

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Fort Craig Post Cemetery Report

Socorro County, New Mexico

Bureau of Reclamation,
Albuquerque, New Mexico

by

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Thomas Smith, 1846-1866



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To all who worked on this project: Thanks for your hard work and your dedication to history.

Contents

Chapter 1: Project Background

Chapter 2: Excavation at the Fort Craig Cemetery

Chapter 3: Artifacts from the Fort Craig Cemetery

Chapter 4: The Accertionary Growth and Dynamics of the Fort Craig Post Cemetery

Chapter 1: Project Background

Fort Craig

Fort Craig is located on the west side of the Rio Grande, thirty miles south of the small town of San Antonio, New Mexico (Figure 1.1). It lies opposite the prominent basalt outcrop, Mesa del Contadero, and was strategically located near the El Camino Real, the major supply line that ran from Mexico to Santa Fe.

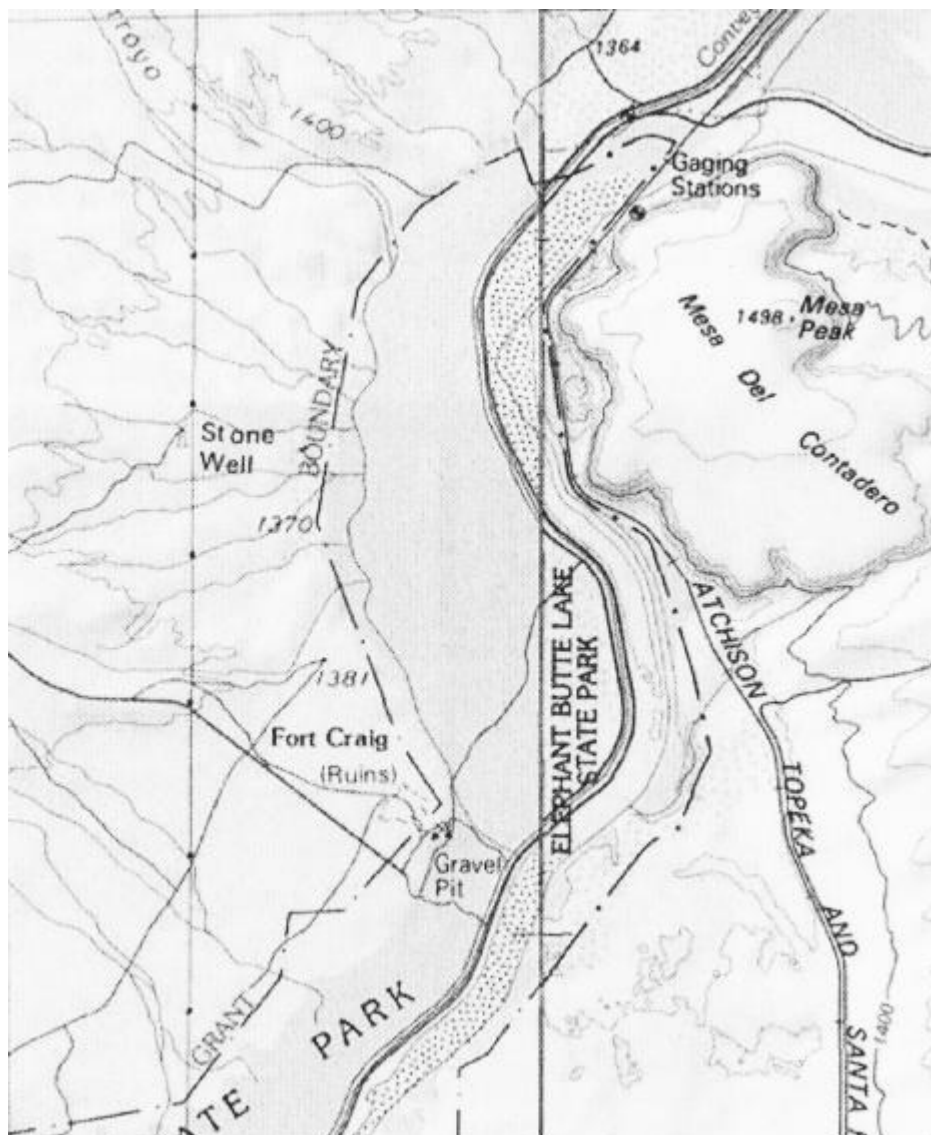


Figure 1. General location of Fort Craig.

