



In Search of El dorado

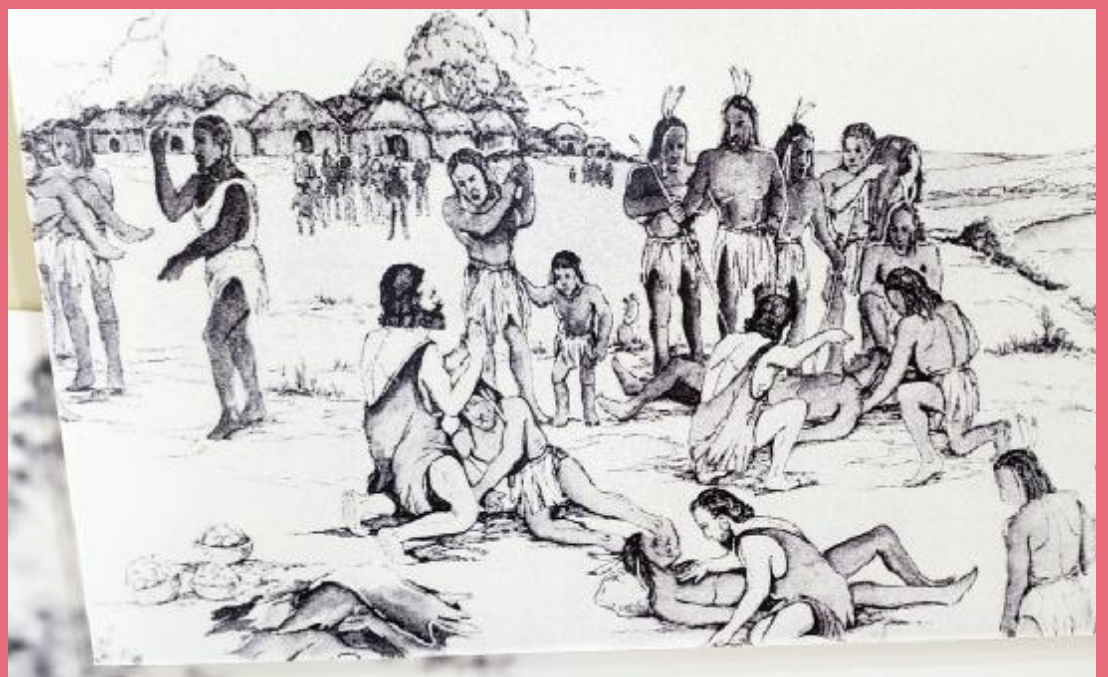
A daily journal of my travels and adventures in my.....Search for Eldorado

Hello to Family & Friends

Tuesday, February 9th 2021 Day 24

Let's do things a little differently today. I visit three battle sites and the history of Brownsville museum. In order to keep things organized I am going to show the sites in chronological order, otherwise the first battle would be depicted last. Due to jumping around there will be photos from battlefields and museums grouped together and it may look a little odd. So without further delay, let's get to it.

The Native Americans living in south Texas were known as the Coahuiltecans. They were known for their intricately carved shell jewelry, which they traded with other tribes for various goods such as stone tools and pottery.



As Mexico grew to the north, it met the western aspirations of the United States. Cultural and economic priorities clashed between these two rival countries resulting in several revolutions. The Republic of the Rio Grande briefly flourished in the lower valley. The Republic of Texas brought tensions to a head when it joined the United States.

The Manifest Destiny movement in the United States in the early nineteenth century claimed that it was literally the destiny of the US to extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans. The Battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma began the Mexican War, whereby the US claimed the west and fulfilled the movements promise.

Border War

Who owned Texas, and where was the border?

President James Polk thought he had settled these questions when he announced that the United States would annex Texas in 1845. Polk proclaimed the Rio Grande was the south boundary of Texas.

Mexico saw things differently. President Mariano Paredes maintained that Mexican territory continued for hundreds of miles north of the Rio Grande. Paredes also refused to concede the rebel providence of Texas was permanently lost.

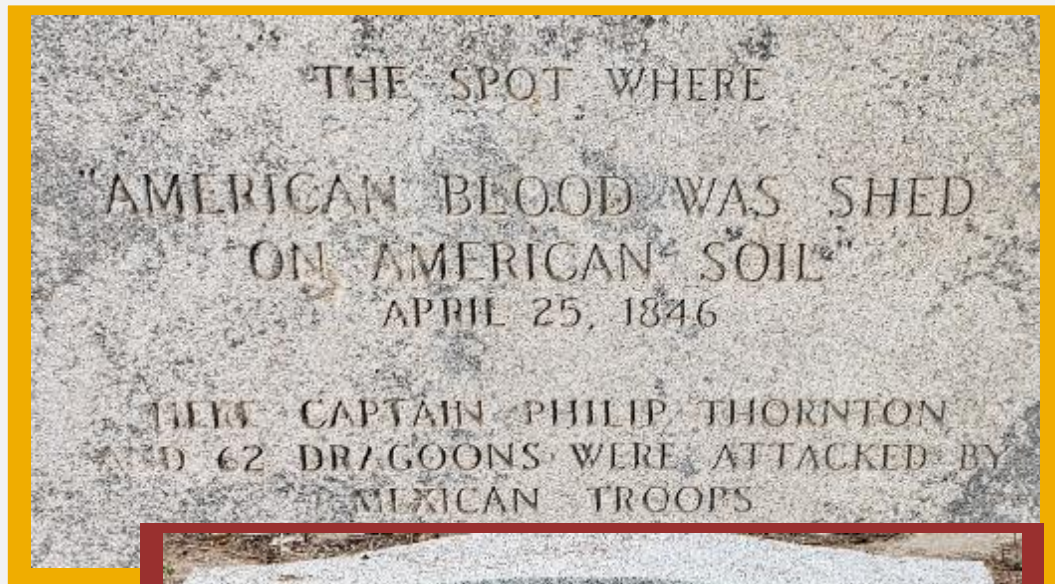
Diplomacy failed and the two presidents ordered armies to march. Here, on May 9th, 1846, the second battle of the U.S.-Mexican war exploded in the dense thickets bordering the ravine called Resaca de la Palma. At the stake was the fate of the lands laying north of the river.

Rancho de Carricitos

Two weeks before the main armies clashed here, Mexican cavalymen first skirmished with U.S. troops in a settlement 25 miles to the west. This incident led to a declaration of war by the U.S. Congress.

