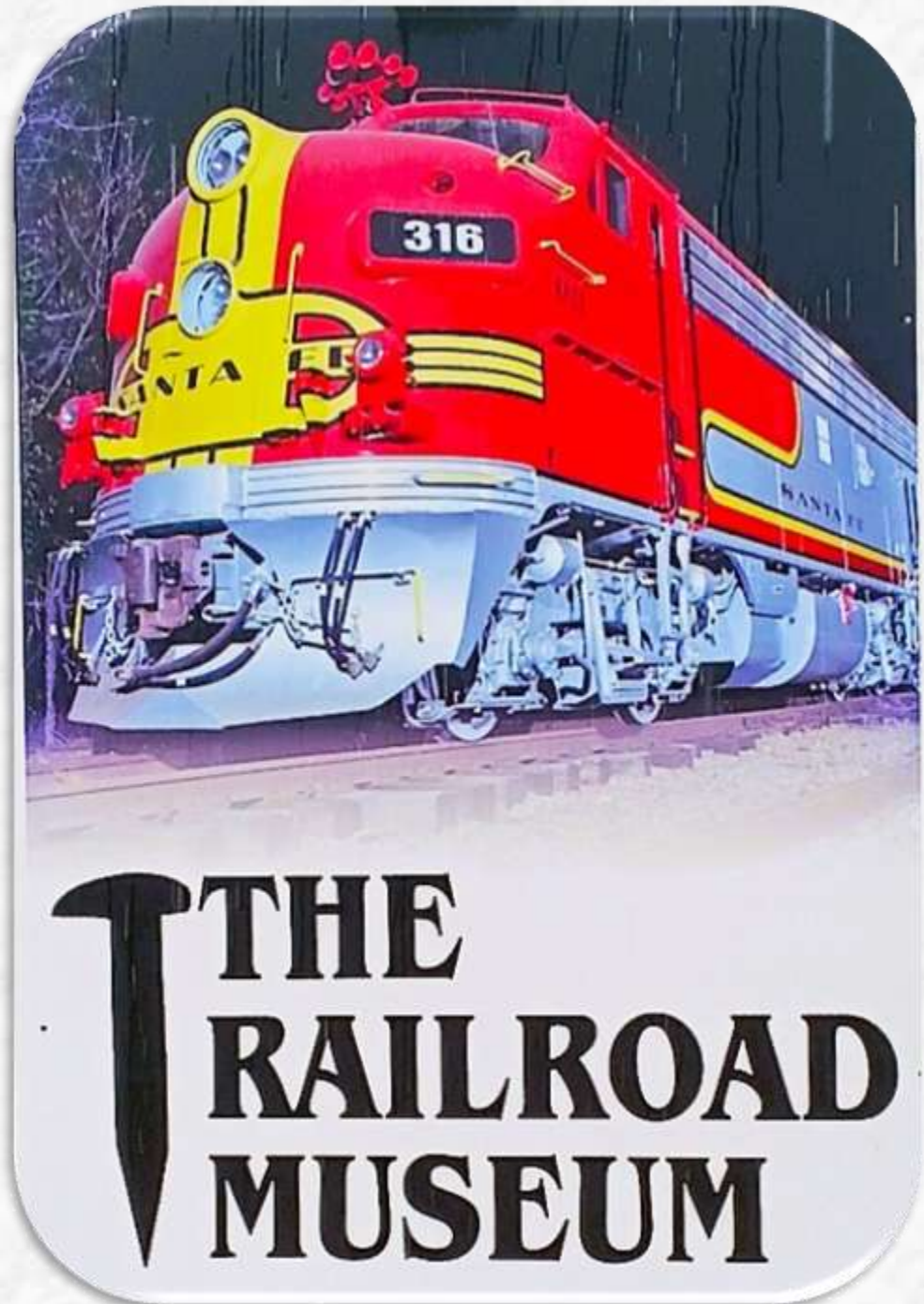


**LEOH Trip**

**Galveston  
Railroad Museum**

May 20, 2026



# **Galveston Railroad Museum**

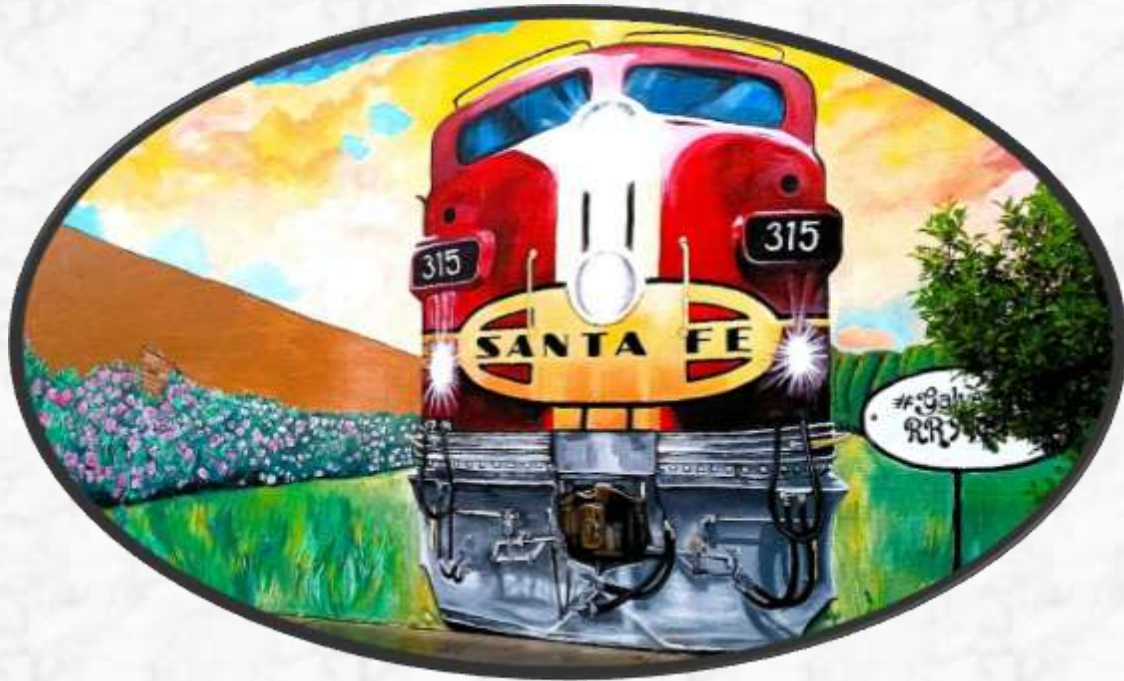
## **2602 Santa Fe Place**

### **Mission Statement**

*The Galveston Railroad Museum is dedicated to the restoration, observation, and re-use of its historic facilities and equipment for the development of educational and interactive programs, which support railroading and transportation initiatives serving our regional community.*

### **A Few Key Events in Galveston's Railroad History**

- **1850** The *Galveston, Harrisburg, and San Antonio Railroad* became the first established operating railroad in Texas.
- **1853** The *Galveston, Houston and Henderson Railroad Company* was chartered and was the only rail connection to the Texas railroad system.
- **1860** A trestle across Galveston Bay was completed, allowing a direct linkup between Galveston and Houston.
- **1863** The tracks and bay bridge were used by Northern forces in a recapture of Galveston during the Civil War.
- **1877** A “newspaper train” carried the daily *Galveston News* to Houston. This service continued until WW I.
- **1892** The company reported passenger profits of \$95,000 and freight earnings of \$398,000, operating 12 locomotives and 14 cars.
- **1900** The Galveston Wharves Railway was established.
- **1982** The Galveston Railroad Museum opened.





The Museum is housed in the former Santa Fe railroad station and is owned and operated by the non-profit Center for Transportation and Commerce.

The Museum plus forty rail cars and tracks cover a total of five acres.

Upon entering the Museum, visitors enjoy a trip back in time to the beautiful art deco interiors of the early 1930's.





White marble floors greet you in the 10,000 square foot 1932 depot.

*Ghosts of Travelers Past*, seen throughout, are composed of papier mache and plaster.

Philanthropist and museum founder Mary Moody Northen commissioned the work by artists Elliot and Ivan Schwartz. While the clothes and travel items represent the early 1930's, the faces were modeled on visitors to the depot at the time the artists were there. Famous and important people traveled by rail, so paparazzi also made an appearance!

