



Concho Valley Archeological Society Newsletter

March 2011

47th Annual Southwest Federation of Archeological Societies Symposium 9 April 2011

Planning for the SWFAS Symposium to be held at Fort Concho on April 9th is moving along. Bill Yeates reports that he now has 10 papers and speakers lined up plus our guest speaker, Dr. Bruce Dickson from Texas A&M. CVAS will host the symposium along with Fort Concho. Fort Concho director, Bob Blumthardt, has offered us the use of the Quartermasters Storehouse Building for the event.

The schedule for the event will be 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a period for arrivals, sign-in, morning refreshments and tour signups to be from 8 - 9 a.m.

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Refreshments and sign up for field trips

8:30 a.m. Local artifact displays open. SE room adjacent to the main speaking room

9:00 – 9:15 a.m. Welcome and announcements

C.A. Maedgen, President CVAS, Mr. Robert Bluthardt, director Ft Concho Foundation

9:15 – 9:45 a.m. Tom Ashmore. Butterfield Overland Mail, Johnson's Station (41IR123)

9:45 – 10:15 a.m. Ray Theiss. Sterling County's Tower Hill

10:15 – 10:30 a.m. **break**

10:30 – 11:00 a.m. Richard Walter. Pure Quartz Technology on the Southern High Plains

11:00 – 11:30 a.m. Calvin Smith. Stewardship Archeology

11:30- 12:00 a.m. Evans Turpin. 41PC633 – Sherbino Mesa Rock Art Shelter

12:00 – 1:30 pm **Lunch**

SWFAS Annual Business Meeting and announcements

1:30 – 2:00 pm John Yates. Serendipitous Pot Pourri

2:00 – 2:30 pm Joe Rogers. Reconstructing and Preserving a WWII Site: The Prisoner of War Camp in Hereford, Texas

2:30- 3:00 p.m. Teddy Stickney. The Plains Indians – Kiowa Art

3:00 – 3:15 p.m. **break**

3:15 – 4:00 p.m. Guest Speaker – Dr. Bruce Dickson, Texas A&M University. Scientific Field Methods in Archeology

4:00 – 4:30 p.m. R.G. Wakeland. Permian Basin Bureau of Land Management Lithics. Comparison with Upper Rio Grande Culture

4:30 – 5:00 p.m. Larry Riemenschneider. Fairs and Horse Races in the Concho Valley 1890's

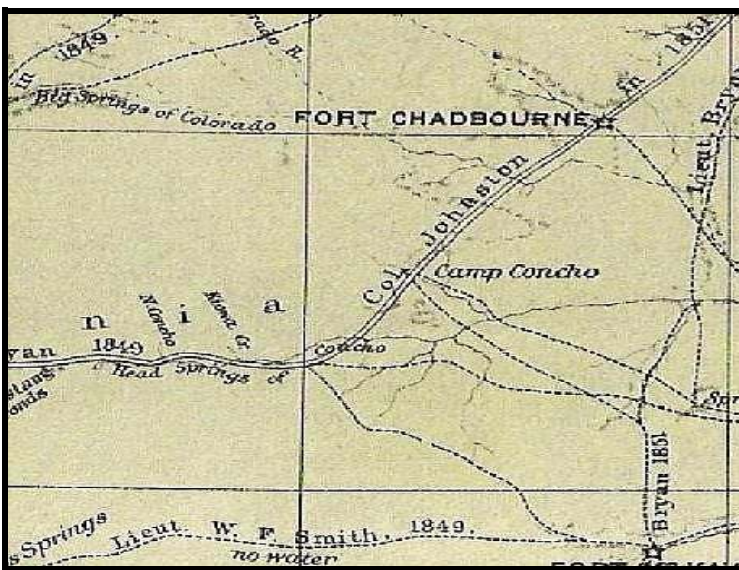
5:00 – 5:15 Wrap-up announcements for Sunday tours and any other misc. business.

