

Fort McKavett Gazette

“News of our Volunteers and Friends”



Volume 4, Number 7

July, 2005

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



July 1-4 July 4th Tours
(Fort McKavett)

September 23-24 Fort
Stockton Educational and
Living History Day

October 1 JSCAS Star Party
and the Fort McKavett Town
Reunion



Fort
McKavett
State
Historic
Site

Memorial Day Tours

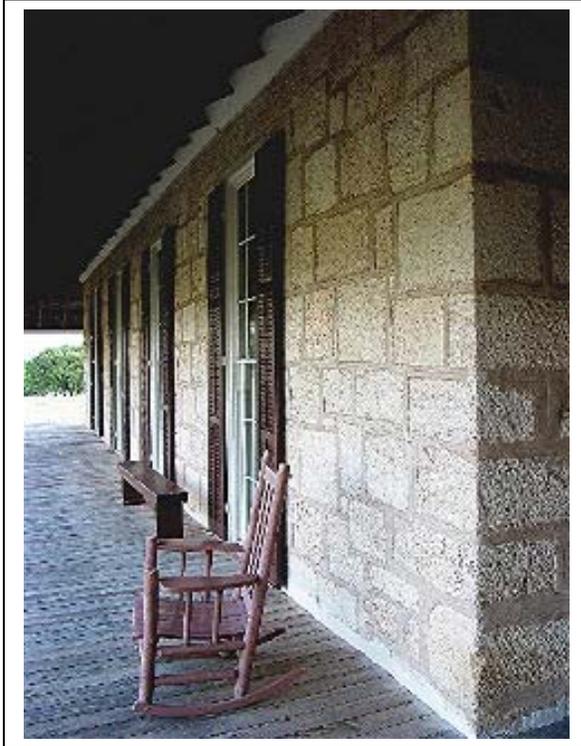
John and Faye Cobb, Richard and Cindy Vaughn, and John Schultz were on hand to give guided tours during the Memorial Day Weekend in May. We had several visitors in spite of rains and heat. Buddy and the Staff have done a great job of staying on top of mowing and other maintenance items. Inside, you will see the work done on the new nature trail at the Post.

Volunteers Trained in Safety

A TPWD Living History Safety Class was presented at the Texas State Railroad State Park in Palestine on June 11th. The Post was represented with both instructors and students at this event. 68 People went through the class. Fort McKavett was the first Park or Site to provide training in the “School of the Soldier” a few years ago.

Have any good photographs you would like to share of Fort McKavett? Contact Gabe Schooley at the Post and we will put them in the Gazette.

Would you like to Help?



After years of faithful serves on the front of the Hospital one of our rocking chairs has finally has become un-repairable. This leaves the site with just one wooden rocker on the porch, and for all of us who have taken the cool breeze during the hot Texas summer months will attest to this is the best spot on post. If you have some heavy-duty wooden rockers, and would like to donate them to the site, contact Buddy Garza. Keep in mind, they will need to be heavy duty and look somewhat period. Visitors for over 100 years have enjoyed sitting in rocking chairs on the Hospital porch.



Fort McKavett at Cochran County again this year

The second year of the Cochran County, Texas Buffalo Soldier living history event was held in Morton on the 24th-26th of June. Fort McKavett was one of the exhibits shown for just fewer than 2,000 visitors to the event. Frontier Ladies, Buffalo Soldiers, Native Americans, Fort McKavett, Soap Making, Buffalo Hunters and Wildlife Exhibits from both Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Federal Wildlife Preserve near Morton were showcased.

This year, we had an increase in the number of folks who viewed the parade in downtown Morton and those attending the event. Churches from all over Cochran County held services on location Sunday morning. This next year's event (the last weekend in June, 2006) promises to be bigger and better.



