

Fort Davis

National Historic Site

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Curriculum Materials Grades 6-8 Student Activities: Interpreting History through Maps

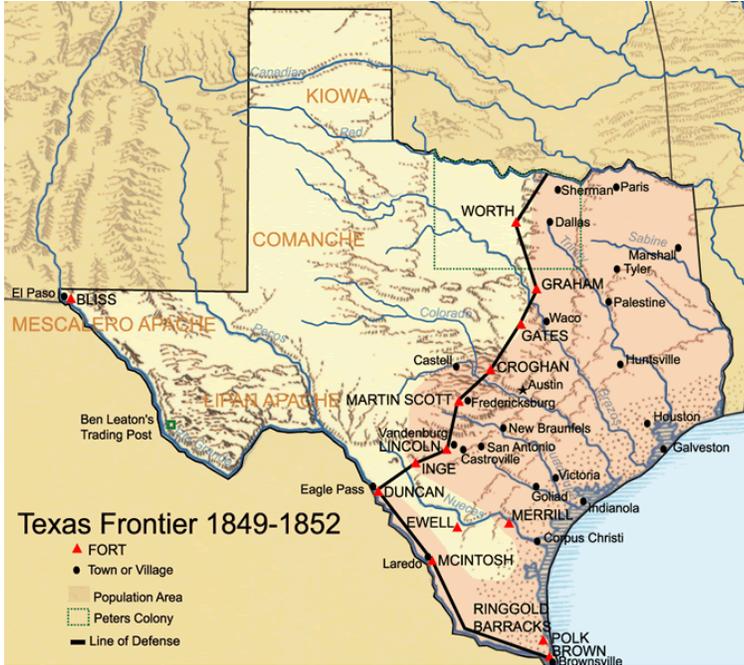
Interpreting History through Maps

Look at the sequence of maps below and the changes over the years. Maps can help you see historic changes and show the western movement of people on the Texas frontier. Answer the questions using the maps.



U.S. Army Forts in 1849

1. In 1849, what were the two routes through Texas from San Antonio to El Paso?
2. Which fort is the most northern of the early forts?
3. Which two territories border Texas?
4. The line of forts indicates the edge of the Texas Frontier in 1849. Is the frontier in eastern or western Texas?
5. Had Fort Davis been established by 1849? Explain why or why not.
6. What geographic features are displayed on this map? Why would it be important for travelers to know about geographic features?



Texas Frontier 1849-1852

1. What does this map tell us about Texas from 1849 to 1852? Explain your answer.
2. Look at the unsettled areas of Texas. Which tribe occupied the northern section of Texas called the Panhandle?
3. Which tribe ranged throughout central Texas?
4. Which tribes roamed the western and southernmost areas of Texas?
5. How would the presence of these tribes affect travel and settlement in these areas? Explain.



Forts in 1854

1. What direction has the line of forts moved?
2. Why do you think forts were needed?
3. Name the forts established along the Lower Road.
4. Why do you think travelers were glad to reach Fort Davis?



Forts in 1860

1. What was the new route across Texas?
2. What forts protected this new route?
3. What are the new forts along the Lower Road?
4. Would you rather travel by stagecoach or wagon? What might be the benefits of traveling by stagecoach? By wagon? Explain.



Forts After the Civil War

1. How many forts were active in Texas after the Civil War?
2. What is the state of Oklahoma called at this time?
3. What is the state of New Mexico called at this time?
4. What is the most western fort in Texas?
5. Why do you think most of the central Texas forts have towns near them, but the western forts do not?



Post-Civil War Forts

Compare the first map with this map. Summarize the progress of the Texas frontier. Explain the reasons for the Texas forts.

Maps used with permission from Texas Beyond History - <http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/forts/military.html#map>

As the army closed many Texas forts in the late 1800s, where do you think the troops went? (Draw on the information you read in the park literature.) Why were troops no longer needed? Who do you think took over law enforcement duties in Texas communities? Today, when large employers move from present-day communities, it generally causes economic hardships. Do you think the closing of the fort in 1891 affected the town of Fort Davis? Explain your answers.

Historical Maps are Primary Sources

The maps above are considered secondary sources as they were created by a historian to document and visualize data. The military map below is a primary source as it was drawn during the time period of Fort Davis.

What's on a Map?

Using highlighters or colored pencils, locate the following places on this map:

Communities -- Red

1. Marfa
2. Toyah
3. Fort Davis

Rivers/Creeks – Blue

4. Rio Pecos

5. Notice how mountains and hills are drawn on this map. Why would it be important for travelers to know about these geographic features?

6. Find the waterholes labeled on this map. Why would this feature be important to travelers in the 1800s.

7. Draw the mapmaker's symbols for these landforms and human-made features. Are today's map symbols similar?

Railroads

Mountains

Waterholes

8. As a historian and knowing that the railroad reached Toyah in September of 1881, about when do you think this map was drawn? 1850s, 1860s, 1870, 1880s, 1890s.

9. Why do you think they didn't generally put railroad tracks right through the middle of the mountains?