In 1937 students attending the University of Texas for their freshman year often traveled by train to Austin. We left with much fanfare and many admonitions about how to conduct ourselves, whom to tip whom not to tip, how to proceed to our dorms and so forth.

As our train pulled out families waved and waved, and as we got further and further away even took out handkerchiefs and waved some more.

It was an exciting year.

This picture was taken at my home, 3311 Broadway, prior to my departure.

In her own words, Jeanne John Hesley writes about what going off to college was like.



Today, people drive or fly to college, but in the 1930's, boarding a train at Galveston's Union Passenger Depot was the preferred means of travel. Affluent families would purchase an array of trunks, as with an ocean voyage, into which students would pack all the belongings they would need while they were away.

Jeanne John Hesley kindly shared her memories of train travel as a student off to college at the University of Texas.

A steamer trunk was not just for ocean voyages! Everything she would need for the year was no doubt in the trunk and suitcases.

Her travel attire is an example of how a typical rail traveler dressed (although the corsage no doubt celebrated the educational milestone in her life!)



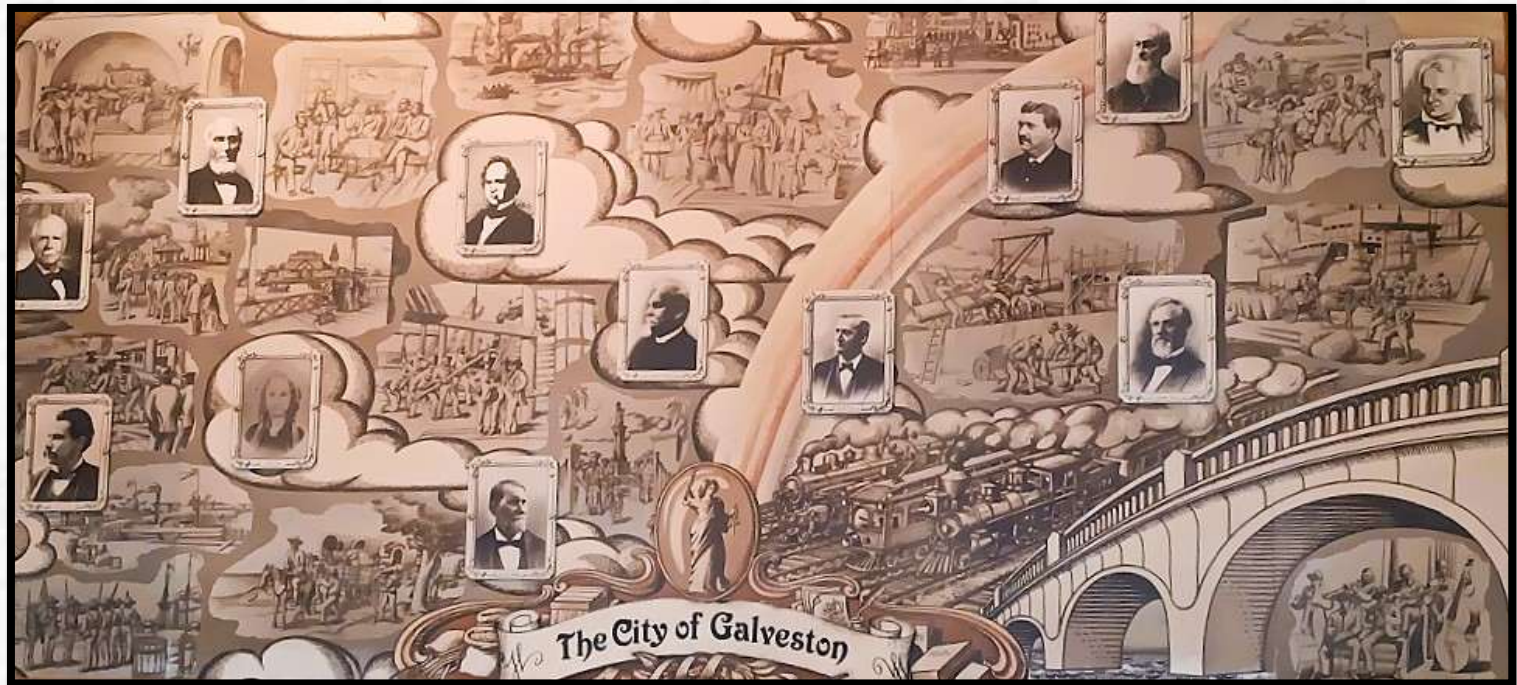
### GULF, COLORADO, & SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY

