



FORT RICHARDSON

State Park and Historic Site

1867 - 1878

WALKING TOUR

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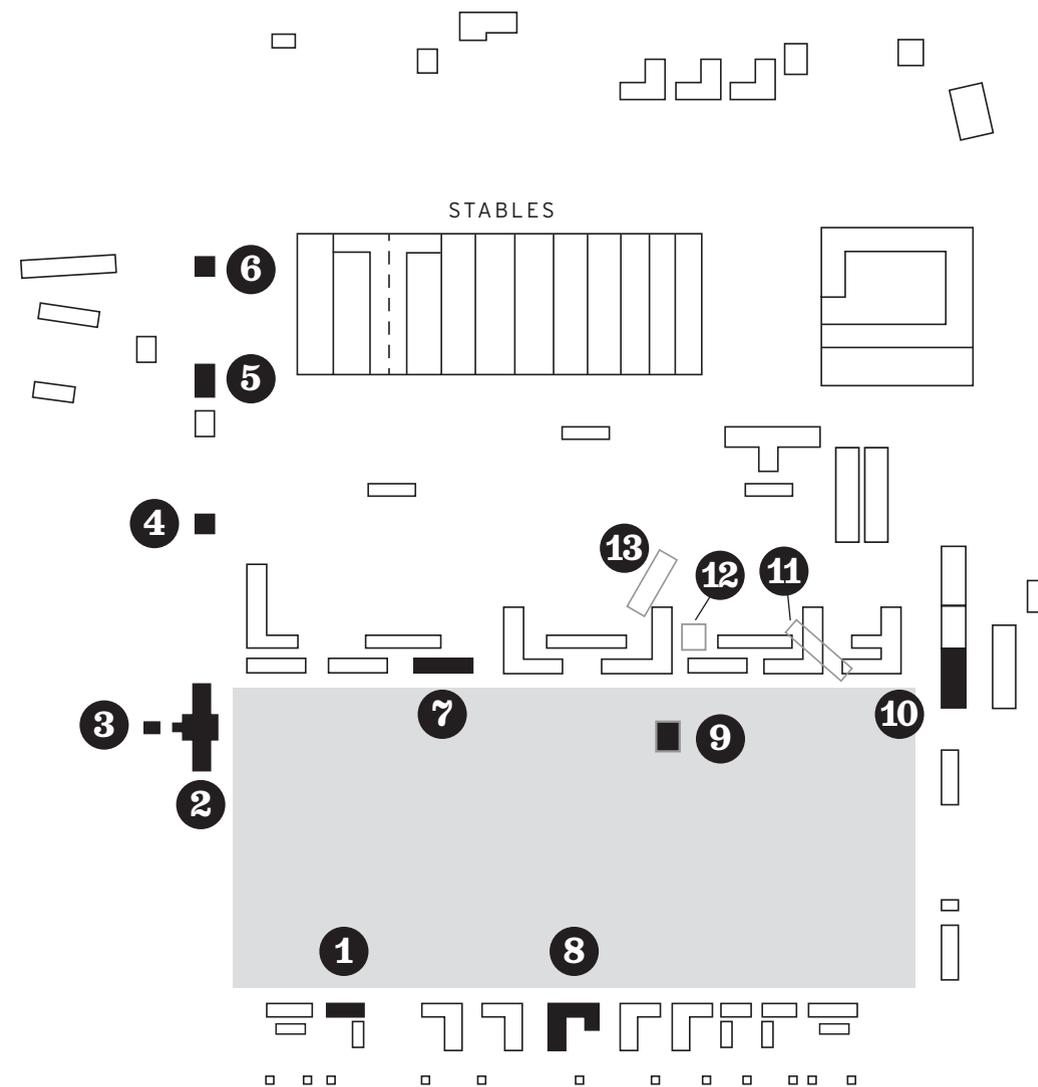
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During the post's 11 years of active military existence, between 1867-1878, the U.S. Army stationed over 5,000 troops at Fort Richardson, with a standing force of almost 800 soldiers at the height of its power. It was originally established as an "occupational fort" to enforce martial law and the reconstruction policies of the federal government. This lasted until April of 1870, when Texas was readmitted into the Union. After 1870, the Army's focus turned to Indian War Campaigns. Three major campaigns and hundreds of scouts and patrols were launched from Richardson. For gallantry in these engagements, Congress awarded 30 Medals of Honor to the men of Richardson.



Although the fort originally had over 60 buildings, most were only temporary structures and were torn down by locals after the fort was decommissioned. The remaining original buildings include the Hospital, Morgue, Bakery, Magazine, Commissary, Guardhouse and Commanding Officer's Quarters.

