

Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum

Educational Resources



Artifact Spotlight: Edwin Wesson Percussion Rifle

Written by TRHFM Staff

The following article has been adapted from the former website of the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum.

Edwin Wesson Rifle attributed to Jack Hays



Edwin Wesson Percussion Rifle

Courtesy of Roblay McMullin / Catalog# 1998.024.002

Photo courtesy of Robert Langham III

John “Jack” Coffee Hays (1817-1883) owned this .42 caliber Edwin Wesson Percussion rifle. Hays arrived in Texas in 1836, where he became a legendary Texas Ranger Captain and land surveyor. He proved the value of Colt revolvers in battle when vastly outnumbered by Indians. Advice from Capt. Hays and Capt. Samuel H. Walker (1817-1847) led to the creation of the renowned Colt Walker for the Mexican War. Relocating to California, Hays became the sheriff of San Francisco in 1850 and surveyor-general, acquiring the rifle around that time.

The Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum proudly displays a portrait of Captain Jack Hays, painted in 1851 by artist W. S. Jewett. It is believed that the rifle in the painting is the same one pictured here and on display at the museum.

