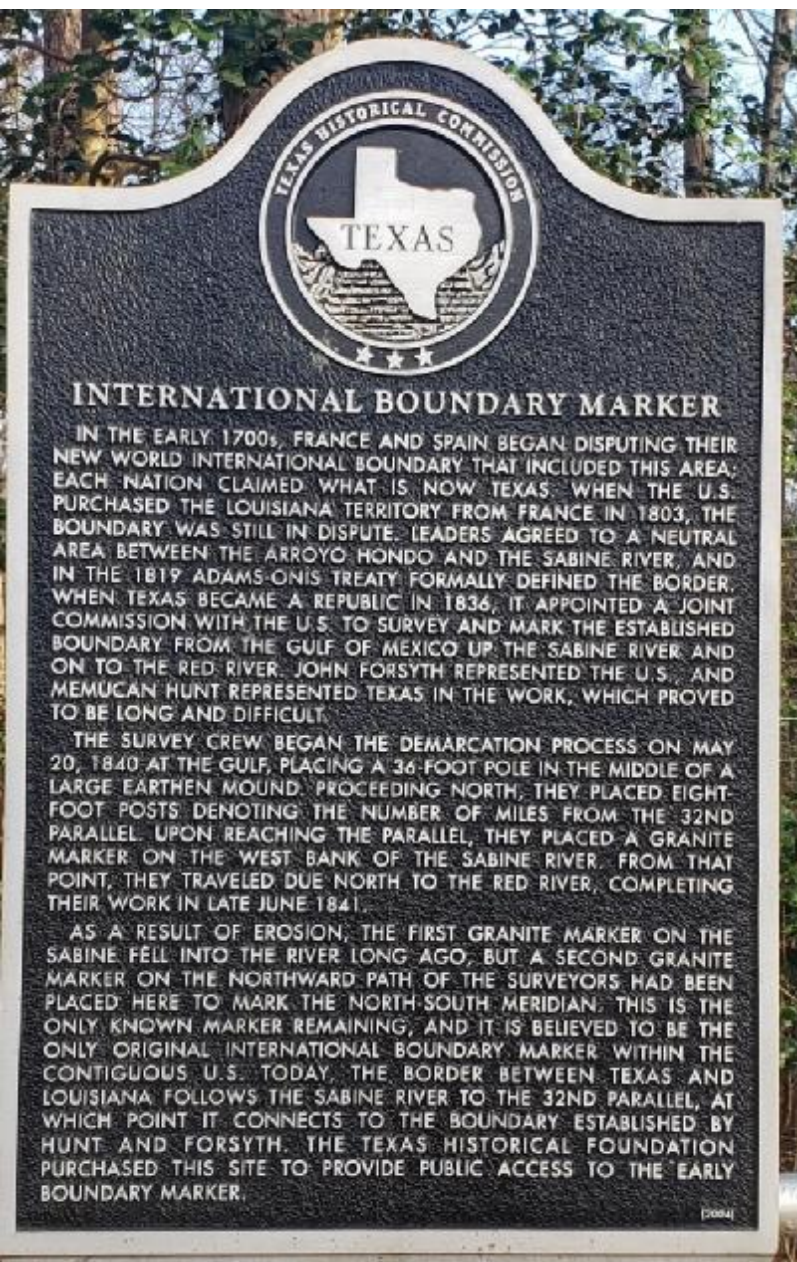


Oh man! I am Uncertain which way to go. LOL

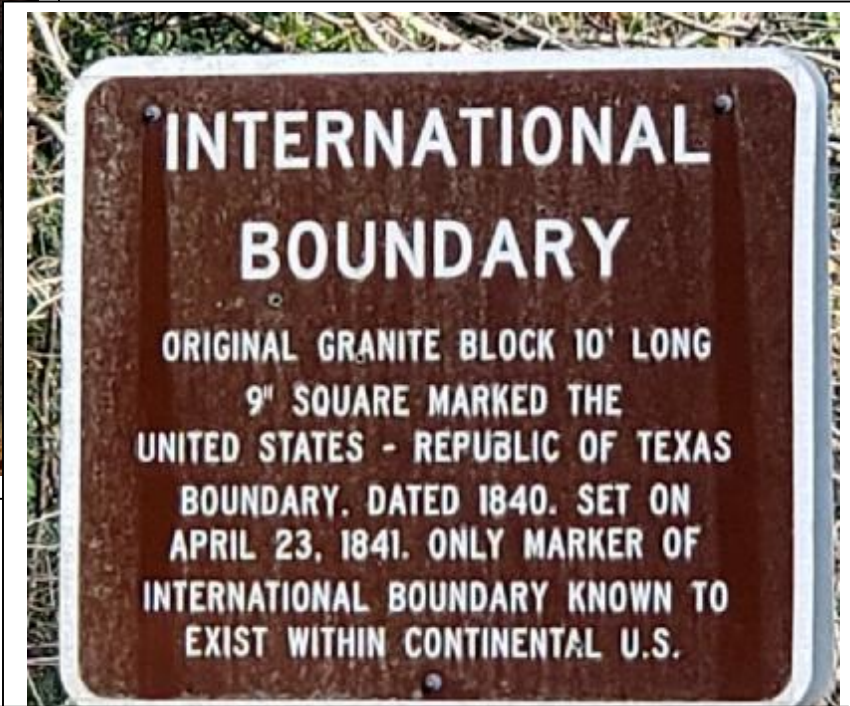
Steamboats, loaded with goods destined for the developing west, traveled through Caddo Lake en route to Jefferson, TX. Because of fluctuating water levels, mooring was often "uncertain." Thanks Road America for that info.



I thought this was interesting enough to make a 20 mile jaunt to the Louisiana border to see and share with you. Mainly because it is the only one left, making it fairly unique.

