

Fort Davis

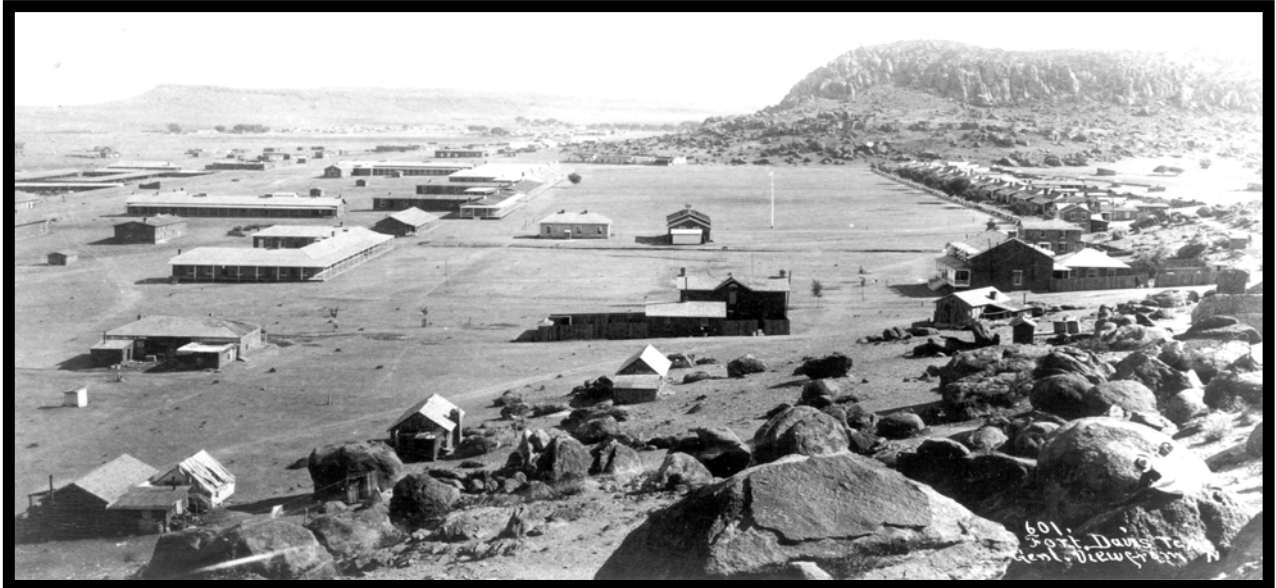
National Historic Site

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Curriculum Materials Grades 2 - 5

The Second Fort Davis 1867 - 1891



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Teacher Notes: Second Fort Davis

Topic: Second Fort Davis

Standards and Objectives:

Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Social Studies: 113.4 -17,18	Social Studies: 113.5 - 1,2,3,16,17,18	Social Studies: 113.6 - 4,8,22,23	Social Studies: 113.7 - 4,8,25,26,27
Language Arts: 110.4 - 6,8,9,10,14	Language Arts: 110.5 - 6,8,9,10,14	Language Arts: 110.6 - 8,10,11,12,13, 15,19,22,24,25	Language Arts: 110.7 -8,10,11,12, 13,15,19,22,24,25

Materials needed:

Copies of student reading: *The Army Builds Second Fort Davis* (4 pages)

Copies of student worksheets: (1) *Be A Newspaper Reporter*, (2) *Fort Davis Alphabet Tells a Story*, and (3) *What Was It Like at the Second Fort Davis?*

Optional for *Be A Newspaper Reporter*: News articles that are relatively short and to the point—ones that demonstrate the five W’s to use as examples. You may also wish to contact Fort Davis National Historic Site (432-426-3224) and order a re-print of the May 31, 1884 issue of the newspaper, “Presidio County News” (approx. \$1.00)—a small part of this newspaper is shown on the student worksheet.

Optional for *Fort Davis Alphabet Tells a Story*: Dictionaries; Art supplies & paper to make picture books, and cardboard or poster board for the cover; Simple nonfiction fact books to share the format with students before they make their own. Books by children’s author Gail Gibbons are recommended for younger students because of her simple, yet captivating style.