IN 1874 GALVESTON COUNTY VOTERS, NARROWLY APPROVED \$500,000 IN BONDS TO FINANCE CONSTRUCTION OF A RAILROAD LINE FROM THE CITY OF GALVESTON THAT WOULD BYPASS HOUSTON, ITS BUSINESS RIVAL, AND REACH ACROSS TEXAS AND BEYOND TO SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO. HENRY ROSENBERG, PRESIDENT OF THE GULF, COLORADO, & SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY (GCSF), BROKE GROUND AT 37TH AND MECHANIC STREET ON MAY 1, 1875. IN 1879 THE COMPANY COMPLETED A 50-MILE LINE WEST TO RICHMOND THAT INCLUDED A 2¼ MILE WOODEN BRIDGE SPANNING THE LENGTH OF GALVESTON BAY.

PROMINENT GALVESTON BUSINESSMAN GEORGE SEALY BOUGHT THE GCSF COMPANY AT PUBLIC AUCTION ON APRIL 15, 1879. SEALY LED EFFORTS TO CONSTRUCT A VITAL SPUR LINE TO HOUSTON, ACQUIRE EAST TEXAS RAIL INTERESTS TO SUPPLY RAIL TIES, INSTALL TELEGRAPH LINES, AND ESTABLISH NUMEROUS TOWNS ALONG THE MAIN RAIL LINE, INCLUDING ROSENBERG, SEALY, TEMPLE, KILLEEN, GOLDTHWAITE, AND BALLINGER.

GCSF JOINED THE ATCHISON, TOPEKA, AND SANTA FE RAILWAY (ATSF) IN 1886 AND BY 1900 HAD ADDED THE POPULAR HARVEY HOUSE HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS TO ITS LINE, BY INTRODUCING INNOVATIVE RADIO COMMUNICATIONS IN 1944 GCSF GREATLY EXPANDED GALVESTON'S NATIONAL RAIL CONNECTIONS. ALTHOUGH GCSF WAS OFFICIALLY BOUGHT OUT BY ATSF IN 1965 VARIOUS RAIL COMPANIES CONTINUED TO USE ITS FORMER LINES.

(1992)



A large wall mural depicts those who played an important role in bringing the railroad to Galveston and ensuring its success as a thriving city known for its commerce and its many amenities, including the well-known and popular Harvey House accommodations.

