

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



Fort McKavett Gazette

“News of our Volunteers and Friends”

Volume 4, Number 10

October, 2005



October 15-16 Fort Griffin
Frontier Times
October 15-Fort Lancaster
150th Anniversary
October 28-29-Midland, "Viva
El Llano Estacado Days"
November 5-6 Fort Richardson
Days
November 11-13 Fort
McKavett Veterans Day Tours
December 2-4 Christmas at Old
Fort Concho
February 11-12 Battleship
Texas "Remember the Maine"
March 24-25 Fort McKavett
Educational and Living History

***Your Friends Group Dues are
needed as soon as possible!***



Fort
McKavett
State
Historic
Site

News from the Friends of Fort McKavett annual Meeting



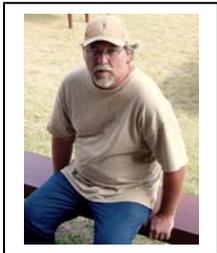
Volunteer Mark Stein left Austin on Tuesday and arrived at McKavett on Friday on his bike. He then assisted Buddy with the food and preparations for the Event. The Friends of Fort McKavett passed a resolution to support development of Infrastructure to enhance bicycling, walking, running and horseback riding in the Fort McKavett area. Mark was instrumental in the Texas Legislature passing this same resolution for the State of Texas earlier this year.

A second resolution was passed by the Friends Group recognizing Ken Pollard on his upcoming retirement from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

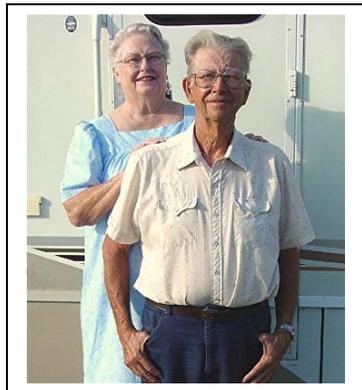
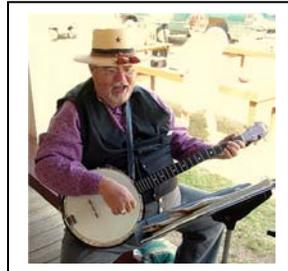
Volunteers at Fort McKavett



Left: the Cannon Crew: Gabe Schooley, Richard Vaughn, John Schultz and Richard Lyons prepare to fire the cannon for the visitors to the site



*Left: Richard Grubb helped with serving and setup
Right: Greg Hector provided music and his cannon for the event.*



Left: Our new Volunteer Hosts Bob and Gene Frankie will be staying at Fort McKavett until December 1st. Right: Kellie Knight presents 1880's Astronomy with Living History at the site.



Meet the Men at Fort McKavett



**1st Lt. John Milton Thompson
Company "I"
24th U.S. Infantry
At Fort McKavett
April 1871 until
August 1872**

*Photograph taken in 1899
when he was a Lt. Col.*

Like several of the Officers and Enlisted Men at Fort McKavett, Lt. Thompson saw service from the Civil War all the way past the turn of the century.

He first arrived at McKavett on July 8th, 1871 from Fort Clark. In September, he commanded the Meyners Creek Sub Post for one month. He and his company returned to McKavett in October only to be sent out on a scout against hostiles after only a week's rest. Their encampment was by the Presidio San Saba at Menardville.

