



Concho Valley Archeological Society Newsletter

August 2018

Living Like Gypsies: Canvas on the North Concho 1852 - A Wild and Romantic Venture

A post return dated 1852, from Camp Johnston North Concho, lists the men of this camp that transferred to Ft Chadbourne, TX. I have used that as a reference to point to write about the women of this camp as well. Many frontier women saw the 'adventure of west,' with the same vision as did their husbands. In a letter by the Holloways from Fort Chadbourne, they were positive about their adventures and talking to the folks back home about making watermelon rind pickles, beautiful jelly and collecting flower seeds to plant. They'd mentioned living in canvas tents for some time before they were able to get into their nice stone dwellings that we know today as Fort Chadbourne. They mentioned they were happy and had an agreeable little society and cool pleasant evenings. Edmonds Holloway (Team Master - Camp Johnston) mentions his cousin visiting at Chadbourne and being given a "Tea Party," by Mrs. Smith and Howard (Larkin Smith's wife, perhaps? She was Catharine Storrow Brown, daughter of Gen. Jacob Brown.) It was followed by a 'guard dance,' and adds the cousin," He waltzes fine, but doesn't know the fancy dances."



Allen & Emma Lunsford-AlLEN's Dad, John R. Lunsford-Frontier Regiment-TX

In my own family my Ggggrandfather, John R. Lunsford was part the Frontier Regiment that were called onto help with Indian depredations. Though we can't find a photo of him, this is one of his son Allen & wife Emma, who were no strangers as children, growing up in early Texas. This picture makes me think of the early Texas frontier, Em grew up at Port Sullivan on the Brazos. Allen's dad was a Mercer Colonist in Texas in 1846. Early brave men and women were needed on the frontier and "to aid in this most important outpost on the frontier." The men and women of Camp Jos. Johnston N. Concho, served together on the open frontier. What sacrifices they made for the safety of immigrants that would flood into Texas, is impressive. I will attempt to tell the story of some of the women of Camp Johnston and will add some snippets from other notes of frontier women, just to help understand what life on this antebellum outpost was like.

Before these belle's of the frontier came to Chadbourne, they ventured by wagon to Camp Johnston North Concho. Most likely they set out as many did on their adventure in ambulance wagons, to which they had some extra room in the back for tending children, it had a curtain that could be, pulled for privacy. These larger prairie buggies, remind me a little of gypsy wagons. One frontier lady even fashioned a cradle for her infant out of a champagne basket and suspended it



31st PA Camp near Washington-Life Would Have Been Like This For Camp Johnston Residents in 1852, Living In Tents, Near the North Concho

Living Like Gypsies-Canvas on the North Concho-1852

A Wild and Romantic Venture

(continued)

from the upper part of the wagon, so that, as she traveled, she could rock her baby. Some frontier women tied firewood under the wagon and cut off a piece at time as needed, for the journey. Mrs. Arthur Tracy Lee, who's husband had a long frontier military career, had a baby at the time they were at camp along the North Concho, in 1852. The infant would have been several months old and might have made the trip. Mrs. Lee was gifted slaves in 1859, from her husband and lived also at Ft Davis (their next assignment after Johnston & Chadbourne). Their little girl Kate, later got the opportunity to ride with the Ft Davis camels, must have been something to a 6 yr old ! Mr. Lee wrote from Davis, that they did build a theatre, for acting and such.

He also husband penned these words:

*Whilst the moon is shining down
On our snowy canvas town,
And the rivelet runs laughing to the sea, my love
Here I cast upon the stream,
All remembrance of the dream,
That is laughing water now to thee and me, my love*

Capt. Lee is thought to have possibly had his wife with him at this antebellum garrison, aka Camp Concho. He was talented poet and an artist. I have researched some of his works and tried to locate his drawings, wondering if it was him that drew that early sketch of Ft. Concho, that some believe to have been instead, Camp Johnston North Concho. Mrs. Susan Miles (former Angelo historian) might have known, she supplied info for his book of over 100 watercolors, documenting his military life in living color. I guess too much time has passed to locate what info, she supplied for his book. But back to the wives, the female matriarch of the group of Camp Johnston wives, might have been Mrs. Garland, wife of Col. John Garland, commander at the camp. Her daughter would have been Mrs. Longstreet, who was practically raised on the frontier and noted for going with her husband to camps frequently.

