

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Resaca de la Palma Battlefield

AND/OR COMMON

Resaca de la Palma Battlefield

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

North edge of Brownsville on Parades Line Road

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Brownsville

___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

15th

STATE

Texas

CODE

48

COUNTY

Cameron

CODE

061

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

___ DISTRICT

___ BUILDING(S)

___ STRUCTURE

☒ SITE

___ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

___ PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

___ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___ IN PROCESS

___ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

___ UNOCCUPIED

___ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

___ YES: UNRESTRICTED

___ NO

PRESENT USE

___ AGRICULTURE

___ COMMERCIAL

___ EDUCATIONAL

___ ENTERTAINMENT

___ GOVERNMENT

___ INDUSTRIAL

___ MILITARY

___ MUSEUM

___ PARK

___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___ RELIGIOUS

___ SCIENTIFIC

___ TRANSPORTATION

☒ OTHER: Polo Field**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Multiple private

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Brownsville

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Texas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Cameron County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

1150 East Madison Street

CITY, TOWN

Brownsville

STATE

Texas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☒ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Today the Resaca battlefield merely suggests conditions as they were in 1846. The bend of the Resaca, once dense with chaparral of mesquite and cactus has been cleared, and until recently was planted as a citrus orchard. This has been removed and is now an open field used for polo. The outlying areas are heavily developed residentially, losing completely any remaining historical integrity. At least the Resaca de la Palma, once filled in has been excavated and again contains water. The tall palms that suggested the name of the Resaca are still standing. A Texas Centennial Commission monument marks the site, but a cannon placed by General James Parker during 1920-21 has been removed about 1/4 mile north of the site. The intrusions are so great that no attempt at preservation is possible. The only remaining open space, although it no longer retains original landscape features is the major portion of the active battlefield and serves well in a commemorative function.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE
☐ 1600-1699	☐ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☒ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER
☒ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1846

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The battle of Resaca de la Palma was one of only two important battles of the Mexican War fought on what is now American soil. Following the Mexican retreat from the Battle of Palo Alto on May 8, General Zachary Taylor and his army followed them to the Resaca de la Palma, where fighting resumed. Deploying his infantry through the high chaparral and sending his cavalry in a sudden charge down the road, Taylor captured enemy artillery and caused the foot soldiers to withdraw. With heavy losses in artillery and personnel, the Mexican army retreated across the Rio Grande. These events led to the successful invasion of Mexico, demonstrating the superiority of American arms which gained the United States new prestige at home and abroad.

HISTORY

Early in 1846, General Zachary Taylor received orders to take possession of the territory lying between the Nueces and Rio Grande Rivers. Accordingly, he started southward with a part of his force from Corpus Christi overland, sending his supplies and munitions by boat. After a difficult march across the vast territory, the Army encamped on March 24, 1846, near Los Fresnos, ten miles north of the present Brownsville, remaining four days while supplies were brought from Point Isabel. On March 28 they reached the Rio Grande where they began construction of earthworks directly on the banks of the river. The post was first known as Fort Taylor but was renamed Fort Brown in honor of Major Jacob Brown who was fatally wounded on May 9 when the fort was besieged by Mexican troops from Matamoros.

Movement of the American army south from Corpus Christi had been the signal for the concentration of Mexican troops at Matamoros. General Arista was appointed Mexican Commander-in-Chief to supercede General Pedro Ampudia, with a total of 5,200 regulars and 26 pieces of artillery.

General Arista moved the concentration of the Mexican cavalry at Rancho Soliseño, 26 miles west of Matamoros with a view of cutting off Taylor's supplies. He crossed from Soliseno on April 24 and took a position on the Point Isabel road near Loma Alta, 9 miles north of Brownsville. Upon hearing of the move, Taylor, with his entire force except for some 50 men remaining at Fort Brown, left on May 1 for the coast, arriving at Point Isabel on May 5. Believing that Taylor was about to withdraw entirely, the Mexicans crossed from Longoreno on May 1 in pursuit of Taylor, leaving a force to besiege the fort.

(Continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuance Sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 50 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 1 4 6 5 1 8 7 0 2 8 6 9 5 3 0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C 1 4 6 5 1 3 9 0 2 8 6 9 3 3 0

B 1 4 6 5 1 7 3 0 2 8 6 9 1 9 0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D 1 4 6 5 1 4 2 0 2 8 6 9 8 5 0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See Continuance Sheet)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Patricia Heintzelman, Architectural Historian, Landmark Review Project

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

5/6/75

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ____

STATE ____

LOCAL ____

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

LANDMARKS

DATE

Landmark

Designated: 12/19/69
date

Boundary Certified:

Cornelius White 5-20
Chief, Hist. & date
Arch. Surveys

DATE

DATE Boundary Reirmed:

George R. ... 5-24-66
Acting Director, DAHP date

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NATIONAL HISTORIC
LANDMARKS

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Taylor, having received news of the Mexican movement, departed from Point Isabel on May 7. On the following day the Americans and Mexicans confronted each other on the Battlefield of Palo Alto.

After each army was unable to advance, the Mexicans retired southward during the early hours of May 9 and made a stand at Resaca Guerrero, since known as Resaca de la Palma. Here they planted three cannons and the greater part of their infantry on the north bank of the Resaca. Supporting these were four cannons on the south side of the Resaca, distributed on each side of the road from Point Isabel, with the remainder of the infantry planted on the bank of the Resaca. The cavalry was distributed along the western turn of the Resaca and a body called "Defensores de Tampico" was hidden in the woods west of the old road which ran south from the Resaca Rancho Viejo in the direction of Brownsville. In front and to the north of the position taken by the Mexicans there was a prairie about three miles in length, thickly covered with sacahuiste or wire grass. To the west, along the road on both sides, there was also a dense growth of ebony, mesquite, and other native cover. The artillery, which had been so effective the previous day, was greatly impeded in its progress by the wire grass.

Realizing that artillery alone could not dislodge the enemy, General Taylor ordered Captain May of the Dragoons to charge the position. This was done successfully and the Mexican army quickly retreated. General Arista narrowly escaped capture, his tent and all his personal effects falling into the hands of the Americans. His forces fled toward the Rio Grande while all the Mexican artillery and supplies fell into the hands of the victorious Americans.

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The boundary has been drawn to include the only portion of the battlefield which has retained any historical integrity. All structures on the site are nonhistoric and do not contribute to the significance of the landmark. Beginning at the southwest corner where Paredes Line Road crosses the Resaca the boundary continues southeast along the south bank of the Resaca, following the curve around north, then west to the point where it bends back eastward, then continuing in a line from this point to an intersection with Paredes Line Road, then south along this road to the point of beginning as shown on the U.S.G.S. map.



RESACA DE LA PALMA BATTLEFIELD, Texas. Palm trees outline bend of Resaca de la Palma, where Mexican and American troops clashed on May 9, 1846. Cannon was placed by Parker Commission. National Park Service photograph, 1959



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HISTORIC Resaca de la Palma Battlefield

AND/OR COMMON Resaca de la Palma Battlefield

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Brownsville

X VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Cameron

STATE

Texas

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Patricia Heintzelman

DATE OF PHOTO February 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service, 1100 L Street NW.,
Washington, D.C. 20240

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO.

View of last remaining open section of battlefield.



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PHOTO NO.

View of Resaca de la Palma looking east.



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AND/OR COMMON Resaca de la Palma Battlefield

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Brownsville X VICINITY OF COUNTY Cameron STATE Texas

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Patricia Heintzelman DATE OF PHOTO February 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service, 1100 L Street NW.,
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PHOTO NO.

View of Resaca de la Palma looking west.