Frontier Texas
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Frontier Texas

Hear, ye haw! Hear, ye haw! Gather ‘round and listen to the story of Frontier Texas, one of the coolest and most interactive wild west museums you’ll find in any state. Using state-of-the-art technology combined lovingly with rustic Americana (Gunsmoke’s Buck Taylor is the audio-visual guide through the facility), the museum doesn’t transport you to the past—it brings the past to you. Frontier Texas can be found in downtown Abilene and doubles as the official visitor center for not just the entire city, but the Texas Forts Trail Region as well. That means it’s both the destination and the gateway to the rest of your trip.

Meet the Eleven Spirit Guides

Most museums have you quickly scanning the placard, self-conscious the entire time that you’re standing in somebody’s eyeline. At Frontier Texas, the placards play second fiddle to the eleven spirit guides.

These are holographic figures stationed all along the trail who tell you—through their own unique perspectives—what became of them. There’s Esihabitu, a Comanche leader who led a full life that included battling white settlers and meeting the president at the White House. Then there’s Cynthia Ann Parker, who was taken by the Comanche as a child and raised as one of them. You’ll also meet Britt Johnson, who was born into slavery, became a respected ranch foreman, and was granted his freedom to go searching for his missing family. Each of the guides you meet represents a different side of Texas’ wild west.

Nine Galleries, Each With Their Own Story

Across Frontier Texas’ fourteen thousand square feet, the exhibits are more like experiences than three-dimensional history books. Take A Wild Land, for example, which covers the fifteen thousand years people crossed through this region without settling it, when the climate swung between extremes that made civilization impossible.

Jump forward in time to Comanche Empire, where you’ll find out how the Comanches learned how to use horses better than the Europeans that brought them. Maybe you’re more interested in the economics of the cattle drives, in which case you’ll spend most of your time at Cowboys and Longhorns.

As with the guides, each of the nine galleries shows a different side of wild west history. Visit them all to get the most comprehensive appreciation of what life was like in the wild, youthful days of America.

High Noon on the Parade Grounds

Six Saturdays a year, Frontier Texas stages a gunfight outside. The best part? It won’t cost you a dime to watch.

The 1884 Historic Reenactment of the Pine Street Shootout is a dramatization of a real event that happened in Abilene, just a few years after the city was founded. Bullets started flying after the city caused tension with its locals by adopting new laws in order to attract railroad travelers. Aren’t you glad you’re living in the 21st century?

Out of respect for Gary Cooper, the gunfight always starts at high noon. Once the smoke has cleared and everyone’s dusted off the dirt from their dramatic fall, your family can interact with the characters to get more insight on Abilene’s famous shootout.

History, when poorly taught, can come off as stodgy and boring. Frontier Texas shows us that history is anything but. It’s dynamic, exciting, and still with us every day in some form or another. For current hours, tickets, exhibits, and reenactment dates, mosey over to our Hours and Prices page.