Camp Concho

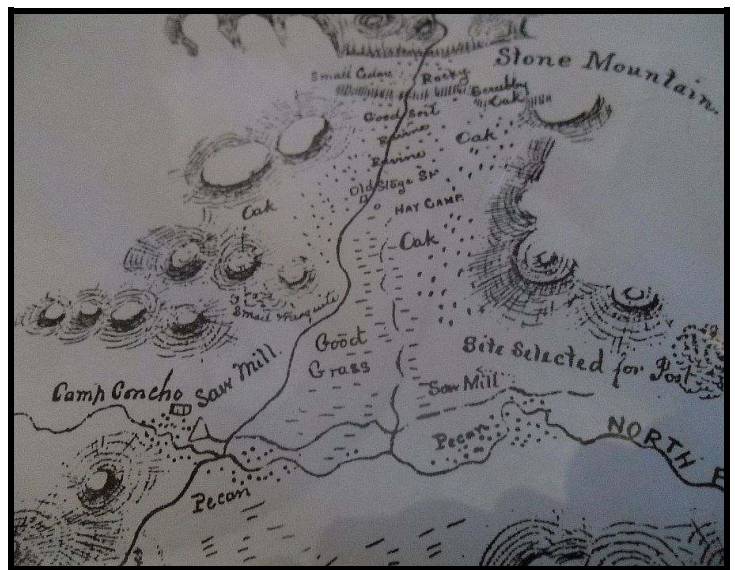
Tom Ashmore

There has been much confusion in historical writings of just what and where Camp Concho was during the 1800s. Some authors have written that before Fort Concho received its designation as a fort it was called Camp Concho. This is wrong. Fort Concho was never designated officially or unofficially Camp Concho. It was first Camp Hatch and later Camp Kelly before taking on the name of Fort Concho. In my recent research I have been able to unveil part of the mystery of Camp Concho, or more correctly the two Camp Conchos.

The first Camp Concho I wrote about in my report on Sterling City's Tower Hill. This camp's full title was Camp at the Head of the North Concho. It was a Texas Ranger camp and later occupied by the 2nd Mounted Rifles during the early Civil War period. The 2nd Mounted Rifles were essentially the Texas Rangers recruited into the Confederacy. Later it was used by Fort Concho troops and is documented in their reports. Because of the long name many just often called it Camp Concho. This camp took on the erroneous name given by a rancher in modern times of Camp Elizabeth.



1857 map of military roads



1867 topographic sketch map by Bvt Lt Col Strang

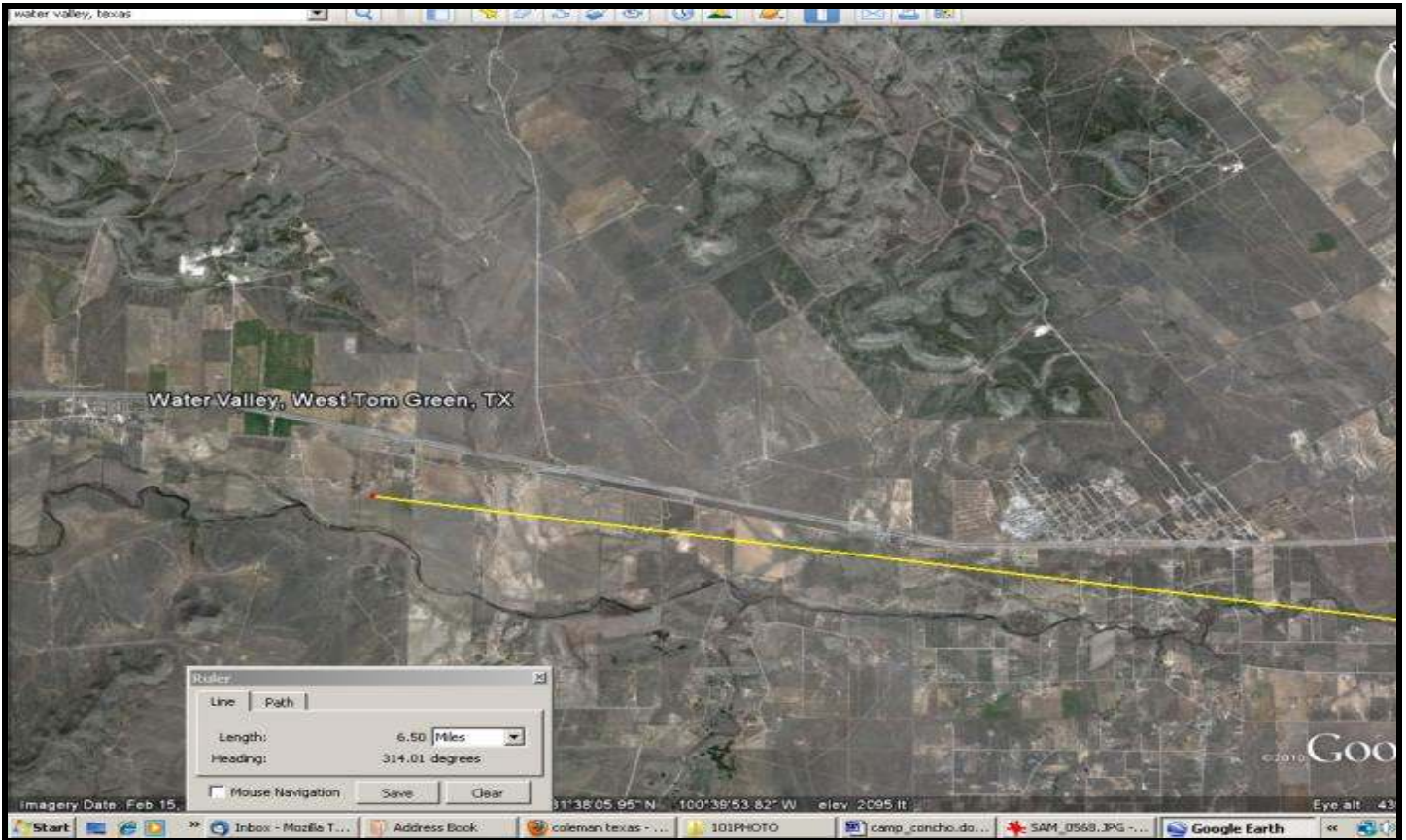
The second Camp Concho I have been trying to figure out for the past year. It is on at least two military maps from 1857 and 1867 and in notes of Bvt Lt Col Strang in 1867. It is located in the vicinity of Water Valley, close to the old Joseph E. Johnston military trail. One speculation is that Camp Johnston was moved to the north side of the North Concho River after a flood in 1852 and was renamed for some unknown reason. To me, this does not add up because the higher ground is on the south side of the river; the North Concho is much lower ground. It would also be very unusual in for a military camp's name to be changed just because it moved a short distance to remove itself from a flood zone. What we do know is that Camp Concho showed up on military maps of 1857 and 1867.

