

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



Fort McKavett Gazette

“News of our Volunteers and Friends”

Volume 10, Number 5

May, 2011

Fort McKavett Upcoming Events

**May 6-7, Lake Brownwood State
Park Open House, Education
Day on Friday**

**May 6-7, Fort Chadbourne,
Education Day on Friday**

**May 13-14, Lake Arrowhead
State Park Open House,
Education Day on Friday**

**May 13-14, Texas Forts Muster,
Fort Worth**

**May 20-21, Fort Lancaster,
Western Frontier Days***

**May 27-29, Texas State
Railroad, Palestine, TX**

**June 24-26, Last Frontier Days,
Morton**

**Oct 7-8, Fort Griffin Living
History Days, Education Day on
Friday***

**Oct 15, Fort Day at Fort
Stockton**

**Oct 29, Fall Star Party at Fort
McKavett***

***THC Historic Sites Event**

Notes from the Fort

As of the date this newsletter was published, Fort McKavett has been very lucky by not having fires close to the site. There have been several large fires in the surrounding area. A fire ban is still in effect. In April, the staff was trained to hook up and use the fire hoses around the site just to be prepared.

Once again, April has been a very busy month for our volunteers. We participated in several events. May looks to be very busy as well. See the event schedule to the left.

News from Austin still looks like our Historic Sites division will not be hurt as bad as other departments of THC and TPWD. We will let you know how we stand as soon as the budget is approved by both the House and Senate.

**John Cobb
President
Friends of Fort McKavett**

Fort Richardson Event



Fort McKavett was represented by Brandon Halfmann, Richard Vaughn, John Schultz, King Walker, and John Cobb at the April 8-9 Living History Days at Fort Richardson. We had over 700 school kids on Friday and several hundred Cub Scouts on Saturday. There was no rain this year, but we did have high winds.

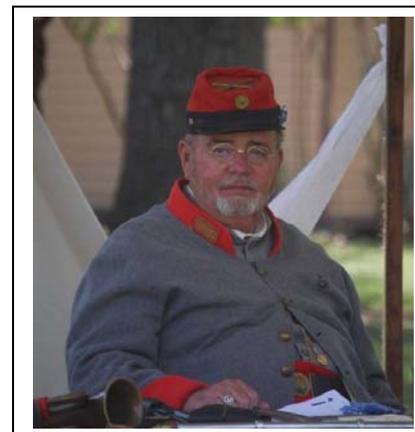


Left: Some of the students attending Education Day at Fort Richardson this year at the McKavett Exhibits.

Confederate Reunion Grounds State Historic Site



Fort McKavett had several volunteers at the Reunion Grounds this year. Greg and Donna Hector were among our folks. John Cobb had his Grand Army of the Republic display. Fort Concho's Chris Morgan was on hand with his bagpipes. The top photo shows Friday afternoon about 4 PM and the smoke from the San Angelo fires, over 250 miles west of the site. We had over 550 students on Education Day and good visitor turnout on Saturday.





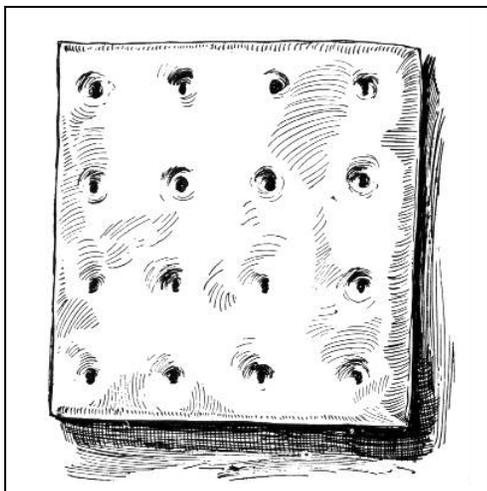
Hard Tack

Questions have come up again about the makeup of hard tack. In order to preserve the bread for storage, it was made with no salt! Salt would dissolve the paper and wood the hard tack was stored in. The Navy's ship biscuit was the same thing except it was round instead of square. The recipe below comes from the 1881 Bakers Manual.

16 lbs flour.

2 qts water.

Keep the dough as tight as possible; cut with round cutters. These biscuit are preferable when baked in a bread oven, that they can have a chance to dry out well; add no salt or lard.



Army bread, hard tack, hard bread, tooth duller, and other terms were used for the "cracker" issued to troopers on the frontier. A full issue was 12 pieces per day. It had to be softened in water, coffee, grease, or crushed into a powder to be eaten.

