

San Juan Basin Archaeological Society



Field Trip Report

Destination: Exploring Cochise County Date: January 16 – 18, 2019

Leader(s): Gail Schulz Number of Participants: 10

Wednesday January 16 through Friday January 18, 2019 ten SJBAS members enjoyed warm Arizona temperatures and sunshine while exploring and learning about Cochise County history and archaeology. We spent our first day in the Dragoon Mountains just north of Tombstone, AZ. The Dragoon Mountains were the ancestral homeland of the Apaches and were invaluable to them for the springs, grasses, wood and items they harvested that were crucial to their survival. The Dragoons were also an impregnable fortress to which they retreated when an enemy threatened. The position of the Dragoons between the Sulphur Springs Valley and the San Pedro Valley made them a perfect lookout to see any group approaching from all directions. The excellent cover and vantage points in the rocks of the Dragoons stopped any enemies from following them there. We entered along the south end of the Dragoons via Middlemarch Road and visited the West Cochise Stronghold area including pictographs estimated at around 1,000 years old, plus perhaps some Apache 4 additions. These are located on large boulders that provided shelter and overlook what is said to be the Council Rocks area where Cochise met with his trusted friend Thomas J. Jeffords, Brig. General O. O. Howard and Howard's aide-de-camp, Joseph A. Sladen on October 1, 1872, to discuss making peace with the Chiricahua Apache bands. A good faith pledge of agreement was made between Howard and Cochise that created a 55-mile-wide reservation which included the Dragoon and Chiricahua Mountains and the Sulphur Springs and San Simon Valleys. Thomas Jeffords was appointed agent and by April 1873, 1,125 Apaches were gathered on the reservation. Promised supplies and food were in short supply but the Apache bands stayed within the reservation boundaries and raiding ceased.

In early 1874, after occupying several unsatisfactory locations Jeffords moved his agency headquarters to Apache Pass. By the fall of 1873 the Apaches were desperate for food and supplies that the Office of Indian Affairs promised but failed to deliver so they resumed raiding in Sonora Mexico. Jeffords tried to stop the raids and recovered and returned some of the stock to their owners. Cochise tried to stop the raiding with some success but some of the Apaches vowed to continue to raid in Sonora to get the food and supplies they needed to survive. Jeffords reported there was "no chance of this reservation holding out much longer." Cochise became seriously ill in May 1874 and died in his beloved East Stronghold June 8, 1874. By April 1876 the reservation was toppled by the actions of some Apaches who resorted to violence, murder and raiding. June 12, 1876, 325 Chiricahua Apaches were forcibly required to abandon their reservation and were moved to San Carlos. October 30, 1876 the reservation was opened to settlers by Executive Order.

Several of our group elected to hike the 4.75-mile Stronghold Trail from the West Cochise Stronghold to the East Cochise Stronghold while the rest of the group drove over 50 miles around the southern end of the Dragoons to the East Stronghold. This group visited the townsite of Pearce, an old mining town east of the East Stronghold on the way to pick up the hikers. Both groups enjoyed the spectacular beauty of the Dragoon Mountains while contemplating the history and human drama of this rugged range.

Thursday, January 17th, we spent the day at Fort Huachuca just west of Sierra Vista AZ, at the eastern foot of the Huachuca Mountains, to get a different perspective on what would become Cochise County AZ. We spent the morning with Marty Tagg, Fort Huachuca Conservation Branch Chief Archaeologist, Susan Bieber, Architectural Historian, Liz Gonzalez Negrete, Cultural Resource Specialist and Charles Hancock, President, Southwest Association of Buffalo Soldiers. Marty gave us an excellent, detailed presentation on the history of Fort Huachuca and the prehistory and historical periods represented on the vast Fort grounds which are comprised of 73,272 acres of owned land and 29,987 acres of leased land. This includes 23,650 acres of forest, 4.5 miles of perennial streams and 64 acres of wetlands. Elevation ranges from 3,940 to 8,625 feet. Fort Huachuca variously ranks as first or second in bringing money to the State of Arizona. Fort Huachuca is an exclusive military reservation dating to 1881 and is not subject to State of Arizona regulations. It began as temporary Camp Huachuca March 3, 1877. When the Indian wars ended, Fort Huachuca survived as a key Army post in the West. November 20, 1974, the site where Camp Huachuca was established was designated a National Historic Site and National Historic Landmark. The Old Post area containing the parade ground is surrounded by buildings that retain the exterior appearance of 1880 to 1905 when they were completed. Fort Huachuca was the home of the Apache Scouts until 1933 and of the 10th Cavalry until 1931. The archaeological history of the Fort dates back at least 12,000 years. The role of Cultural Resources Management on the Fort is to protect sites, manage buildings, educate military personnel and civilians present on the Fort and to maintain relationships. The military mission of the Fort always comes before these duties.