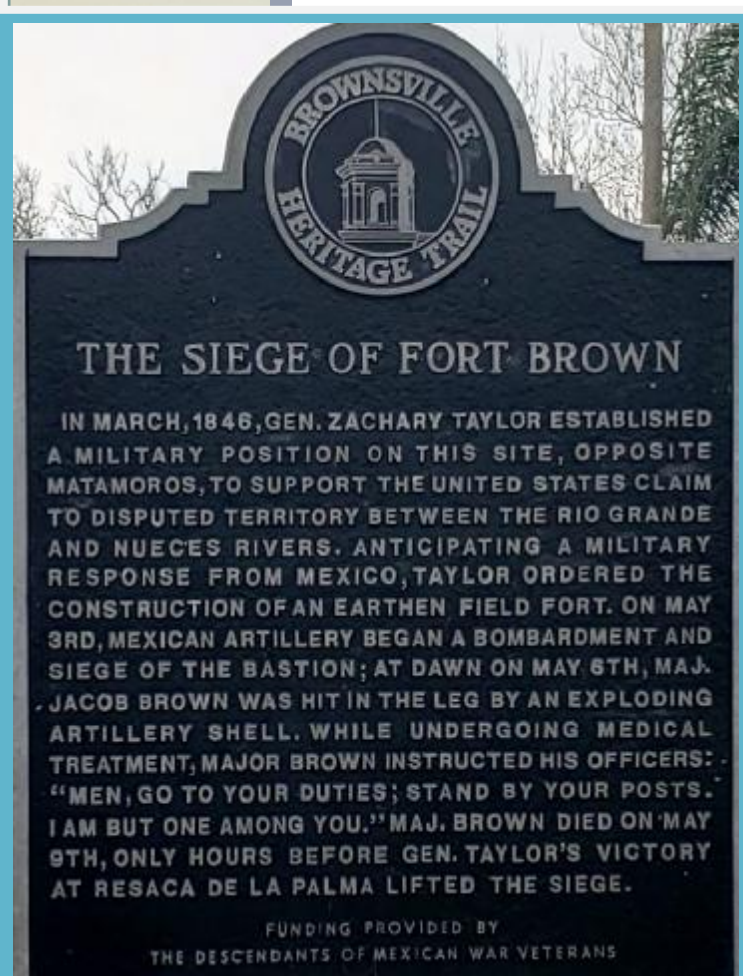
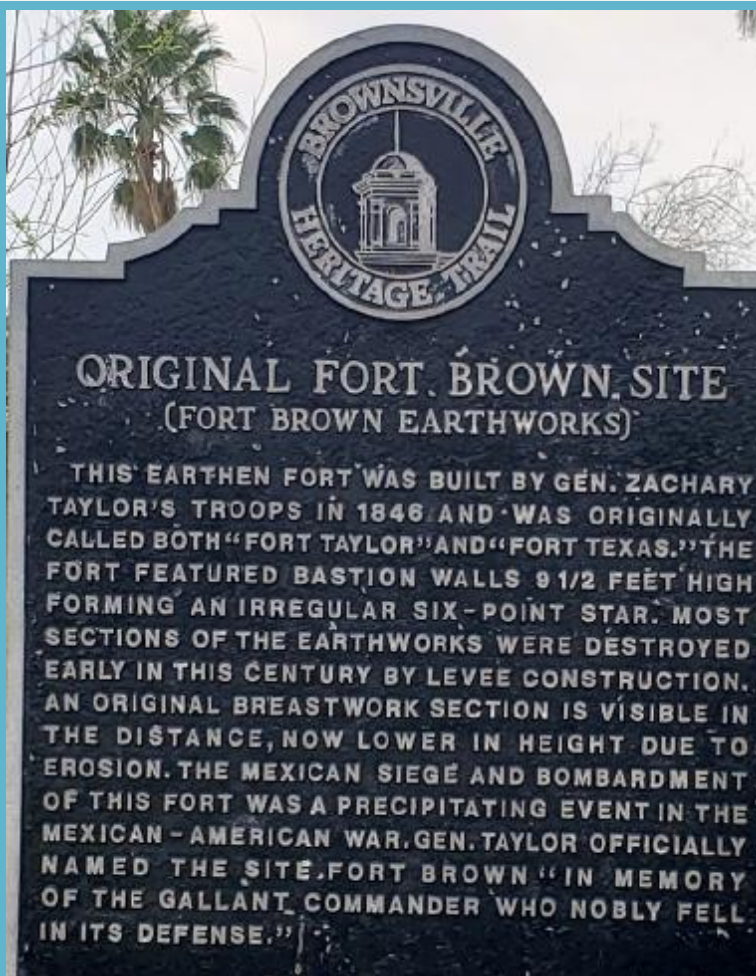
"We have tried every effort at reconciliation...But now, after reiterated menaces, Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States [the Rio Grande], has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon American soil. She has proclaimed that hostilities have commenced, and that the two nations are at war. As war exists, and, notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself, we are called upon by every consideration of duty and patriotism to vindicate with decision the honor, the rights, and the interests of our country."

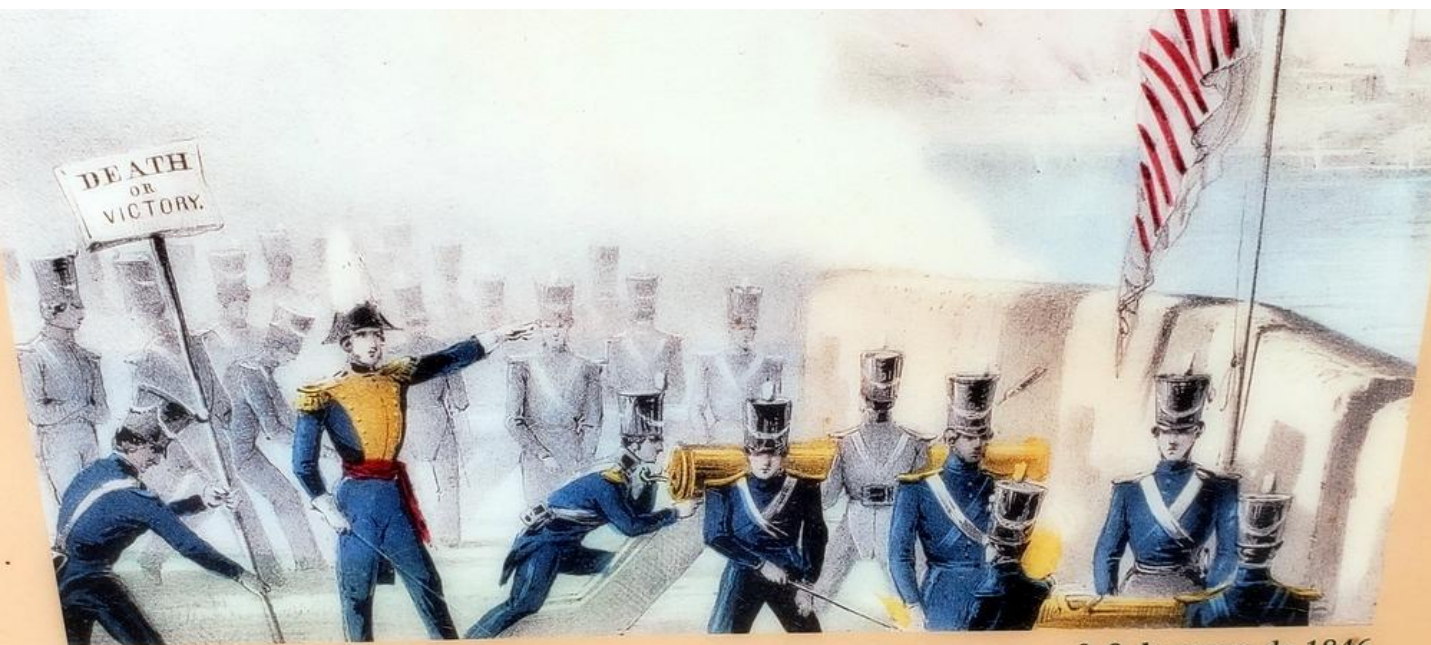
President James K Polk's message to Congress requesting a Declaration of War.



