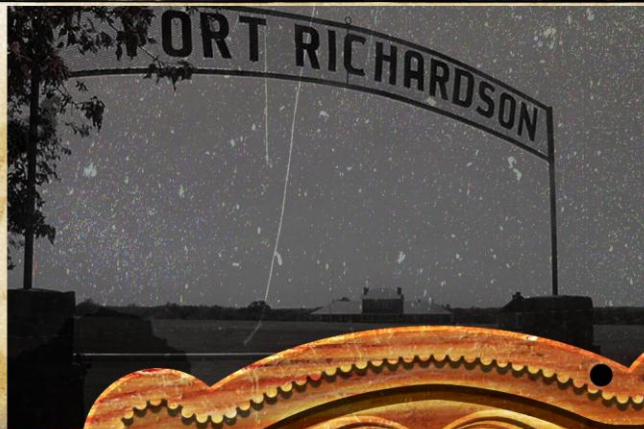




REPORT

FORT RICHARDSON

INVESTIGATION



*Jacksboro
Texas*

TX013

SOUTHWEST GHOST HUNTERS ASSOCIATION



SOLVED

2001

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Forward

The word “investigation” is defined as
“a searching inquiry for ascertaining facts; detailed or careful examination.”

The key word here is “facts”. Do ghosts exist? No, it has not been proven.
Therefore are no facts to investigate.

What we do have is the testimony of the witnesses and this is where an investigational process will work. Investigations are often viewed as a skeptical activity because the main goal is trying to determine what the witness actually saw. Is it explainable or not? This is done through critical thinking and an event replication process developed by SGHA. This is an important concept because what defines a haunting or ghost sighting is “Multiple witnesses reporting unusual phenomena over a period of time”. If these phenomena can be explained, the witness reports are no longer validating paranormal activity as a cause and thus there is no ghost or haunting. Additionally historical research may be done in an attempt to validate facts.

It is important to understand that the goal of an investigation is not to find evidence of the paranormal but to attempt to identify any natural or manmade causes of the reported phenomena

Definition of Terms

Investigation Status: Unsolved investigations will have either an open or closed status. An investigation is given an “Open” status if:

The investigators were unable to replicate all of the witness events. Something significant remains that is still unsolved.

It is important to understand that an “open” investigation does not mean that the unsolved facts are paranormal in nature. It simply means that we have exhausted our resources and cannot solve the “open” items/events.

A “Closed” status indicates that there is insufficient data or confounding variables that prevents replication or identifying possible explanations. This often occurs when investigators do not have direct access to witnesses or some other environmental change have occurred that creates confounding variables.

Confidentiality Notice

Many of the witnesses interviewed have wished to remain anonymous in exchange for presenting their accounts of paranormal experiences. We honor that request and thus witnesses will often be identified by aliases. Any coincidence between aliases and actual persons is unintentional.

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Part 1: Location Information

Fort Richardson

Texas

Part 2: Location History

Northernmost in the line of federal forts established in Texas after the Civil War, Fort Richardson was among the most significant of the frontier posts and is an important part of Texas' rich heritage.

At the time of the fort's establishment in 1867, the frontier situation was critical. Increasing raids by Comanche's, Kiowa's, and Kiowa-Apaches had all but depopulated the northwestern frontier of Texas and had seriously threatened the entire westward settlement. Fort Richardson, only 70 miles from the Indian Territory (Oklahoma), occupied a highly strategic position in a new line of forts created to protect travelers and settlers.



Troops of the Sixth Cavalry under command of Colonel S.H. Starr first set up quarters near Jacksboro in 1866. The garrison was later moved 20 miles north to Buffalo Springs. Due to unhealthy conditions at Buffalo Springs, the post was removed to Jacksboro in the fall of 1867 and located at its

present site on the south bank of Lost Creek. Fort Richardson was named in honor of General Israel B. Richardson, who died in the battle of Antietam during the Civil War.

