

SAN JUAN BASIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Chapter of Colorado Archaeological Society



FIELD TRIP REPORT

Date: **March 5 - 8, 2015**

Destination: **Exploring Cochise County**

Leader: **Gail Schulz**

Number of Participants: **19**

From Thursday March 5 through Sunday March 8, 2015, 19 SJBAS members enjoyed many varied activities on a field trip led by Gail and Marlo Schulz. We started the trip Thursday evening with an introductory dinner followed by a trip to Bisbee AZ to attend the March meeting of The Westerners Bisbee Corral. Their speaker was Cathy Spude from Santa Fe, an author of several books on the Alaskan Gold Rush, including one on Soapy Smith. She spoke about her research into the life of Tom Tucker, a controversial participant in the Pleasant Valley AZ War in the 1880s. Tucker was variously a hero or villain, depending upon your point of view, and whether he had killed someone you cared about.



Friday March 6 we enjoyed an excellent presentation by Ranger Christopher Bentley, archaeologist and historian at the Coronado National Memorial on the Mexican Border. Christopher spoke about Coronado and his 1540 expedition into the Southwest. He debunked some myths about the expedition and clarified other points, based on his extensive

research of, among many other things, the written record of the participants in the expedition from records in Seville, Spain. Christopher explained that one of the ways to know who visited a Native American site and when, was by the crossbow bolt points found because they were not used by any expeditions later than Coronado into the Southwest.

In the afternoon, Christopher led us on a tour of Coronado Cave, along the way explaining the flora, fauna, geology and history of the Memorial. Coronado Cave is a wild cave which requires exploration by headlamps. Evidence of human occupation in the cave included the discovery of a loom shuttle and later evidence of use by miners, as well as much more modern use. The cave is 600 feet long and features side passages and two large caverns with evidence of stalactites, stalagmites and other cave speleothems. The cave is now mostly a dead cave with no new formations being built except for an area in the back of the cave where water was dripping to form stalactites. An entrance blasted into the cave by miners many years ago was the cause of the death of the cave. It was a bit of a spooky, but very interesting experience to tour a large, 68-degree cave with headlamps. It certainly made us think of what it was like to live in a large cave with a constant temperature.

After our cave tour we visited the high and windy Montezuma Pass which links the Memorial and the San Pedro River Valley on the east with the San Rafael Valley on the west. We marveled at the sweeping vistas into both valleys and the mountains surrounding us, as well as the plains and mountains of Sonora Mexico. We viewed a couple of different forms of Border fencing and the start of the Arizona Trail, as well as Border Patrol observation and detection equipment located on top of the pass.

Saturday, March 7th, we started the day at the Turquoise Valley Golf Resort in Naco AZ on the Border. This is the oldest golf course in AZ. While we enjoyed breakfast at the restaurant, our guide, Becky Orozco, educated us on the history of the Mexican revolution and the involvement of the United States in it. Becky teaches a semester college course on this subject so we received the benefit of her vast knowledge along with many slides depicting historic events and key individuals on both sides of the Border. This included Poncho Villa's attack on Columbus, NM, following a bit of U.S. politics which involved backing Villa and then changing to backing his rival, without telling him. This led to a battle Villa had no way of expecting and the loss of thousands of his troops. He retaliated by attacking Columbus NM and killing U. S. citizens before escaping across the Border into Mexico.

The Mexican revolution led to the formation of Camp Naco. It was one of a string of camps along the U.S./Mexico Border forming a human fence to protect U.S. citizens and economic interests by keeping the Mexican revolution from spilling into the U.S. and precipitating battles on U.S. soil. Primarily Buffalo Soldiers based at Fort Huachuca were assigned to this camp, and were joined by troops from many other units through the years. The Mexican Revolution began in 1910. From 1911 to 1923, 50 to 5,000 U.S. troops were stationed in Naco. Camp Naco, built in 1919, is the last of these camps still standing. It was also the only camp constructed of adobe. Becky took us on a tour of some of the 23 adobe buildings that remain at Camp Naco. She explained the layout of the camp and the purpose and use of each building.

When Camp Naco was decommissioned in the 1950s ownership was returned to the original landowner. The camp lived on until the 1990s as various parts of it were home for the owner and rented homes for community members. The Town of Huachuca City has owned the camp since 2006 with the goal of protecting it. Now the Naco Heritage Alliance and Archaeology Southwest are working to stabilize and preserve Camp Naco. Becky Orozco has championed and organized the preservation of the camp for many years. The community of Naco hopes to find a tenant to help Camp Naco again become a place to live and work in their town. Go to www.archaeologysouthwest.org/naco to learn more about it.

Following our visit to Camp Naco we moved on to Lowell and Bisbee AZ. We walked the Lowell main street with vehicles and buildings straight out of the 40s and 50s preserved as a kind of outdoor museum. We stopped to view the Lavender Pit and mine tailings on our way to Old Bisbee where some of us toured the exceptional Bisbee Mining Museum. Some of us went on to Tombstone to view this historic town. In the evening seven of us attended the 1880s Historical Military Ball in St. David AZ. The Ball featured clothing and uniforms of the 1860s to 1880s, refreshments of the period and an excellent large brass band which played the music of this period. A caller instructed the dancers in the steps of the dances of the period including a Grand March headed by presentation of the colors. It was an authentic recreation of the lives and entertainment of this war-torn period in our history. It was meant to show how people preserved civility, culture and friendship in the uncertain and dangerous times in which they were living.

Sunday March 8 we started the day with a visit to the Singing Winds Book Shop north of Benson AZ, owned and operated by Winn Bundy for decades in her ranch house. This independent bookstore is known throughout the Southwest and beyond for its spectacular collection of books on the Southwest and many, many other topics, as well as for Winn and her stories. Winn hosts many special events including presentations and readings by featured authors, book signings, cowboy poets and much more. We all left with lighter wallets and fascinating new reading material on many subjects.

We moved on to Colossal Cave Mountain Park near Vail AZ. Some of us toured Colossal Cave while others visited the CCC Museum and the La Posta Quemada Ranch museum. Colossal Cave was used by the Hohokam circa 900 - 1450 AD. One of their large pots found in the cave is on display in the museum. The Sobaipuri used the cave as well as the Apache and Papago (now Tohomo O'odham) circa 1450 - 1880 AD. The cave was used later by bandits, bat guano miners, early explorers and adventurers, tourists and archaeological expeditions. La Posta Quemada Ranch takes its name from a burned stage station located there in the mid-1870s. Another stage station and hotel were built there in 1878 and assisted in mail transportation. In 1934 Civilian Conservation Corps Camp SP-10-A was located on the ranch to construct trails, handrails and lighting in Colossal Cave and eventually stone walls, headquarters and other buildings. Today the park is owned by Pima County AZ and operated by the Pima County Parklands Foundation which protects and enhances all the parks of Pima County. This concluded our trip activities and nine of us shared Sunday dinner to close out the trip.

Prepared by: Gail Schulz

Participants: John and Eliane Viner, Bev and Bob Danielson, Beverly and John Moore, Tom and Lydine Hannula, Gail and Marlo Schulz, Tish and Pete Varney, etc.