Fort Texas

General Taylor ordered an earthen fortification built on the north bank of the Rio Grande near today's downtown Brownsville. General Arista besieged Fort Texas for six days, sparking battles at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma.





May 3-9, 1846

3-9 de mayo de 1846

In April of 1846 General Taylor established a camp and began building a star shaped fortification on the north bank of the Rio Grande, opposite Matamoros. Major Jacob Brown, for whom Brownsville takes its name, was left in charge of the fort while Taylor marched his troops back to Fort Polk in Point Isabel to protect his supply line. General Francisco Mejia shelled the fort for six days in May, during which Major Brown was killed.

The 1846 battles

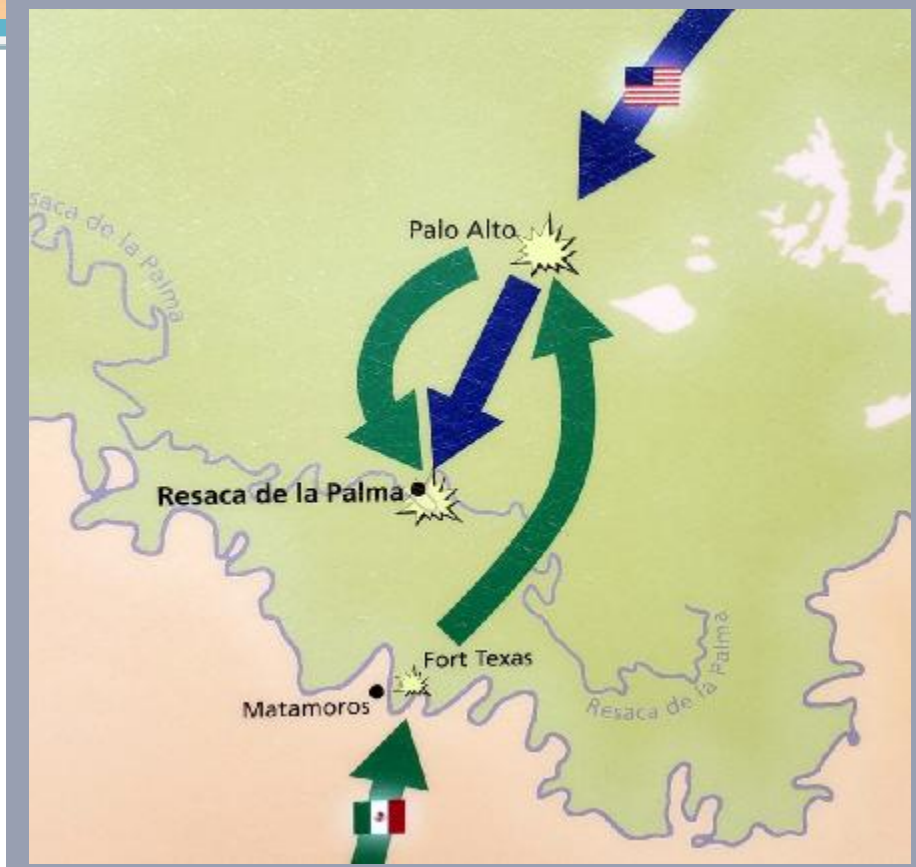
When United States troops marched south from Point Isabel to relieve the siege of Fort Texas, battles broke out

on the prairie of Palo Alto on Friday, May 8th, and here at Resaca de la Palma on Saturday, May 9th.

Palo Alto

In this first clash of the war, U.S. cannonfire devastated the Mexican forces, leading General Mariano Arista to withdraw his army to Resaca de la Palma.

This is it for Palo Alto since we already covered that.





Exhibits along the half-mile-long path ahead tell the history of the fighting here in 1846. As you walk, imagine miles of thick, thorny underbrush instead of the streets and homes you see on all sides today.


Some key battlefield features remain the same. The resaca bed follows the same wandering course, flanked by traces of dense chapparal. The modern highway crosses the ravine at the same point that the road crossed during the war.

**A Daunting
Defense**


General Mariano Arista believed that Resaca de la Palma—the ravine hidden by the thickets you see ahead—provided the strongest available position for his army. This former bed of the Rio Grande served as a natural defense for Mexican infantrymen, who lined up along both sides of the resaca. Thick undergrowth would protect them against the U.S. artillery that had been so deadly the day before at Palo Alto.

As Zachary Taylor approached on the morning of May 9th, Mexican officers thought they were well prepared to halt Taylor's advance toward Fort Texas.

If I had with me \$100,000 in silver I would have bet the whole of it that no 10,000 men could have driven us from our positions.


 Rómulo Díaz de la Vega, general

The [Mexicans] had taken up a position...at a ravine called the Resaca de la Palma...a spot covered with trees and bushes, which completely hid them from view.


