

Brenham, Texas Fireman's Park est. 1883



Original Pavilion



1st Little League - 1950



Renovated
Carousel
Building

Historic Beginnings

A heated exchange between Union soldiers and local citizens in September 1866 led to the eventual development of the City of Brenham's flagship park. The soldiers, part of an infantry company, took issue with comments made in the local newspaper and set the town on fire – not once, but twice. And so was born the Brenham Fire Department – organized under the pretense of protecting the community from fire, but in reality as a way to defend it from the Union soldiers. The department's history has been intertwined with that of the City since. It was through the firemen's generosity that Fireman's Park was founded.

In November 1883, the Mechanics Engine Company No. 1 and the Hook and Ladder Company No.1, purchased 14 acres of land from Pocahontas Higgins through his guardian, David B. Williams. Together, these two companies paid \$80 per acre for a total of \$1,160. The tract of land was named Fireman's Park, a name it still holds today. It was deeded to the Brenham Fire Department in 1884 and eventually deeded to the City in 1917.

Heritage Preservation

Fireman's Park has been home to the annual Maifest, a popular German festival, since 1884.

It is also the original site of the Washington County Fair. The park houses the Flying Horses Antique Carousel, the Finke Pavilion, the American Legion Hall, Veteran's Plaza and Fireman's Field. Each building has a history all its own.

Two of the Washington County Little League's original fields, Greenwade and Pflugaupt fields, were part of Fireman's Park. Greenwade still remains as the site of a baseball themed playscape. Brenham is the Baseball Capital of Texas and is home to Fireman's Field, one of the nicest high school ballparks in America. Nolan Ryan pitched against the Cubs at Fireman's Field in 1965 and legend has it that the field was the site of the Texas A&M and University of Texas alumni baseball games.

Historic Features

A 16-sided building was constructed to house the Flying Horses Carousel, in 1932. That building, along with the original kitchen, American Legion Hall, beer garden and a small hut were part of a Works Progress Administration project. The carousel building received a new roof as part of a renovation of the park and a new kitchen was built as well, but the American Legion Hall and hut remain as they were originally constructed.

Community Support

Fireman's Park has always enjoyed strong community support. The Flying Horses Carousel was maintained for a number of years by local civic groups like the Lions and Kiwanis Clubs. The Washington County Arts Council sponsors a "Music in the Park" program during the summer, opening the carousel to children free of charge. And of course, Maifest continues its tradition of celebrating the local heritage at Fireman's.

A community supported renovation of the Flying Horses and the building housing it turned into a total facelift for the park in 2005. A fund raising effort – "Rally Round the Carousel" – was started. A local family came forward with monies to construct a new pavilion – in the old turn verin style. Nearly \$200,000 was raised in private donations, grants and sales tax revenues to cover the renovations. The park "re-opened" in 2007 as part of the Maifest celebration and it continues to draw both local residents and visitors to its attractions.

Lone Star Legacy Park

Finke Pavilion and Kitchen, 2007