Elizabeth Hollaway might have also been one of the ladies at the prairie outpost on the North Concho. Daily visits with colorful characters like Yellow Wolf, Sanaco and Buffalo Hump and their people, were noted by some, as a report was done from Camp Johnston. Some of the women reported from Chadbourne, that the Indian women had to be watched, as silver was known to turn up missing. For these ladies, every day was likely an adventure, at this frontier on the plains. I also ran on this on the wife of Thos. G. Pitcher, from the Eighth Infantry.

“Mrs. Pitcher was for many years very prominent both in social and charitable circles in this city, where she gathered around her a host of admiring friends and also many in whose memory she will long live on account of her benevolence and sweetness of character. She was well known to the older residents of the capital, having been prominent in social circles during the administration of President Grant. Mrs. Pitcher could have been one of the women at Camp Johnston N. Concho, as Thomas Pitcher was 3rd in command at this little prairie outpost. “ Months before possibly coming to Camp Johnston, Mary Pitcher was married in Bexar Co, TX in 1852. She was also the sister in law of Lewis Maverick, son of famed Samuel Maverick, Texas land baron/surveyor, signer of Texas Declaration of Independence.

As I mentioned, many saw it as an adventure and even Sarah Capers Swift who came with Dr. Eb. Swift, was pregnant on the prairie, as we have record of that as well. She had to walk back to camp after a problem with their wagon, on the way to Chadbourne. After the problem with the wagon her pet guinea cock, bottles and blankets as well as lunch was strewn everywhere, all the while their escort made good time to Chadbourne. I'm sure she came quite equipped for life on the prairie, as she was the daughter of a merchant in San Antonio, from Charleston SC.

Inside these canvas homes on the Concho, probably a smudge pot was kept to keep mosquitoes away and ammonia was often used on skin to keep them away as well. Insides of the tents were heated with coals in a pan or heated bricks. Under the stars, the tents by the light of the moon where romantic, with dashing men in uniform and ladies in fluffy dresses. Romance did have a chance to blossom.....And some young men were gallant and it drew young ladies.... Lt. Melancthon Smith who served at Camp Johnson was responsible for bringing back horses that the southern Comanche had raided the camp and made off with.

Living Like Gypsies-Canvas on the North Concho-1852

A Wild and Romantic Venture

(continued)

“As a fellow cadet described him:

In personal appearance he was tall and slim; a countenance handsome, firm, and decided, yet merry and laughing in social life. His mind was finely cultivated, clear, and well balanced; as a writer, he wielded a graceful and fluent pen.”-civilwartalk.com

Don't you just love the 'ordinary,' details of their lives? Their lives were already, 'painted on canvas,' weaved into quilts and told about around campfires. This was their destiny, their time and their calling. What a group of industrious and patriotic citizens, willing to 'take a stab at peacemaking with the Honey Eater Indians,' and set out to expand Anglo settlements on this wild prairie. What courage, what hope they had, lives they endured and legacy they left.....