Constructed in 1854 to protect the settlements along the Rio Grande from Apache raids, Fort Craig became one of the largest and most important forts in the southwest, playing a significant role in the Civil War and Indian

wars (Carroll and Sebastian 2000; Gerow 2004; Purcell 2005). Gerow (2004:48), who presents a thorough history of the fort, provides an excellent description :

The fort consisted of a large complex of adobe and rock buildings surrounded by an earthen ramp and ditch with two bastions... The buildings included quarters for two companies, officers' quarters, quartermaster's offices and warehouses, a guardhouse, hospital, blacksmith shop, wagon yards, stables, sutler's store, and carpenter's shop... The wall enclosing these buildings encompassed 1,050 by 600 feet, the longer dimension running roughly east to west.

The dimensions of Fort Craig can be visualized through an 1866 ground plan (Figure 1.2) and an aerial photograph from 1996 (Figure 1.3).

In February of 1862, Fort Craig played a major role in the New Mexico theatre of the Civil War as its forces, consisting of Union Army, New Mexico, California and Colorado Volunteers, engaged the Texas Confederates in the Battle of Valverde. While the battle was won by the Confederates, Fort Craig remained under Union control as both sides sustained heavy casualties. Nearly one hundred men from the Union forces died and were buried in the cemetery. The Confederate success was short lived as the Battle of Valverde taxed their supplies and they were defeated later that year at the Battle of Glorieta Pass (Crane 2000; Gerow 2004: 124).

After the Civil War, Fort Craig was one of many posts in New Mexico from which military operations were launched against Apaches, predominantly the Warm Springs, Chiricahua, and Mescalero bands. During the mid-1870's, warfare with the Apaches abated somewhat and in 1878 Fort Craig was largely abandoned save for a small detail of one officer and seven enlisted men to watch over the property (Gerow 2004: 10).

Records from the National Archives show that in 1878 the graves from the post cemetery were exhumed and re-buried at national military cemeteries at Fort Marcy in Santa Fe. But shortly after this, in 1880, Victorio and his Warm Springs Apache fled the reservation and began an extensive raiding campaign against the Army and civilians in New Mexico, Texas and Mexico. Fort Craig was re-garrisoned until 1886 when it was abandoned and auctioned off. One more time, the graves from the post cemetery were exhumed and re-buried, this time at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

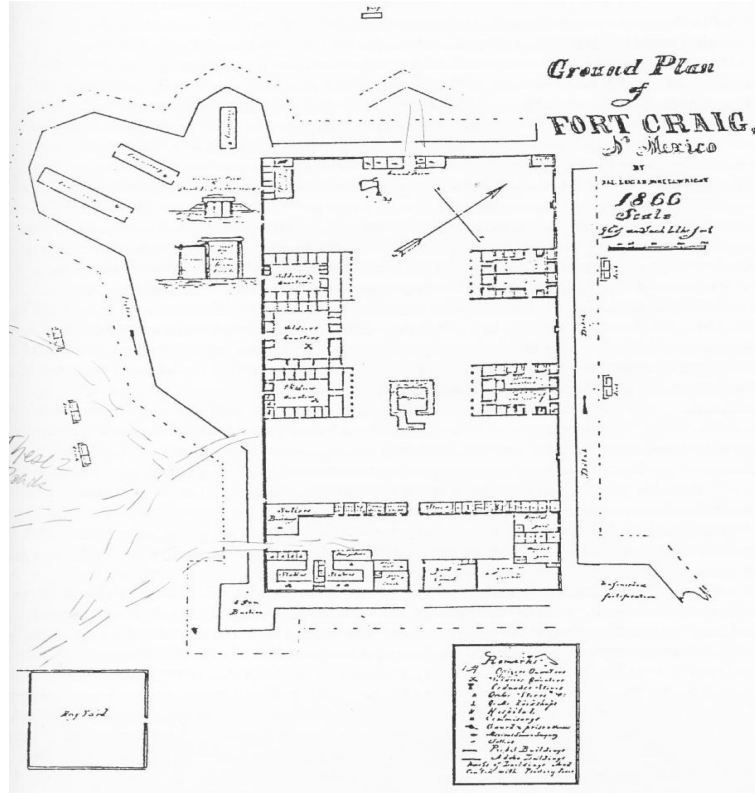


Figure 1.2. Ground plan of Fort Craig (Gerow 2004).

Buffalo Soldiers

Among the troops that served at Fort Craig were the Buffalo Soldiers, all African American regiments who had been accorded this nickname by the Indian tribes they fought. Taken as a compliment, one of the regiments, the 10th Cavalry, incorporated the likeness of a buffalo on its regimental crest (Billington 1991: xi; Jenkins 2000: 184; Schubert 2003: 47). In 1866, when Congress re-organized the Army, they designated two cavalry regiments, the 9th and 10th, and four infantry regiments, the 24th, 38th, 57th, and 125th, as all African-American (except the officers, who were White) (Jenkins 200: 184).

These units quickly traveled west to participate in the Indian wars in the southern Plains and southwest. Despite the discrimination these troops endured from fellow soldiers and settlers, by most accounts they served with distinction and had the lowest desertion rate than any other group (Jenkins 200: 183).

