

# FORT LANCASTER

— STATE HISTORIC SITE —

*Sheffield, Texas*

## Pre-Visit Guide

Grade 7

### Overview: Westward Ho to Fort Lancaster

In this lesson, students will learn about Fort Lancaster's construction, the changing landscape of settlement in Texas in the mid-1800s, and the fort's important function as a refuge for settlers heading west.

### Social Studies TEKS

(6) History. The student understands how individuals, events, and issues shaped the history of Texas from Reconstruction through the beginning of the 20th century. The student is expected to:

(A) identify significant individuals, events, and issues from Reconstruction through the beginning of the 20th century, including the factors leading to the expansion of the Texas frontier, the effects of westward expansion on American Indians, the buffalo soldiers, and Quanah Parker.

(10) Geography. The student understands the effects of the interaction between humans and the environment in Texas during the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. The student is expected to:

(A) identify ways in which Texans have adapted to the environment.

(21) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired through established research methodologies from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology.

The student is expected to:

(A) differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as computer software, databases, media and news services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information about Texas;

(B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions;

(C) organize and interpret information from outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps;

(D) identify points of view from the historical context surrounding an event and the frame of reference that influenced the participants;

(F) identify bias in written, oral, and visual material.

### Materials

- Historical images for display/distribution
- Activity resources
- Graphic organizer
- Fort Lancaster State Historic Site introductory video (<https://youtu.be/abheEKzNG9w>)

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## Vocabulary

- **migration:** the act of moving from one place to another
- **nomadic:** having no permanent home; characterized by moving from place to place

## Historical Context

Fort Lancaster, a U.S. Army fort in west Texas, was established in 1855. Soldiers stationed at the fort were responsible for providing safe escort to travelers, mail carriers, and wagon trains heading west toward California. Fort Lancaster was built in an area previously dominated by Comanche and Apache and a maze of tribal trails that crisscrossed the area and led in and out of Mexico.

In the 1800s, immigrants from the United States, Mexico, and Europe poured into frontier territory, threatening tribal hunting grounds and buffalo herds. Native Americans raided livestock and settlements to counter the loss of their land. In the 1850s, the U.S. military established forts throughout west Texas in response to the tribal attacks and to increase safety for travelers heading west.

There were two roads leading from San Antonio west to El Paso: the Upper Road and the Lower Road (also known as the San Antonio to El Paso Road). Fort Lancaster's location on the Lower Road was strategically important to the Army because it filled a 300-mile gap between Forts Clark and Davis. Because several Native American trails also passed close by, soldiers could keep an eye on local Native Americans' movements from here. In 1853, Joseph Mansfield noted "...the abundance of grazing, wood, and good water" nearby. These resources were crucial to building and sustaining the fort. Most importantly, the Army could defend travelers at the nearby Pecos River crossing, where they were vulnerable to attacks while fording the river.

## Activity: Out West at Fort Lancaster

*15 minutes*

Display/distribute the **Fort Lancaster, Texas, 1861** and the **Apache teepees** images. Tell students that the Fort Lancaster image is a wood engraving, believed to show the fort as it looked in 1861. Although the teepee image is from Arizona, structures like these would also have been found in Texas in the mid-1800s. Give students five minutes to study the images.

As a class, discuss the following:

- What details do you notice in the images that tell you what life was like for soldiers at the fort and Native Americans in teepees?
- How are the living structures alike and different?
- What would have been enjoyable and interesting about living in either structure?
- What would have been challenging about living in either structure?

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## Activity: History Worth Preserving

20 minutes

Distribute the **activity worksheet**. Tell students to complete the organizer as they watch the Fort Lancaster State Historic Site **introductory video**. Share responses.

### Answer Key:

1. Gold Rush/settlement of California
2. protect travelers from Native American attacks
3. stagecoach, wagon trains
4. to defend their territory
5. 1855
6. as a form of punishment
7. Buffalo Soldiers
8. Local people took the stone to use for their own building materials. Natural deterioration also caused the buildings to crumble. Once the structures' roofs were burned during the Civil War, the adobe and plaster walls lacked protection and stability.
9. Answers will vary.
10. Answers will vary.

## Activity: An Encounter at Fort Lancaster

20 minutes

Distribute the **1856 Inspector's Report activity worksheet**. Tell students that this primary source selection is taken from U.S. Army Inspector General Joseph Mansfield's report on Fort Lancaster, written in June of 1856.

Have students work individually or in pairs to complete the activity. Share responses.

### Answer Key:

1. Who was the audience for this account? **other U.S. Army officials**
2. Why did Mansfield write this report? **to explain and justify the need for west Texas forts.**
3. Is there bias in this account? Give examples. **Answers will vary but could include Native Americans characterized as marauders, highwaymen, and murderers.**
4. What facts about west Texas Native Americans are learned from this account? **Answers will vary but could include noting that Apaches led a nomadic lifestyle from the quote, "They do not occupy the ground permanently."**

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## Assessment

Evaluate student media organizers and map for completeness and understanding.