Sites on the Fort include archaeological sites, paleontological (fossils), prehistory and historic, historic structures, districts, buildings, features, sacred sites and collections. Mammoth tusks have been found on the Fort. There are 5 sacred sites, 2 rock art sites and the Garden Canyon Village and two Apache campsites. The Fort has been a military institution since 1877 and early surveys ignored things like military fighting positions. These are of interest to Marty Tagg and surveys now document many of these sites. The Arizona State Museum in Tucson is the repository for artifacts collected on the Fort. To date 53,839 acres of the 73,272 total acres have been surveyed which equates to 73%. To date 470 archaeological sites have been documented. Three of these sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and 291 are eligible, 79 sites were not evaluated, and 97 sites were not eligible, were combined or were destroyed. There are 325 historic facilities from 1884 to 1968, 48 of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and include three historic districts. An interesting feature is the many walls built on the post from very early construction to the WPA, CCC, WWII era and through 1980. It is difficult to identify the time and origin of some of these features since they all mimicked the original style of construction.

Eleven tribes have historic affiliation with the Fort: Fort Sill Apaches, Mescalero Apaches, San Carlos Apaches, White Mountain Apaches, Ak-chin, Gila River, Hopi, Pascua Yaqui, Salt River, Hopi, Zuni. Archaeological evidence is present on the Fort from every major period: Paleo 10,000 - 8,000 BC, Archaic 8,000 BC -AD 1, Formative AD1 -1450 and Proto-historic post AD 1500. Paleo mammoth bones and isolated spear points are found as well as lots of archaic sites based on the points found. The Proto-historic period includes evidence of the Sobaipuri, a sub-group of the current O'odham tribe in Pima County, living in hamlets along rivers and nomadic Apaches hunting, gathering and raiding. Garden Canyon Village is a large prehistoric site which is on the historic register. Excavation was carried out in the 1960's but was shut down when human remains were found. The main

occupation period was 800 -1100 and featured pit houses with surface structures on top, circular orientation with a plaza. There was a large village at the mouth of every drainage, spaced about every two miles apart, along the San Pedro River. Obsidian, turquoise, ceramics and shells from CA were found at Garden Canyon Village.

The two pictograph sites on the Fort are in Garden Canyon and both are sacred sites. Red pictographs are likely from the Formative period dating to AD 1000 -1100. White pictographs are similar to Apache styles. The distinctive white Thunderbirds are probably Apache and there is a possible kachina pictograph.

After the Indian wars ended in 1886, Fort Huachuca's location about 25 miles from the Mexican border, was crucial to keeping the Apaches who were in Mexico there. An extensive heliograph system, which was a series of manned posts on mountaintops in NM and AZ that used mirrors to relay information, was established at Fort Huachuca and helped protect settlers and led to diminished raiding. In 1899 -1901 the Spanish American War troops trained at the Fort. Of all the Army posts, Fort Huachuca had the most black soldiers stationed here for the longest period of time, mostly in WWII. In 1922 all Indian Scouts in AZ were moved to Fort Huachuca. In 1931 the 25th Cavalry replaced the 10th Cavalry on the Fort and the cavalry period ended. In 1933 -1935 WPA construction was extensive on the Fort. In 1933 -1934 small adobe shelters replaced wickiups for Apache Scouts. In 1940 WWII training impacted the Fort. In 1942 the first WAACS arrived on the Fort. In 1942 -1943 the Fort was the cantonment for two divisions, the black 92nd and 93rd divisions. The Fort population expanded to 42,500 troops by 1944. In 1947 the Indian Scouts were disbanded at Fort Huachuca. In 1949 the Fort closed and was transferred to the State of Arizona and became a buffalo preserve. In 1951 the Fort was reactivated for the Korean War. In 1953 the Fort closed again. In 1954 the Fort became the Army Electronic Proving Ground. In the 1960s the Fort became a major communications hub. In 1971 the Military Intelligence mission transferred to the Fort. Electronic training was established here because it is the largest electromagnetic free zone in the U.S, one of only three in the world. The electromagnetic free range found here limits radio stations and goes well outside the Fort boundaries.

