

You have seen only a portion of this large fort.  
Other buildings include:

- |                                |                        |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Adjutant's Office              | Laundress' Quarters    |
| Blacksmith Shop                | Officers' Quarters     |
| Carpenter Shop                 | Post Office            |
| Cavalry Stables                | Quartermaster          |
| Commanding Officer's Residence | Storehouse             |
| Commissary Store               | Quartermaster's Office |
| Guard House                    | Saddler's Shop         |
|                                | Wheeler Shop           |

# A Walk Through Fort Griffin 1867-1881



Fort Griffin  
State Historic Site



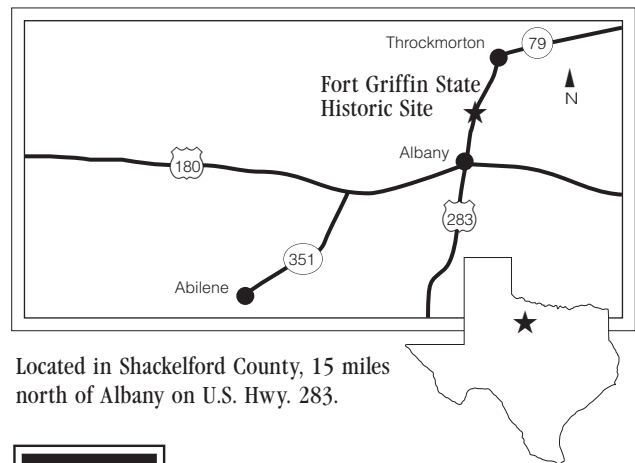
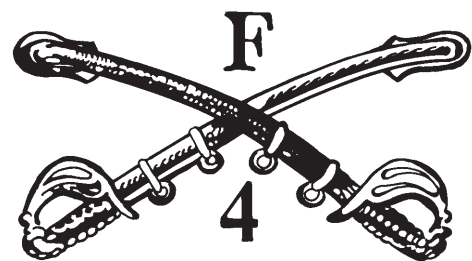
*Walk in the tracks of men who lived and died on the Texas frontier over 120 years ago.*



These men were from many different backgrounds, but they all shared the danger as well as the tedium of serving at a military outpost like Fort Griffin.

The fort was located on what was then a sparsely settled and dangerously exposed bluff, jutting into the heart of hostile Indian territory. As a consequence, the troops were frequently called upon to risk their lives on challenging and dangerous campaigns against various Indian groups roaming the High Plains to the north and west. Between campaigns, however, daily garrison life could be quite boring. As one soldier observed: "Life at the fort was always the same - drill, reveille, mounting guard, retreat, calling tattoo and taps, hoisting the flag at sunrise and taking it down again at sunset."

