

# SAN JUAN BASIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Chapter of Colorado Archaeological Society



## FIELD TRIP REPORT

Date: **March 1 - 4, 2018**

Destination: **Exploring Cochise County Arizona**

Leaders: **Gail and Marlo Schulz**

Number of Participants: **18**

Eighteen SJBAS members enjoyed sunny, warm Arizona weather on this year's Exploring Cochise County field trip. We started the trip with dinner in Sierra Vista on Thursday night where introductions were made and daily trip plans discussed. Friday morning March 2 we explored Millville on the east bank of the San Pedro River. Millville was the site of one of seven stamp mills along the San Pedro that processed silver ore from the Tombstone mines. Although the mineral wealth of a 1½ to 2 mile wide, 30 mile long mineralized belt from the Huachuca to the Dragoon Mountains had long been known to Spanish soldiers, vaqueros and individual early prospectors, Ed Schieffelin is credited with the very dangerous prospecting, due to the Apache control of southeastern Arizona Territory, of the Tombstone Hills that led to the discovery of the vast silver deposits that required construction of the stamp mills on the San Pedro River. Schieffelin staked his first claim on August 1, 1877. He called it "Tombstone", a reference to the Fort Huachuca soldiers telling him all he would find in such dangerous Apache territory was his own tombstone.

Many rich claims were subsequently staked and recorded, and the ten-stamp water powered Gird Mill, constructed in Millville, was tested May 15, 1879. A second mill, the 15 stamp Corbin Mill was constructed nearby in Millville and was put into production on January 14, 1880. Superintendent Richard Gird's office and home was a fine, large adobe structure built adjacent to his mill. He brought his bride, Nellie McCarty to live between the two 24/7 stamp mills in January 1880 and their home was a center of society in Millville until 1881 when he sold his stock and, suffering from mercuric poisoning, purchased the Chino Ranch in California. He remained there until his death in Los Angeles May 29, 1910 at age 74. Mining and ore processing continued and by September 1881 five more stamp mills, the Boston and Arizona, the Grand Central, the Western (Contention), the Head Center and the Hopkins, containing a total of 125 operating stamps, had been constructed along the east side of the San Pedro River. The history of Tombstone and the myriad mines in the district is fascinating, and is that of boom and bust, as with all mining towns. To learn more about it we recommend "Tombstone, Arizona "Too Tough to Die", The Rise, Fall, and Resurrection of a Silver Camp; 1878 to 1990" by Lynn R. Bailey.

We explored the ruins of the stamp mills, foundation of the Gird home and dam and marveled at the fine stonework which remains in place. We moved closer to the river to view the petroglyphs on a rocky cliff face and found more obscure petroglyphs on smaller rock outcropping along the trail. We moved on to another site on the San Pedro River, the San Pedro House with its immense cottonwoods and numerous birds at the feeders. We ate lunch in the picnic shelters and continued our drive to Bisbee to the Warren Ballpark to meet Becky Orozco, Professor of History and Anthropology at Cochise College, who arranged a tour of the archaeological dig taking place on site, and of the very interesting, historic Warren Ballpark.

The Warren Ballpark has been in use since 1909 for much more than baseball. It has hosted and continues to host some of these varied sports and events: high school football, rugby, soccer, cricket, traveling circuses, rodeos, Wild West shows, professional wrestling matches and significant films shown by local theatres. Baseball has always been the heart of the Ballpark and it has hosted minor league teams, semi-professional teams, outlaw teams, town teams, high school teams, barnstorming major league teams and now Vintage Baseball League games and tournaments. According to Mike Anderson, author of "Warren Ballpark Images of Sports", and our guide for the afternoon, "Bisbee's Warren Ballpark is America's oldest multi-sport facility."



Regarding the archaeological dig being conducted in the Ballpark, Robert Schon, Associate Professor of Archaeology at the University of Arizona, began this dig in 2016. The dig includes both college and high school students, with the goal of establishing more detail about the local economy in the early 1900s. When the Warren Ballpark was constructed in 1909 by the Calumet Mining Co. it was to provide the company's miners and their families with a recreation area. Becky Orozco and her Cochise College students are also involved in this dig. One of the goals was to learn how baseball affected the local economy by seeing what items remain buried on the site. Items found include broken glass bottles, bottle caps, firearm cartridges and a 1930s bus token. Bottles are dated from their markings. One interesting aspect of the dig involved the time of Prohibition when soft drinks bottles were found around the grandstand, but jars which contained bootleg liquor, were found around the area where cars were parked quite a distance from the grandstands. One huge benefit of the dig has been that the Bisbee High School students who participate are learning just what they are capable of and what paths might be open to them after high school, as they succeed in the daily work alongside college students and do just as capable a job as those college students are doing. New horizons they never knew existed are opening for them.

In addition to seeing where excavations were taking place and learning what had been found in the different areas, we were treated to a very interesting tour of the dugout, lounge and player locker rooms of this huge adobe facility by Mike Anderson, who told us so many stories of the history of the facility, teams, individual players, controversies and the Warren planned neighborhood laid out in a similar fashion to Washington D.C. The facility played a role in the Bisbee Deportation of IWW members in 1917, when 1,500 copper miners on strike were marched there and held until they could be put in train cars and sent to New Mexico where they were dropped off in the desert.



