



**GALVESTON
RAILROAD MUSEUM**

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1948: Freedom Train Visits Galveston

GALVESTON, TX – On February 7, 1948, The Freedom Train called on Galveston, where more than 3,500 people lined up early in the morning before the depot doors opened to view the nation's documents of liberty.

The Galveston Railroad Museum is home to the only remaining rail car that traveled to all 48 states in the Union, 1947 – 1949, as part of the first Freedom Train. All that remains of The Freedom Train is the Glen Fee at the museum. A fundraising campaign is currently underway to complete the restoration. The exterior has been painted in the traditional red, white and blue, the magnificent American Eagle is prominently displayed on the car, and new windows have been installed, however, much needs to be done to complete the interior that will feature documents and U.S. Marine uniforms circa 1945 – 1947.

The railcar needs proper ventilation, paint, flooring, exhibit cases, and more to allow public access to the historic gem. Families of numerous veteran U.S. Marines from across the United States have graciously contributed artifacts to the military presence content of the exhibit.

The Galveston Daily News headline for February 7, 1948, read "Galveston to Greet Freedom Train Today" and "Tours Begin at 10 o'clock." The article said that 8,000 were expected to view the documents.

A project of the American Heritage Foundation, The Freedom Train was meant to remind Americans of their liberties that were nearly taken for granted in post-war America. The train made stops in big cities and small towns alike covering the entire United States.

The display cars were filled with dozens of "documents of liberty", including the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, one of the 13 original copies of the Constitution of the United States of America, The Emancipation Proclamation, the Gettysburg Address, the Iwo Jima flag, and the German and Japanese surrender documents that ended World War II.

The original Freedom Train consisted of a brand- new Alco PA-1 streamlined. diesel locomotive, built specifically for the Freedom Train, an equipment car, three display cars, and three Pullman cars. The Glen Fee was the middle of the three Pullman cars that together were the living quarters for the detachment of the 28 U.S. Marines that provided security for the train as it traveled cross country.

Built by Pullman company in 1926, the Glen Fee originally ran on the New York Central's 20th Century Limited until about 1963. It was probably selected as a The Freedom Train because it has 3 drawing rooms, one at each end and one in the center, each a private room with a bathroom and couch. There are also 6 compartments, each a private room but no bathrooms, all interconnected. It had an ice-activated air conditioning system added in the 1930s.

The New York Central sold the car to Private Railway Cars, Inc., who then sold it to Bear Creek Scenic Railway and finally was sold to Oregon, Pacific and Eastern in 1966. The Galveston Railroad Museum purchased the car from the OP&E in 1978, along with several other cars and the 555.

As an immersive living history museum dedicated to educational outreach, the Galveston Railroad Museum is committed to completing the restoration of the Glen Fee. To donate to the restoration go to www.galvestonRRmuseum.org or contact Executive Director David Robertson. As non profit organization, contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

The Galveston Railroad Museum is open daily 10 am – 5 pm daily. Admission is Adults \$12, Seniors \$9, Students 12 years and under \$6, Members, Active Military, and Under 3 Free. Complimentary parking with admission at 2602 Santa Fe Place. For additional information and schedule of events go to www.GalvestonRRMuseum.org or call (409) 765-5700.

Photo: Glen Fee