

SAN JUAN BASIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Chapter of Colorado Archaeological Society



FIELD TRIP REPORT

Date: **March 1 - 5, 2012**

Destination: **Cochise County, AZ – Territorial Ranches**

Leader: **Gail Schulz**

Number of Participants: **16**

March 1 to 5, 2012, sixteen SJBAS members spent three very full days visiting historic Arizona territorial ranches in southeastern Arizona. The focus of this trip, led by Gail and Marlo Schulz, was to learn about the great differences in several 1870s to 1880s ranches, and the common hardships they faced as they were being developed, during the time of Apache warfare and raids before and shortly after the surrender of Geronimo in 1886.

Friday March 2, our first stop was the Empire Ranch administered by the BLM and surrounded by the Las Cienegas Natural Conservation Area near Sonoita AZ. This ranch was begun in 1871 and was operated until 1974, under several owners. The original four room adobe ranch house, which eventually grew to 22 rooms, featured a high, wide corridor between the rooms which led to an enclosed corral used to protect the cattle and horses from raids and thefts. Anyone trying to steal the animals had to pass between the bedrooms of the two armed ranch owners who vigilantly guarded their animals. The ranch preserves barns, corrals and a large adobe hay barn from the 1880s. Signs throughout the buildings tell the story of the families who called this ranch home and the times in which they lived. We also visited the nearby Kentucky Camp, an ill-fated mining camp created to support hydraulic gold mining, which later became a ranch headquarters. Kentucky Camp has one of the largest adobe buildings still standing, which was built as the mining headquarters and hotel and later became the family ranch house. The Arizona Trail passes through Kentucky Camp. We ended this day with a visit to two of the many excellent vineyards in the Sonoita area.

Saturday March 3, we traveled east of Douglas AZ to visit the John Slaughter Ranch Museum on the Mexican border. This 65,000-acre ranch was part of the San Bernardino Land Grant created in 1822, and was purchased in 1884 by Texas John Slaughter. Slaughter was elected sheriff of Cochise County in 1886 and is credited with cleaning up the outlaw element which was terrorizing Cochise County. Adjacent to the ranch are the remains of a fort established by the U S Army in 1911 when Mexican civil unrest was escalating, and was staffed until 1923. We returned to Douglas AZ and visited the Gadsden Hotel, an elegant hotel opened in 1907, burned in 1928, rebuilt and re-opened in 1929. The lobby features a white marble staircase, gold leaf topped marble columns and a 42-foot-long Tiffany stained glass mural depicting the beautiful desert landscape.

Sunday March 4, we traveled to the Chiricahua National Monument southeast of Willcox AZ, to tour Faraway Ranch, one of the earliest Arizona guest ranches. In 1887 Swedish immigrant Emma Peterson purchased a log cabin on the site of the current ranch house. When she married Neil Erickson in 1887 they filed a 160-acre homestead claim on the cabin site and moved to the cabin. Neil worked away from the ranch frequently and built a stone room to which Emma and the children could retreat in case of attack by Apaches or outlaws roaming the area. Their oldest daughter Lillian remained on the ranch and from 1917 to 1973, in addition to running the ranch, she and her husband Ed Riggs ran a very

successful guest ranch. These families are responsible for the establishment of the Chiricahua National Monument in 1924 to protect their cherished "Wonderland of Rocks".

- Prepared by: Gail Schulz

Participants: Gail and Marlo Schulz, Bev and Bob Danielson, Jim and Kathleen Shadell, Lydine and Tom Hannula, Pam and Lyn Butler, Bill and Letha Cagle, Bev and Guy Tomberlin, Rae Haynes, Laura Watson