

13. Masonic Lodge

Originally a single story rock building, the lodge was later attached to the Scobee home. It was used as a drug store, grocery store, bank and residence. In 1928, it was purchased by the Masons and a second story was added.



14. Mary's Post Office

In 1908, James L. Edwards built this post office for his wife, who was postmistress. Alice Sproul bought it in 1914 and served as postmistress until 1922. Her niece, Mary Sproul, inherited the building, which is now used as a vacation rental.



15. 1884 Carlton Store

Samuel Stern and Julius Seibenborn built this general store. Stern sold his interest to Seibenborn in 1886. Seibenborn sold the store in 1896 to James Stewart, who ran it until 1936. For a number of years, the Carlton family ran the store but never owned it. The building was sold to the local VFW post in 1946. Today the building is rarely used.



16. Old Schoolhouse

To your left, visible from Fort at Sixth St., the old schoolhouse was built in 1904 and used as a school until 1933. It was then sold to the Miller family, who converted it into apartments. In 1990, new owners converted it into a bed and breakfast.

17. Presbyterian Church

To your left, one block from Fort at Fifth St., the church was built in 1904 by the Reverend William B. Bloys, J. L. Janes and Frank Sproul. In 1929, a basement was dug under the existing building using a scraper and mules.



18. Overland Trail Museum

The north side of this home was built in 1883 by George M. Gaither. Nick Mersfelder bought and lived on the property from 1897 until his death in 1936. He was justice of the peace and operated a meat market, barber shop and photography studio. The museum houses a vast array of historic materials on Fort Davis and Jeff Davis County.



19. Fort Davis National Historic Site

West of Fort at Second St. is the historic fort. Established in 1854 to protect travelers on the overland route to California, it is one of the best preserved frontier forts in the American southwest. A museum and many restored structures tell the story of the soldiers and Apache peoples who clashed to determine the future of the region.



20. Saint Joseph Catholic Church

East of Highways 118 and 17 sits one of the oldest Catholic churches in the region. The original church, built in 1878, was replaced by the existing adobe structure by 1899. Members of the first congregation built pews for their families. An exhibit in the church interprets its colorful past and displays two of the historic family pews.



21. 1908 Adobe

Built by A. V. Mayes, the adobe was sold to Ernest Hanscher, a blacksmith. In 1911, Walter S. Miller purchased the property. It has been used as a home, drug store, antique store and dentist office. Miller himself never lived in the home, which is still in the Miller Family.



22. Dumas Building

The original rock structure, built in 1923, was one story. In 1928, the second story was added and used for dances and silent movies. It remained in the Dumas family until 1979.



Fort Davis, Texas

Historic Walking Tour



Originally a frontier military post, Fort Davis is rich in history. The walking tour is approximately one and a half miles long and begins and ends in Memorial Square. Along the way, you will pass many historically significant structures, many of which lie along the Old Overland Trail. Because of limited shade along the tour route, we recommend that you walk during the cooler part of the day and wear a hat and comfortable shoes. For more information about the town, stop by the Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce office.

To begin the walking tour, open the enclosed map. The numbers on the map correspond to the numbers next to the photos and descriptions of the historic structures in this brochure.

1. Fort Davis State Bank

Constructed in 1913, the building was jointly owned by the bank and the Fort Davis Independent Order of Odd Fellows. The Odd Fellows held its meetings upstairs until the 1950s when it sold interest in the building to the bank. The bank still houses many of the building's original furnishings.





2. Kimball Miller Real Estate Office & Fort Davis Family Practice

Built in 1909, this structure was the first automobile garage in West Texas. Originally, it aligned with the front of the bank building next door. In 1929, it was carefully jacked up, placed on logs and rolled backwards so that the front section, which was used as a filling station, could be added. If you look carefully underneath the arches, you can still see the outlines of the gas pumps and the screws that attached them.



3. The Union Building

Originally built in 1874 as the W. Keesey & Company Store, the building was expanded around the old store in 1906. In 1908, the store was sold to the Union Trading Company and remained the principle store in town until 1941. From 1941 to 1978, it operated as a hardware store and lumber yard. Currently, the building is owned by Jeff Davis County and houses the county library. To the west, under the "Feed" sign, is the Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce office. Inside, you can see the original adobe bricks and hardwood floor.