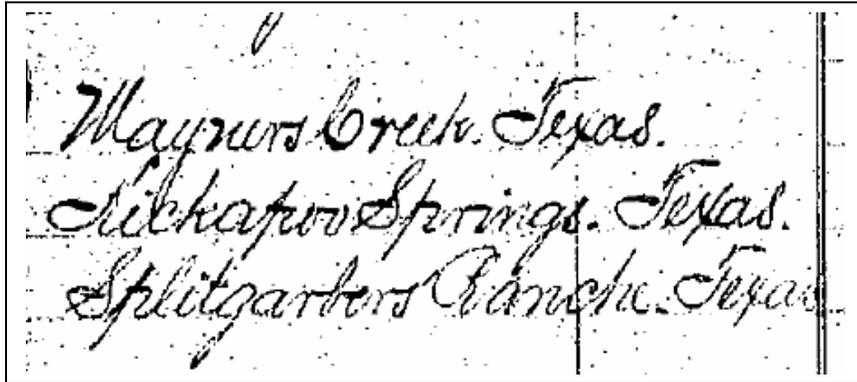
He stayed with the 24th and rose to the level of Major during the Spanish American War where he served in Cuba. He then became a Lt. Col. with the 14th Infantry in 1899. By 1901, he was the Colonel of the 23rd Infantry and served with his regiment in the Philippines during the Philippine Insurrection.

When his regiment returned home, they came by way of the Suez Canal and the Straits of Gibraltar, becoming the first United States Army Regiment to circumnavigate the globe.

While at Fort McKavett, he commanded his company several months, took part in Court Marshals, Board of Inquiry, Inspections and several scouts.

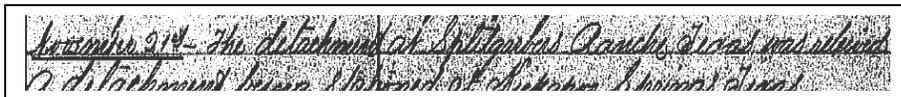
1871 Sub Posts of Fort McKavett, Texas

In the 1871 Post Returns of Fort McKavett, there is shown three Sub Posts that were occupied by Soldiers from McKavett.



Mayners Creek, Texas (sometimes written as Meyners Creek in the records), the Mail Station at Kickapoo Springs, and Splitgarbers Ranch (sometimes written as Splittgerber).

Mayners Creek is located in the area of Fort Terrett to the south of the Post, while the Mail Station at Kickapoo Springs is located due north of McKavett.



Above: From the Post Returns, 1871, the Post withdrew the detail assigned to the Sub-Post because of

From Col McTaggart:

"Splitgerber Station was located about seven miles west of Menard on the site of the present Oak Hill ranch, which a great-grandson, Doug Lundgren now runs. The stone walls were still standing when I was growing up. They succumbed to the Highway Department, which ran the present US 190 straight through the site sometime around the late '40's. You can see the nearby springs which served the stage station. I think one of the local Menard County books contains a photo."

Fort McKavett, the Beginning

October 1st, 1849 to January 21, 1850, Lt. William H.C. Whiting was ordered to make a "military reconnaissance of the western frontier of Texas indicated by the chain of posts now established, commencing at the Rio Seco and terminating on the Red river, at the mouth of the False Washita". He was also ordered to "report the general character of the country, the roads to be constructed between the posts, (taking the nearest routes eligible for such roads,) timber and stone for quarters, fuel and water, and the subsistence and forage which the country adjoining the posts can supply also noticing the amount of population and cultivation, as well as the healthiness of the country" with an eye for new Posts.

In his March 25th, 1850 report, he talks about the area around the location of present day Menard and Fort McKavett. He states:

"To know us, they must be made to feel us; and I can conceive of no better plan for this end than the disposition of two thousand mounted men upon the frontier, of which a garrison of two hundred may be placed on Red river, five hundred on the Brazos, three hundred at the old San Saba fort, (a locality peculiarly eligible,) three hundred at Las Moras, and seven hundred at Preidio del Norte. The old San Saba fort, in the beautiful and luxuriant valley of the river of that name, is particularly eligible. One of the emigrant routes to California passes by it. It is situated with peculiar advantages for scouting to and from the settlements, and detecting the advance or retreat of predatory bands. It is the point once occupied by the Spanish garrison, whose work still remains, at once a lesson and a warning. From this point the scouts may scour the country traversed by the Indians in their descents to the lower country. To the westward pass those large bands of Comanches which, secure in the recesses of the Sierra Madre and the Bolson de Mapimi, carry on such extensive forays in the Mexican States, returning with incredible numbers of horses and mules."