As they continued onto the next post, glamping I believe they call it. These refined ladies lived out their lives for some time, like gypsies on the North Concho prairie. Army life offered board, food, medical care and travel, so it was something many enjoyed. Some also had deep military roots in their family. One lady wanted to tell her relative of their venture west, but declined, because someone told her, "They'd never understand our sense of adventure!" That was probably true. While collecting stories on the early fort days, I ran on these: One army wife recalled a noise in the night and when they awoke, a mountain lion was nestled in the corner of their room. They made racket and it soon departed. Another came in on rattlesnakes in the tent, a mother and its offspring, the servant quickly 'tonged,' the serpents and threw them in a pot of boiling water and that was quite a good supper, they recalled. Another except from more army wives, mentioned the time they ran upon a baby bear, of which they befriended in camp and later let go. Life was for sure something, for these frontier wives. Western garrisons were known for their hospitable women and warm welcomes. Often daughters and nieces of older officers became wives of younger officers. Not an easy place to be at Camp Concho, when Dr Swift speaks of the only vegetables as pokeweed and cactus. Many of their supplies, it is thought were coming in from Fredericksburg and San Antonio. Most ladies found out soon, their flower adorned cottages, were instead canvas tents, daily visits from wild Indians, and wandering buffaloes were the norm. Capt. Lee even noted rattlesnakes, prairie dogs, hail storms, floods, were constant companions. Some did make their tents quite comfortable homes. They reported having fine furnishings inside their tents and on one account a lady remembers piano music coming from inside one of the tents. Hard for us to imagine to take such fine furnishings on the plains, but they helped to make their time more comfortable, having household items with them, from their treasured trunks. Maybe a favorite tea set, a silver hairbrush, granma's wash basin, some photo's of loved ones and a bible probably made up some of their cherished items. Some women might have felt like they were living like gypsies out on the open prairie as they followed their husbands from camp to camp, setting up temporary homesteads., not always knowing if the locale that was encamped upon would turn out to be a 'good post,' or not. But it was for sure if they followed their men, their lives would be exciting. Sarah Swift was compelled to follow and probably had some of her personal servants go along to help attend things. She was a refined woman, educated and she caught the eye of her handsome suitor, Dr. Swift. She was from the social scene of San Antonio and frequently rendezvoused with her beau in a beautiful charming little Hill Country town of Fredericksburg before coming to the 'River of Pearls Camp,' on their honeymoon. So compelled to marry her he pursued her till matrimony and so what if they 'lived like gypsies,' for a time. It was probably the most wild and romantic venture in their lives.

*Michelle Doss-2018-CVAS
Miss Lissia's Cabin -North Concho*

Notes and Doc. Tx Frontier-Swift
Edmonds Holloway Letter-Courtesy Ft Chadbourne Archives
A History of Ft Chadbourne- Ft Chadbourne Archives
A.T. Lee-Army Ballads, Find A Grave
Army Wives on the American Frontier-Eales
M. L. Crimmons, West TX Historic Society

Concho Valley Archeological Fair

Sept. 22, 2018

10:00am-3:00pm-603 S. Oakes, San Angelo, TX- Fort Concho-Commissary & Barracks 6

Concho Valley Artifacts including “Petticoats on the Prairie,” & Bow & Arrow & Atlatl Throw, Prehistoric Food Preparation, Clues in the Dirt, Medicine Bag Making, Drones in Archeology & , Iraan Archeology Society, Daughters of Republic-TX-Traveling Trunk & Indian Stories, SAGHS, Illuminated Threads, Sutler’s Store, Artifact Identification & Painted Pebbles. Perfect for all ages, help us keep archeology alive in the Concho Valley. Come out and see what you can learn about our ancient past along the ‘River of Pearls.’ FMI: 325-450-6965 or wildrosetexas@hotmail.com

TAS Excavates at Mission San Lorenzo in Camp Wood in June 2018



CVAS member Brownie Roberts



CVAS member Marcia Asel

The August 23rd CVAS meeting speaker will be Fort Concho’s own Cory Robinson

Analysis of Hafted Dart Points: Dating and CT Scans

<http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/ceremonial/hafted.html>

Six hafted dart points from the shrine deposit at Ceremonial Cave and another from a nearby site in New Mexico have been analyzed for stylistic and temporal information. Stylistic change in projectile point form has long been used for cross-dating by archaeologists, especially in North America. In order to construct calendar age ranges for different projectile point styles, chronometric dating methods have been applied to remains inferred to have been associated and contemporaneous. Radiocarbon dating, in particular, has been important in determining age ranges of chipped-stone points, but virtually all such dates are on organic remains that have only indirect and inferential association with projectile points.