## Be the Engineer!

Featuring the Control Stand  
from the Texas Limited #100

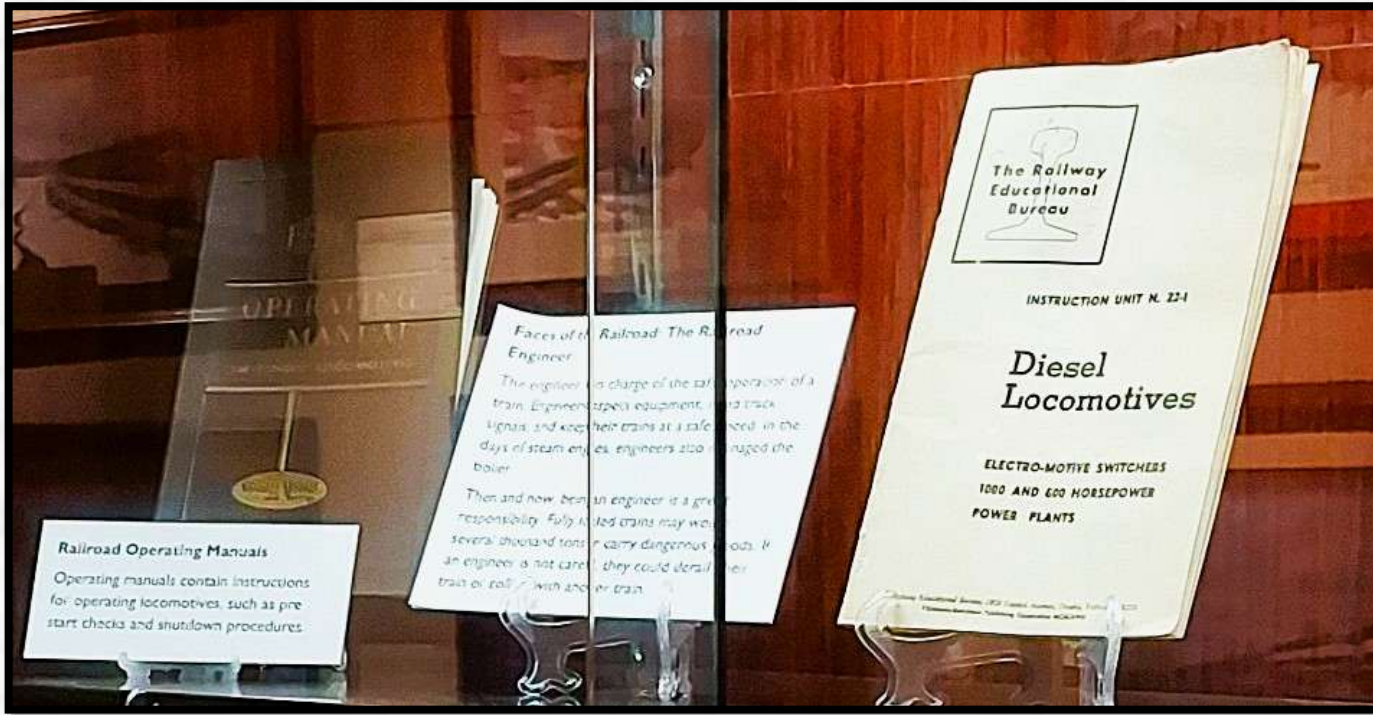
The controls and chair featured here once belonged to the Texas Limited #100, a train which provided weekend service between Houston and Galveston from 1989-1994.

These parts were salvaged from the Texas Limited #100 after Hurricane IKE caused damage to its engines.

*(The Museum graciously thanks Calvin Wehrle for donating his time to paint and create this stand for your enjoyment.)*



Does this chair look comfortable?!



Displays include a diesel locomotive operating manual as well as sturdy locks used for a variety of purposes.



The display above shows a photo of a railway conductor and engineer (each wearing their trademark hat and uniform) as they synchronize their watches to ensure accurate train arrival time.

Conductor membership cards are also on display.



1914 Illinois Central Rail  
Post Office car



Naturally, communications were important.  
Pay phones were available in the station,  
as well as postal service.

This Post Office car remained in service until late 1968, just before railroads stopped carrying mail for the Postal Service. Workers had to memorize all zip codes on the route and know which code they were in at all stops during the trip. Robberies were always a threat, so workers were issued .38 caliber revolvers for protection.



Travelers could enjoy a fine meal in the dining car. Railroad china with silverware settings were specific to each railroad line. The xylophones on display were not used at the table, but elsewhere by staff to announce that the dining car was now available for hungry passengers!



Above: a *Quench* carbonated soda contained saccharin. The label states "Food value: none"



The train kitchen above is a typical food preparation area.



Each railroad line had its own distinctive china pattern. The china pattern on the pieces above are from the Baltimore & Ohio railroad. Beautiful!



In 1919, Levitt Luzern Custer, an MIT graduate and inventor, built the Invalid Chair, a 3-wheeler that first ran on batteries, then later on gasoline. He saw a need for the chair for amputees returning home from WW I.

While waiting for a train arrival or departure, lounge areas added to the comfort and relaxation of both visitors and travelers.

What are they drinking?!