Today the primary mission of the Fort is Military Intelligence training. Fifty-four different organizations are based here. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, both reconnaissance and killer drones are based here. Work is being done on weapons heat signature and individual GPS positions are being developed for every single soldier. The long and proud history of Fort Huachuca continues to develop and change to meet current requirements and technology. After this extensive briefing on the Fort, Susan, Liz and Charles took us to visit Garden Canyon. Our first stop was at the Garden Canyon pictograph site where some ancient and some more recent Apache pictographs are well protected behind wire fencing. A viewing platform with a bench seat, deck and steps to reach this viewing level provides a comfortable area to view and photograph the pictographs. The most prominent pictograph is a large white Thunderbird thought to be of Apache origin. This is also the logo for the Cultural Resource Management organization. Just up the road from this site the Rappel Site is located on a high, striking, curved, vertical wall which once was used by the troops to practice rappelling. This site contains more of the older red pictographs and is also well protected by fencing. We then drove back down Garden Canyon, which is a wonderful example of the beautiful canyons of the Huachuca Mountains, to visit the Garden Canyon Village site. This site is in a flat plain covered with native grasses with no structures visible above ground. There were many different potsherds on the gravelly surface in these grasses. Some of the pottery was micaceous. This setting gave the villagers access to water, wood, areas to grow crops and a clear view of the San Pedro Valley and surrounding sky islands, as these small, isolated mountain ranges are called.

We left Garden Canyon to visit the Mountain View Officers Club(MVOC). Charles Hancock spoke to us there about the structures that once stood to the east of this large building. This was the location of

the hospital and the housing area for the black doctor and nursing students who were being trained for deployment overseas during WWII. Charles showed us photos of the facility and the students. There were many students and many buildings that housed the hospital with its supporting buildings and barracks. All are now gone. The Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation states 14,000 black soldiers lived at Fort Huachuca. All buildings, no matter what their purpose and use were segregated.

Charles then told us the history and importance of the MVOC building. It was built in 1942 for the black officers who were, due to the segregation that still existed in the Army until July 26, 1948, when President Harry S. Truman signed the executive order committing the government to integrating the segregated military, not allowed to use the white officer's clubs on any post. On Fort Huachuca the white officers club was located on the other side of the post and was called the Lakeview Officers Club. It was demolished some years ago. White officers were allowed to visit the black officers club. This policy was not appreciated by the black officers who believed there should be one officers club for all officers no matter their race. The MVOC was used for a few years until Fort Huachuca was closed in 1949 and transferred to the State of Arizona. Many entertainers such as Lena Horne performed at the MVOC and many functions for the black officers and their families were held there. The MVOC building lived on as a home for a local theatre group and served several other purposes through the years before being left vacant since 1998. We were not able to enter the MVOC for safety reasons, but Charles showed us many photos of the original exterior and the interior of the building and of the people and events held in the building. The Southwest Association of Buffalo Soldiers, of which Charles Hancock is currently president, championed the cause of preserving and telling the rich history of black soldiers at Fort Huachuca from its inception, when the Army decided the MVOC was a surplus building without any use and should be torn down. The MVOC is one of two WWII black officer's clubs still standing today. The other is at Fort Leonard Wood Missouri. The Sierra Vista community, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Arizona Preservation Foundation and Tucson Preservation Foundation came together to assist the Southwest Association of Buffalo Soldiers in their efforts to spare this historic building from demolition. In 2014 the MVOC was designated a National Treasure and in 2018 Arizona State Parks and Trails received \$500,000 in capital grant funding from the National Park Service African American Civil Rights Fund to rehabilitate the MVOC. Efforts are under way to determine how to coordinate all agencies involved and the Army to start this extensive rehabilitation which will require several million dollars to complete. Charles explained that preserving and restoring this building is one key to preserving the rich history of black troops, beginning with the Buffalo Soldiers, so that young African-American students can learn and experience firsthand the proud tradition of service of their predecessors, as well as learn about their sacrifices and the many difficulties they faced in a segregated Army.

Charles then took us to the Fort museum to tell us the story of the Buffalo Soldiers. The original Buffalo Soldiers were a mobile group not stationed at any fort. They were sent out to quell Indian uprisings, protect settlers, recover hostages and fight wherever it was required. They were sent all over the American West. They were named Buffalo Soldiers by the Indians, possibly because their dark, curly hair resembled the coat of a buffalo and possibly because they were such tenacious and fierce soldiers. The Buffalo Soldiers were commanded by white officers. The 10th Cavalry was the first black regiment to be assigned to Fort Huachuca in December 1913, beginning the continuous era of black soldiers at Fort Huachuca, although the 9th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry regiments all served briefly at Fort Huachuca during the 1890s. Charles told the story of Cathy Williams, a black woman who enlisted in the Buffalo Soldiers as William Cathay and served for two years before it was discovered she was a woman and was discharged. She was a former slave who only wanted to make a living for herself, but had no marketable skills or education, so she joined the Army where she could learn and serve. The Army thanked her for her service by denying her a government pension. In 1931 the 25th Cavalry replaced the 10th Cavalry on Fort Huachuca and the cavalry period ended. The Fort museum documents the service of the segregated black troops from the Spanish-American War, WWI, WWII, Korea and beyond. Uniforms, weapons and gear from all time periods, as well as horses