It was a recent offer of assistance by CVAS member Orville Shelburne in sending me a full scale hand-drawn topographic sketch from 1867 found in the University of Texas that laid out at least some of the second piece of the puzzle. The sketch is a detailed map of the travels of Brevet Lt. Col E.J. Strang from Fort Stockton to Fort Chadbourne in October and November 1867. Lt Col Strang essentially took the Butterfield Trail, at that time called the Fort Stockton Road. When he reached the North Concho River he went up river for a short distance and camped on the outskirts of Camp Concho. From my previous research on the Butterfield North Concho crossing and Lt Col Strang's annotation that Camp Concho was 6.5 miles from the crossing I can determine that the location of Camp Concho was on the North side of the river just before coming into the current location of Water Valley.

(continued on page 3)

Camp Concho

(continued from page 2)



So who was Brevet Lt. Col Strang? Congressional records show that he was the “Assistant Quartermaster on construction of military posts in Texas.” His trip was to oversee the initial preparations and construction of Camp Hatch (later to become Fort Concho). Remember that troops moved from Fort Chadbourne down to Camp Hatch at the end of November 1867.

On the map it shows three things at the location of Camp Concho. First, it is at the location of a large pecan grove. Second, it is designated “saw mill.” Third, there is a road coming up from down river that stops at the camp. So, the second Camp Concho during this period was a military lumber camp, felling trees and preparing the wood for shipment down to the new Camp Hatch. Although not identified by name, this lumber saw mill activity is documented exhaustively in numerous books on Fort Concho. In one account in 1868 by a carpenter at Fort Concho, he wrote his mother, “We first constructed a saw mill 12 miles up river, which mill sawed a great deal of lumber for the fort to be built. We then moved the mill to another location, but unfortunately there was very little timber at the new location...” This location of 12 miles is marked on this same 1867 map about 8 miles below the major saw mill location that Strang visited. Another account in Evett Halley’s book ‘Fort Concho and the Texas Frontier’ he specifically states that in August of 1867 “steam sawmills were sent from Chadbourne to the North Concho where there was an abundance of water at all times...where it was presumed the new post would be located.” Interestingly, again on the Strang topographic sketch, annotated next to the 12-mile sawmill it says, “Site Selected for Post.” Halley also enters a quote from Strang’s reports stating, “the mills did not get into operation until the middle of October and first part of November.” Finally, in Bill Green’s famous book, ‘The Dancing Was Lively,’ he states that, “Late in 1867 civilian workers set up two sawmills on the Conchos to make use of the pecan timber growing along the streams.”

Pecan was the only major wood available in the area and was initially used for wood framing. However, it did not cure long enough and its inherent properties did not do well for framing either. Eventually they discarded it completely as building construction material in favor of better wood being freighted up from Fredericksburg.

Digging up the mystery of James Coryell

www.centraltexasnow.com, Posted: Feb 10, 2011 8:47 PM CST

A mystery is unraveling in Falls County and it could bring justice 170 years later to a legendary Texas Ranger.

Inside Bull Hill's slave cemetery, full of history and stories, comes one not yet written in the history books. Texas Historical Commission Archeology Director, Jim Bruseth says, "We have an adult male down there. Everything's fitting for this being James Coryell, who hasn't been found for over 100 years."

Bruseth and his team from the THC are digging deep into the past, pulling every shred of information to prove this is the mysterious grave site of former Texas Ranger and Coryell County's namesake: James Coryell. "People wanted to find the burial site, re-bury him some place and put up a monument to really tell the story of what this early Texan did for our state," says Bruseth.

