

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



Fort McKavett Gazette

“News of our Volunteers and Friends”

Volume 8, Number 2

February, 2009

Fort McKavett Upcoming Events

- Feb 14-15**, Battleship Texas Time Line (Remember the Maine), Houston
- Mar 6-7**, Fort Clark, Education Day on Friday
- Mar 14-15**, Fort Concho, Artillery School and Ladies Conference
- Mar 21**, Spring Star Party, Fort McKavett
- Mar 27-28**, West Texas Heritage Days, Education Day on Friday, Fort McKavett
- Apr 15-17**, THC Annual Historic Preservation Conference, Austin, TX
- Apr 17-18**, Fort Richardson Days, Education Day on Friday
- Apr 22**, Texas Travel Counselor's Conference, Tour of Fort McKavett
- Apr 25**, Mission Tejas Folk Festival, Mission Tejas State Park
- May 1-2**, Fort Chadbourne Event, Education Day on Friday
- May 8-9**, Texas Forts Trail Muster, Fort Worth

Color Copies of all the Fort McKavett Gazettes can be found at:

www.fortmckavett.org



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
read please calling read please

A note from the President
We have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Texas Historical Commission and the Friends of Fort McKavett. It has been posted on our website for everyone to view.

In response to our questions, THC has clarified several items. First, they have reduced the audit requirements. Secondly, we will not be required to carry our own insurance. Finally, there were minor wording changes and clarifications to the MOA in general.

THC has made sure that a good working relationship exists between us. This is greatly appreciated. They are a very understanding and professional group to work with.

The post bandstand project is now in the planning stage. We will keep you updated on our progress.

See you at our March event!

John Cobb, President
Friends of Fort McKavett

From the Archives

Fort McKavett, Menard Co., Texas.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I am a little girl, ten years old. Occasionally I see letters in your "Letter-Box" from boys and girls living in the army, so I thought I would send you a short letter from Texas. We live at Fort McKavett, one of the best frontier posts in the State. The surrounding country is very pretty. There are five infantry and two cavalry companies stationed here. I have a pony, which I ride nearly every day and enjoy it so much. My papa went on a scout two years ago and brought home this pony; he belonged to the Indians. I think he must have been one of the squaws' ponies, because he is so gentle and likes women better than men around him.

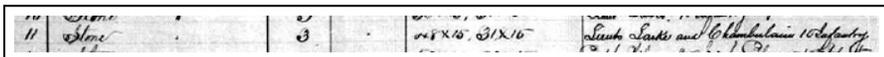
I have a black and tan terrier dog named Nipper, and a cat called Teeny. I could not live away out here without plenty of pets—it is so lonely. I have no brothers or sisters, but there are eighteen officers' children in the garrison, and all under twelve years of age. I have not been North for four years; I am getting tired of living South so long. I enjoy reading St. NICHOLAS so much, and out here it is doubly welcome. I am afraid I am writing too much, so will close for this time.—I remain one of your best friends,
 JANET G. LARKE.

This note was found in the Magazine "St. Nicholas" in their November 1876 edition. This is the first of two letters written by Janet Larke, the daughter of 1st Lt. Alured Larke of the 10th Infantry Regiment at Fort McKavett. The second letter is a follow-up to this one and goes into the description of the Post more. We will put that one in our March Gazette. Thanks to Harvard College Library for these copies...



Right: 1st Lt. Alured Larke while at Fort McKavett

Below: Lt. Larke, his wife, Margaret and daughter (born 1866), shared Officers Quarters No. 11 with Lt. Chamberlain and his family in this 1875 Quartermaster Inventory.

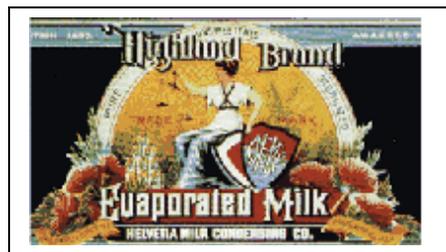


From the Army Cooks Manual

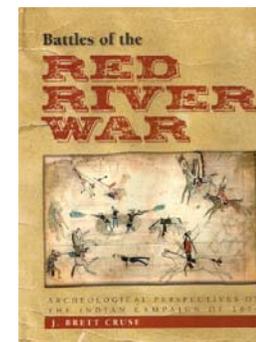
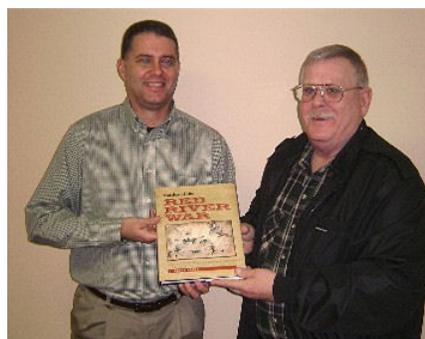
Bean Soup.

207. For 50 men, take 3 Government tin cups of beans, clean and wash well; then place in 5 to 7 gallons of water or beef stock in a boiler; set on the range, and let come to a boil, and then remain on the range over night. In the morning, put in pieces of beef bones, and 1½ pounds of bacon. Boil until about 10 o'clock and pass through a colander. Place on the range again and let come to a boil. Thicken with a flour batter, season with pepper and salt. Serve hot with hard or fresh bread.

Highland Milk became Pet Milk in the 1890's



Photographs from the Collection of John Cobb



Brett Cruse (L), with John Cobb at the Austin Headquarters. Brett is the THC Site Supervisor for Archeological and Military Sites. He will be signing his new book, "Battles of the Red River War", at our March West Texas Heritage Days event. This is a good time to visit with Brett and get your copy of his book signed!