Rarely are there projectile points that have unambiguous and direct association with datable organic material, but we report here the dating of four points still hafted in dart foreshafts. This approach is a methodologically sophisticated enhancement of traditional chronology building efforts, avoiding the inferential nature of virtually all assessments of association between projectile point form and dated event. AMS radiocarbon dates were obtained on either the shafts or on the sinew wrapping or seizing that secured the point in the foreshaft. However, in these cases, the seizing covered the stem portion of the chipped stone points such that their shape cannot be seen. For the AMS dates to be useful in defining the calendrical age of the point styles, therefore, the stem shape had to be determined. For this, we had high resolution X-ray computed tomography scans done of each, thereby providing a clear image of each point, the second critical bit of data in this study. The combination of projectile point form and chronometric age provides a unique opportunity to fine tune the dating of specific projectile point styles in the American Southwest.

Additionally, wooden artifact specialist Ken Brown of TARL examined several of the specimens, and we include here his observations on the construction of the darts and materials used. To him, the darts appear almost diminutive in size, compared to specimens from regions such as the Lower Pecos area of Texas, and this is presumably a result of local geology. The foreshafts are scaled to the size of the points, which are small due to the poor quality of local stone. Several of the darts have been impact-damaged and were converted to knives by "amputating," or shortening them, then blunting the proximal end of the foreshaft. All but one of the darts are hafted onto a hardwood foreshaft. The other dart is unusual, having been hafted directly onto a mainshaft made of lightweight flower stalk. As such, the dart may have had limited utilitarian value; rather, it may have been a ritual item, intended only as an offering.

Six of the analyzed hafted points may have found in the apparent shrine deposit at the entry to Ceremonial Cave; a seventh point is from Chavez Cave in nearby Dona Ana, New Mexico. Three of the specimens from Ceremonial Cave were recovered in 1926 or 1927. The exact circumstances of recovery are not known, but they were apparently part of a large deposit of artifacts that had been placed together near the mouth of the cave over a long period of time (The other four specimens were recovered in 1928 during excavations by the Peabody Museum, Harvard University).

The so-called shrine deposit at the mouth of Ceremonial Cave evidently included spear shafts, numerous foreshafts (most without the hafted points, some simply pointed wood), rabbit or fending sticks, marine shell and stone ornaments, tablitas, snares, pipes, reed cigarettes, basketry, and yucca stalks and other sticks with attached fiber bolls containing tobacco. Based on the array of different styles, it seems clear that this deposit accumulated over a period of many centuries, beginning at least by the beginning of the Common Era and continuing until perhaps A.D. 1000. Until the dating effort reported here, no chronometric dating has been attempted on any of the objects from Ceremonial Cave.

The numerous spear shafts and foreshafts in the deposit of objects at the front of the cave constitute one of the largest collections of such objects from the Southwest. It is not known if they were deposited as a group or incrementally, although the dating effort reported here represents the initiation of a larger program of dating the remains from Ceremonial Cave. As these results become available, they will be reported on this exhibit on Texas Beyond History.



WE'RE ON THE WEB AT
CVASSANANGELO.ORG

Meeting Location

Please remember that our meetings are now in the classroom at the Fort Concho Living History Stables, 236 Henry O. Flipper St. We enter through the side door.

2018 Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

Cell _____

Family members _____

Email _____

I pledge I will not intentionally violate the terms or conditions of any current or future state or local statute concerning cultural resources or engage in the practice of buying or selling artifacts for commercial purposes, or engage in the willful destruction of archeological data, or disregard proper archeological field techniques

Signature _____ Date _____

Mail to: CVAS, 132 Kilt Road, San Angelo, TX 76901

Individual	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family	\$20	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student or military N/C		<input type="checkbox"/>

(active military only)