 George Deas, lieutenant



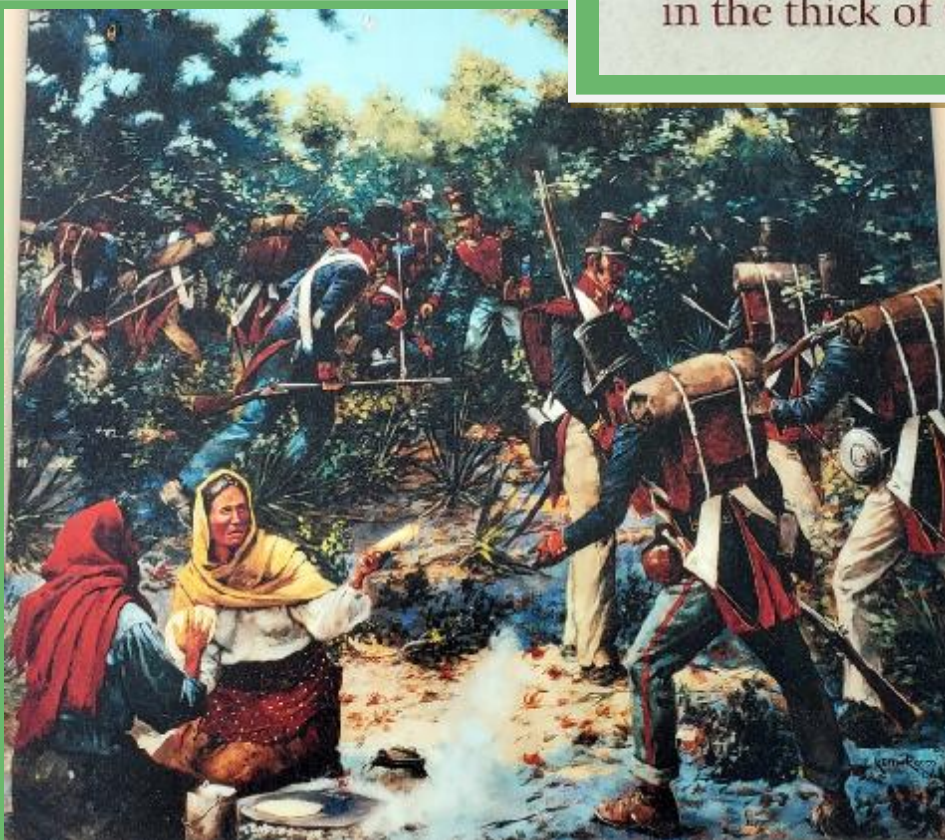
I saw & here their best troops, the Guarda Costa, were drawn up, and I shall never forget the scene. These brave men were literally slain in their tracks by the awful fire of our artillery and the charge of the infantry regiments.

 *Baltimore American* June 1846

...the best [regiment] in the Mexican service, the Tampico Guarda Costa... would not retreat but fell at their posts... Most of their officers and men were killed or taken.

 Edmund Kirby Smith, lieutenant, 5th Infantry Regiment

Since before the empire of the Aztecs, armies in Mexico have traditionally been accompanied by large groups of women, called *soldaderas*. Mass graves found at Resaca de la Palma contained the remains of Mexican women killed in the thick of the fighting here.




The Resaca de la Palma as it is today.




Hand-to-Hand


The chaparral was so thick that the troops had to use pickaxes just to clear a spot to stand and our own officers could not locate each other or their troops without reaching out and touching them.

 *Campaña contra los Americanos del Norte, 1846*


No officer could keep his men in hand, on account of the undergrowth. There were no tactics used. It was a general free fight, from right to left. ... In the midst of this scene, sat the General, as calm as if at a tea-party. After he had once given his orders to advance, fighting, he could do no more; for he could not possibly see his troops.

 George Deas, lieutenant

...balls commenced to whistle very thick overhead, cutting the limbs of the chapparal right and left. We could not see the enemy, so I ordered my men to lie down, an order that did not have to be enforced.

 Ulysses Grant, 2nd lieutenant

It was a hand-to-hand conflict—a trial of personal strength...where the bayonet failed, the fist even was used.


 Edmund Kirby-Smith, lieutenant




Take the Cannon!

As fighting raged in the brush, Zachary Taylor ordered Captain Charles May to seize six Mexican cannons that blocked the road near here. The captain and 40 dragoons charged and scattered the Mexican gun crews, but could not hold the cannon. As May regrouped his horsemen, Taylor angrily ordered infantrymen to assist. In a second charge, the U.S. troops captured both the Mexican guns and General Rómulo Díaz de la Vega, clearing the way to advance down the road toward Matamoros.

...Captain May rode to the front of his troop—every rein and sabre was tightly grasped. Raising himself and pointing at the battery, he shouted ‘Men, follow.’ There was now a clattering of hooves and a rattling of sabre sheaves—and the next moment we were sweeping like the wind up the ravine.

 Edward Milton, sergeant

Even with his horse dead and nearly all of his men dispersed, [General Díaz de la Vega] stayed at his post, holding it until seized in hand-to-hand combat with three enemy dragoons, and suffering the humiliation of falling prisoner. But he did not retreat a single step.


 Mariano Arista, general




Into the Mexican Camp

Plunging half-blind in the thorn-laden thickets, U.S. soldiers chanced upon narrow cattle trails that crossed the resaca. With surprising speed, they fought their way into the Mexican headquarters, near the modern road intersection you see ahead.


So swift was the advance that the enemy had only time to fire two rounds from his [cannon] batteries before our troops, with yells and shouts, charged in amongst them.

 Napoleon Dana, lieutenant

...we captured nine pieces of artillery, 400 mules, great numbers of pack saddles, all their baggage, stores, ammunition, military chest [of money], great numbers of prisoners including General de la Vega and other officers, and encamped at night on the Rio Grande.

 John James Peck, second lieutenant

The General-in-Chief [Arista] placed himself at the head of the cavalry. He made a final daring charge toward the victors. . . . But the enemy, who had already taken control of the brush on either side of the road, unleashed a terrible fire, and shot down our lancers with impunity. There was no choice but to retreat.

 *Apuntes para la historia de la Guerra entre México y los Estados Unidos*




Fallen Side by Side

The battle here at Resaca de la Palma lasted less than two hours. When the shooting stopped, hundreds of wounded men from the two armies lay side by side in the tangled undergrowth, crying out for help and pleading for water. The fierce fighting in the afternoon had cost the lives of 45 United States soldiers and 158 Mexican soldiers.

I tried to rise, but I had already grown so weak with my wound that I was unable and I fell back exhausted. . . a wounded Mexican call[ed] out to me 'Bueno Americano'. . . Two hours after, I had the pleasure of shaking some of my comrades by the hand, who were picking up the wounded. They lifted my Mexican friend, too, and I am pleased to say he, as well as myself, lived to fight over again the sanguine battle of Resaca de la Palma.

 Edward Milton, sergeant

The wounded, both friend and foe, we collected on the bank of the pond. Their groans were heart-rending. . . I turned away and wept.