Shipped out in bread boxes holding 50 lbs. of 12 packs enclosed in wax paper and string (a full day's ration), the army bread was stored for several years at quartermaster and commissary storehouses until issued.



Army Cooks Manual

DRIED AND EVAPORATED FRUITS.

Dried fruits are an excellent food when properly prepared for the table, but unfortunately they are usually cooked imperfectly, and cook-books give scant information concerning them; in fact, the majority of cook-books do not mention them. The following recipes for cooking dried prunes, apples, peaches, and apricots contain directions which may be applied with slight variations for cooking all kinds of dried fruits.

STEWED PRUNES.

Wash and pick over the prunes, rejecting imperfect ones; put them to soak over night in the water (cold) they are to be cooked in, using only enough water to cover them. Put the prunes on the fire where they can just simmer during three hours (prunes require longer cooking than other dried fruits because of their thick skin). Do not let them boil, nor use a vessel of iron. Keep them closely covered. If carefully cooked they present a plump appearance and are not broken or burst (this defect gives them a slovenly look, the reverse of appetizing). As the prune contains much sugar, more should not be added; the fruit taste is more prominent without additional sugar. If, however, increased sweetness is desired, the sugar should not be added till about five minutes before taking off the fire.

STEWED DRIED APPLES.

Pick over the apples carefully; then wash them in cold water and drain. Soak them over night in sufficient cold water to cover them. Put them, with the water in which they have been soaked, into a pot (iron should not be used; an earthenware well-glazed crock or stone jar is preferable); cover closely to simmer until they are tender.

From the 1857 Army Regulations

ARTICLE XIII.

COMPANIES.

85. . . . The captain will cause the men of the company to be numbered, in a regular series, including the non-commissioned officers, and divided into four squads, each to be put under the charge of a non-commissioned officer.

86. . . . Each subaltern officer will be charged with a squad for the supervision of its order and cleanliness; and captains will require their lieutenants to assist them in the performance of *all* company duties.

87. . . . As far as practicable, the men of each squad will be quartered together.

88. . . . The utmost attention will be paid by commanders of companies to the cleanliness of their men, as to their persons, clothing, arms, accoutrements, and equipments, and also as to their quarters or tents.

89. . . . The name of each soldier will be labeled on his bunk, and his company number will be placed against his arms and accoutrements.

90. . . . The arms will be placed in the arm-racks, the stoppers in the muzzles, the cocks let down, and the bayonets in their scabbards; the accoutrements suspended over the arms, and the swords hung up by the belts on pegs.

91. . . . The knapsack of each man will be placed on the lower shelf of his bunk, at its foot, packed with his effects, and ready to be slung; the great-coat on the same shelf, rolled and strapped; the coat, folded inside out, and placed under the knapsack; the cap on the second or upper shelf; and the boots well cleaned.

92. . . . Dirty clothes will be kept in an appropriate part of the knapsack; no article of any kind to be put under the bedding.

93. . . . Cooking utensils and table equipage will be cleaned and arranged in closets or recesses; blacking and brushes out of view; the fuel in boxes.

94. . . . Ordinarily the cleaning will be on Saturdays. The chiefs of squads will cause bunks and bedding to be overhauled; floors dry rubbed; tables and benches scoured; arms cleaned; accoutrements whitened and polished, and every thing put in order.

More next month...

Spring Star Party

The Johnson Space Center Astronomical Society held their spring star party at Fort McKavett Saturday, April 2nd. Thirty-five club members traveled to the fort some from as far away as New Mexico and New Orleans but most of the amateur astronomers were from the Houston area.

Twelve people attended an astronomy program on the Solar System presented by Lisa and Ken Lester in the school house at 5p.m. At dusk, members of Saint James Episcopal church had BBQ brisket sandwiches available at the Visitor's Center for donations. As the Sun set, the crowd swelled! We estimated the crowd at over 100! It was undoubtedly one of our larger turnouts. We had a large group of people from Junction, a homeschooling group from the Sonora area as well as a number of other visitors from Sonora. Abilene, San Angelo, San Antonio and Austin were other towns that visitors traveled from to attend this event. We even had a family from Korea attend. The path of red garden lights purchased by the Friends of Fort McKavett were a big success and we receive compliments on how well they worked from visitors who had attended other star parties. Our special thanks to Roger and Carolyn McCartney, our park hosts, for their help with this event.

The star of the show was Saturn which has returned to the evening sky. Also making appearances were the various nebulas, clusters and galaxies. Despite the higher than normal winds, our guests really had a great time. Our next star party will be the evening of October 29th.

Site Manager, Buddy Garza, visits with our guests from Austin and Korea just before the star party