Two years later, Fort McKavett was founded.



"the chain of posts following the valley of the Palo Pinto to the old San Saba fort, and thence' by the heads of the Nueces and Las Moras. Such a line penetrates the very heart of the Indian country" Lt. Whiting stated in his 1850 report. He resigned his commission in 1861 as a Captain in the Engineers and became a Major General in the Confederacy. He died in a Federal Prison on Governors Island, New York in March 1865 after being wounded in 1864.

**Need a back copy of the GAZETTE?
If you have a computer, you can go to:
<http://www.fortmckavett.org/gazette.htm>**



Friends of Fort McKavett



Congratulations to our Dale Werner who has received a promotion to Lt. Colonel with the Air Force. Dale retired from the Active service and transferred to the Air Force Reserves a few years ago. We are lucky to have dedicated people like Dale in our Volunteer and Friends organizations. Left: Dale and Oliver at the 150th Yr Event



***Congratulations are in order...
John "Gabe" Schooley and LeAnna Biles will be married on the 22nd. Gabe will be leaving Fort McKavett. They will be living in the Stephenville area. LeAnna is the Curator for the W.K. Gordon Center for Tarleton State University.***

We wish them the very best and thanks for all your hard work over your time here at the Post.



Got some time on your hands? Give Buddy Garza a call at the Site and volunteer to help with the site! 325-396-2358

Star Gazers Report By Lisa Lester

Fort McKavett was the unplanned host to ten members of the Johnson Space Center Astronomical Society (JSCAS) a little early. Hurricane Rita prompted them to leave the Houston area over a week before their planned trip. The evacuees were received with open arms. The communities of Fort McKavett and Menard were very gracious and willing to help in any way. On Saturday, Buddy and Bea Garza hosted a BBQ for the evacuees staying at the fort and family members who had also evacuated from the Houston area. The JSCAS members showed their appreciation by putting on a star party after dinner. The last of the evacuees left early Tuesday morning and the first of the JSCAS members able to attend the planned Star Party weekend arrived on Wednesday!

Forty-five members of JSCAS had planned to come to Fort McKavett for the weekend but after evacuating for Hurricane Rita, only 27 members were able to come and enjoy the dark skies at Fort McKavett. The school presentation in San Angelo had to be cancelled but will be rescheduled in 2006. Club members observed until well after midnight Thursday and Friday nights.

Saturday was an extremely busy but enjoyable day! A number of former residents of the town of Fort McKavett arrived for a reunion. Everyone had a lot of fun looking at pictures of Fort McKavett as a fort, a town, and a park. Many people, houses, and buildings were identified on pictures and this information will be updated and the pictures relabeled. Everyone visited, walked around the fort, talked to the living historians, and browsed through the items set out for the Silent Auction until noon when it was time to feast on the BBQ prepared by Buddy's wonderful cooking team! Numerous people contributed wonderful salads and other side dishes to go with the brisket, sausage & beans. The number of desserts to select from was almost overwhelming but everyone had a great time trying a little bit of several desserts as a way of solving the problem. 150 people were served lunch and all the picnic tables in the schoolhouse and out under the trees were full of people getting to know each other over wonderful food.

After lunch, Gabe Schooley and a group of the Living Historians put on a cannon firing demonstration that was a booming success! As the Silent Auction was wrapping up, the annual meeting of the Friends of Fort McKavett started. Buddy reported that with Gabe leaving in mid October, the Fort will be short two staff members and he doesn't know if he will be able to hire anyone to fill either position. If you have time please call or stop by the fort to see what you can do to help. The park does have two Park Hosts, Bob and Gene, for the next two months. They arrived as evacuees from Hurricane Rita and started working as soon as their camper was set up! The Silent Auction was very successful! Many thanks to everyone who brought items for the auction and everyone who bid on the items. The Friends of Fort McKavett collected \$2,240 from the auction, dues, and donations.