Lesson Activities:

For younger students, the teacher can read aloud or tell the story of the second Fort Davis. Older students can read the information sheet independently for a discussion—to include both facts and opinions.

Students can extend the information of the fort’s history by looking up more about the 19th-century Indian Wars, mail delivery in the 1860s-1890s, Apaches, Buffalo Soldiers, early telegraph, specific jobs mentioned that soldiers did at the fort such as being a cooper or blacksmith, or whatever their interest.

Activities and Projects:

* Be a Newspaper Reporter

It would be helpful for students to read one or two news articles before attempting to write one of their own. The teacher can put up articles on the overhead projector and have students find the 5 W’s. The teacher can also have students look for the “Inverted Pyramid” approach.

* Fort Davis Alphabet Tells a Story

Students can work alone or in groups to find words.

Encourage students to be creative! Make dictionaries available as reference tools.

When all have finished, discuss together the words selected. You may wish to choose as a class one favorite word for each letter.

Turn the alphabet into a picture book or storybook.

Divide up the words so that all of them get illustrated on white paper.

Instead of just having one word on the page with the picture, tell students to use the word in a sentence that gives factual information about the Fort.

Put the pages together as a picture book. Assign a couple of students to make the cover.

Students can take turns borrowing it overnight to share with their family.

*** What Was It Like at the Second Fort Davis?**

Depending on which activities they choose, have students work alone or in pairs / small groups.

If time allows, students can read or present their work to the class. If space allows, you may exhibit their work.

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Student Activity: Second Fort Davis

The Army Builds Second Fort Davis



The U.S. Army operated the second Fort Davis from 1867 to 1891.

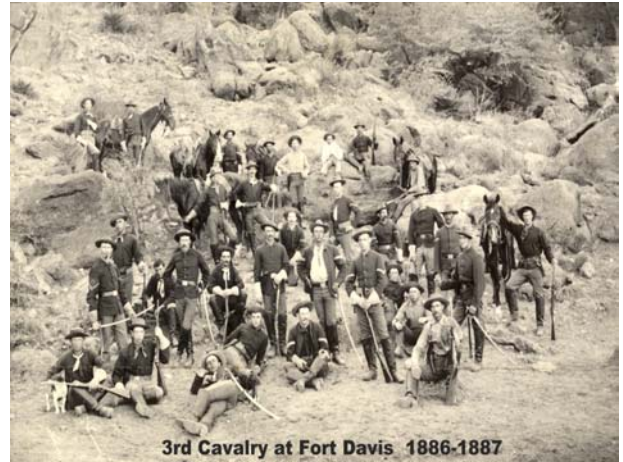
In the mid-1800s, thousands of pioneers, freight wagons, and mail carriers began traveling through the Trans-Pecos region of west Texas—many on their way to the gold fields of California. Because Apaches, Comanches, and Kiowas were in the area, the U. S. Army built Fort Davis in 1854 and other forts to protect the route of travel. The “first” Fort Davis remained active until early in the Civil War, being abandoned in 1862.



This photo shows African-American soldiers of Company I, 9th Cavalry at Fort Davis in 1874 or 1875. Black soldiers served at Fort Davis from 1867 to 1885 and helped to bring the peaceful settlement of the region.

After the Civil War, more traffic on the San Antonio-El Paso Road brought more raiding by Indians, so the army re-established Fort Davis in 1867. In June, Lieutenant Colonel Wesley Merritt arrived with four companies of the Ninth U. S. Cavalry, composed of black soldiers that later became known as Buffalo Soldiers, to rebuild the fort. Over 200 civilians (non-military) also helped build the fort.

Like most other western frontier army forts, there were no tall walls all around the fort—except for the stables and corrals where the animals were kept. The presence of so many soldiers was enough to discourage Indian attacks. From 1867 to 1881, Apaches and Comanches struck not only travelers and stagecoaches on the road, but mail stations and new settlements. Coming to west Texas from the mountains of New Mexico and the plains of Oklahoma to steal horses, cattle, guns, and other goods, the Indians were good at avoiding the soldiers. Their strategy was hit-and-run, or surprise attack—called ambush.