Left: Frontier Women's exhibit with Jennifer Logan. Below: Clyde Dudley from Caprock Canyons State Park giving a presentation on the Buffalo Hunters

Fort McKavett and the Buffalo Soldier Programs are shown Statewide over the year at several events. This is one of the best advertisements we can have for our programs



Fort McKavett Town Reunion

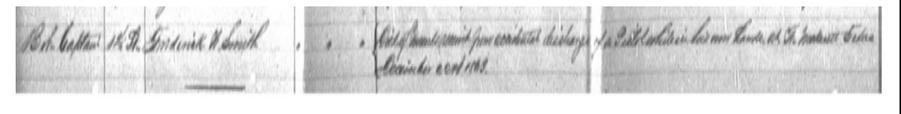


*Bar-Be-Que * 1870's Baseball Game *
Hoops for Kids * Music * Bring you
photos to be scanned into the Archives *
Visitation * Tours of the Fort * Living
History Exhibits * Silent Auction * Star
Party by Johnson Space Center Amateur
Astronomical Society*

If you can assist us with this, contact Gabe at Fort McKavett State Historic Site. We will need help scanning photographs, feeding everyone, help with desserts, tours (both of the Fort and the Nature Trail), and general organization of the event. Gabe can be reached at: 325-396-2253. Also, if you have items for the Silent Auction, let him know and all items will be collected at the Fort.

Meet the People that lived at the Fort

Frederic W. Smith rose from Private during the Civil War to Captain. Afterwards, he took a commission in Company K of the 9th U.S. Cavalry as a 1st Lt. under Capt. William Frohock. The day after Christmas in 1867, Company K was located at Fort Lancaster where they were attacked by several hundred Indians, outlaws, and ex confederate soldiers. They stood off the attack with the loss of three enlisted men. This was the first time the 9th had seen serious action. When the Company transferred to Fort McKavett, he came with them after Captain Frohock had resigned his commission. Showing much promise as an officer, Smith led frequent scouts against hostile Indians and white outlaws building a solid reputation with Army staff. But barely two years after the fight at Fort Lancaster, had his world begun to fall apart. First were allegations that he had mishandled government property. Then, on December 22, 1869, his wife announced that she was leaving him. Smith pleaded with her to reconsider, but she remained adamant over the separation. An hour before sunset he confronted his wife again. Having failed at having her change her mind, he shot himself in his quarters in front of her. He took the reason for the marriage breakup with him to the grave.



Above: From the Post Returns of Fort McKavett for December 1869 showing the suicide of Lt. Smith. He was returned to his home and was never buried at McKavett.

Smith, Frederic William. Mass. Mass. Pvt A 8 Mass mil 30 Apr to 1 Aug 1861; sergt A 23 Mass inf 28 Sept 1861 to 12 Nov 1863; 2 lt 1 U S c cav 13 Nov 1863; 1 lt 1 Nov 1865; hon must out 4 Feb 1866; 2 lt 9 cav 28 July 1866; 1 lt 12 July 1867; bvt 1 lt and capt 2 Mar 1867 for gal and mer ser in the operations before Petersburg Va; died 22 Dec 1869.

There are no known photographs of Lt. Smith, but we do have his Military Record from Heitman's Registry.

New Nature Trails at Fort McKavett

Right: the start of the new nature trail leading down and around the Government Springs area and then back up the Fort McKavett Canyon to the Hospital.



Menard County Agent and Advisor to the Western Edwards Plateau Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program, Billy Kniffen, aided by Trail Coordinators Don and Marilyn Pearson and many volunteers have added a special treat for our visitors to the site. There is now a self-guided nature tour of the area behind the Hospital. Different flora and fauna are identified on the trail by markers so visitors will be able to know what they are seeing.



Volunteers along with the Staff at Fort McKavett have placed the new markers all along the trail. The trail has been cleared that takes visitors from the Hospital to the lime kiln, the rock quarry, Government Springs and San Saba River, then back up the McKavett Canyon, to the picnic area. Several hundreds of volunteer hours were recorded on this new project. The Staff, as well as the Volunteers, is maintaining this area for all to see.

Make sure you take time on your next visit to the Fort to see this area. Bring your camera. You will be impressed by their hard work! This is a great addition to what we have to show visitors!



Other Projects around Fort McKavett



Ranger Johnny Johnson has just finished patching the roofs on several of the buildings making them quite a bit more water resistant. He also finished re-roofing the Sinks and Woodshed behind the Lt.'s Row. This adds to the looks of the site.

Wagon Wheels and Wagon Repairs



Left: The rebuilt wagon wheels were mounted on the Wagon over the Memorial Day weekend after Rangers Johnny Johnson and Alfredo Munoz cleaned and repainted them. The wagon has been moved to the shop for undercarriage repairs and repainting now.

The chuck box will be mounted to the wagon and it will be used for special events, cooking, and display at the site as well as special trips off site as needed. The box has been removed and will be finished very soon now.