

Battle of Palmito Ranch

Hallowed Grounds: Sites of African American Memory

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The Civil War was a big step forward in equality for African Americans. In this war, the United States split into two halves: the North and the South. The South wanted slavery to remain legal, so they could have free workers on their farms to mass produce crops. The North wanted each state to be slave free.

The last battle in this war was the Battle of Palmito Ranch. The battle began at around four p.m. and lasted about four hours. This is considered the last battle of the Civil War, despite being a month after the Civil War concluded. Though the South ultimately won this battle, both sides fought long and hard. Even though segregation would be a problem for years to come, slavery was now banned in all of the states.

Palmito Ranch is in Texas, near Brownsville. Anyone can visit it and walk along the trails. On the sides of the dirt pathways are stone graves of soldiers who fought and died in the battle. This is a sadly noble place to be, as if the ghosts of the men who died are mourning that their deaths did not end the segregation between whites and blacks.

Even though this battle did not abolish segregation completely, it helped the African Americans gain courage. When the Civil War first started, the task probably looked impossible to the African Americans, even with the president on their side. There were thousands of slave owners in the south. This battle site reminds African Americans today who still struggle with the color of their skin. It helps African Americans stay on their feet, even helps me stay on my feet and I am white. It helps remind us that good will always win, even when the enemy has gotten the last laugh.

The site is home to the hearts of many. People look at it and think how bad it was back then, and how much better it is now, even though there is still racism in many locations, including some within the United States. Others look at it with sadness, disappointed that

humanity has to fight to decide on a choice. No matter who wins the war or how long since the “end of segregation,” there will always be people who are against African Americans.

The site in itself gives courage to struggling African Americans. It helps them see the world through a different perspective. Yes, some people still struggle to treat African Americans as their rightful equals, but think of how far we have come. Take a look around yourself and see how many African Americans there are. About 150 years ago, they would have all been slaves. The African Americans look at the battle site and gives them hope for a brighter future, even when all seems lost. That is what the site is, a beacon of hope for all people of the United States, male or female, white or black.

Bibliography

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