 Barna Upton, private



BATTLE OF RESACA DE LA PALMA

On the 9th of May, 1846 the military forces that were led by Gen. Zachary Taylor engaged for a second time within two days along the banks of a body of inland waterway called "Resaca de la Palma". This battle resulted in a decisive victory for the American forces, and succeeded in driving the Mexican troops across the Rio Grande. Shortly afterward, generals Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott began their campaign to penetrate into Mexico and effect a total surrender by Mexico, culminating in the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

From the Resaca de la Palma Battlefield I headed over to find Fort Texas / Brown. It was a challenge. Those plaques and the photo of the earthen works are at the top. Along the way I found the site where Fort Brown was moved to and which became the campus of Texas Southmost College.



TEXAS SOUTHMOST COLLEGE

FORT BROWN RESERVATION

NAMED BY GEN. ZACHARY TAYLOR DURING MEXICAN WAR FOR MAJ. JACOB BROWN, WHO DIED IN 1846 DEFENDING THE POST. PERMANENT 385-ACRE RESERVATION LAID OUT 1848 BY COL. WM. DAVENPORT, AROUND ORIGINAL EARTHWORKS.

YOUNG OFFICERS IN THE TAYLOR OCCUPANCY INCLUDED D.C. BUELL, U.S. GRANT, GEO. G. MEADE, GEO. H. THOMAS, LATER CIVIL WAR GENERALS IN THE U.S. ARMY; AND BRAXTON BRAGG, T. H. HOLMES, JAMES LONGSTREET, J. C. PEMBERTON AND E. KIRBY SMITH, FUTURE CONFEDERATE GENERALS. IN THE LATE 1850'S ROBERT E. LEE SERVED HERE.

IN MARCH 1861, TEXAS CONFEDERATES UNDER COL. JOHN S. FORD OCCUPIED THE POST; LATER C.S.A. COMMANDERS WERE COLS. P. N. LUCKETT AND AUG. BUCHEL, GENS. H. P. BEE AND J. B. MAGRUDER. IN NOV. 1863 THE POST WAS BURNED.

FEDERALS UNDER GEN. N. P. BANKS HAD A CAMP OF TENTS AT FORT BROWN UNTIL JULY 1864. AFTER THAT, GEN. J. S. SLAUGHTER AND COL. FORD REOCCUPIED THE POST WITH CONFEDERATES UNTIL THE WAR ENDED. SOON AFTER THE CONFEDERATE SURRENDER AT APPOMATOX, U.S. GEN. PHILIP SHERIDAN BROUGHT IN TROOPS FOR A SHOW OF FORCE AGAINST THE FRENCH IN MEXICO CITY.

IN 1867-69, NEW PERMANENT FORT WAS BUILT BY CAPT. WM. A. WAINWRIGHT. CITY AND COLLEGE ACQUIRED RESERVATION IN 1948. NORTHERN BOUNDARY INTERNATIONAL BLVD.
(1964)

This is a very nice campus. All the buildings are brick, and there are several originals from the mid 1800's and later. It would be interesting to explore. Later on the museum provides me with a map to 72 buildings in Brownsville of historic significance. I can't wait to show them to you.



POST HOSPITAL
IN MARCH 1868, CAPTAIN WILLIAM ALONZO WAINWRIGHT ARRIVED IN BROWNSVILLE TO SUPERVISE THE REBUILDING OF FORT BROWN FOLLOWING THE CIVIL WAR AND AN 1867 HURRICANE. ONE OF THE FIRST STRUCTURES BUILT UNDER HIS DIRECTION WAS THE POST HOSPITAL, COMPLETED IN 1869 AND NOTED FOR ITS CLASSICAL DESIGN AND PALLADIAN INFLUENCES. FIRST LT. WILLIAM C. GORGAS BEGAN STUDIES THAT LED TO THE DISCOVERY OF THE SOURCE OF YELLOW FEVER WHILE HE WAS BASED HERE IN 1883.
RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK - 1962

NOW REGARDED AS "THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOSPITAL IN THE ENTIRE ARMY," THIS POST-CIVIL WAR RECONSTRUCTION ERA BUILDING WAS BUILT IN 1868, AND COMPLETED IN 1871 UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF CAPTAIN WILLIAM A. WAINWRIGHT. ITS ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES ARE GENERALLY CREDITED TO SAMUEL W. BROOKS. CONSTRUCTION OF THE 16,500-SQUARE-FOOT HOSPITAL INVOLVED 1,300 LABORERS AND UTILIZED MORE THAN ONE MILLION BRICKS, ACQUIRED ON BOTH SIDES OF THE RIO GRANDE. EXTERNAL ARCADES AND ARCHED BREEZEWAYS WERE ADDED TO ACCOMMODATE THE SEMI-TROPICAL ENVIRONMENT. FORT BROWN CLOSED AT THE END OF WORLD WAR II AND BECAME THE NEW CAMPUS FOR TEXAS SOUTHMOST COLLEGE. THE HOSPITAL WAS THEN REPURPOSED AND NAMED IN HONOR OF DR. WILLIAM GORGAS, WHO CONDUCTED RESEARCH ON YELLOW FEVER HERE IN THE 1880s.



**FORT BROWN
COMMISSARY-GUARDHOUSE
COMISARIA Y CASA DE LA GUARDIA
DEL FUERTE BROWN**



THE (FORT BROWN) COMMISSARY AND GUARDHOUSE BUILDING WAS CONSTRUCTED IN 1904 AS A REPLACEMENT FOR THE ORIGINAL FORT GUARDHOUSE. THE MAIN FLOOR CONTAINED A GUARDROOM AND OFFICES AS WELL AS A GUN RACK ROOM AND CELL ROOM. THE BASEMENT IS NOTED FOR THE EXTANT HOLDING CELLS OF STRAP METAL. THE CELLS STORED PIECES OF ART DURING THE PERIOD WHEN THE BUILDING HOUSED THE TEXAS SOUTHMOST COLLEGE ARTS DEPARTMENT. IN 1913 CONSTITUTIONALIST REVOLUTIONARIES UNDER GEN. LUCIO BLANCO ATTACKED MATAMOROS, COMPELLING THE FEDERAL "HUERTISTA" FORCES TO FLEE THE CITY ACROSS THE BROWNSVILLE & MATAMOROS BRIDGE OVER THE RIO GRANDE TO BROWNSVILLE. FORT BROWN COMMANDING OFFICER, COL. AUGUSTUS P. BLOCKSOM, MARCHED THE 130 MEXICAN SOLDIERS TO THE FORT, WHERE THEY WERE INTERNED FOR SEVERAL WEEKS AT THIS GUARDHOUSE TO AVOID INCIDENTS WITH AMERICAN TROOPS.