4. Miss Anne's Cottage

Judge James W. McClendon, Chief Justice of the Court of Civil Appeals (1923 – 1949), and his wife, Miss Anne, were frequent summer visitors to Fort Davis. After spending a few summers in the Hotel Limpia Annex, and distraught by the noise, Miss Anne persuaded the Union Trading Company to convert their dynamite and powder storage building into a cottage for her.



5. Hotel Limpia

The Union Trading Company built the hotel in 1912 using pink limestone quarried near Fort Davis. Named after a nearby creek, it was a popular local gathering place to exchange area news and gossip.



6. Jeff Davis County Courthouse

Fort Davis is the only town in Texas to have been the seat of two different counties. The courthouse sits on the same block of land as the

original one-story Presidio County Courthouse of 1880. The Jeff Davis County Courthouse was completed in March of 1911 from pressed bricks and limestone. The architect was L.L. Thurman & Co. from Dallas. The building was adorned with a four-faced Seth Thomas clock, which was used as a fire alarm for many years. The upstairs courtroom had an ornamental 25-foot pressed tin ceiling and a fan-shaped stained glass window behind the judge's bench. Outside, the courthouse was fenced and turnstiles were placed on each side of the courthouse to keep out the donkeys that were set free after wagons became more prevalent. A complete restoration of the courthouse began in 2002 and was completed in 2003. However, the fan-shaped window behind the judge's bench was missing. After the dedication, the window was returned to the county and later re-installed.



7. County Jail

Located at Woodward and Main, the jail was constructed at the same time as the courthouse and made of pressed concrete bricks. It held prisoners until 1978. The building currently houses the county tax offices.



8. United Methodist Church

The sanctuary at Woodward and Front streets, built in 1884, is the oldest Protestant church between San Antonio and El Paso. A booklet on the history of the congregation may be obtained at the church for a small fee.



9. Wildflower Cottage

Built as the Frank Sproul home in 1917, the cottage was home to a local sheriff for many years. Renovated in 1991, it is now a vacation rental property.



10. The Webster House

Built in 1898, the house was gutted by fire in 1995. A close look reveals a dormer, which was a unique feature at the time of construction, above the front door. Now restored, this historic home is a vacation rental.



