

Marshall Civil War History and Today

The town of Marshall, Texas is dedicated to preserving its past; given its eventful history, it has good reason to do so. If you enjoy heritage tourism, this town is your ideal destination. The Civil War was one of the most significant periods in early American history and this East Texas town played a pivotal role throughout the era. With more slaves than any other county in Texas, the town was undeniably a Confederate community.

Marshall served many purposes during the war. It was a major center of politics, military operations and supplier of necessities, especially gun powder. The town's Confederate backing, as well as its location on the map, allowed it to serve as a power center west of the Mississippi, ideal for Confederate conferences. At one point, Marshall was the temporary capital of the Missouri Confederate Government that had been forced into exile. Today, a monument marks the site that once served as the house used by Missouri Governor Thomas C. Reynolds as his state's Confederate "capitol." Two of the three Texas governors who served during the Civil War, Edward Clark and Pendleton Murrah, were from Marshall.

Much more can be said about the wartime role of this town; tourists eager to learn about this time in history are encouraged to stop by the Harrison County Historical Museum. You can also uncover this town's Civil War past by visiting cemeteries and memorial sites dedicated to the town's famous politicians and war heroes.

If you are not exactly a history buff, no need to worry because the town is full of opportunities for a stimulating experience. With the many surrounding lakes and dense forests, outdoor recreation is often pursued by both residents and visitors. Hunting is one of the most popular activities because the area is ideal for excursions onto public lands and private hunting clubs that feature deer, turkey and ducks.

The town is also a destination for avid shoppers. Visitors can explore Washington Square, a historic downtown which is one of the oldest in Texas. From antiques to great food, the collections of shops are one hundred percent locally owned, making it a true one-of-a-kind experience. To further your shopping adventure, venture a little further from the Marshall's Square to the world-famous Marshall Pottery. Here you can watch a master potter transform a lump of clay into a piece of art at one of the oldest potteries in the nation.

Over the years, Marshall has gained national attention during the winter season because of its annual winter holiday celebration, the Wonderland of Lights. The festival showcases hundreds of light displays, an outdoor ice-skating rink, street performances, a reindeer petting zoo, and other activities for every age group. Claimed to be the biggest and best Christmas festival in Texas, the town's five week celebration draws more than 125,000 people every year to experience the unique, hometown Christmas atmosphere.

Whatever your interest, Marshall, Texas is the perfect place to experience the Old South. Discover the past and the present, all in one, in this well-preserved community.

Source(s):

Marshall Convention and Visitors Bureau. (2011). Retrieved January 28, 2011 from http://www.visitmarshalltexas.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=52&Itemid=105

Texas Historical Commission. (2002). Texas in the Civil War. Retrieved January 28, 2011 from http://www.thc.state.tx.us/publications/brochures/tx_cvl_wr.pdf

Wikipedia. (2010). History of Marshall, Texas. Retrieved January 28, 2011 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Marshall,_Texas

Author(s):

Written by Maggie Pottkotter, Intern with the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences at Texas A&M University, as part of a National Park Service Trails and Rails project funded by Amtrak, 2011.