News from the Post

In December, Curator/Interpreter Chris Fischer attended a week long workshop held at the Houston Zoo and sponsored by the National Association for Interpretation (NAI). Chris is now a Certified Interpretive Guide or CIG. The National Association for Interpretation is a not-for-profit professional organization dedicated to advancing the profession of heritage interpretation, currently serving about 5,000 members in the United States, Canada, and over thirty other nations. As part of the certification process, the Fort McKavett Post Library obtained a copy of the NAI Certification Library Package. This is a collection of six textbooks for the certification process. It includes the classic work, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, by Freeman Tilden. Tilden's six principles of interpretation are the cornerstone of the NAI and the National Park Service's interpretive programming. These books will be available on site for the use of staff and volunteers. The Texas Historical Commission is very supportive of the National Association of Interpretation and its programs. THC hopes to send additional staff and site volunteers to future certification workshops.



In this 1876 Photograph of Fort McKavett's Senior Officers Parade Ground, we have the only known photograph of our Bandstand. We have found a set of plans for it and will have some announcements later.

Donation for the Friends of Fort McKavett

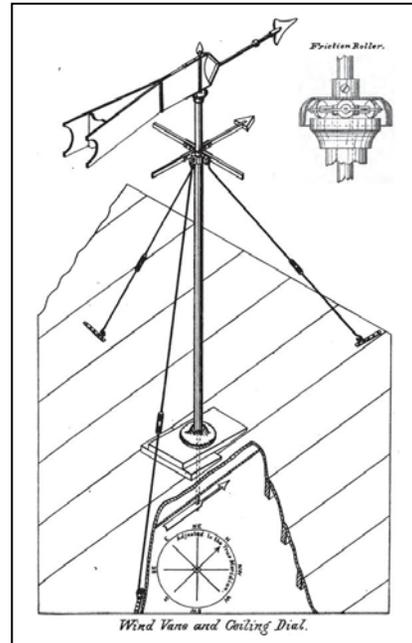
Long time Friends of Fort McKavett members and supporters of our Friends events, Lee and Kelley Knight Heins, made a nice donation to the Friends on behalf of HHSC-Family and Community Services and the Friends and Family of Lee and Kelley Heins. Their generosity is greatly appreciated and will help ensure that our upcoming March event is a success. Thanks Kelley and Lee!



Left: Kelly and Lee Knight Heins at our "West Texas Heritage Days" during "Education Day"



Above: 1983 Photograph of the Officer of the Day Quarters at Fort McKavett when the highway still ran through the middle of the Post. The road was moved to its present location soon after this photograph was taken. Photograph by John Cobb, November, 1983



Remember our Wind Vane?

A report from the Medical Journal in August, 1877 shows that there was a wind vane on the hospital administration building. It had an indicator (a large iron ring with the direction painted on it with a pointer showing the direction of the vane) inside the building to show the direction of the wind. This enabled the post doctor to record the weather without going outside. The Hospital Steward F. Worth, U.S. Army was praised by Dr. Goddard for his “ingenuity” in making this device. The Dr. had to record the weather daily.

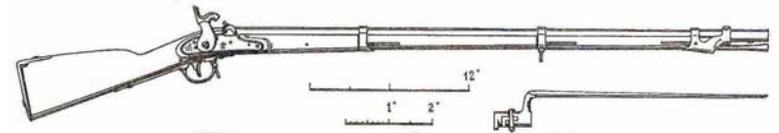
The photograph on the left is our Wind Vane, minus the ceiling dial, in storage at Fort McKavett. Captain A. W. Greely was impressed by the way it worked when he was on an inspection tour of the Signal Corps. He came up with a similar design and included it in his Regulations beginning in the 1870’s for all Military Installations that reported the weather conditions.

We hope that this little piece of History will be restored before too long.

Firearms of Fort McKavett

(Part I)

Submitted by Chris Fischer Musket, Model of 1842



When Fort McKavett was established in 1852 the Model 1842 Musket was the standard long-arm of the United States Infantry. During the 1853 inspection; Companies D, E, H, and part of Company F of the 8th Infantry were equipped with this weapon as were Companies C & E of the 1st Infantry during the 1856 inspection. The Model 1842 followed the basic design of every U.S. produced musket from 1795 and the earlier French weapons used in the Revolution with the exception that the older flintlock firing system was replaced by the more reliable percussion cap. This was the first U.S. musket to feature the percussion cap and the last smoothbore weapon produced by government armories. Production began in 1844 and the first issues were made during the Mexican-American War. This 10 pound, 57 ½ inch long muzzleloader was still in the hands of many Civil War soldiers, both North and South, as late as 1865. The main drawback was that it had a smooth bore of .69 caliber. Rifled weapons required the ball to be threaded tightly down spiral grooves in a barrel so the bullet would come out spiraling like a football. This allowed only about one shot per minute which would be a liability during an enemy bayonet assault. To speed loading the Model 1842 was issued with a .65 caliber round ball. This allowed the typical soldier to fire three shots in one minute, at a cost of accuracy. The Model 1842 did not have a rear site for aiming, it was a point and shoot weapon. In order to make the Model 1842 Musket work most effectively, soldiers were trained to fire in shoulder-to-shoulder volleys like a giant human shotgun. In order to make the weapon even more effectively, the U.S. Army typically issued what was called buck-and-ball cartridges. The buck-and-ball contained one .65 caliber round ball and three .31 caliber buckshot. The Model 1842 Musket was replaced by the Model 1842 Rifled Musket, using a new expanding bullet, in 1857.



b. BUCK AND BALL