



## Just Visitin': Old Texas Jails

*Joan Upton Hall*

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The classic board game, Monopoly, doesn't include a jail in its town for nothing. Jails hold a certain awe for most of us, and in the game or in reality, everyone would rather be "just visiting."

Whether you call it "hoosegow," "calaboose," "slammer," or "correctional facility," each jail is a backdrop for the personalities and events of its time and place. Sometimes rustic, often beautiful, the architecture symbolizes each society's brand of justice. Unfortunately, today many stand neglected to the point of ruin, or become relegated to mere storage facilities. Some have even been demolished.

But thanks to innovative minds with an appreciation for history, the more than fifty jails featured in this book have realized their potential as town attractions and are ready to show off what they possess. Who isn't curious about the stories a prison's formidable walls could tell? And hearing the stories, don't we also want to see what it's like inside those walls? The buildings that once kept us safe from outlaws now serve us as museums, libraries, restaurants, hotels, and even a home or two.

"Just visiting," as the old Monopoly game called it, takes on a more enjoyable meaning as you indulge in a physical or imaginary excursion to the places that interest you most. Located all across Texas and dating back as far as 1850, each has its own style.

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