and their tack used, are displayed in this museum. Our next stop was the post cemetery which dates back to this location in May 1883 and contains the remains of everyone from early settlers and travelers who might have been found dead by troops on patrol, enlisted men and officers and their families, and Apache scouts, to a mass grave containing the remains of 76 unknowns transferred from old Fort San Carlos in 1928. 4,269 known dead and 98 unknowns are interred here. The cemetery now is available only for initial interment of cremains. A national cemetery is located elsewhere on Fort grounds. This concluded our day at Fort Huachuca and Charles answered our many questions. He is retired career Army and keeping the history of the black soldiers of Fort Huachuca alive and passing their story on to young African Americans is his passion. He travels throughout the state giving presentations to any group that requests them, especially focusing on schools.

Our final day was spent along the San Pedro River. We started with a hike to the Presidio Santa Cruz de Terrenate high on a bluff overlooking the San Pedro River and its confluence with Willow Wash. This fort was an extension of Spanish presence up from Sonora in 1776. It was authorized by Hugh O'Connor, or in Spanish Hugo Oconor, who was born in Ireland and became a military governor of northern Mexico. He is considered the founding father of Tucson where he authorized construction of a military fort in 1775. This presidio was never completed to specifications due to continuous attacks of the Apaches. While it had the advantage of the high ground, its occupants had to leave the presidio to get water, try to raise crops, tend to the horse herds on pasture and to bring mule trains carrying supplies into the presidio. This exposed them to attack by the Apaches and the presidio was abandoned by 1780 after the loss of more than eighty men in less than 5 years. Adobe walls at the site of the chapel. Stone foundations for the exterior wall surrounding the fort are visible. An interpretive loop with many signs and artist's illustrations of what it may have looked like, extends through the site. Some reports indicate the presidio was briefly occupied by the US Army in 1878 but was soon abandoned. This may or may not be true. The site was excavated in 1951 by Charles Di Peso of the Amerind Foundation near Dragoon AZ. Other excavations including work by Deni Seymour, reveal the presidio was built on the site of a Sobaipuri village, possibly named Santa Cruz (the influence of Father Kino is present here), and not Quiburi as di Peso speculated. Deni also found evidence of prehistoric Hohokam and Archaic occupations. Sherds from the Hohokam occupation exist on the surface and in the adobe walls of the presidio. Archaic points and tools are also present. When we visit, we are always struck by the comparison of what was going on here in 1776 and in the colonies on the East Coast in 1776.

Our next stop was the Murray Springs Clovis Site which was discovered in 1966 and was excavated through 1971 by archaeologists from the University of Arizona. Funding was provided by the National Geographic Society and the National Science Foundation. Remains of camels, horses, bison and a mammoth named 'Big Eloise' were found here. An ancient campsite was discovered nearby as well as Clovis points and tools including a bone shaft wrench. The evidence shows that humans were present and hunted and butchered these Ice Age animals over 13,000 years ago. The Murray Springs Clovis Site is one of at least 8 documented Clovis sites in the San Pedro River Valley. The Naco Clovis Site was discovered in 1952 and was the first documented Clovis site west of the Continental Divide. It is believed that the Clovis people were the first humans in this area of southeastern Arizona. The Murray Springs Clovis Site is important because it has such a high degree of site integrity because it is overlain by black mat. Black mat is a dark black layer of organic-rich sediment caused by thick algal mats. It was formed when small aquatic plants lived in ponds created when the water table rose during a warm, moist period about 10,700 years ago. This black mat blankets the Murray Springs Clovis Site and effectively determines the age of all things found under it and kept the Clovis surface virtually undisturbed.

Our last stop was the San Pedro House on the San Pedro River just off Hwy 90. The San Pedro House is the headquarters for the Friends of the San Pedro River, an all-volunteer organization that provides education, docent-led interpretive walks to sites along the river and bird walks, trail maintenance, monitoring and clean-up events. They run a nice bookstore and gift shop in the San Pedro House and in the Fairbanks Schoolhouse. The San Pedro House is an historic ranch house built in the 1930s, flanked by huge cottonwood trees, one of which is estimated to be as much as 150 years old and one of the largest in Arizona. The San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area was designated the first globally important bird area in the Unites States and has documented 350 different bird species using the area. Bird feeders around the San Pedro House attract a wide array of birds to view from the comfortable gardens and grounds surrounding the house. We ended the trip here in this beautiful, peaceful setting.

- By Gail Schulz