MORGUE AND LINEN STORAGE,
1867 FORT BROWN BUILDINGS 85
AND 86. BRICK FRINGE, CORNICE.

AUTOPSIES IN YELLOW FEVER
STUDY WERE MADE HERE BY DR.
WM. C. GORGAS, CAPT. HENNESSEY,
LT. CROWDER, DR. MELON, DEFYING
ORDERS OF SUPERIOR OFFICER.
DR. GORGAS BECAME IMMUNE.
RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK - 1965



POST MORGUE CIRCA 1870

Built circa 1870 and originally two separate army buildings, the morgue and the linen storage were joined in 1940. A garage was also added and the building became an office and storeroom. In 1946 the Fort Brown property, including the old morgue, was acquired for the junior college. The building is reputed to be haunted.

Construido cerca 1870 e dos distintos edificios de y el almacén de ropa de los dos edificios fueron una oficina y un almacén fue agregado. En 1946, la Fuerte Brown, incluyendo fue adquirida para el cole El edificio se rumora esta

AL TRAIL SPONSORS

POST CHAPEL CIRCA 1882

Built circa 1882, also known as Building No.2 and the "Little Chapel at Fort Brown," it has had various uses including a school, military chapel and a post office. It was restored in 1952 by the Brownsville Historical Association who used it as their offices. In 1992, the building was dismantled, and eventually, moved from the riverbank near the Gateway International Bridge to the college campus.

HISTORICAL TRAIL SPONSORS





Now here's a beauty!

SOUTHERN PACIFIC DEPOT - 1928 -

Built in 1928, the depot was designed by R.W. Barnes, Southern Pacific Railroad's Chief Engineer. Southern Pacific began freight service on its line running from Brownsville to Edinburg on October 20, 1927. Passenger service was added November 1928. It was a depot until 1952. The Historic Brownsville Museum opened at this site in 1986.

HISTORICAL TRAIL



**SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD
PASSENGER DEPOT**

THIS DEPOT WAS BUILT BY THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD IN 1928 AS PART OF ITS EXTENSION INTO THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY. A FINE EXAMPLE OF SPANISH COLONIAL REVIVAL ARCHITECTURE, THE DEPOT FEATURES A TILE ROOF, ARCADES, CURVILINEAR PARAPETS, AND OTHER ORNAMENTATION COMMON TO THAT STYLE. THE STRUCTURE WAS USED AS A PASSENGER DEPOT UNTIL 1952. IT NOW SERVES AS A REMINDER OF THE RAILROAD'S IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF BROWNSVILLE AND THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY.

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK - 1985

Get a load of the bubbler. Yup, I'm from Wisconsin.

THE BIRTH OF BROWNSVILLE

..... It literally came into existence with a bang



Charles Stillman founded the City of Brownsville immediately after hostilities had ended during the Mexican War. Recognizing the potential for trade between the two nations, he focused his resources on controlling the infrastructure for this trade, an arrangement that eventually netted him an enormous fortune.

Charles Stillman named the main thoroughfare of his city after his wife Elizabeth. Elizabeth Street was the hub of commerce and activity in the city well into the 20th century.

Stillman acquired title to the land that Brownsville sits on from the tenants who ranched and farmed it at the time, rather than the proper landowners. After several decades of lawsuits and court battles, which eventually ended up in the Supreme Court, the original owners of the land received the right to sell the land to the New York and Brownsville Improvement Company.

Civil War

Following the vote for secession the United States Army garrison at Fort Brown evacuated the city. Leaving town they burned the forts powder magazine, which destroyed most of the fort. The troops marched to Point Isabel where they boarded the *USS Daniel Webster* for the long trip back to Union soil.

General Nathaniel Banks was charged with capturing Confederate Texas during the Civil War. Failing in his efforts to invade at Sabine Pass and Galveston, General Banks decided to invade through the lightly defended lower Rio Grande River. There in 1863 he overwhelmed the defenders at Brazos de Santiago by 100 to 1. His win was short-lived. His troops were pulled out by the summer of 1864 to fight in other regions of the South. The lower Rio Grande did not see Union soldiers again until the Battle of Palmito Ranch on May 13, 1865, less than a month after the war was over. From the late 1850's through the 1870's, Mexico was facing armed rebellion from Juan N. Cortina.

You have probably noticed, as have I, the name of Juan N. Cortina being mentioned here and there throughout my trip. I expected there to be more info on him here in Brownsville, but there is not. The following PBS website has the full story https://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/a_c/cortina.htm I will wait until farther down the road before I relate his story here. There might be more info in Rio Grande City on the "Robin Hood of the Rio Grande"

1910

The Mexican Revolution

The Mexican Revolution quickly overwhelmed Matamoros. Wealthy Mexican citizens fled to Brownsville when bloody fighting overwhelmed Mexican defenses in the city. The war raged up and down the Mexican side of the Rio Grande River, sometimes spilling across the river in to the United States. This required heavy U. S. Army deployments all along the river.

Historic Brownsville Museum Association



Rio Grande Railroad
Locomotive #1

You know how I love trains!
Another one of those coincidences – I took a lot of photos today, so I grabbed another newsletter that also had a lot of photos, this way I don't have to 'create' as many pages. The Galveston newsletter from 1-19 was close. As I add these photos of the Brownsville train depot, I am deleting photos of the Galveston train depot. Again, ironic.

The Rio Grande Railroad



This very detailed model is about five feet long

The rail line, first built in 1872, was originally known as the Rio Grande Railroad (RGRR) operated between Brownsville and Point Isabel (Port Isabel). Constructed in circa 1850, the Celaya building located at 1159 East Elizabeth Street operated as the RGRR headquarters was built by Simon Celaya, a Spanish vice-counsel who immigrated to Brownsville in the mid-nineteenth century. Celaya, a wealthy merchant, served a large stockholder, one of the directors, and also General Manager of the Rio Grande Railroad. The line measured twenty-two miles in length and had a

narrow-gauge track of 42", in comparison to the 56' ½ standard gauge track. During its early years, the Rio Grande Railroad owned and operated three small Baldwin steam locomotives, two small passenger cars, one baggage car, twelve box cars, and one service car. The Rio Grande Railroad engine No.1 the 2-4-2 (two front small wheels, four large in center, two at rear) was built in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1871 by the Baldwin Locomotive Company for \$6,000.00 and arrived with an identical engine No.2 in 1872 before the construction of the railroad was completed. The Rio Grande Railroad served as a passenger and freight line until 1913 upon the arrival of the St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railway. By this

time, the transportation for leisure and of commodities shifted from sea transportation to inland. According to oral history of the three locomotives, one in 1891 was derailed by bandits where it was burned in the wreckage and the second in 1915 met the same demise. Since its decommission, engine No. 1 was acquired by the City of Brownsville and located to the southeast corner of Old Fort Brown on East Elizabeth Street and Tyler Street. The engine stood unprotected from the elements for many years until 1992 when it was moved by museum volunteers to Balch Machine Shop for restoration. In 1998, "El Trenesito" as it will be affectionately known was moved to a new home, the former Southern Pacific passenger depot grounds in Brownsville.