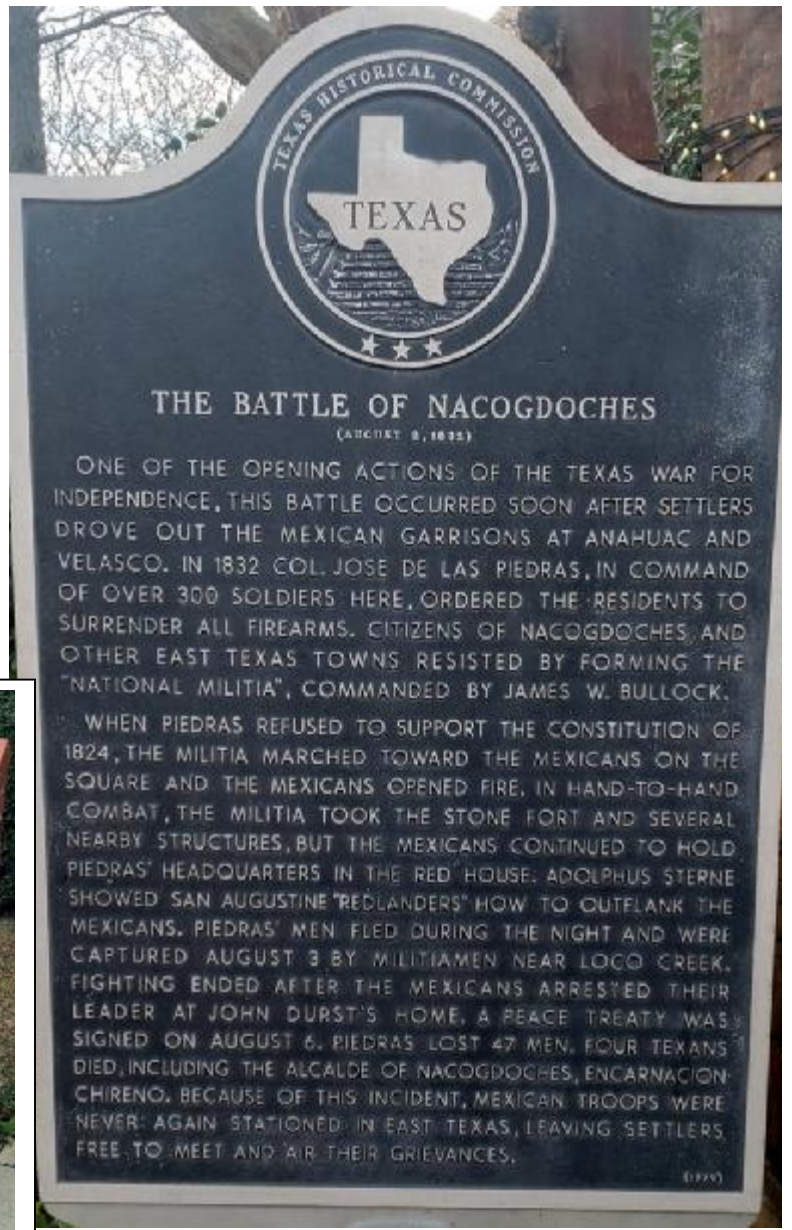








From Uncertain, Texas I made my way to the oldest city in Texas, Nacogdoches. Once again I arrived at 4:50 on a Saturday and most sights closed by 4:00 today. I did a short walk around town to some of the open air sights, and the downtown area seemed very quaint and worth exploring. However, a check of the weather showed me a winter storm warning for the area with up to 4 inches of wet heavy snow expected tomorrow afternoon. I don't relish thought of driving the RV around in wet slushy snow in an area where there are probably no snow plows and the citizenry probably doesn't have much experience driving in the snow, I decided to head a little farther south for the night and make it to Morgan's Sunday.



You can hardly read this memorial, even in person, but it commemorates the February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003 explosion of the Space Shuttle Columbia, from which a large piece of debris landed in this parking lot. It's a shame they've allowed it to get to this condition.





Now here, as Paul Harvey would say, is the rest of the story.

Because I bought myself a drone for Christmas, and borrowed Kali's GoPro, I wanted to be able to put videos in my newsletters. I did some searching and found out I would have to spend \$15 a month on the next version of PDF in order to do that. Instead, I decided to create a website so I could archive the newsletters from prior trips and also be able to post the videos.

Research into websites showed me that it is much easier to design a site today than it was last time, about seven or so years ago. Also, the domain name for free and as little as \$3 bucks a month for the site. I can live with that.