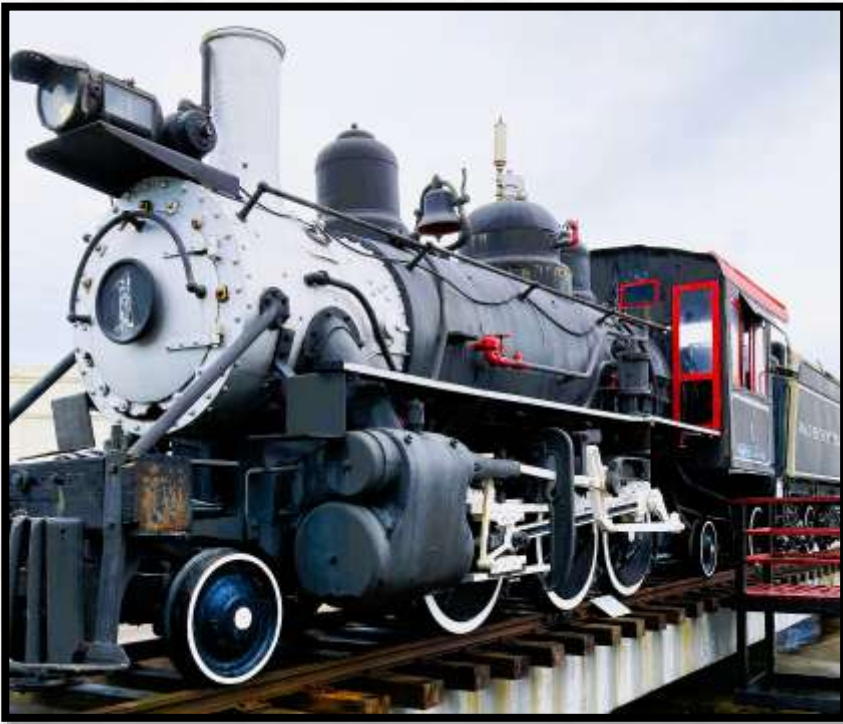
Pullman Porters were instrumental in ensuring passengers were comfortable and all needs met during a train trip in these luxury railroad sleeping cars.

A. Philip Randolph, a labor unionist and civil rights activist, helped organize the *Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters*, the nation's first successful African American led labor union.

Thanks to the union, porter wages increased, and long working hours decreased.

A museum exhibit includes an interview with George Lewis, who retired as a Porter in 2017. He grew up in a railroad family and was aware of the long working hours and low wages of Porters.

One of the few perks of being a Porter was the opportunity to meet famous passengers, as George did when he met President and Mrs. George H.W. Bush.



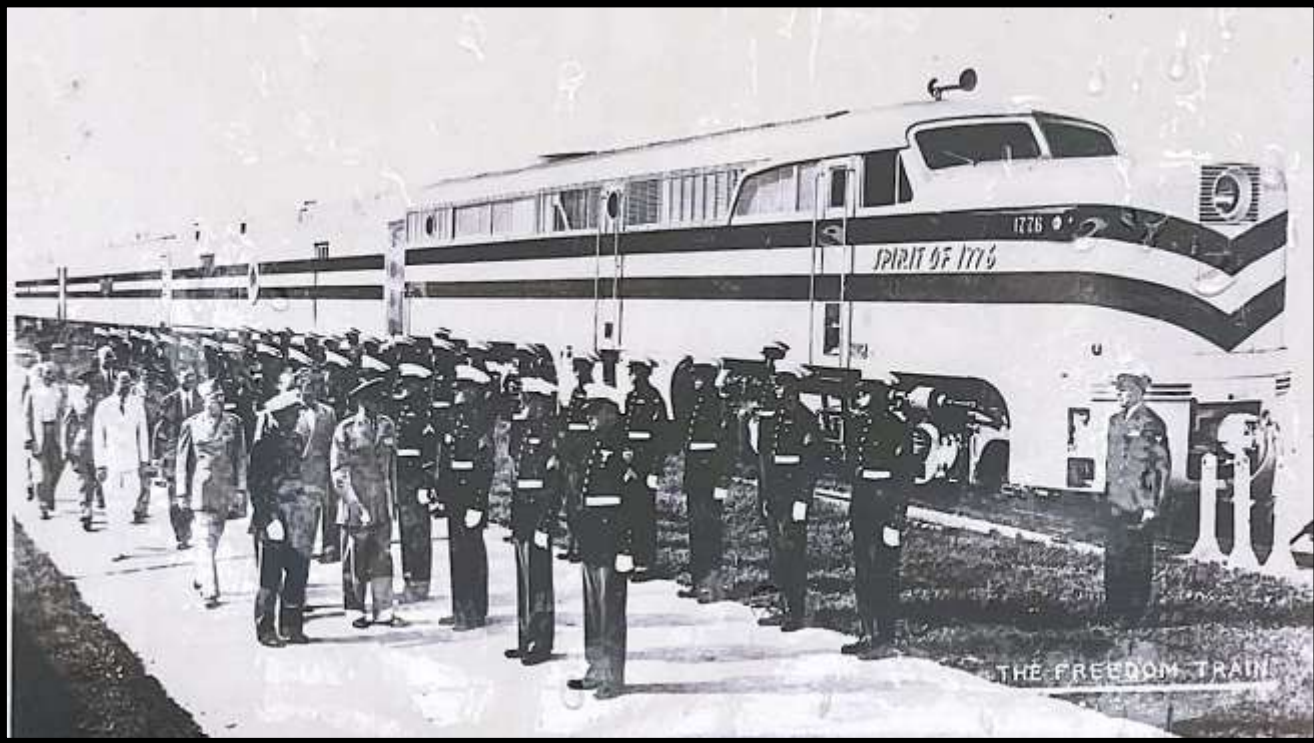
Engines and rail cars were amazing to view up close!