In 1837, just about a half-mile from this plot of land, Coryell was killed by Indians. There is no documentation of a burial, but a slave narrative from 1920 mentioned Coryell's grave was at the site of the former Jones Plantation cemetery - the current site of Bull's Hill. "It [the grave] caved in and the slaves piled rocks on it to keep the spirit from coming out of the gravesite," says Bruseth.

Fast forward to December 2010 and the THC was putting up a new fence in this historic cemetery when they came across what is believed to be those rocks. "We found that there was a grave shaft down below and now we're here actually excavating the grave shaft and finding human bone," says Bruseth.

A skull, femur, teeth, even a button have been found and will be used by the Smithsonian Institution's Forensic Anthropologist, Dr. Doug Owsley, for DNA evidence. "It tells the person's age and sex and their ancestry," says Dr. Owsley, "and then we'll be looking it over for evidence of cause of death."

This DNA will be compared to a 92-year-old female descendent of Coryell's in Missouri to confirm if this is the legendary Texas Ranger. THC archeologist Pat Mercado-Allinger says, "We'll know once and for all if this is truly the person that we think it is."

The digging for more remains will last through the weekend. Bones and teeth will then be handed over to Dr. Owsley. From there, the DNA testing will begin and we will know if this is indeed James Coryell.

CVAS at Fort Chadbourne Living History Days, May 6th & 7th

Larry Riemenschneider announced at the February meeting that Fort Chadbourne will not be opening up any new excavations this year due to their need to continue working on the new museum. CVAS will have a booth at the Living History Weekend. A signup sheet went around the room for people to help out at different times of each day. We will be showing artifacts on tables and generally discussing archeology and our work with visitors to the fort.

March Meeting Presentation

Tom Ashmore will give the presentation at our March meeting. As most members know, Tom has been working over the last few years to identify various portions of the Butterfield Trail that runs through the Concho Valley and on to the Pecos River. His research has brought together satellite imagery interpretation using Google Earth with traditional historical records in order to locate various aspects of the trail. Recently, another CVAS member, Orville Shelburne, began a correspondence with Tom which brought to light a topographical sketch produced in 1867 of a journey taken on the old Butterfield Trail, then called the Fort Stockton Road, from Fort Stockton to Fort Chadbourne. This phenomenal map has validated several of Tom's earlier conclusions. He will present these, along with the actual map, at the meeting.

PLEASE PAY YOUR ANNUAL DUES IF YOU HAVE NOT YET. ALSO, NOTE THERE IS A NEW ADDRESS TO SEND TO ON THE FORM NOW.

Water Valley—2nd Outing Report

Tom Ashmore

Our first outing to the Water Valley area took us onto the ranch of Mr. Trey Wood and a portion of the Cargile Ranch, but we could not get onto an area of particular interest as a possible location of Camp Johnston. Mr. Wood introduced us to the foreman of the Cargile Ranch who recently gave us permission to survey that second area. However, he asked that we keep the number of members to a minimum. So this trip we only had six CVAS members.

We covered quite a bit of ground. The lines I saw as trail lines in the satellite imagery were old fence lines. I knew they weren't current fence lines, but old fence lines look almost identical to trail traces. I normally would not have been fooled, except these fence lines went to river crossings, which is unusual. We found the fence wire rolled up, pieces of fence along the line and fence posts pulled up in some places. The location I thought might be a corral was essentially correct, but it was also built by fence which has since been torn down. There was also a large roll of barbed wire under a bush there too and some fence posts lying about. The foreman gave us a theory that makes sense. It is likely that this was a trap for pushing the cattle up into from the river. The line leading up to it (also looking like a trail trace) was a fence probably used to force the cattle into the trap/holding pen.

As far as artifacts go we found an old frying pan and some old tin can remnants, but that could have come from early cowboys working the area. We found some other pieces of tin that might have been some kind of supply can tops and one interesting decorated cast iron piece. Nothing looked older than turn of the century and I would bet early 1900s or so.

So, we have eliminated that area as a possibility for Camp Johnston. I have one area that was my second choice, but it will be even harder to get into because it is in a gated homeowners community. The hunt continues...



Old frying pan and various tin pieces



Unidentified piece

CVAS member, Ray Theiss, will be giving his presentation on Sterling County's Tower Hill to the Tom Green Historical Society on March 21st at Fort Concho's Barracks 8 at 7 p.m.

Upcoming Events

Next meeting Mar 24th

Iraan Archeological Society trip to Rylander Ranch - Mar 25th & 26th

POC: CA Maedgen

Fort Chadbourne Living History weekend—May 6th & 7th

Southwest Federation of Archeological Studies Symposium hosted by CVAS

April 9th at Fort Concho

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.

2011 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, 4801 Royal Oak Dr., San Angelo, TX 76904

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

(active military only)