## Take-home Extension

Distribute **Fort Lancaster KWL charts**. Tell students to complete the K and W columns of the chart and bring it back to class. They will complete the chart as a Post-Visit activity.

## Additional Resources & Extensions

### The Portal to Texas History

<https://texashistory.unt.edu>

### The Handbook of Texas Online

<https://tshaonline.org/handbook>

### Library of Congress

<https://loc.gov>

### Texas Beyond History's "U.S. Army on the Texas Frontier"

<http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/forts/military.html>

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## Fort Lancaster KWL Chart

KNOW	WANT TO KNOW	LEARNED

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## Activity Image: Fort Lancaster, 1861

An image believed to represent Fort Lancaster. *Fort Lancaster, Texas*, 1861. Wood engraving printed in *Harper's Weekly*. Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2003677260/>. (Accessed October 21, 2017.) Caption: From a Sketch by a Government Draughtsman



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## Activity Image: Apache Teepees

Two Apache Indian teepees in a hilly landscape in Arizona. Arizona, ca. 1909. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/92501360/>. (Accessed November 18, 2017.)



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## Activity: History Worth Preserving

Write answers to these questions as you watch the Fort Lancaster Historic Site introductory video.

1. Why were people traveling west through Texas to get to California in the 1840s?
2. Why did the U.S. Army establish forts along the western route?
3. What kinds of vehicles did people use to travel west?
4. Why did Native American tribes along the western route attack travelers?
5. When was Fort Lancaster established?
6. Why did soldiers wear a “barrel coat”?
7. After the Civil War, what group of soldiers reoccupied Fort Lancaster?
8. What happened to the buildings at Fort Lancaster after it was abandoned?

List **two other facts** you learned from this video:

- 9.
- 10.

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## Activity: An Encounter at Fort Lancaster

Read the primary source excerpt from *Inspector General Joseph Mansfield's Inspection: Report of Fort Lancaster, June, 1856*. Circle unknown words and define them, answer the questions, and mark the landmarks that are identified in Mansfield's report on the resource map.

Indians in this locality are marauding parties of Apaches & Mescaleros as highway men, and murderers. They keep out of sight & commit depredations & murders at time when least expected. They are on the Pecos, in the mountains, on Devils river, &c, always concealed & difficult to find. The night after I left Capt Lindsay at the 1st crossing on his return from Devils river, say 80 miles from Fort Clark, I encamped at the second crossing, and a large cow & calf train bound for New Mexico, which encamped 5 miles ahead of me, was attacked & one man killed & another badly wounded & they were so disorganized when I came up to them in the morning having but 4 men left, as to make it necessary to detach 5 of my escort to accompany them to Camp Lancaster where thro' the assistance of Capt Granger they were rested & refitted & furnished with an escort to Fort Davis. But for my timely arrival, and the aid of this post, these men would have been murdered & their cows & calves, so important to the inhabitants of New Mexico, captured by the Indians. The number of these Indians cannot be estimated. They do not occupy the ground permanently but come from a distance, and it is quite probable that this and other posts will have to be maintained for a great many years.

### Vocabulary Words/Definitions

1. Who was the audience for this report?
2. What was the purpose of the report?
3. Is there bias in this account? Give examples.
4. What facts about west Texas Native Americans can be learned from this account?

