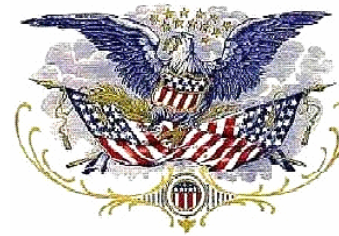




Fort McKavett State Historical Site
 P. O. Box 68
 Fort McKavett, Texas 76841



Fort McKavett Gazette

"News of our Volunteers and Friends"

Volume 2, Number 2

February, 2003

Star Party at Fort McKavett March 29th

With the upcoming Star Party to be held next month at the Post, it should be noted the Post Surgeon would note in his logs anything that stood out at the Post. This included a eclipse of the sun in July, 1878 noted by Dr. Goddard.

Eclipse of sun July 29th 1878. 1st contact 2 hrs 56 minutes. Greatest totality about 7/10 at 4 hrs 6 minutes. Last contact 5 hrs 4 minutes.

Eclipse of Sun, July 29th, 1878. 1st contact 2 hours, 56 minutes, Greatest totality about 7/10 as of 4 hours, 6 minutes. Last contact, 5 hours, 4 minutes.

Information for the newsletter?
 Contact Gabe Schooley at:
 John.Schooley@tpwd.state.tx.us
 Or by mail at:

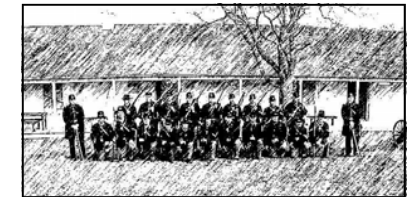
Fort McKavett S. H. S.
 P.O. Box 68
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TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE
PARKS & HISTORIC SITES

"West Texas Heritage Days at Fort McKavett"

March 22-23, 2003

This is our annual event held at Fort McKavett State Historical Site. All Indian Wars units and displays are invited. Meals will be provided by the Friends of Fort McKavett group. Lodging is available either in vintage tents on the parade ground or in barracks and buildings (reservations for these must be made ASAP). The Post was active from 1852-1883. The event will cover through the WWI era for exhibits and troops. Horses must have current Coggins papers before being allowed to unload on State Property. There are showers available. For registration or other information, contact Gabe Schooley with Texas Parks and Wildlife. Gabe can be reached by telephone at (915) 396-2358



Call to Arms...

Events For Fort McKavett



February 14-15, Battleship Texas, U.S.S. Maine Memorial and Living History Timeline

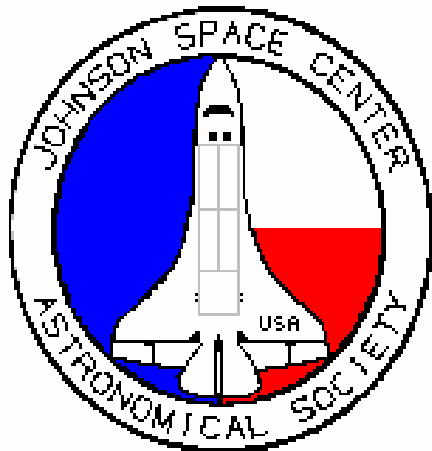
February 21-22-23, "Inspection 1853" at Fort Phantom Hill

March 21-23, Fort McKavett, West Texas Heritage Days

March 29, Fort McKavett, Star Gazer Party

May 17-18, Texas State Railroad Living History Timeline

May 16-17, 2nd Annual Living History Days, Fort Chadbourne



Fort McKavett Star Party
March 29, 2003

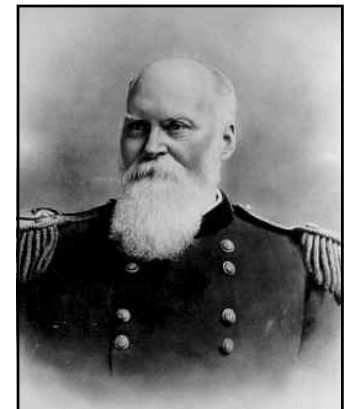
From the Archives

A photograph of a handwritten document in cursive script. The text describes an armed party of 30 citizens passing a post on March 11, 1857, and reports on their search for gold and silver in the region of the Concho river and Fort San Saba.

An armed party of 30 Citizens passed the Post on March 11 June '57, organized to explore the country from the No of the North fork of the Concho river to south side the south east corner of New Mexico in search of gold. There is an armed party of about 20 men digging for silver at the old Fort San Saba, 20 miles below this post. They report having found small quantities. (Doubtful)

This report came out of the "Post Returns", in the "Record of Events" section written by 1st Lt. Samuel B. Holabird in Temporary Command of the Post, June 1857.

Quartermaster General of the Army S. B. Holabird several years after he served at Fort McKavett as a 1st Lt. in Supply with the 1st Infantry. He had also commanded the Post on several occasions in the late 1850's



Sgt. Jacob W. Wilks, 9th U.S. Cavalry

February is Black History Month in Texas

Jacob W. Wilks was born into slavery in Clarke County, Kentucky around 1840. He escaped slavery along with his family via the "Underground Railroad." Jacob was raised in the free state of Ohio by the Waddell family after his parents died.

He was one of the first to enlist at Camp Nelson, Kentucky on the 16th of September 1863. He joined Company "C," 116th Regiment United States Army Colored Volunteer Infantry, Wilks was discharged in October, 1866 after serving 3 years and 1 month. He took part in several Civil War actions including the defense of Camp Nelson, Hickmans Bridge, and the siege of Petersburg.