Fully restored. Quite a beauty!



Air

Caption for the photo on the far right - Charles Lindbergh came to Brownsville in 1929 with the first load of airmail from Mexico to the United States

TEXAS
LAUNCHING SITE OF
FIRST U. S. ARMY WARPLANE
FROM OLD FORT BROWN CAVALRY DRILL FIELD, NEAR THIS SPOT, WAS MADE THE FIRST FLIGHT OF A U. S. ARMY PLANE TO BE FIRED UPON IN ARMED HOSTILITIES, APRIL 20, 1915.
TWO SIGNAL CORPS OFFICERS, LTS. BYRON Q. JONES AND THOS. MILLING, FLEW A MARTIN T. O. CURTISS 75 ON THE BORDER TO SPOT MOVEMENTS OF MEXICAN REVOLUTIONIST PANTCHO VILLA. THEY REACHED 2,600 FEET; WERE UP 20 MINUTES. THOUGH THEY DID NOT CROSS THE RIO GRANDE, THE PLANE WAS HIT BY MACHINE GUN AND SMALL ARMS FIRE. THEIR PATROLS LASTED 6 WEEKS. PLANES WERE USED MORE EFFECTIVELY IN FIGHTING AGAINST VILLA IN 1916.
RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK-1967

Charles Lindbergh came to Brownsville in 1929 with the first load of airmail from Mexico to the United States.



Flying reconnaissance along the river during the Mexican Revolution, the Army Air Corp brought flight to the valley. Pan American Airways established its headquarters here, bringing in such notable flyers as Amelia Earhart and Charles Lindberg.

Sea

The lower valley has a long maritime tradition dating back to the establishment of Matamoros as a port. During the Civil War, the community of Bagdad became one of the most active ports in the world with dozens of ships loading cotton on any given day. When the Intra-Coastal Waterway and the Port of Brownsville were established, large shipping concerns, offshore oil companies, produce ships and commercial fishing boats made Brownsville their homeport.

Alrighty then. That pretty much puts things in chronological order. The following photos are random finds throughout the day.



Monumental History



This cannon and marker are important symbols of the effort to remember this battlefield and other nearby U.S.-Mexican War sites.

U.S. Army troops placed the cannon near this spot in 1917 in a first attempt to mark the 1846 battle of Resaca de la Palma.

In 1931, the Daughters of the American Revolution set the cannon on a base and added the monument to identify the name and date of the battle.

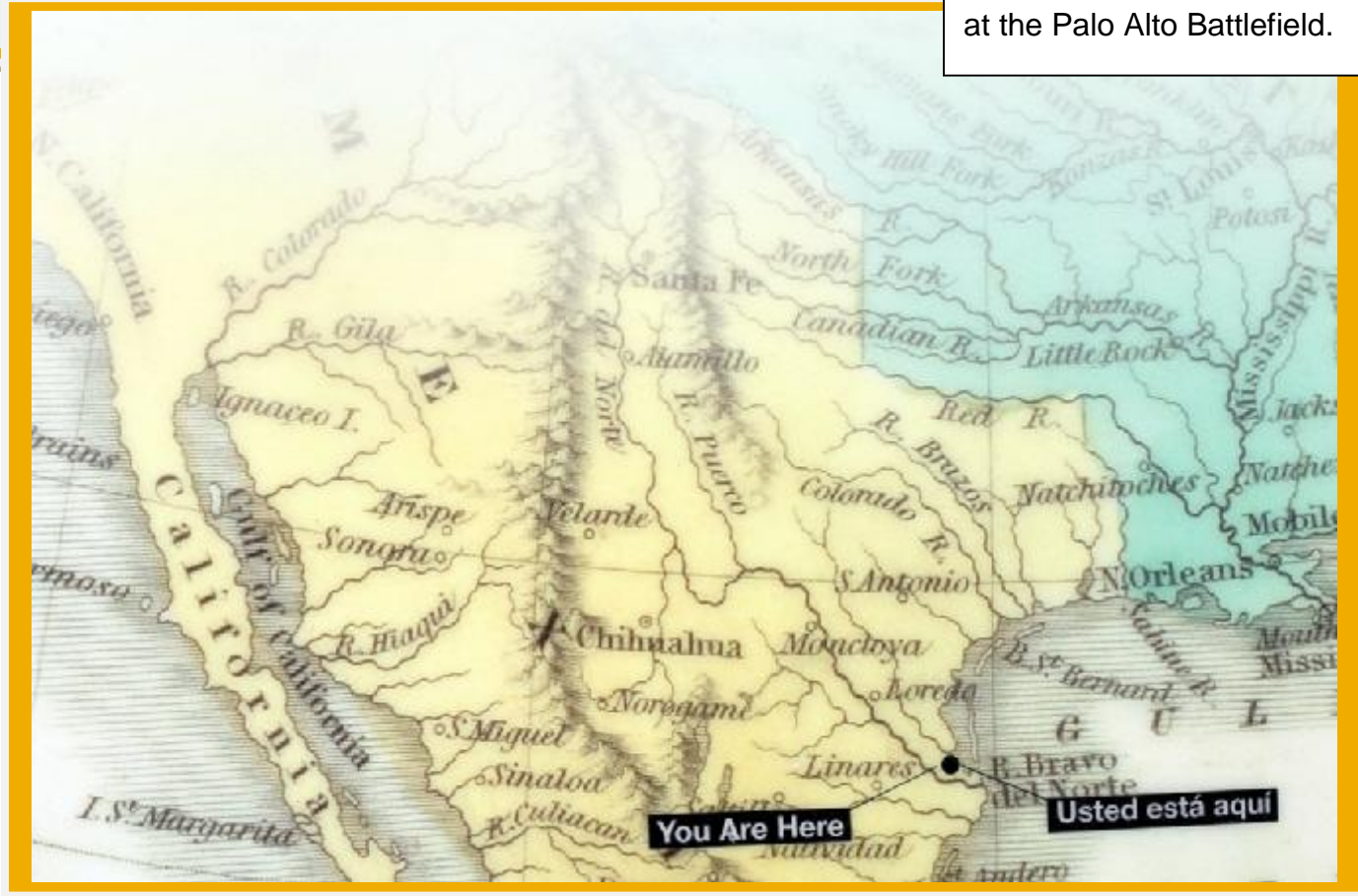
The cannon and monument were relocated several times before they were moved here in 2018. But they have been constant reminders of the importance of this site to the community and the nation.