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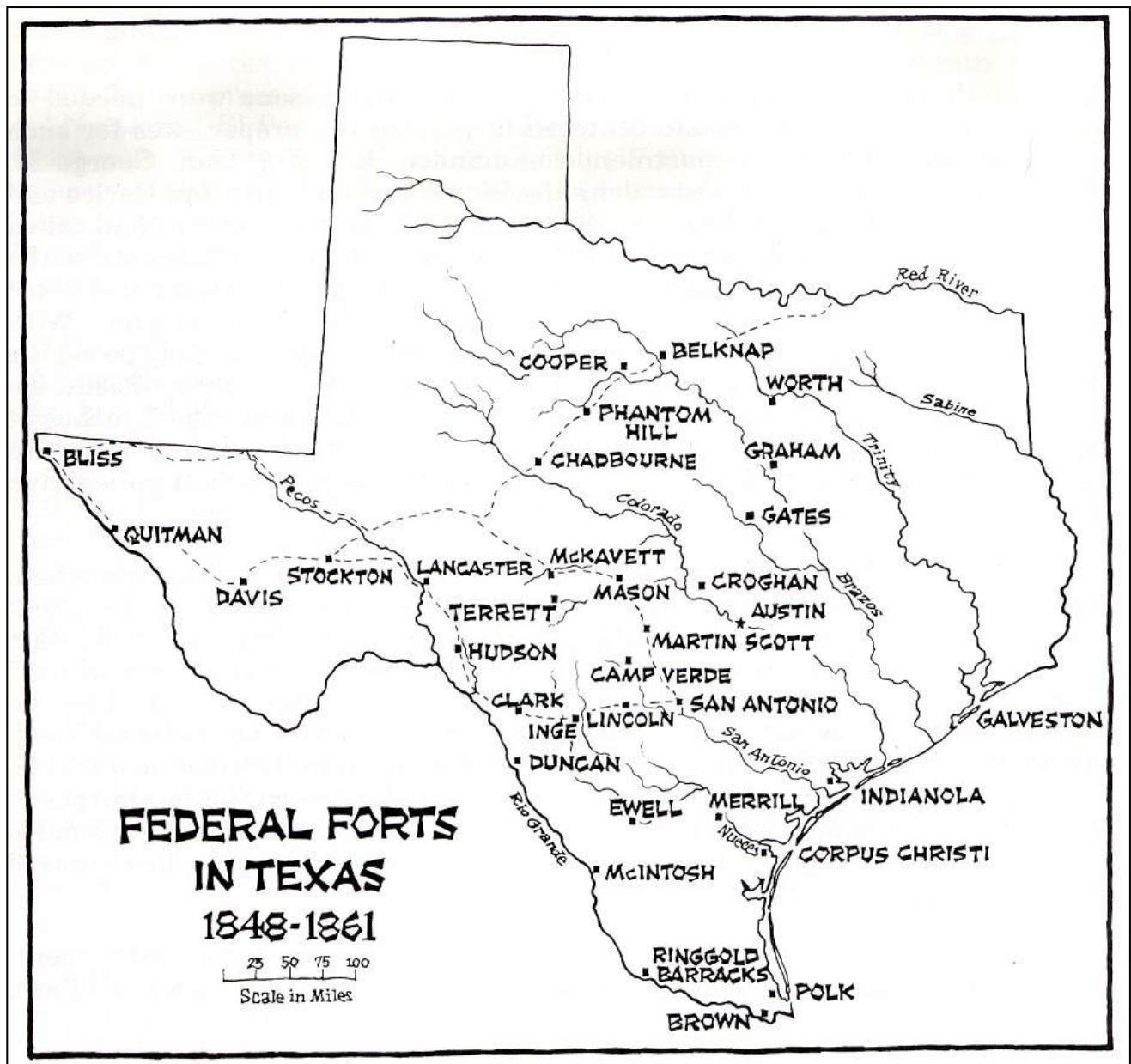
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## Activity Image: Federal Forts in Texas, 1848-1861

[http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/tex\\_fedforts\\_1848.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/tex_fedforts_1848.jpg) (Accessed December 20, 2017.)



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## Site Visit Recommendations

- Complete the pre-visit lesson or other introductory lessons prior to your field trip.
- Divide students into small groups, each with an adult chaperone.
- Make sure students bring pencils. Pens and markers are not allowed in the exhibits.

## Information

To schedule a site visit field trip for your students, please call 432-836-4391.

For admission prices and hours of operation, please visit us online at <http://visitfortlancaster.com>.

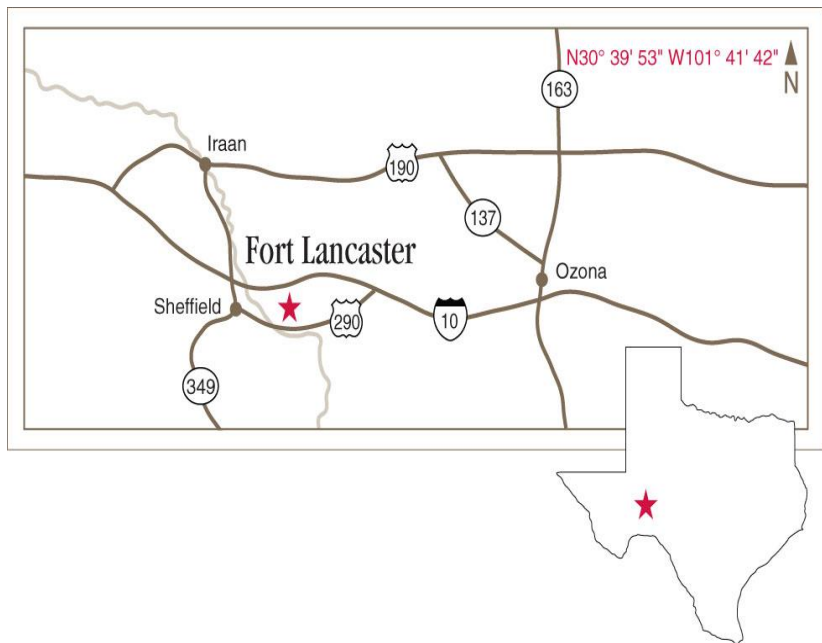
## Contact Us

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