The boom in Jacksboro which followed the establishment of the fort brought gamblers, saloons, and camp followers. Numerous frame and picket shanties, mostly saloons, occupied the opposite bank of Lost Creek. Tiny cells, 4 1/2' x 8'-housed soldiers confined to the guardhouse for drunkenness, fighting, and similar offenses. The Quaker Peace Policy, initiated by President U.S. Grant in 1869, placed the Indian reservations under civilian control and prohibited military movements on the

reservations. Some tribes took advantage of this policy by raiding into Texas and returning to the sanctuary of the reservation, knowing troops from Fort Richardson could not cross the Red River in pursuit.



Consequently, settlers continued to be harassed by Indian raids. In response to their complaints, routine patrols were dispatched almost every week.

Frequent expeditions were organized to pursue and punish known marauders. However, unending drudgery was the normal lot of the frontier soldier. They guarded the military road connecting Richardson with Forts Griffin and Concho to the southwest, provided escorts for mail and supply trains, and made it possible for traffic to move along the vital routes in greater safety.

On occasion 'routine' patrols became bloody battles; one of the most notable was the fight at the Little Wichita River in July 1870, when Captain Curwen B. McLellan and a detachment of 56 men were attacked by a war party of some 100 Kiowa's. The cavalrymen stood their ground. Although at

times almost completely surrounded, they retreated under heavy fire to a strong defensive position on the Wichita where the Kiowa's abandoned the fight. Thirteen Medals of Honor were awarded for gallantry in the Little Wichita River battle. Fort Richardson's achievements can be largely attributed to her commanding officers, most of them men of great distinction: Colonel S.H. Starr, Colonel William H. Wood, Colonel James Oakes, and Colonel Kanald Slidell Mackenzie of the Fourth Cavalry-one of the West's most successful Indian fighters, who served as post commander from April, 1871 to December, 1872.

Four of Mackenzie's major forays into hostile territory originated at Fort Richardson. He was in command there when the fort's most celebrated chapter was written: the Salt Creek Massacre. A wagon train carrying corn on government contract from Jacksboro to Fort Griffin was attacked May 17, 1871, on Salt Creek Prairie about 22 miles from Fort Richardson. A large force of Kiowa's led by Chiefs Satanta, Satank, and Big Tree killed the wagon master and six teamsters; five others, although wounded, managed to escape with their lives.



General William Tecumseh Sherman was at Fort Richardson when the survivors reported the tragedy. Sherman and his escort had passed over the same spot the previous day. The Indians were massed there at the time, eager to attack, and were restrained only by the prophecy of the medicine man, De-ha-te (Owl Prophet), that the second party to pass would be more

easily captured.

Understandably alarmed by his narrow escape, Sherman (who previously had been skeptical about Indian atrocities on the frontier) ordered Colonel Mackenzie to assemble four companies of his Fourth Cavalry and two companies from Fort Griffin for an all-out pursuit of the raiders. The Indians responsible for the raid were easily identified, for Satanta boasted of his

grisly exploit to Lawrie Tatum, Indian agent at Fort Sill, and named Satank and Big Tree as co-leaders of the attack. The chiefs were arrested in a tension-filled confrontation with Sherman at Fort Sill.

While en route to Fort Richardson and under military guard, Satank was killed attempting to escape. Satanta and Big Tree were tried for murder in the court at Jacksboro, found guilty and condemned to hang. Their sentences, however, were commuted to life imprisonment at Huntsville by Governor Edmund J. Davis, who shortly granted them parole in 1873. Both chiefs violated their paroles by leading raids into Texas. Satanta was arrested in 1874 and returned to Huntsville. He died as a result of a lump or fall from an upper story window of the prison hospital. Although Big Tree was arrested in 1875, he was released at the request of federal officials. Thereafter he kept his parole and died in 1929 at Anadarko, Oklahoma.

The widely publicized trial-the first time Indians were tried in a white man's court-caused a temporary decrease in Indian raids, but was not the solution to Indian troubles on the frontier. Colonel Mackenzie and other frontier



commanders continued to pursue the Indians in Texas, attempting to discourage raiding, but with no success. In July, 1874, President Grant rescinded the Quaker Peace Policy, releasing the military to take any necessary measures to end hostile activity.