Following this fascinating tour, we drove with Becky to the Douglas Campus of Cochise College to view a stunning collection of Casas Grandes pottery recently donated to the college from a ranch not far across the border in NM. This pottery was mostly intact, and many pieces were very ornate and unique. The ranch had been building a ranch road when they cut into what Becky believes was a burial site and unearthed this pottery. They donated about half of it to Cochise College and are donating the rest to a school in NM. Becky's students were curating, documenting and photographing the collection for entry into the school's data base. We were allowed to see the artifacts not currently on display and stored in the lab. We then moved on to the public area of the administration building to see the collection on display. This collection included an Apache

burden basket and water jar, as well as knives, stone ax heads, projectile points, pottery, mano and metate, spindle whorls, effigy jars, shell necklaces and pipes. Many of these artifacts are from the Casas Grandes area and culture, which

extended into the southeastern AZ and southwestern NM areas. The artifacts were displayed in large glass cases backed with fine paintings of the people who used them, the desert plants they used and the activities they pursued. Many photos of rock art in the area were displayed on the walls. These were from 13 rock art sites in Cochise County and one in Sonora near Naco. Pictographs and petroglyphs were both displayed. These rock art sites date from early prehistoric through Apache times. Some panels display rock art from many different periods. We were impressed with what a fine display of artifacts and photographs was created and interpreted depicting many time periods. Credit goes to Becky Orozco for this lovely display. This was a pleasant end to a very busy day.

Saturday March 3, we started our day at 7:30 a.m. to drive to Camp Rucker Road near Elfrida, AZ to meet Becky at 9 a.m. for a tour of Camp Rucker. Camp Rucker is on U. S. Forest Service ground and is maintained and interpreted by their employees and volunteers. There are many well-preserved buildings and plaques throughout the site explain the history of the Camp. Camp Rucker was a remote cavalry post and military supply camp founded in 1878 in White River Canyon to reduce Apache raiding. It was called Camp Supply and manned by Company C of the 6<sup>th</sup> cavalry and two companies of Indian Scouts for a total of 135 men. It was renamed Camp Rucker in 1879 in honor of Lt. John Rucker who drowned in a flash flood in White River Canyon when he tried to rescue Lt. Austin Henely, who also drowned. In 1880 the Army constructed several permanent buildings, including a bakery which is still standing.



There were ranches in the area grazing many cattle and rustling, which the Army tried to deter, was frequent. Camp Rucker was staffed until July 1881, when more peaceful times reduced the need for the Army's presence in the canyon. The Army did continue to use the land until following Geronimo's surrender in 1886. Camp Rucker passed into private ownership and became the Old Camp Rucker Ranch which operated, under different owners, until 1943 when Ella Dana, a NY socialite bought it and in 1970 deeded it to the U. S. Forest Service. We walked through the entire site and the buildings while Becky explained the history and importance of the site to us. Camp Rucker was in a canyon that had been used for centuries as a passage through the Chiricahua Mountains. It was important for the Army to protect travelers and residents in this thoroughfare which also featured crucial water supplies.

Our next stop was Apache Pass and Fort Bowie. Apache Pass was crucial to travelers from Apaches, Spanish soldiers and settlers, stage coaches carrying the mail and passengers, wagon trains, travelers heading for California and to U. S. soldiers, because it contained a year-round source of water, Apache Springs. Of course, these crucial springs were a



good spot for ambushes and attacks, so it became essential for the Army to establish a permanent presence to protect the springs and travelers. So many events in Cochise County history took place in Apache Pass. We hiked from the parking lot at the west end of the pass up to Fort Bowie. Becky stopped frequently along the way to tell us the history of the pass. There are the remains of a Butterfield Overland Stage Station built in July 1858 about ¼ mile west of Apache Springs. Stages passed the station twice a week when east and west-bound stages met there. Butterfield had an agreement with Cochise which allowed his stages to pass through unmolested, but this did not extend to other travelers. In October 1860 a cattle raid and the kidnapping of a young boy who came to be known as Mickey Free, west of modern day Sonoita AZ, by a band of