War between Mexico and the United States first erupted here in the valley of the Rio Grande, then spread west to California and south to Mexico City.

In the end, the northern half of Mexico became the southwestern third of the United States.

This is a much better representation of the lands in dispute between Mexico and the United States than the one at the Palo Alto Battlefield.



I'm gonna go out on a limb here and guess that the golf course does not get much use nowadays. This is the clubhouse.



HISTORY OF 124TH CAVALRY 1929 - 1945

THE 124TH CAVALRY REGIMENT WAS ORGANIZED IN MARCH 1929, AS PART OF THE TEXAS MOUNTED CAVALRY, UNDER COMMAND OF TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD AND EXISTING 56TH CAVALRY BRIGADE. MOTTO OF THE 124TH IS "GOLPEO RAPIDAMENTE", SPANISH FOR "I STRIKE QUICKLY".

UNDER THE NATIONAL DEFENSE ACT, ALL MEMBERS OF THE 56TH CAVALRY BRIGADE WERE INDUCTED INTO ACTIVE MILITARY TRAINING WITH THE UNITED STATES ARMY, EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 18, 1940. AFTER MEETING REGULAR ARMY TRAINING STANDARDS AT FORT BLISS, TEXAS, THE NATIONAL GUARD CAVALRYMEN EXCHANGED MILITARY POST WITH THE REGULAR ARMY CAVALRY STATIONED ALONG THE RIO GRANDE RIVER. ON FEBRUARY 2, 1941, THE 124TH OCCUPIED FORT BROWN AT BROWNSVILLE, WITH THE 2ND SQUADRON BEING SENT TO FORT RINGGOLD AT RIO GRANDE CITY. THE DESIGNATED PERIOD OF ACTIVE FEDERAL DUTY WAS EXTENDED INDEFINITELY FOLLOWING THE JAPANESE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR, WHEN THE UNITED STATES ENTERED WORLD WAR II.

IN MAY 1944, THE 124TH VACATED FORTS BROWN AND RINGGOLD AND WERE SENT TO CHINA - BURMA - INDIA THEATER OF WAR. DISMOUNTED, THEY TEAMED WITH OTHER COMBAT UNITS TO FORM THE "MARS TASK FORCE" AND BATTLED THE JAPANESE IN CENTRAL BURMA. USING PACK MULES AND RELYING PRIMARILY ON AIRDROP SUPPLIES, THEY TRAVELED 279 MILES IN 31 DAYS ON FOOT OVER EXTREMELY DIFFICULT JUNGLE AND MOUNTAIN TERRAIN. WEEKS OF HEAVY FIGHTING RESULTED IN BREAKING THE ENEMY'S RESISTANCE AND ULTIMATELY PERMITTED COMPLETION OF THE STILWELL ROAD FROM INDIA TO A JUNCTION OF THE BURMA ROAD WHICH BECAME A LIFE SUPPLY LINE INTO CHINA. THE 124TH WAS COMMENDED FOR ITS OUTSTANDING BATTLE ACHIEVEMENT, CLAIMING 10 ENEMY FOR EACH CAVALRYMAN. THE 124TH CAVALRY (SPECIAL) WAS IN - ACTIVATED JULY 1, 1945 IN KUNMING, CHINA.

THE 124TH CAVALRY REGIMENT WAS THE LAST MOUNTED CAVALRY IN THE ARMY, AND THE LAST CAVALRY REGIMENT STATIONED AT FORT BROWN, TEXAS.

MEMBERS OF THE 124TH CAVALRY ASSOCIATION DEDICATE THIS PLAQUE AND FLAGPOLE IN HONOR AND MEMORY OF THOSE WHO SERVED IN THE 124TH CAVALRY REGIMENT.

I have forgotten if it was on a prior trip or a documentary or what, but I know I have heard about this 'Mars Task Force' someplace. It was quite a feat.

INTO THE WILD WEST

A COLLECTION DONATED BY BEN EDELSTEIN

I saved the best for last. I know a few readers out there that will really enjoy the following photos. There were 27 Objets d'art on display here and I don't have the time to include them all.

The BHA is proud to present, *Into the Wild West: A Collection Donated by Ben Edelstein*. Ben Edelstein was a notable figure in the Brownsville community for his philanthropy and generosity. Edelstein and his family were known for their furniture business, Edelstein's Better Furniture, throughout the Rio Grande Valley in addition to their involvement in the community. Before his passing, Edelstein gifted the Brownsville Historical Association his collection of various sculptures and paintings by Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell. Both artists are celebrated for their vivid depictions of the Old American West marked by rustic landscapes, frontier life, and the interactions between man and beast. The BHA would like to thank the Edelstein family for this collection and the opportunity to share these remarkable pieces of American Art.





It's not as easy as you might think to photograph dark brown artwork on black display cloth with black backgrounds. This was the best angle I could get with this one and not include the one behind it.



I know what you're thinking, "What about the zoo?" That's what I get for having high expectations. The zoo is only open Friday, Saturday and Sunday. So long Komodo Dragon!

I know what you're thinking, "Where are all those historic building photos?" If you really want to see them, pick up your phone, call an airline and buy a ticket to Brownsville. But make sure you stop at the museum for a map and not the visitor center.

Believe it or not, I was done with the museum and all the other sites by 1:00 p.m. I ate lunch in the RV, took a short nap, and then tried to determine my next move.

With the zoo closed I feel I'm done in Brownsville. I drove twenty miles west to get the photos of the Thornton Skirmish at Rancho de Carrisitos. It was just a pullover with the cannon and monuments. This NPS website has the full story, and I also read it in the brochure from Ranger Karen, but I felt it was too long to type in here.

<https://www.nps.gov/paal/learn/historyculture/ranchodecarricitos.htm>

The 'wall' is in sight during most of the drive west on HWY 281, the east Military Highway. I pulled over to write this newsletter near a truck stop, but plan to move before bedtime. I am only about a quarter-mile from the border and this is a fairly busy crossing. It has finally slowed down now at midnight, but the traffic, trucks mostly, were bumper-to-bumper back to where I'm parked.

Tomorrow is another 'back to nature' day. I think I need one.

Until next time.....