

W.L. Moody Confederate Reunion Grounds (2014)

Marker #: 17877

Marker Text:

The Freestone County W.L. Moody Reunion grounds have been used for reunions, celebrations and remembrance of U.S. war veterans since 1891. The grounds were named after Col. William Lewis Moody, who organized Co. G of the 7th Texas Infantry, C.S.A., based in Freestone County. An ex-Confederate Association formed in 1890 and began meeting at this site in 1891. In 1892, the veterans group was incorporated into the United Confederate Veterans organization as W.L. Moody Camp No. 87. By 1896, they obtained the deed to the reunion grounds from the Moody family.

Brush arbors were erected by the veteran families for the three-day encampment which included speeches, concerts, musicals and dances. The reunion would begin with a firing of Valverde cannon, which now sits at the courthouse. As many as 8,000 attendees would come in from surrounding communities. As time went by, more and more of the old soldiers were taking their final roll call. By 1933, the Confederate reunions ceased.

The Moody family designated the grounds as the W.L. Moody Camp, Memorial Park in 1947, and placed it under the supervision of the City of Fairfield as a memorial to veterans of all U.S. wars. In 1951, the grounds were used for the Fairfield Centennial Celebration, as well as the Freestone County Boys Club and Livestock Show. Area families continue to use the camp grounds for gathering during the County Homecoming, Fair and Rodeo week. Since 1991, the W.L. Moody Memorial Park Campsite Association has assisted the city in maintaining the family campsites and encouraging the community spirit of the old historic reunions. (2014)

Directions: about one mile east of the Freestone County Courthouse in Fairfield on the south side of Hwy 84/East Commerce Street at what is known as the "Fairgrounds" in front of the Boy Scouts' Hut.

Address: East Commerce Street

GPS: N 31° 43.360 W 096° 08.714

PHOTOS: By Linda Mullen on Feb. 20, 2023

For more information and original images from the early Confederate Reunions please visit the Freestone County Historical Museum at 302 E. Main in Fairfield.



W. L. MOODY CONFEDERATE REUNION GROUNDS

THE FREESTONE COUNTY W.L. MOODY REUNION GROUNDS HAVE BEEN USED FOR REUNIONS, CELEBRATIONS AND REMEMBRANCE OF U.S. WAR VETERANS SINCE 1891. THE GROUNDS WERE NAMED AFTER COL. WILLIAM LEWIS MOODY, WHO ORGANIZED CO. G OF THE 7TH TEXAS INFANTRY, C.S.A., BASED IN FREESTONE COUNTY. AN EX-CONFEDERATE ASSOCIATION FORMED IN 1890 AND BEGAN MEETING AT THIS SITE IN 1891. IN 1892, THE VETERANS GROUP WAS INCORPORATED INTO THE UNITED CONFEDERATE VETERANS ORGANIZATION AS W.L. MOODY CAMP NO. 87. BY 1896, THEY OBTAINED THE DEED TO THE REUNION GROUNDS FROM THE MOODY FAMILY.

BRUSH ARBORS WERE ERRECTED BY THE VETERAN FAMILIES FOR THE THREE-DAY ENCAMPMENT WHICH INCLUDED SPEECHES, CONCERTS, MUSICALS AND DANCES. THE REUNION WOULD BEGIN WITH A FIRING OF VALVERDE CANNON, WHICH NOW SITS AT THE COURTHOUSE. AS MANY AS 8,000 ATTENDEES WOULD COME IN FROM SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES. AS TIME WENT BY, MORE AND MORE OF THE OLD SOLDIERS WERE TAKING THEIR FINAL ROLL CALL. BY 1933, THE CONFEDERATE REUNIONS CEASED.

THE MOODY FAMILY DESIGNATED THE GROUNDS AS THE W.L. MOODY CAMP MEMORIAL PARK IN 1947, AND PLACED IT UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE CITY OF FAIRFIELD AS A MEMORIAL TO VETERANS OF ALL U.S. WARS. IN 1951, THE GROUNDS WERE USED FOR THE FAIRFIELD CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION, AS WELL AS THE FREESTONE COUNTY BOYS CLUB AND LIVESTOCK SHOW. AREA FAMILIES CONTINUE TO USE THE CAMP GROUNDS FOR GATHERING DURING THE COUNTY HOMECOMING, FAIR AND RODEO WEEK. SINCE 1991, THE W.L. MOODY MEMORIAL PARK CAMPSITE ASSOCIATION HAS ASSISTED THE CITY IN MAINTAINING THE FAMILY CAMPSITES AND ENCOURAGING THE COMMUNITY SPIRIT OF THE OLD HISTORIC REUNIONS.

MARKER IS PROPERTY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

(2014)

