

# Explore our history with a visit to a Texas Frontier Fort!

Visiting our Texas Frontier Forts is a perfect short, fun and educational trip for the whole family. These Texas Frontier Forts include Fort Griffin, Fort Concho, Fort Richardson, Fort Chadbourne, Fort Belknap, Fort Stockton, Fort Davis, Fort Bliss, Fort McKavett, Fort Clark, Fort McIntosh, Fort Inge, and Fort Phantom Hill. This article will focus on the frontier forts close to Coke County.

## Fort Chadbourne

We in Coke County are blessed to have one of these restored forts within our own borders. Our own Fort Chadbourne was first established in 1852 as a United States Army post. The "Camp on Oak Creek" was originally intended to provide protection for those traveling to Santa Fe. It was built on the Butterfield Overland Mail route and housed 8th Infantry Companies A and K. In 1861, US forces surrendered the fort to the confederacy. Although US Infantry were stationed there after the War Between the States, a lack of water forced its closure and abandonment in 1868. The resident troops were moved to

Fort Concho at this time.

The public might never have been able to experience this piece of history without the efforts of Garland and Lana Richards who have worked tirelessly to restore the buildings and artifacts housed within them. Richards' ancestor Thomas Lawson Odom purchased land from Samuel Maverick's widow, Mary, in 1877. Fort Chadbourne was on part of the land purchased. Odom and his wife, Lucinda, were the first of eight generations to live on the ranch containing the fort. They made their home in what is now called the Double Officers' Quarters. This building was destroyed in a fire in 1919 and restored to what it is today in 2007. Known as the first Chadbourne Ranch Headquarters, visitors to the fort can appreciate the Odom family heirlooms with which the rooms are furnished.

Fort Chadbourne is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 8 am to 5 pm and is located twelve miles north of Bronte on US Highway 277. Just look for its entrance graced by a huge cavalry spur.