3rd Cavalry at Fort Davis 1886-1887



Drawing of Buffalo Soldier by Frederic Remington

Fort Davis soldiers went on scouting trips into the Guadalupe Mountains and to the Big Bend to show the Indians they no longer had a safe hiding place. The army believed that scouting expeditions like this—even if the soldiers did not see the Indians—helped keep the Indians under control. By the late 1870s, Fort Davis troops had also built new roads and strung 91 miles of telegraph wire to connect the post with other forts to the west. Now the army could communicate long distance by telegraph, and not have to send messengers or use signal flags!

Some of the Indians were not happy when they were forced to live on reservations. They wanted to be free to live their traditional way of life. After Victorio, a clever Apache leader, ran away from the reservation in New Mexico, Indian raids in western Texas reached a new high. So the army began setting up sub-posts or small camps where soldiers were stationed away from the main fort to help track the Apaches and to give more protection to travelers. In a little over a year, troops from Fort Davis and its sub-posts traveled a total of 6,724 miles on scouting trips! Soldiers from Fort Davis and other forts fought the



Victorio

Indians in the summer of 1880 and drove them into Mexico. There, Mexican soldiers killed Victorio and many of his followers in October, 1880.

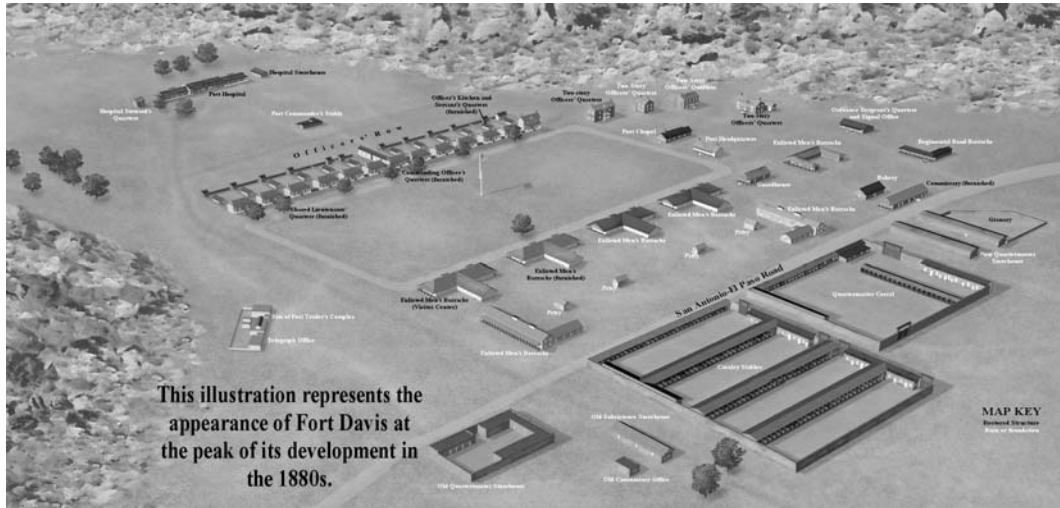
Within a few months after Victorio's death, the Indian Wars in Texas came to a close and life at Fort Davis became routine. The fort was much like any town on the frontier—it had a church, hospital, school, library, grocery store, houses, and people to take care of horses and to fix broken wagons. The fort had a commanding officer (C.O.) just like a town had a mayor, and it was the C.O.'s job to see that everything ran smoothly. The officers under him made sure soldiers did their job. The same jobs and services needed by a town were also needed at the fort.



C.O. (Lieutenant Colonel Melville Cochran) with his family in front of his house at Fort Davis, 1888-1890

Some soldiers had special skills that were important for the fort's operation, such as bread baker, cooper, saddler, blacksmith, wheelwright, nurse, and telegraph operator. At any one time, there were from 100 to 400 enlisted men plus officers and families at the fort.

A town grew up next to the fort, and the fort hired townspeople to be clerks, laborers, and laundresses. From local people, the fort also bought supplies like hay, wheat, fresh beef, building materials, and fresh fruits and vegetables. In 1884, the town of Fort Davis had a dairy, bakery, lumber yard, furniture shop, general stores, saloons, and hotels.