For a small fee, the Harborside Express Caboose is available for rides.

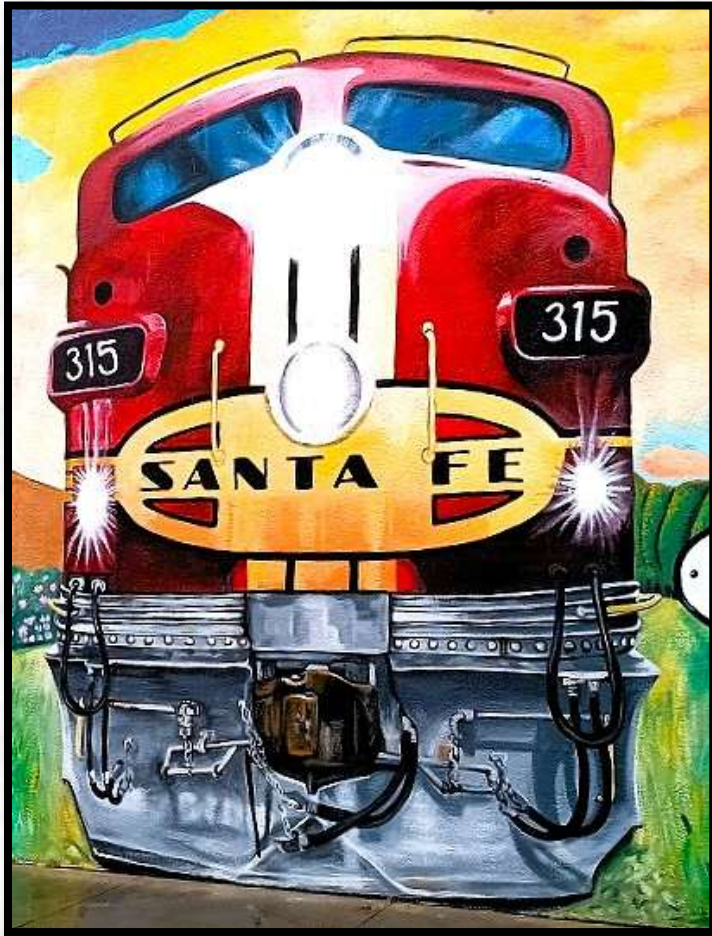
In 2008, Hurricane Ike caused about \$8 million in damage to the Museum and railyard with 8-11 feet of water. Water heights from various hurricanes are displayed beside this track.





Built in 1926, the Glen Fee is only one of two remaining rail cars of *The Freedom Train*, a project of the American Heritage Foundation, that traveled throughout the nation between 1947-1949, making its way to Galveston in 1948 (top left).

The train carried “documents of liberty”, including the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, the Emancipation Proclamation, the Gettysburg Address, the Iwo Jima flag, and one of the thirteen original copies of the Constitution.



The *Santa Fe Warbonnets* were acquired in 2012 to replace Texas Limited engines #100 and #200, which were destroyed by Hurricane Ike in 2008.

