



# **The Enemy Within Never Did Without: German and Japanese Prisoners of War At Camp Huntsville, Texas, 1942-1945**

*Jeffrey L. Littlejohn, Charles H. Ford*

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Camp Huntsville was one of the first and largest POW camps constructed in America during World War II. Located roughly eight miles east of Huntsville, Texas, in Walker County, the camp was built in 1942 and opened for prisoners the following year. The camp served as a model site for POW installations across the country and set a high standard for the treatment of prisoners.

Between 1943 and 1945, the camp housed roughly 4,700 German POWs and experienced tense relations between incarcerated Nazi and anti-Nazi factions. Then, during the last months of the war, the American military selected Camp Huntsville as the home of its top-secret re-education program for Japanese POWs.

The irony of teaching Japanese prisoners about democracy and voting rights was not lost on African Americans in East Texas who faced disenfranchisement and racial segregation. Nevertheless, the camp did inspire some Japanese prisoners to support democratization of their home country when they returned to Japan after the war. Meanwhile, in this country, the US government sold Camp Huntsville to Sam Houston State Teachers College in 1946, and the site served as the school's Country Campus through the mid-1950s.

“This long-overdue project is one I started working on decades ago but didn't finish. It is gratifying to see the book come to fruition through the efforts of these two history professors. And what a job they've done!”—Paul Ruffin, Director, TRP

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