The San Antonio-El Paso Road runs through the fort. Today, the National Park Service preserves Fort Davis.

It was peaceful during the last ten years of the fort (1881-1891). Soldiers still patrolled the western frontier, but they were more involved in surveying or repairing roads and telegraph lines. The fort continued to grow. By the late 1880s, it had gas lighting, running water, and an ice machine. It had over a hundred buildings, and its excellent hospital treated people all around the area—not just people who lived at the fort.

But the fort was isolated. It was over twenty miles from the nearest railroad, and it lay on land that the government did not own. There were no more problems with Comanches or Apaches. Texas Rangers now kept watch on the occasional outlaw gangs that sometimes terrorized the countryside. In June of 1891, the U.S. Army decided the fort was no longer needed and closed it. The last soldiers said good-bye to the fort and marched out of the military post of Fort Davis.



Soldiers of the 5th U.S. Infantry at Fort Davis in 1889

Choose ONE of the time periods to report on:

1. The decision to rebuild the fort after the Civil War and the beginning of this rebuilding
2. Indian activity and the diminishing threat after Victorio was killed
3. The last decade when there were fewer Indian problems and the fort became more of a community

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Curriculum Materials Grades 2-5

Student Activity: Second Fort Davis
Student Worksheet – Fort Davis Alphabet

FORT DAVIS ALPHABET TELLS A STORY

Make an alphabet of Fort Davis. Take each letter from A to Z and choose words that are important to the fort's story.

You may even illustrate them, if you have time, or work in a group to do so.

Some letters may be harder. For letters such as X, you can use something like the X in TeXas.

For a few of the letters, you might have to come up with words not in the story but that would fit to describe it. For example, Z could be zeal—the way the soldiers pursued the Indians or the way the Indians defended their traditional way of life. See how creative you can be!



FORT DAVIS ALPHABET



- A _____
- B _____
- C _____
- D _____
- E _____
- F _____
- G _____
- H _____
- I _____
- J _____
- K _____
- L _____
- M _____
- N _____
- O _____
- P _____
- Q _____
- R _____
- S _____
- T _____
- U _____
- V _____
- W _____
- X _____
- Y _____
- Z _____

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Student Activity: Second Fort Davis
Student Worksheet – What Was It Like?

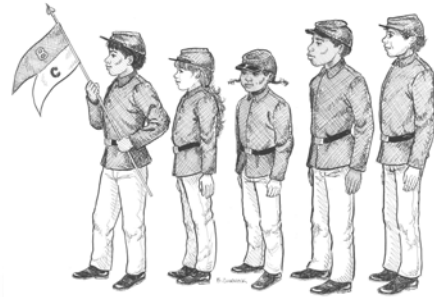
What Was It Like at the Second Fort Davis?

DIRECTIONS: Choose an activity in one of the boxes.

HOW DID IT FEEL?

Choose one:

- an Apache
- commanding officer of the fort
- an enlisted man (soldier)
- a traveler on the road
- one of the townspeople



Now write two paragraphs describing
Second Fort Davis from the

perspective of that person. Think about how differently each of these
people might have felt and viewed things.

TIMELINE

Make a time line. List on the time line some of the most important
happenings in the life of Second Fort Davis, 1867-1891.

BE AN ARMY OFFICER IN 1867

Imagine that you are a U.S. Army officer. The year is
1867. Write at least two paragraphs on one of the
following:

1. It is your job to find a spot to build second Fort Davis. Will you build it in the exact same place as first Fort Davis? Or nearby? Explain why it is important that the fort be near wood, water and grass.
2. Decide on the army's strategy in making the area around Fort Davis peaceful for wagons to travel through and for pioneers to settle. Explain how you will deal with Apaches who roam in small bands and are "guerilla" fighters.



ICE AT FORT DAVIS

Research how they made ice in the 1800s. Explain in writing and illustrate your explanation. You may wish to compare this method with the way our refrigerators work today. Fort Davis got an ice machine in 1888 - one of the main uses of ice was to relieve fever in sick people. (What inventions or changes can you think of that have happened in your lifetime or your parents' lifetime? Ask your mom or dad about this.)