11. Veranda Country Inn Bed & Breakfast

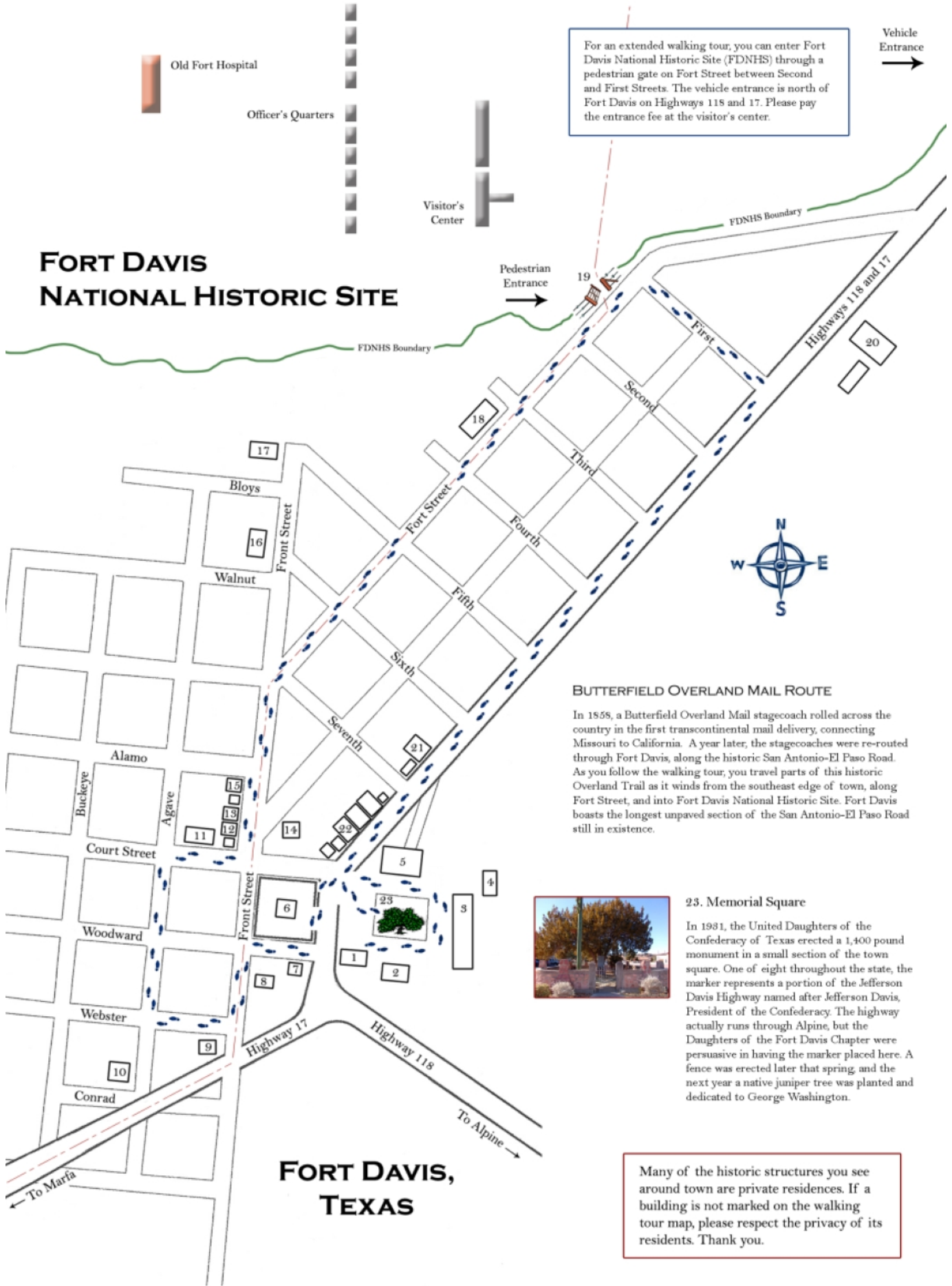
Built in 1883 as the Lempert House, this inn is the oldest in West Texas. It has walled gardens and courtyards and is furnished with antiques.



12. 1884 Scobee House

S. A. Thompson, a surveyor, used this building as an office. In 1902, it became the original post office. It was enlarged in 1925 and in 1945 was bought by Barry Scobee, who resided there until his death in 1977. Scobee was a colorful writer and newspaper man. He and his wife managed Hotel Limpia for a short time. Scobee Mountain is named after him.

FORT DAVIS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



For an extended walking tour, you can enter Fort Davis National Historic Site (FDNHS) through a pedestrian gate on Fort Street between Second and First Streets. The vehicle entrance is north of Fort Davis on Highways 118 and 17. Please pay the entrance fee at the visitor's center.

Vehicle Entrance →

Pedestrian Entrance →



BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND MAIL ROUTE

In 1855, a Butterfield Overland Mail stagecoach rolled across the country in the first transcontinental mail delivery, connecting Missouri to California. A year later, the stagecoaches were re-routed through Fort Davis, along the historic San Antonio-El Paso Road. As you follow the walking tour, you travel parts of this historic Overland Trail as it winds from the southeast edge of town, along Fort Street, and into Fort Davis National Historic Site. Fort Davis boasts the longest unpaved section of the San Antonio-El Paso Road still in existence.

23. Memorial Square



In 1931, the United Daughters of the Confederacy of Texas erected a 1,400 pound monument in a small section of the town square. One of eight throughout the state, the marker represents a portion of the Jefferson Davis Highway named after Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy. The highway actually runs through Alpine, but the Daughters of the Fort Davis Chapter were persuasive in having the marker placed here. A fence was erected later that spring, and the next year a native juniper tree was planted and dedicated to George Washington.

Many of the historic structures you see around town are private residences. If a building is not marked on the walking tour map, please respect the privacy of its residents. Thank you.

MAP LEGEND

- OVERLAND TRAIL ————
- HISTORIC WALKING TOUR - - - - -
- FORT DAVIS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY ————

For more information about the town, contact the Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce at 800.524.3015.

www.fortdavis.com

Fort Davis photos courtesy of Max Kandler
Copyright © 2008 Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce