

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 3

March, 2009

Fort McKavett Upcoming Events

- March 6-7**, Fort Clark, Friday is Education Day
March 14-15, Fort Concho, Artillery School and Ladies Conference
March 21, Fort McKavett Spring Star Party
March 27-28, Fort McKavett, West Texas Heritage Days, Education Day on Friday
May 22-24, Texas State Railroad
April 15-17, THC Annual Historic Preservation Conference, Lakeway, TX
April 17-18, Fort Richardson Days, Education Day on Friday
April 21, Texas Travel Counselors Conference at Fort McKavett
April 24-26, Fort Lancaster Living History Day and Scout Weekend
April 25, Mission Tejas State Park, Mission Tejas Folk Festival,
May 1-2, Fort Chadbourne Event, Education Day on Friday
May 8-9, Texas Forts Trail Muster, Fort Worth
May 8-9, Lake Brownwood State Park Open House, Education Day on Friday
June 27-28, Morton, Last Frontier Days
October 10-12, Fort Griffin Days
October 17, Fort Stockton 150th Anniversary
December 4-6, Christmas at Old Fort Concho

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

www.fortmckavett.org



Notes about this month:

It's March again and once more time for our annual “West Texas Heritage Day” event. This year's event is going to be a good one judging from the number of participants who have already registered. This includes displays from the U.S. Army stationed at Goodfellow Air Force Base in San Angelo.

The Staff has done their usual great job of getting the Fort ready for visitors. I think everyone will be pleased with the way the Post looks!

A couple of notes for our Friends group members. One, we will need desserts and salads again this year. See Buddy about this. Two, the board of directors of the Friends of Fort McKavett will have a short meeting after the meal on Saturday.

Don't forget our “silent auction”! I am looking forward to seeing everyone there...

John Cobb
President
Friends of Fort McKavett

Second Letter from 1877 Fort McKavett

Continued from Last Month

Fort McKavett, Menard Co., Texas, May 2, 1877.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: My letter in the March number of your magazine has been the means of giving me two kind little friends in the State of New York. They rather felt for my lonely situation, I suppose, and I thank them for their kind-heartedness. They are anxious to know about my army home, so I will tell them, and the rest of your young folks, as best I can, how we live in the army:

We have no grand, fine houses like you town and city girls and boys have; but our houses are built of rough stone one story high, and contain but three or four rooms, sitting-room, bedroom, dining-room, and kitchen. No matter how large a family an officer may have, he is limited to this number of rooms; in fact, we are entitled only to one room and a kitchen; but this is seldom strictly adhered to, as in that case we should have to live more like pigs than human beings. Army officers, too, are generally supposed to live like gentlemen; but I am sure it would not look very gentlemanly or lady-like to sleep, eat, and sit in the same room.

The officers' and soldiers' quarters are all built in line and around a "square;" we have a little plot of ground in front and at the side of our quarters; we have vines trained over our porches, making them look pretty. Fort McKavett is situated on a hill, and is surrounded on all sides by hills; the scenery is varied and pretty. A lovely stream called the San Saba runs near the post; it is full of beautiful, clear springs; from one or two in particular is obtained all the water used in the garrison, brought up in large water-wagons, each drawn by eight mules; the work about the garrison is done by the soldier prisoners. There is a fine hospital building for the sick, and two doctors to attend them. It would seem strange to you, no doubt, to see scarcely any one but soldiers about; but I am used to it, never having seen anything else, for I was not quite two years old when I first knew anything about army life; we were then living so near Mexico that mamma and papa often took me across the Rio Grande river to Matamoras, we could get so many nice things over there; but may be I will tell you about that place another time.

We have a delightful band here belonging to the Tenth Infantry which plays in the open air three times a week, in the evening, in the band stand, and every morning at guard-mounting, and on Sunday evenings at dress parade, which is the soldiers' church; for we have no chaplain. I have not been inside a church for four years; is not that dreadful? Some foolish persons think army people live in ease and luxury, and do not sacrifice anything; but just think of not having a school, or a church, or anything of that kind to go to, seeing the same faces every day and the same things—nothing to amuse us. We get tired of playing the same games even. The only things I enjoy without tiring of are riding on horseback, and that I do love heartily, and taking care of my numerous pets. I study every day, but it is not like going to school; I am afraid I am dreadfully behind other girls of my age. But I fear, dear ST. NICHOLAS, you will be tired of reading so much; so my letter shall stop right here. I believe I think more of you every year, and just long for the end of the month to come.—Your affectionate little reader,

JANET G. LARKE.



Left: Maintenance Supervisor, Russell Tipton, and his maintenance crew have completed painting the flag pole. Since the flag pole is 62' above ground we had to rent a boom truck to reach the top. Russell displayed his sheer courage by volunteering to paint the top. We have also cleaned the entrance flagpoles. These activities are all part of our getting everything shipshape for the March event.

Meet our new employee, Cody Mobley



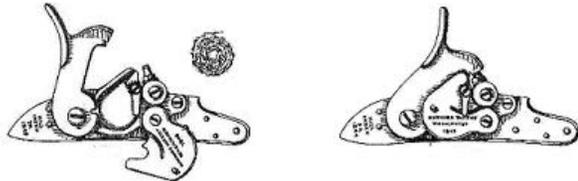
Cody was born in Hale Center, Texas and raised in the area between Rowena and Wall. He attended both the Olfen and Wall schools where he graduated from the latter in 2001. After high school, Cody attended Angelo State University where he worked for the West Texas Collection. Cody did an internship at Ft. Chadbourne. It was during this internship that he aided the

Richards' in cataloging their immense artifact collection. Cody has been active in the living history field since 1996 and has been with such groups as Co. A, 7th Texas Infantry, the Frontier Guard Living History Association, and the Texas Ground Hornets (Co A, 15th Texas). While these groups have tended to focus on the American Civil War, it was during his internship that his interest in the antebellum period and the 8th Infantry and 2nd Dragoons began to grow. This love of history and his innate inclination toward engineering (his father, grandfather, and great-grandfathers were all engineers) aided him in his endeavors of recreating the accoutrements, uniforms, clothing, and material culture of the mid-19th century. After college, Cody worked as a carpenter in San Angelo doing custom home remodeling and making custom furniture. At McKavett, Cody hopes to aid site manager Buddy Garza in implementing a historical woodworking program for interpretation purposes.

Firearms of Fort McKavett

(Part II)

Musket, Model of 1840 Nippes/Maynard Conversion



The model 1840 musket was the last flintlock firearm produced by Springfield Arsenal. Harpers Ferry continued to produce the model 1822 musket until they converted production to the model of 1842 percussion musket, see *Fort McKavett Gazette Vol. 8, No. 2*. During the Mexican War, Daniel Nippes was contracted to make the model of 1840. When the war ended he had several thousand muskets still undelivered. In 1848 the United States again contracted with Nippes to convert 2,000 of the undelivered muskets to the percussion system and to add the Maynard's Patent Priming System invented in 1845. Maynard's system, also called the "tape primer", was a roll of paper tape with explosive charges evenly spaced and contained in a small box attached to the side of the musket's lock. It functioned exactly like a modern child's paper-roll cap gun, when the hammer was cocked a small arm advanced the next charge over the cone. It was designed to speed loading by automatically priming the weapon. Reviews by officers testing they system were mixed. Many were critical of the feeding mechanism becoming out of timing or breakage of the small parts. In 1855 the system was adopted for all Army weapons only to be eliminated in 1861 when the increased demand for arms required a simpler weapon to produce. The M1840 Nippes/Maynard Conversions resembled the Model 1842 Musket except for the lockplate. It looked the same, was .69 caliber, fired the same .65 caliber buck-and-ball cartridge, used the same bayonet, and was also an inaccurate smoothbore weapon. During the 1853 inspection of Fort McKavett, Company B, 8th Infantry was armed with this weapon. Company F, 1st Infantry was still using them at Fort Chadbourne in the summer of 1856 and parts for the Nippes/Maynard conversions have been recovered at that post.