He re-enlisted the same day at Greenville, Louisiana in Company "F," 9th U S Cavalry where he was promoted to Sergeant. He served until 1871, and re-enlisted for a second tour. He was stationed at Fort McKavett, Texas from 1869 to 1874. Sergeant Wilks was in the same Company "F" as Emanuel Stance and under the command of Captain Carroll.

When he was stationed at Fort Sill in Indian Territory, Sergeant Wilks contracted chronic lung disease from exposure in the line of duty. He was honorably discharged 2 October 1876 from Fort Seldon, New Mexico.

Wilks was married on 20 October 1884 at Fort McKavett, Menard County, Texas to Elizabeth Moore. They had six children: Maggie, Mary, Ophelia and Ovelia, Bernice and Mamie Sue. The family moved to San Angelo, Texas in 1899. Wilks bought property consisting of cattle and land in Fort McKavett and San Angelo, Texas. He became successful in the cattle business and operated his ranches in West Texas until he retired after the turn of the century.

Jacob Wilks died in 1922 in San Angelo, Texas. He is buried in the family plot in the Black cemetery inside Fairmont Cemetery there.

Information about Jacob Wilks was found at the Chicago Public Library in their "Former Slaves in Freedom" exhibit and TPWD's Exploring Texas Roots program.

A School for Area Children

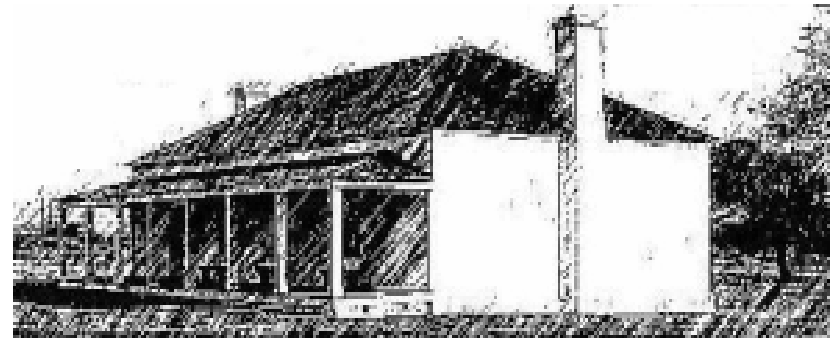
Post School:

In accordance with G. O. 24, 4-4, 0. Washington D. C. May 18th 1878, a post school was established November 5th 1878, in the stone school building at the post. A non-commissioned officer is detailed as teacher. The school during the month has been well and regularly attended by officers, landowners & civilian children. The school is well provided with furniture and is quite an institution among the young folks.

Although the present school house had been used at the Post since 1874, it was for the use of Military Personnel only. In May 1878, the War Department set aside the use of the school buildings at Frontier Posts for the education of Children, not only on the Post, but also those in the area.

A noncommissioned officer was appointed "Teacher". The first classes for "young folks" was started on November 5, 1878.

Our Schoolhouse at Fort McKavett was used continually from then until 1951 when the Children were sent to the Menard Independent School System, 23 miles away from the Post.



Pre Civil War Deaths at the Post

When the Army left the Post in 1883, they removed the Soldiers and their families from the Cemetery to San Antonio's National Cemetery

From the records of both the Post, the VA, and the National Cemetery, it looks as if the people who were interred before the Civil War were not moved.

From the Post Returns, we can tell that there were 36 Enlisted Men, and 2 Officers who were buried at the Fort McKavett Cemetery.

We are researching this now and if we find that these people are still at Fort McKavett, then steps will be taken to recognize their final resting place.

As you can imagine, there is a lot of work to do to document this before anything can be done officially.

We will keep you posted on this project. In the research done so far, we have the names of four of the Soldiers stationed at Fort McKavett who had died. We are expecting some more records shortly that will help us with this research.

One of the things that has been a problem is the loss of so many records the Army had when they surrendered to the Confederate Forces in Texas at the start of the Civil War. A lot of the records have not been found in either the Federal or the State Archives.

This list of those we know about at this time shows the date of death, name, rank, Regiment, Company, and cause of death:

9/13/52	Washington P. Street, 1 st Lt.	8 th Inf.	F Disease
4/26/56	Louis Bauer, PVT	1 st Inf.	F Disease
10/26/55	John D. McCall, 2 nd Lt.	1 st Inf.	A Acc'dl Gunshot
1/27/57	Daniel Herne, PVT	1 st Inf.	D Disease



One of our Star Gazers, Becky Ramotowski, got to attend the launch of NASA's STS-107 in February. She was there because Mission Specialist David Brown, another one of the Star Gazers was on this flight. David has taken a Fort McKavett patch with him in space and will be returning here to the Post in the near future.

These are the folks that you can meet when you come out to the Star Gazer Events held at Fort McKavett.



DAVID M. BROWN
CAPTAIN, USN
NASA ASTRONAUT
Member Johnson Space Center
Astronomical Society
Has been involved with the Star
Gazer Events at Fort McKavett

David M. Brown is a pilot, a Medical Doctor, a Flight Doctor, and now Astronaut on the first all Science Mission NASA has flown in several years.

Gabe has an excellent photo taken by Becky of the Lift-Off in the office at the Post.

Fort McKavett
*Where the Old Frontier meets the
Final Frontier*