Within three months this new policy proved successful. On September 28, 1874, Colonel

Mackenzie ended the Indian domination of the Southern Plains at the Battle of Palo Duro Canyon. By 1875 the frontier of Texas was relatively secure, and the services of the troops at Fort Richardson were no longer needed. Orders for the abandonment of Fort Richardson were issued March 29, 1878; on May 23 the last troops marched to their new station at Fort Griffin. Fort Richardson's colorful and useful life as a military installation had ended.

Part 3: Witnesses

This section identifies the witnesses to the reported activity.

Name	Sex	Connection with reported incident	Interviewed
Lisa Smith*	F	Witness, Staff	5 August 2001
Janet Mulberry	F	Witness	5 August 2001

*Witnesses given aliases are noted by a **

Part 4: Reported Phenomenon

While preparing for a event one Spring, a female staff member (Lisa) was working near the hospital reported that she had heard the unmistakable sound of footsteps walking around on the front porch of the building. The footsteps seemed to follow her movements and were always behind her. When she stopped and looked around, the footsteps stopped as well. Just as the woman turned to go about her business, she was knocked up against a wall by an invisible blast of cold air. Frightened and disoriented, the women also noticed that the “unique sound of knuckles cracking” seemed to accompany the strange manifestation.

Dark figures (shadows) have also been seen in its windows at night when the fort is closed to visitors. Visitors and staff have also reported seeing a shadowy figure in a blue soldier’s uniform around the hospital, morgue, guardhouse and magazine areas.

Part 5: Investigation

We were given permission to investigate the fort after hours. An observation team dispatched to search for any possible alternatives (explanations) for the phenomenon.

Part 6: Hypotheses

1. Dark (shadow) figures

Based on the locations and times of the witness accounts of seeing this phenomenon we believe that there is a logical explanation for the shadow figures.



Do you see the person in the middle window on the second floor in the picture above? It is not a person. It is a cardboard cutout of a soldier. These are displays used by the fort for several exhibits. They are constantly being moved around, knock over by visitors, wind and the changes to the air pressure in the buildings as doors are opened and closed.

During our visit, the staff complained about them frequently for this reason. The life size cutouts are always falling over or moved because of one reason or another. One minute it is there, the next it is gone.

We identified this by asking specific questions to the witnesses concerning the appearance of the shadows (posture, approximate height, what was it doing, etc.) The locations were the witnesses were reporting the dark

figures also correspond to the locations where these cutouts are often positioned.

Lisa's Account

The elements of Lisa's account are not really empirical elements that can be directly investigated. This was a single occurrence that happened only to Lisa. There are no other reports of anything like this occurring to the staff or visitors to the fort.

The most probable causes for the phenomena she experienced would probably be medical in nature as there are many conditions and health issues that have these types of symptoms. Unless there are future reports of similar phenomenon from other people it is not logical to associate the phenomena that she experienced as paranormal in nature. there are too many other possible causes that have not been eliminated.

Part 7: Conclusion

The phenomenon was identified and found to have alternative explanations other than being paranormal in origin.

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Part 8: Photographs







The hospital and powder magazine



OFFICERS' QUARTERS

BUILT IN 1867 OF LUMBER CUT FROM COTTONWOODS GROWING IN NEARBY RIVER BOTTOMS. ONE OF 5 ORIGINAL OFFICERS' QUARTERS. OUTLASTED FORT'S BARRACKS AND STABLES, WHICH WERE BUILT OF SMALL VERTICAL TIMBERS (PICKETS).

STYLE TYPICAL OF 19TH CENTURY ARMY POSTS IN THE WEST. ONLY ONE LEFT STANDING IN THE U.S.

AMONG MEN QUARTERED HERE WAS GEN. RANALD S. MACKENZIE, WHO SENT INDIANS BACK TO RESERVATIONS, 1871-74.

RESTORED BY CITY OF JACKSBORO.
MAINTAINED BY GIRL SCOUTS.

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK - 1964