I had good luck on finding a video showing me how to build a site in 27 steps, there is a link on the links page if anyone is interested. Over about 5-6 days I built most every page on the site. Then I spent another 7 days trying to figure out how to do a newsletter, similar to the ones I have done in the past, post it daily, then archive it and create the next days. I looked at plugins, widgets, themes and templates; I checked out the software to create photo blogs; photo journals; photo diaries; photo newsletters; online comic books; online magazines; flip books. Frustration set in. Nothing did what I wanted it to. Then again, I don't have a lot of patience.

I had one of my old newsletters open to use as a visual aid, as I tried to design a new one on the website, when I noticed the link to the Eldorado song in the PDF was live. HUH? That's right, a link in the PDF worked when I clicked on it in the website. Amazing. This means I can link to videos from the PDF. I can't believe it. Morgan laughed at the hours I spent trying to do it a new way when the old way works just fine.

I still need the website because the videos will be stored in the media library, but I can still use Word for creation, print to PDF and then place the PDF on the webpage.

This is a new skill I'm learning, so please bear with me and my mistakes. But I hope everyone explores the webpages. There's a little bit of humor in them and maybe you'll learn something you didn't know before or see something you haven't seen before.

I will still send you an email each day with the link to the newest newsletter.

You may have noticed that this newsletter is for 1-9-21 and today, I think, will be 1-16-21. That is the seven days I spent trying to create the newsletter on the web.

Until next time.....