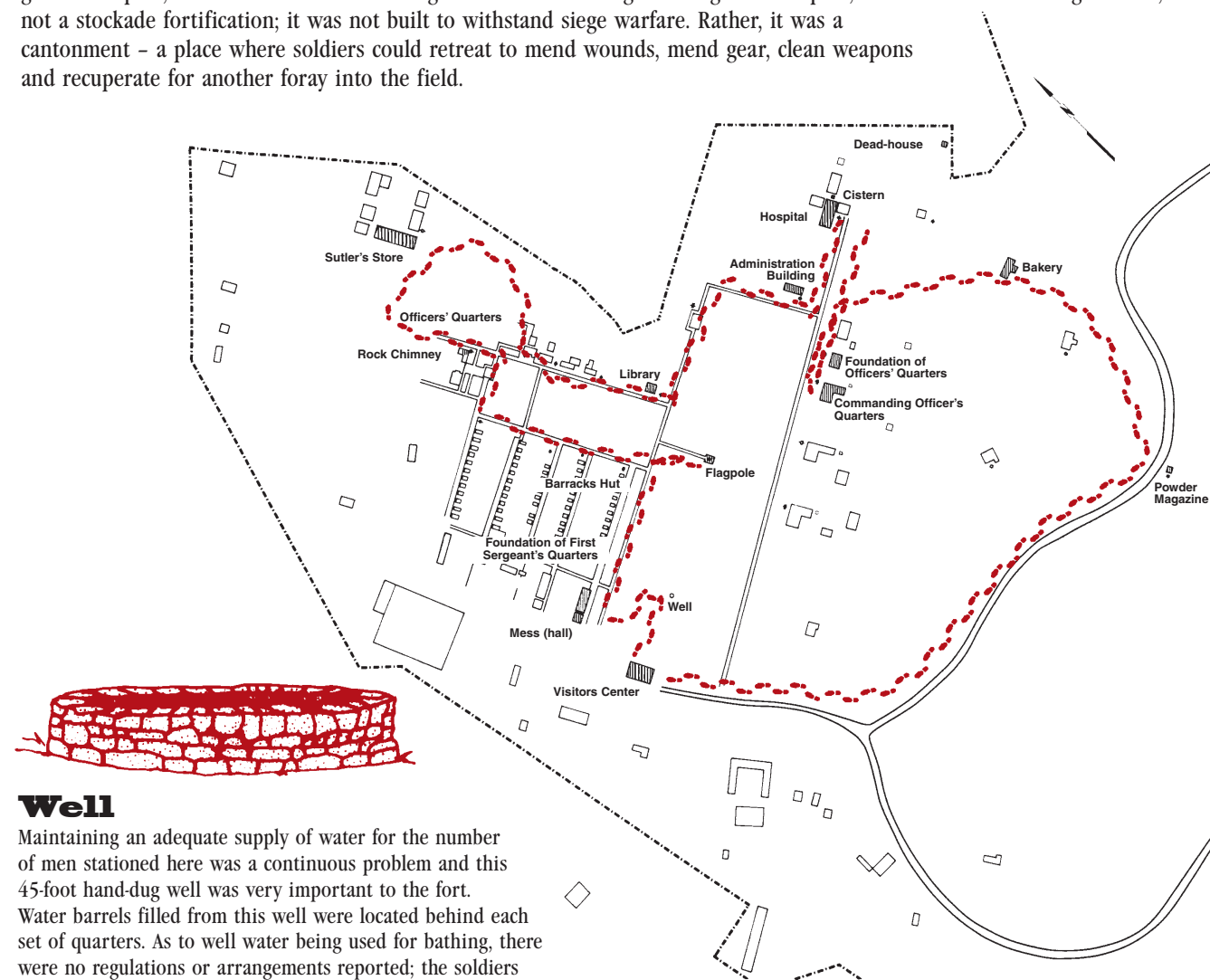
Fort Griffin played an important role in providing protection during the settlement of the Texas frontier. It was never a glamorous post, located as it was on the edge of a wild and dangerous region. This post, as were most western garrisons, was not a stockade fortification; it was not built to withstand siege warfare. Rather, it was a cantonment - a place where soldiers could retreat to mend wounds, mend gear, clean weapons and recuperate for another foray into the field.



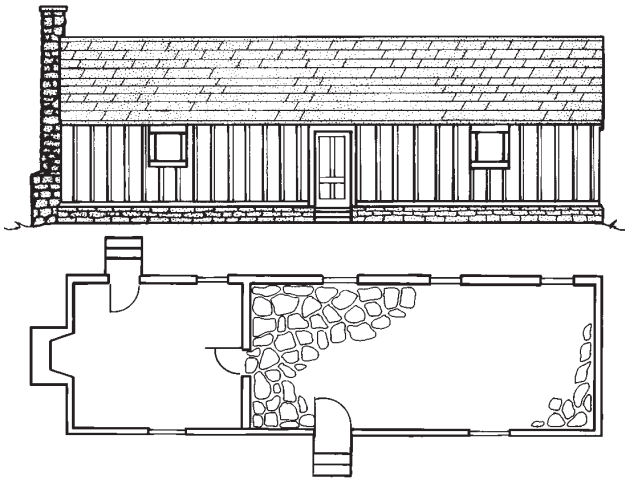
Located in Shackleford County, 15 miles north of Albany on U.S. Hwy. 283.

**TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE**  
 Web site: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us>  
 FORT GRIFFIN STATE HISTORIC SITE  
 1701 N. U.S. Hwy. 283, Albany, TX 76430  
 (325) 762-3592

Cover drawing extracted from *The Horse Soldier, Volume II*, by Randy Steffen. Some building illustrations extracted from the *Texas Historic Forts, Part IV, Griffin*, by the School of Architecture UT at Austin. Illustrations redrawn by Elena Ivy, TPWD staff.

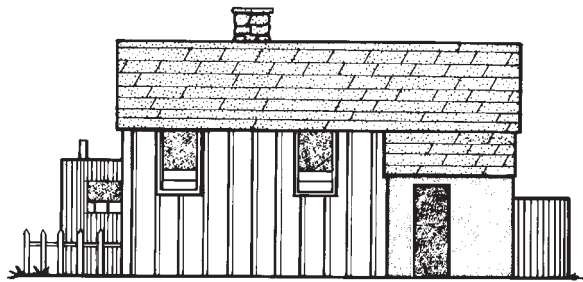


**Well**  
 Maintaining an adequate supply of water for the number of men stationed here was a continuous problem and this 45-foot hand-dug well was very important to the fort. Water barrels filled from this well were located behind each set of quarters. As to well water being used for bathing, there were no regulations or arrangements reported; the soldiers probably used the Clear Fork of the Brazos River instead.