Apaches, led to an incident in February 1861 in Apache Pass which came to be known as “The Bascom Affair”. Second Lt. George N. Bascom, age 23 and two years out of West Point, was stationed at Fort Buchanan near the John Ward ranch, from which Ward’s cattle and step-son had been taken. Bascom and 54 infantrymen plus Ward and an interpreter named Antonio set out in January 1861 to ride the 150 miles northeast to Apache Pass to meet with Cochise regarding the missing cattle and boy. They set up camp near Goodwin Canyon where Cochise and some of his tribe had rancherias. The next day Cochise and a small party of his family came to inquire about the troops. They were ushered into a Sibley tent flying a white flag to meet with Bascom. Bascom told Cochise they had come for the boy and cattle. Cochise replied that he and his band did not have the boy or the cattle but, given time, Cochise would find out who was responsible and would attempt to buy them back. It eventually became known that the Coyoteros or White Mountain Apaches, had taken the cattle and the boy. Bascom declared he would hold Cochise and his party hostage until the boy and the cattle were returned. Cochise quickly used his knife to cut the tent and escape up the hillside. The rest of his party remained hostages. Things progressed to the point where Cochise seized a hostage from the stage station, to trade for his party that Bascom was holding hostage. Bascom refused until the boy, whom Cochise did not have, was also returned as part of the exchange. At this point the east-bound Butterfield stage entered the pass and was attacked but eventually made it to the station. The west bound stage was due late on the evening of Feb 6 and did make it to the station without attack. The east-bound stage had come upon the ruins of a wagon train carrying supplies to the stage station, which was recently attacked and burned in the pass. Burned victims were also found. Evidently Cochise had taken two Americans alive to hold as hostages and he sent a message to Bascom that he was not to harm the hostages from Cochise’s party since Cochise was holding a man from the station and two other hostages. A three-day standoff ensued during which time the people and animals in the station were trapped 600 yards east of the springs with no water. Eventually Butterfield employees and soldiers took half the herd to the springs. They were attacked as they returned to the station and men were killed and some wounded. The stock stampeded west of the springs and was driven off by the Apaches. Army re-enforcements were on the way and a small party reached the station unmolested through a series of fortunate events that distracted the Apaches. On February 17 or 18 the dragoons arrived and found the three American prisoners slain on their way to the station. In retaliation the six Apaches from Cochise’s party that had been held as hostages were hanged. At this point the troops and civilians were able to leave the stage station and return to their posts and homes. From this point on Apache raids and warfare were nearly constant. In 1862 Bascom was killed in the Civil War Battle of Valverde, New Mexico.



Fort Bowie was established in Apache Pass July 28, 1862, in response to the tragic events that led to the broken peace with the Apaches. Mickey Free was never recovered but in the middle 1880s he served as an Apache Scout, guide and interpreter with the U. S. Army. The Butterfield Overland Mail stage resumed operation until Congress annulled the contract and gave Butterfield the choice of continuing service over the central route. The last scheduled Butterfield stage, east-bound, left Apache Pass Stage Station on March 6, 1861. Fort Bowie was established ½ miles east of the abandoned Butterfield Stage Station. Breastworks were built and tents were erected to house the troops. The camp came under frequent Apache attack and proved to be miserable quarters likened to hovels

excavated into the hillside. By August 1868 a new Camp Bowie was constructed on a plateau southeast of the old fort. Permanent adobe buildings were constructed and living conditions were much improved for the troops stationed there. Apache Pass and Fort Bowie continued to be the site of many bloody battles, skirmishes and attacks on civilians and troops alike, until the end of the Apache resistance in September 1886. October 17, 1894, troops marched out of Fort Bowie to their new post in Fort Logan, CO. Fort Bowie passed to the Dept. of Interior in late 1894 and locals removed any building materials they could salvage for their own use. June 20, 1911, 59 tracts of the Fort Bowie Military Reservation were sold, mostly to squatters on the land. August 31, 1964 President Johnson authorized creation of the Fort Bowie National Historic Site. Over the years the visitor center we see today, the interpretive signs, the restoration and repair of the abode walls, and maintenance of trails became reality.

Sunday, March 4, we were again on the San Pedro River, this time at Fairbank, an old railroad and mining community northwest of Tombstone. The Friends of the San Pedro staff a museum and bookstore in the old school house and maintain and repair the remaining buildings. Fairbank was important because it was the closest railroad station to Tombstone for many years. Freight had to be hauled on wagons from Tombstone to the railhead and supplies for Tombstone had to be hauled on wagons from Fairbank to Tombstone. Passenger stages ran between the two towns. Fairbank has an interesting cemetery high on a rocky hill northeast of the town. Burials range from the 1880s to early 1900s. Each time we visit we find new toys have been added to a child's grave with no name on the western edge of the hilltop. After visiting the cemetery, we hiked a couple miles to the site of the Grand Central Stamp Mill. Beautiful stonework remains on what appear to be four levels of the mill, a testament to the skill of the craftsmen who built it in the 1880s. We explored the remains of other milling buildings and equipment near a fenced off open mine shaft near the Stamp Mill. If we had hiked farther, in another 4 miles or so north along the San Pedro, we would come to the ruins of the Western (Contention) mill at Contention City. We enjoyed lunch at the Fairbank town site and then drove to Tombstone where we visited The Courthouse Museum, a beautiful structure filled with early Indian history of southeastern AZ, exhibits on the shoot-out at the OK Corral, early gaming tables and some of the beautiful back bar furnishings of Tombstone saloons, mining history and equipment, early courtroom and law office furnishings, an exhibit on the family life and styles of the 1880s, an exhibit on the cattle ranches and brands from the days of lush rangeland and exhibits on the sheriffs of Cochise County through the years. It is probably the best museum in Tombstone with the most comprehensive, clearly documented exhibits. We enjoyed a final dinner together at one of our favorite places, Pizzeria Mimosa in Hereford AZ, before everyone went their separate ways on Monday morning.

- By Gail Schulz