

## FORT RINGGOLD, TEXAS ROBERT E. LEE HOUSE - MUSEUM

This building was built in 1848 of wood frame construction, when Ringgold Barracks was established. It was home of the commandant, or the commanding officer, of the fort. The building is located on the top of a slight knoll where it commands the best view of the entire post.

The house is associated with Robert E. Lee, who led the Confederate forces during the Civil War. Before the Civil War, Colonel Lee visited Fort Ringgold two different times. The first was in 1856, when he came for court martial duty. He stayed at the fort for a month. Records indicate that he slept in a tent. However, he probably joined the post commander for dinner here at the house. Colonel Lee returned the spring of 1860. He had orders to stop the banditry of Juan Cortina, even if he had to take U.S. troops into Mexico to do it. Cortina was a Mexican National whose army of followers stole cattle from Texas ranchers and drove them across the river into Mexico.

Colonel Lee resided at the post about a week. Fortunately, he did not get to invade Mexico. It is said he shared the commandant's office, which was located here in the house. The house originally consisted of the central hallway, two rooms one on each side, a small dining room, library, and large wrap around porches.

The house has been renovated with great loving care. The floor and ceiling boards were removed individually and gently sanded, leveled, and replaced. They are made of white pine. The pine wall boards are also original to the house as well as the mantle and the fireplace. All original materials were brought here by steamboat.

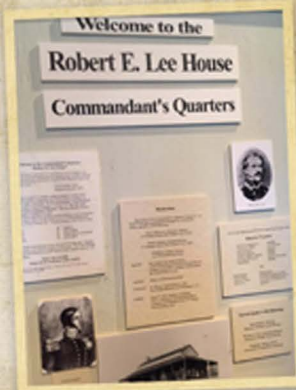
The house was renovated with a 21st Century grant that involved the work of high school students enrolled in the Rio Grande City Consolidates Independent School District in 2006.



## TODAY - OUR MUSEUM

Today, Fort Ringgold is considered one of the best looking posts along the South Texas border.

The Robert E. House serves as the Fort's museum and exhibits the life of the Fort during its frontier days. The museum includes both 19th and 20th Century displays revealing early life on the fort. The displays show the involvement and role the fort played to protect the border and the town during the Mexican-American War and during instability of the Mexican Civil War.



One key exhibit honors Major Samuel Ringgold in which the Fort bears his name.



Major Ringgold was the first American officer to die at the battle of Palo Alto, near Brownsville. This was the first battle of the Mexican-American War which began in 1846.

Other exhibits in the museum include era military uniforms and local artifacts found in the area.

