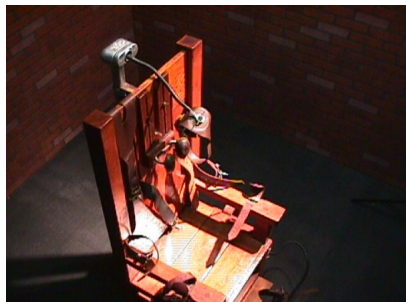


TEXAS PRISON MUSEUM: THE HUNTSVILLE CONS STILL DRAW ATTENTION



Huntsville, Texas, is famous for several things. One of them are local prisons. As they are a valid part of local history, visiting the Texas Prison Museum is an absolute must.

Huntsville, Texas, with slightly more than 35,000 residents is one of those places that would not ordinarily make it on the tourist maps. Not if it wasn't for the rich and long history of crime punishment. There are a total of six prisons in Huntsville and they have become such a firm part of 'local color' that in fact, they are featured as one of the major attractions here. **The Texas Prison Museum is an exhibit well worth visiting.**

The museum offers a captivating insight into the evolvement of the penal system in Texas. It is run by former prison employees who are more than willing to share not only their own stories, but the stories of the thousands of convicts who paid their dues here over the past decades.

There are several attractions which give the stories a very realistic spin, for example Old Sparky. **Old Sparky is an electric chair on which 361 prisoners were executed between 1924 and 1964.** The chair is actually displayed in a replica death chamber. There are several other appealing artifacts which once belonged to famous criminals, among which are **the carbines used by Bonnie & Clyde**, or a boot with a hollow heel worn by prisoner Charles Harrelson, the father of a more famous actor Woody Harrelson. Charles used to smuggle drugs in the hollowed-out heel. Naturally, other objects which are common to daily life in prison are on show here. A very interesting exhibition introduces the art of the cons which one can only admire. Especially the use of some bizarre materials, toilet paper, for example, reveals the creativity and talent of many prisoners. Visitors should not leave without having taken a picture in a real jail cell. For a small fee, they can even borrow a striped prisoner shirt and 'get the picture right'.

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