The museum received permission to paint them in the Warbonnet colors to honor the *Texas Chief*, which operated out of the depot between 1948-1967.

GO BACK IN TIME  
at the **GALVESTON  
RAILROAD  
MUSEUM**



STAY ON THE

**B O N N I E**

***Fun things to do on a museum visit!***

- Take a train ride!
- Book an event! Weddings, etc. with an overnight stay as desired, and all with Pullman porter assistance!
- Enjoy a Harvey House dinner!
- Take part in the annual Polar Express holiday experience!
- NOTE: Certain events are fully booked well in advance, so plan ahead!

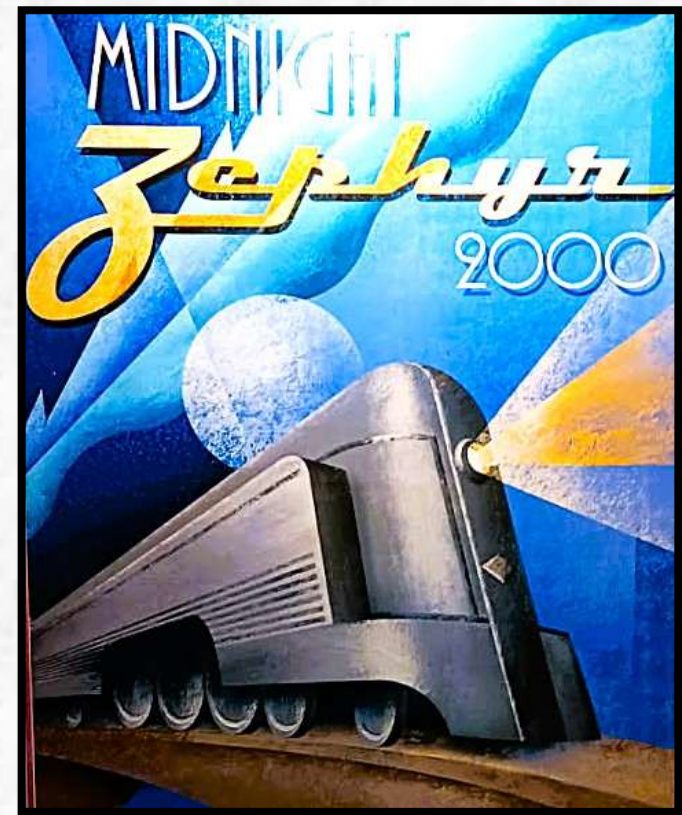
**ALL ABOARD!**

The Harborside Express  
Weekend Train Rides  
Advance Reservation Required  
*(Weather permitting)*

**SLEEP ON A TRAIN**

**RAILHOTEL**

CHECK INTO OUR UNIQUE RAILHOTEL TO EXPERIENCE THE LUXURY  
OF A NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM ABOARD A PRIVATE RAILCAR.  
24 HR. CONCIERGE. SECURE. COMPLIMENTARY PARKING.



The fun art deco poster above depicts an older Burlington railroad steam locomotive wrapped with a stainless steel shroud, circa 1930.

Learn much more and enjoy viewing more photos on the museum website

[galvestonrrmuseum.org](http://galvestonrrmuseum.org).

Lunch was enjoyed at **Benno's Cajun Seafood Restaurant**.  
*"Laissez les bons temps rouler"*



Thank you, trip coordinator **Ann Fairchild**, and Precinct One bus driver **Byron**,  
for another well-planned and safe trip!

It was noted that the bus had new "advertising", this time honoring  
famous people and places originating in the Houston area.  
*(We will check out the other side of the bus on the next trip!)*

# *Future Trips - all by Precinct 1 bus*

*Wednesday, June 11: Brookwood Community*

*July: Amazon Distribution Center*

*Complete details/dates will follow closer to the trip dates*

## *Signing Up for a Trip*

Trip Coordinator Ann Fairchild may be contacted at [fairann@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fairann@sbcglobal.net) or **281-686-1325**.

She will publish complete trip details, with the opportunity to sign up, closer to the trip date.

If the traveler quota is full, you may ask to be put on a waiting list.