Illustration courtesy of: *U.S. Firearms 1776-1956* by J. Hicks

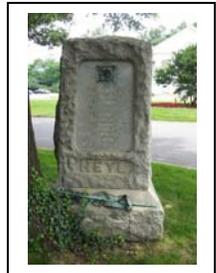
November 1869 – Captain Heyl, wounded in fight with Indians

. CCCCLXXVIII.—*Note concerning an Arrow-Wound of the Lumbar Region.* By REDFORD SHARPE, M. D., Acting Assistant Surgeon.

Captain E. M. Heyl, Co. M, 9th Cavalry, aged 26 years, was admitted to the post hospital at Fort McKavett, Texas, on November 28, 1869, with an arrow-wound of the left lumbar region, midway between the spine and umbilicus, received in an engagement with Lipan Indians, at the headwaters of the Llano River, Texas. The wound had a direction oblique and backward. He recovered, and returned to duty December 25, 1869.

In this surgical report for 1870, Dr. Redford Sharpe at Fort McKavett reports on wounds received by Captain Heyl in a fight with Lipan Apaches at the headwaters of the Llano River. He recovered and transferred to the 4th Cavalry at Fort Concho under Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie soon after.

Heyl, Edward Miles. Pa. Pa. Q
m sergt and 1 sergt E 3 Pa cav 12 Aug
1861; 2 lt 8 Sept 1862; 1 lt 1 May 1863;
capt 2 May 1864; hon must out 24 Aug
1864; 1 lt 9 cav 28 July 1866; capt 31 July
1867; tr to 4 cav 31 Dec 1870; maj I G 19
Feb 1885; lt col I G 22 Sept 1885; col I
G 12 Feb 1889; bvt maj 27 Feb 1890 for
gal ser in actions against Inds at the
Rio Pecos Tex 7 June 1869 the Salt Fork
of the Brazos river Tex 16 Sept 1869 and
at the South Fork of the Stano river Tex
24 Sept 1869 in which last-named action
he was severely wounded; died 2 Jan
1895.



Above: Heyl's Service Record from Heitman's Registry. Above right: Heyl's gravesite in Arlington National Cemetery and right: Edward Miles Heyl while serving as Inspector General in Washington (photograph courtesy of Palo Duro State Park.

“West Texas Heritage Day”, 2009

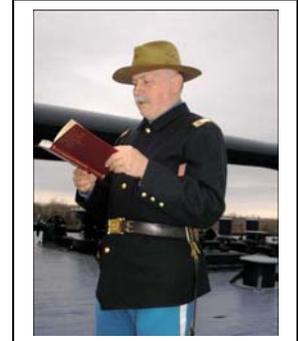


Fort McKavett State Historic Site will come to life on March 28, 2009 as living historians and re-enactors from around the state gather to portray life on a fort in the 1800s. Gates will open at 8 a.m. followed by a 10 a.m. flag raising ceremony.

Activities will include cavalry, artillery and infantry drills, Lipan Apaches, buffalo soldiers, buffalo hunters, chuck wagon demonstrations, the Texas Camel Corps, and demonstrations of other frontier skills. The Ice House Brass Band will perform during a barbeque lunch offered to the public by the Friends of Fort McKavett.

Brett Cruse, author and Sites Supervisor, Archeological and Military Sites, Historic Sites Division, Texas Historical Commission will be on hand to sign his new book, “Battles of the Red River War” on Saturday.

Education Day, for area school students will be on Friday, March 27th.



The Last Battleship Texas “Remember the Maine” Event

Upper Left: Photograph, the U.S.S. Texas (John Cobb 2007). Upper Right: Ed Owens reading the Memorial Service on board the ship. John and Andrew Schultz attended as well. There is talk of a May event in 2010. We will pass it on as soon as we have information.



Texas Historical Commission’s Laura DeNormandi-Bass spent time in February at Fort McKavett removing selected items from our museum that will undergo restoration in Austin. The items will be returned to the fort in a couple of months. Laura is the Chief Curator at Texas Historical Commission. We welcome her expertise and support!

Right: with the newly painted flag pole in the background, the Headquarters building is ready for paint after repairs were made because of wood pecker damage. New steps have been installed also. The repairs and painting will be completed by our March Event.

