

Fort McKavett State Historical Site
P. O. Box 867
Fort McKavett, Texas 76841



Fort McKavett Gazette

“News of our Volunteers”

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This is our first edition of the Fort McKavett Gazette.

This publication is to keep our Volunteers at the Fort informed of current events, upcoming events at both the Fort and outside Events, and give some history of the Fort.

Everyone is invited to write a piece for this newspaper to share with all the Volunteer Staff.

To contact the Fort with your publication, you can contact Gabe Schooley at:

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With your information. Thanks,
the editor...



Capitol Salute at Fort McKavett this year...

For the first time in history, the Texas Legislature has passed legislation for a cultural group. The Soldiers in Blue Committee, a TPW African-American support group, initiated legislation to the Texas Senate and the House of Representatives proclaiming July as Texas Buffalo Soldiers month, and July 27 as Capitol Salute Day, when youth from across Texas will come to Austin. Texas is the only state to honor the Buffalo Soldiers with a month-long celebration. This years event will be held at Fort McKavett and will honor the relocation of seven years research with the move of the research material to Fort

McKavett State Historical Site.



**Be at the
Fort
July 27th**

FORT MCKAVETT'S FIRST TELEGRAPH OPERATOR

By Ephriam Dickson

Jerry Sullivan, author of the standard history of Fort McKavett, noted that the garrison's first telegraph office was opened in October 1875 and operated by a Private E. G. Prince. Gabe recently asked for additional details about this soldier. A search through the museum archives provides the following information:

In 1874, Congress appropriated funds for the construction of a telegraph line connecting various frontier posts to San Antonio, headquarters for the Department of Texas. Improved communications was considered a key component in the Army's campaign against hostile Indians of west Texas and an important link to the outside world. The job of constructing and operating the telegraph line fell to the Army's relatively new branch, the Signal Service (later known as the Signal Corps). With construction beginning in Denison in northern Texas, small detachments of soldiers under Lieutenant Allyn Capron built the first seventy miles of line.

In April 1875, in an effort to speed up construction, the project was turned over to Lieutenant Adolphus W. Greely. Perhaps best known for his later explorations in the Arctic and for helping to establish the National Geographic Society, Lieutenant Greely proved to be well-suited for his new job as engineer and project manager. Construction of the new telegraph line moved forward rapidly, connecting Fort Richardson to Denison by early May and Fort Concho by mid-October. The segment between Concho and Fort McKavett was completed at the same time.

Construction of the Fort McKavett segment was completed by soldiers from the post. In July 1875, Department Headquarters ordered the commanding officer at Fort McKavett to detail an officer and thirty enlisted Infantry soldiers to construct the line connecting the garrison to Fort Concho. Lieutenant Charles L. Davis, 10th Infantry, was assigned the duty. Construction began in early September and was completed between Concho and McKavett, a distance of about 50 miles, on October 18, 1875. The following day, October 19, a telegraph office was opened with Private E. G. Prince in charge.

Finding qualified telegraph operators was a challenge for Lieutenant Greely, particularly those willing to enlist in the Army for five years. Private Edwin G. Prince was one of a small handful of men inducted into the Signal Service as the telegraph line was being completed. A native of Page County, Virginia, this 24-year old telegraph operator was sworn in as a private on September 25, 1875. His enlistment record notes that he had blue eyes, brown hair and was slightly taller than average at 5' 11" in height. On the same day as his enlistment, Lieutenant Greely issued Special Order #34 assigning Private Prince to serve as telegraph operator and repairer "at McKavett (near Fort McKavett)." In his letter to the commanding officer at McKavett, Greeley explained that Private Prince would not be formally assigned to the post "as such act would militate against the man's pay, reducing it from \$66 per month to \$22 and rations in kind, for which sum no operator could be long retained in service."

How long Private Prince remained at Fort McKavett is not known at this time. He was still there in early 1876 but by the time of his honorable discharge in September 1880, Prince had moved to Indian Territory (Oklahoma). What happened to the soldier after his discharge remains unknown.



June 22, 2002 Fort Chadborne Living History Days at Fort Chadborne

Call to Arms...

Upcoming Events For Fort McKavett

*July 27th, 2002 Capitol Salute, Fort McKavett, Buffalo Soldier Salute
date*

150 years later, a debt repaid...

150 years ago, Soldiers from Fort Chadborne (near the present town of Bronte), came to Fort McKavett and assisted in roofing some of the buildings at the new Fort. In 2002, Buddy Garza and Johnny Johnson, our Park Manager and one of our Rangers, went to Fort Chadborne and helped roof some of the buildings there. Fort Chadborne is a fellow member of the "Texas Forts Trails". Several volunteers will join Buddy and Gabe at Fort Chadborne June 22nd in celebrating their 150th anniversary.

Right:

*1st U.S. Muster at
Fort McKavett in
May, 2002*