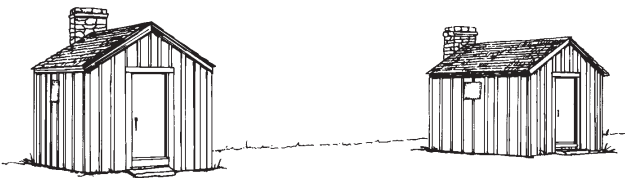
### Mess (Hall)

At the end of each row of company quarters were the kitchens and mess. As staples, the men were served beef, bread and coffee, morning, noon and night. Pea, bean or rice soup, plum pudding and vegetables and fruit in season were then added to the menu.



### Foundation of First Sergeant's Quarters

Between each row of enlisted men's barracks and the mess rooms was a first sergeant's quarters. Sergeant James W. Foley and his wife, Rachel, lived in this one.

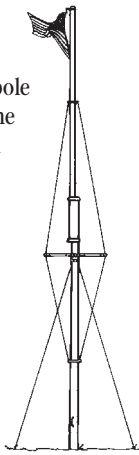


### Barracks Hut

There were four rows of huts with four to six men living in each one. The huts were built of "rawhide" lumber, which soon began to shrink and warp badly leaving gaping cracks in the walls. These quarters were almost as open to the weather as a brush arbor.

### Parade Ground and Flagpole

Flying in the Texas breeze, the 38-star U.S. flag, atop a pole shaped after a ship's mast, announced the presence of the U.S. Army and its determination to protect the American frontier. Battle-hardened troops drilled on this parade ground, then marched west into a region where charred rock chimneys symbolized the blasted hopes of pioneers and often marked their graves.

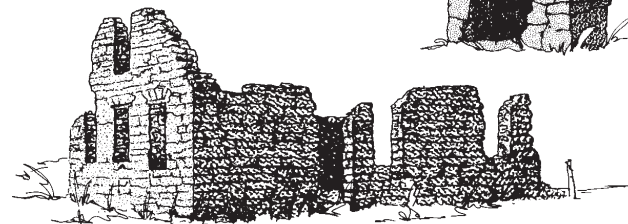
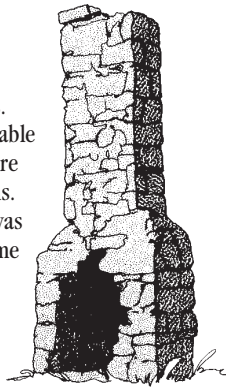


### Library

One of the commanders established a post library, which consisted of a limited selection of 56 volumes of miscellaneous books and magazines. Upon arrival of Company I, Sixth Calvary, the library was increased by 58 more books. These volumes had constituted the post library at Corsicana where the reinforcements had been stationed. The building also served as a school and chapel.

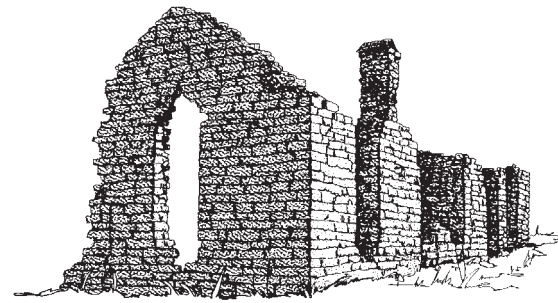
### Rock Chimney

That's all that remains of one officer's quarters. While such quarters were always more comfortable than the enlisted men's, all of the buildings were inferior to those of the more southern garrisons. Located in a vital defensive area, Fort Griffin was a very active post and the soldiers had little time for construction chores.



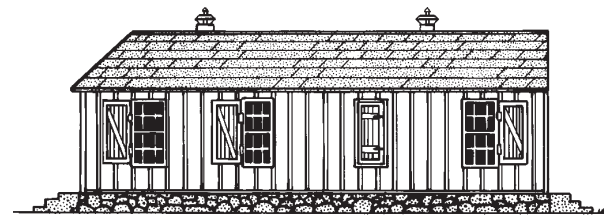
### Sutler's Store

Here, settlers and soldiers could buy such items as canned tomatoes, canned peaches (a favorite item), fruits, oysters, (Borden's Eagle Brand) milk, dried fruits, sperm candles and powder and shot. On one particular day, the receipts at this store totaled over \$4,000, most of which came from settlers and buffalo hunters, since many soldiers preferred to spend their wages on drink and gambling. (Officers made about \$90 a month and enlisted men \$13.)