1 THE INTERPRETIVE CENTER is a reproduction of a non-commissioned officer's barracks. The building housed several bachelor officers or several families of the lesser ranking officers. Each picket officer's barracks contained three to four rooms with separate doors and windows for ventilation. There were never enough quarters for all the officers stationed here so many slept in tents.





2 THE POST HOSPITAL was the largest building on the fort grounds, completed in 1869, at a cost of about \$150,000. It is made of sandstone quarried from a neighboring county; the walls are 18 inches thick in places. The main portion of the building consisted of the Dispensary, Post Surgeon's Office, Dining Room, Steward's Room and a Kitchen/ Surgery attached to the back. Upstairs was used as the Morgue or Death Room until a separate building was added, then these rooms were used as storage of all medical supplies and for medical staff quarters. The north and south wards contained a total of 24 beds. The post surgeon was challenged with unfilled medical requisitions, poor sanitary conditions and limited or ineffective treatments for common illnesses caused by bad water, spoiled food, alcoholism, and venereal diseases.

3 THE MORGUE OR DEATH HOUSE was the last building constructed at this post. Erected in 1875, a pair of sinks or earth closets was built on the back of the building. The bodies of the soldiers were prepared for burial here.



4 THE BAKERY operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week supplying the post with 600 to 800 loaves of bread a day. The bakery was furnished with tables for preparing bread, and shelves for supplies and equipment storage. The back room contained a large beehive oven. The bakery would become so hot in the summer it became almost intolerable inside. In fact, one baker actually died from heat stroke.



5 GUARDHOUSE RUINS originally consisted of four stone cells, 4 feet by 8 feet, in which three soldiers were confined to each cell. An attached picket structure served as guard offices and quarters. The guardhouse was nearly always at full capacity and additional rooms were added. The post reportedly lost 246 soldiers through desertion.

6 THE MAGAZINE was used to store explosives and black powder. The walls are 4 feet thick with a vaulted ceiling, which was designed to implode in case of fire. The original door was 6 inches thick, made of cast iron.



7 THE ENLISTED MEN'S BARRACKS is constructed in the picket style, like the Officer's Barracks. The building contains two rooms on the west end, used by the non-commissioned officers as quarters, and a back room used as storage for company supplies. The large east room was used as sleeping quarters for the enlisted men. The bunk beds are double bunks, designed for two soldiers to sleep in the top and bottom bunks. Mattresses (bed sacks) were filled with straw and replaced on a monthly basis; the old hay was fed to the livestock. Two wood-burning stoves heated the large room. With upwards of 150 soldiers crammed in these small buildings, the living conditions were deplorable.



8 THE COMMANDING OFFICER'S QUARTERS was the largest house built on the post grounds. The board and batten construction was the typical method used in the period. It is the only cottonwood frame officer's quarters standing in the United States from the Indian War period. Cottonwood was used for the external walls with plastered interior walls. The first floor consists of various living spaces such as parlors, a kitchen, and bedrooms, separated by a breezeway. The second story was used as both a storage area and additional bedroom space. Contrary to popular belief, General Sherman did not stay in this house, with Mackenzie, during his visit to the fort. He set up his campsite directly to the east and only entered the home to eat dinner with Colonel Mackenzie.

9 JACKSBORO WATER WORKS was built from salvaged stone from the second county courthouse in the early 1930s. This structure currently houses the park's Nature Center.



10 THE COMMISSARY AND THE RUINS OF THE QUARTERMASTER SUPPLY was located on the easternmost edge of the grounds. The building was used for storage of post supplies, such as dried goods, clothing and some livestock feed. It was refurbished in 1968 by TPWD.



11 THE CHICAGO ROCK ISLAND & TEXAS DEPOT, erected in 1889 by the Risley Brothers, was built of local stone. This was the first depot constructed in Jacksboro. There are several original telegraph poles along the multi-use trail which runs in front of the building.

12 THE "FORT RICHARDSON" SIGN was erected in 1936 to commemorate the Texas Centennial. The sign is not at the original entrance to the fort.



13 THE TRESTLE BRIDGE once spanned Lost Creek and was used by the Chicago Rock Island Line and the Gulf & Western Pacific Line. The bridge was moved in 1985 to its present location from the bend in the creek about 500 yards to the west.

THE GRAVES BEHIND THE COMMANDING OFFICERS QUARTERS contain the graves of William E. Stanton, born December 3, 1871, died October 5, 1874 and Robert F. Stanton, born August 27, 1873, died October 19, 1874 from whooping cough (pertussis). These brothers were the children of a teamster who hauled supplies to the post.

THE ORIGINAL FORT CEMETERY IS NO LONGER IN EXISTENCE. It was located approximately 1/4 mile east of the parade grounds. The 37 known fallen soldiers were exhumed and relocated to Fort Sam Houston Cemetery in San Antonio during the 1880s.