

Fort Davis

National Historic Site
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Guardian of the West Texas Frontier

A RICH HISTORY

After gold was discovered in California in 1848, westward overland travel routes became important. In West Texas, the San Antonio—El Paso Road and the Butterfield Overland Trail passed through territory used by Apache and Comanche Indians. To protect travelers and the mail, the Army built a fort in what were then called the Apache Mountains, at the mouth of a pleasant box canyon near Limpia Creek. The new fort was named Fort Davis, after Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, and soon the mountains became known as the Davis Mountains.

Fort Davis was active from 1854 to 1891, except for the Civil War years. Troops from the fort scouted and mapped the surrounding territory, escorted the mail, protected stagecoaches and wagon trains, guarded railroad surveyors, and fought against raiding Indian bands. When Fort Davis had "outlived its usefulness" and was abandoned by the army, it contained over sixty major adobe or stone buildings.

The historic ruins of Fort Davis were acquired and preserved by the National Park Service beginning in 1961. There has been enough restoration that a visitor receives a vivid impression of what a fort was like. Today, Fort Davis National Historic Site is regarded as the most outstanding surviving example of a southwestern frontier military post.

VISITOR SERVICES

The site is open 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. from Memorial Day through Labor Day and from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. the rest of the year. Fort Davis is closed on Christmas. The entrance fee is \$2.00 per person. Individuals 16 or under, educational groups, and holders of Gold Eagle, Golden Age, or Golden Access Passports enter free of charge.

The Visitor Center is in a restored barracks and contains exhibits and a slide program on the fort's history. A sound representation of an 1875 Dress Retreat Parade echoes over the parade ground at scheduled times. During summer, park rangers and volunteers dressed as soldiers, officers' wives, or servants are stationed at some of the refurbished buildings to provide information. Be sure to check in at the Visitor Center at the beginning of your visit to learn what programs are available.

The site covers 460 acres and has several miles of hiking trails. A shaded picnic area is available year-round.

AREA INFORMATION

There are no overnight accommodations in the park. Camping is available at the Davis Mountains State Park, four miles from the fort. Lodging is available at several motels in the neighboring town of Fort Davis (population 1,000), and at Indian Lodge in the state park. The town has several gas stations, grocery stores, restaurants, and gift shops. Nearby attractions include the McDonald Observatory of the University of Texas, Davis Mountains State Park, the Overland Trail Museum, and the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute. Nearby towns of Alpine and Marfa also have attractions for visitors to the Big Bend Country.

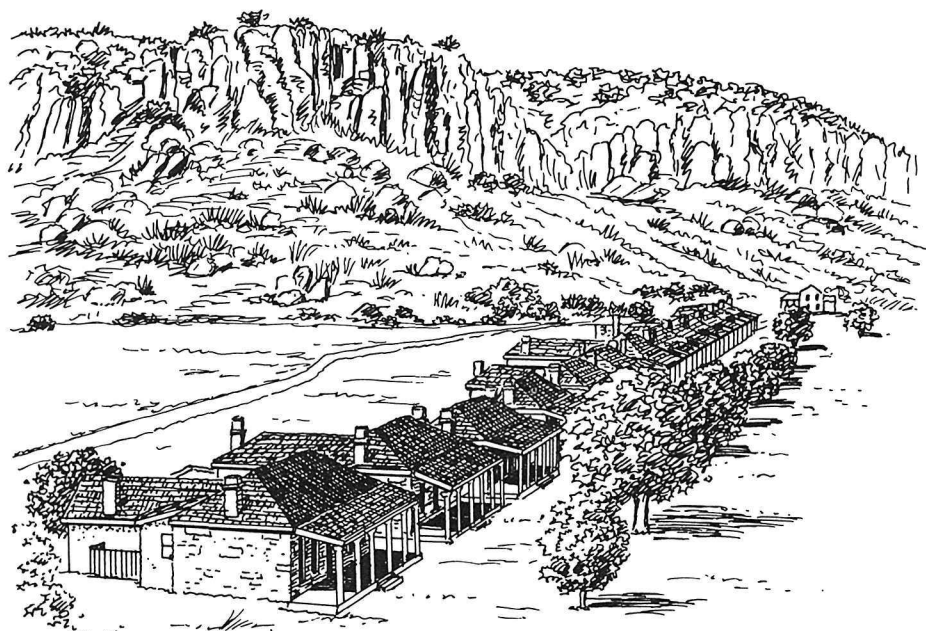
The elevation of Fort Davis is 4,900 feet. Summer is hot with occasional showers, fall is mild, winter is cool and windy, and strong winds prevail in spring.

DO . . .

- allow at least one to two hours for your visit.
- bring comfortable walking shoes.
- keep pets on leashes and out of historic buildings.
- walk only on established walkways or trails.

. . . AND PLEASE DON'T . . .

- remove anything from the site.
- walk, climb, or sit on any foundation or ruin.
- smoke or have refreshments in historic buildings, or the Visitor Center.
- build fires at the picnic area.



Fort Davis, Texas

Officers' Row

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Superintendent
Fort Davis National Historic Site
P.O. Box 1456
Fort Davis, Texas 79734
(915) 426-3224

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