Jocelyn Ho

Arkansas History

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Historic Washington State Park

Historic Washington State Park formally known as Old Washington State Park is located just off I-30 at the Hope exit. Once you exit the interstate you will drive approximately 15 minutes until you reach the destination. This old rustic town is on 101 acres of land in Hempstead County. The park has more than 30 restored landmarks with various backgrounds. The welcoming center is based inside the 1874 Hempstead County Courthouse which is in the center of the town. In the old town, there is Williams’ Tavern, several churches where weddings can be hosted, a candle/gift shop, the 1914 Washington Schoolhouse, and the two courthouses.

The old town is open to the public weekdays and weekends and is only closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s Day. This charming town offers people a glimpse at the people and events of the Territorial, Antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction eras in Arkansas History. The park was established in 1973 and served as the Confederate capital in the Civil War. Once the railroad was build, the town began to diminish because people were moving to Hope. The town wanted to preserve the old historic buildings and created the Pioneer Washington Restoration Foundation in 1958.

The restoration began with the 1836 Hempstead Courthouse and the other buildings soon followed. With these restorations, visitors are able to explore the grounds and see where history has taken place. This state park is a hidden gem that does not receive much credit because of its location.