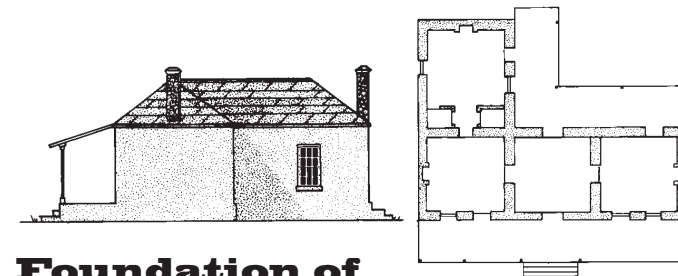
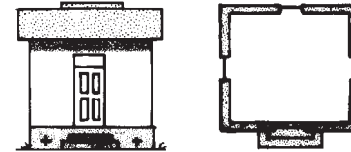
### Administration Building

This structure housed the offices of the commanding officer, post adjutant and post quartermaster. This was one of only a few buildings ever built of stone at the fort, although original plans called for stone construction throughout. Fort Griffin was never considered more than a temporary post by the Army.



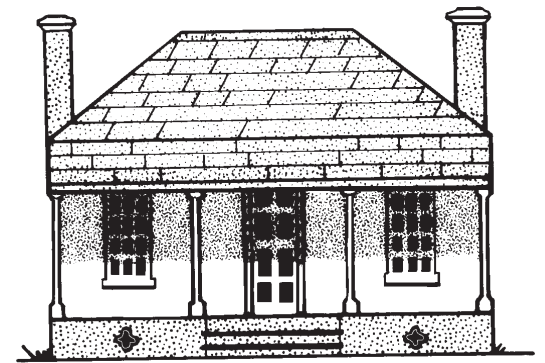
### Hospital, Dead-house and Cistern

The hospital consisted of four distinct buildings. One was a dilapidated log building brought in from a deserted ranch, the other three were frame construction. The dead-house, where postmortems were performed and bodies prepared for burial, was located 100 yards north of the hospital. The cistern, located next to the hospital, was used for storage of water hauled from Collins Creek.



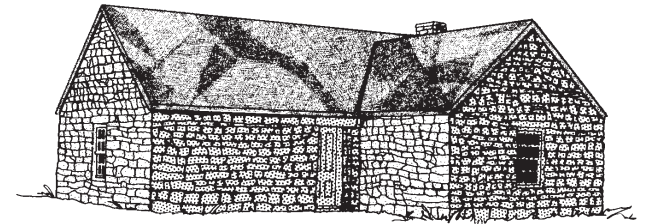
### Foundation of Officers' Quarters

Several officers' quarters were located in this area. The remains here are those of a frame building with two rooms, a kitchen, detached servant's room, underground cellar and a picket fence around the backyard.



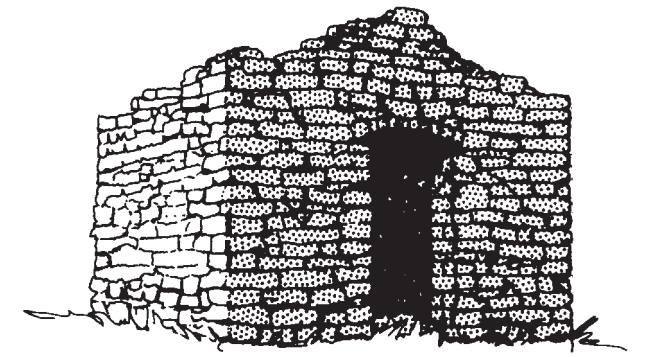
### Commanding Officer's Quarters

Ghost Building. These quarters were occupied by Captain Geo. L. Choisy, 11th Infantry, at Fort Griffin, 1876.



### Bakery

Eight hundred loaves of bread were baked here each day. A fire was built in the ovens, heating the bricks. The fire was then removed and the bread was baked by the retained heat. At one time, the bakery had to be closed a short while, until the baker who had deserted could be replaced.



### Powder Magazine

Another of the rare stone buildings, the powder magazine with its earthen roof was used to store powder and ammunition. Notice the small windows angled so as to permit ventilation, while preventing anyone from shooting straight into the magazine.