In New Mexico, Buffalo Soldier regiments served at numerous military establishments, including Forts Craig, Bayard, Selden, Cummings, and Bascom (Jenkins 200: 185). Among the duties carried out by



Figure 1.3. Aerial photograph from 1996 showing the Fort Craig ruins. The cemetery is located to lower left of the fort proper (Bureau of Reclamation photo).

Buffalo Soldier regiments were military campaigns against Apaches, conducting forays against cattle rustlers, guarding stagecoaches, mail routes, survey parties and supply trains, and building roads (Jenkins 2000:186). Between 1866 and 1886, African American soldiers contingents from the 38th and 125th infantries and the 9th Cavalry were stationed at Fort Craig where their major activities were to guard stagecoaches and mail routes along the old Camino Real (Jenkins 2000: 186).

Tale of a Soldier

Thomas Smith, a twenty-three year old farmer from New Market, Kentucky, enlisted for a three year stint in the 125th Infantry at Bolling Green, Kentucky, November 14th, 1864 (The Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917: Compiled Military Service Records; Civil War, 1861-1865 Record Group 94). After the Civil War, he headed west with his regiment. A member of A Company, Private Smith and sixty-three other soldiers arrived at Fort Craig in September of 1866 (Gerow 2004: 398; Jenkins 2000). His tenure at the fort was brief, for on November 21st, Private Smith died of “inflammation of the bowels,” a complication from Cholera. He was buried three days later. According to the burial registries from Fort Craig, Private Smith was buried in the post cemetery (The Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General: Cemetery Commission: National Post and Cemetery Papers, Reports, And Correspondence; Fort Craig and Fort Leavenworth Record Group 92).

The Mummy Story

In November of 2004, Dr. Don Alberts, a professional historian, walked into the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Area Office in Albuquerque. We had met Alberts the previous month at the Fort Craig Conference, in Socorro, New Mexico. We had agreed to provide him with reports from Reclamation's archaeological investigations at another Civil War era fort, Fort McRae. While at the office, Alberts, unsolicited, related to us an incredible story. He said that he knew a man, who subsequently turned out to be collector and amateur historian Dee Brecheisen, who had in his possession the “mummified” remains of a Buffalo Soldier, and that Brecheisen was keeping the remains in his house.

Alberts said that the well preserved remains, still dressed in a Civil War era uniform, were clearly African American due to the prevalence of kinky hair and patches of brown mummified flesh on the facial bones. The historian revealed that he had first seen the remains approximately twenty years ago, and knew that the remains had come from the cemetery of Fort Craig. According to Alberts, Brecheisen had admitted to digging up the remains in the early 1970s. Alberts ended by saying that Brecheisen was dying and he was urging him to give up the remains.

Following our conversation with the historian, we decided to check the land status of the Fort Craig cemetery. Once it was established that the cemetery was on Reclamation land, we visited the site in late January of 2005.

We were accompanied by an archaeologist from the Bureau of Land Management, the agency that had management responsibility for the ruins of Fort Craig (the boundary between Reclamation land and the National Historic site of Fort Craig runs immediately west of the cemetery which sits on the terrace lip between the floodplain and the ruins of the fort (Figure 1.4). Three things became apparent during the field trip. First, the discovery of several clearly defined looter holes indicated that the cemetery had been vandalized in recent years. Second, the BLM archaeologist repeated the mummy story to us and, furthermore, had known about the remains for approximately one year. Third, we were informed that Brecheisen had died without indicating the whereabouts of the human remains.

In light of the fact that the cemetery had been vandalized on at least two or more occasions and human remains had been removed, Reclamation made the decision to hire an archaeological contract firm to conduct a geophysical survey of the cemetery. Despite the fact that Fort Craig had been abandoned in 1886 and the Army had conducted two sets of exhumations and re-interments at national military cemeteries (discussed below), it was possible that there might still be intact graves in the ground.

The Investigation

By February of 2005, the mummy story had gotten the attention of Federal agents from the Bureau of Land Management, and a case file was opened in Albuquerque. Even though Brecheisen was dead, those remains were still unaccounted for and it was unclear whether or not any associated artifacts from the cemetery had passed into the possession of other individuals. What was clear was that Private Smith did not show up on any of the registries of soldiers from Fort Craig who were re-interred at either Santa Fe or Fort Leavenworth. The subsequent investigation and aftermath would result in the intersection of law enforcement techniques, historical research and archaeological excavations at the cemetery.

Throughout February and March, 2005, Federal investigators interviewed friends, relatives and associates of Brecheisen.

Late in the afternoon of April 25th, we received a call from one of the agents who said that a “drop” of human remains was going to occur at a specified location, and that we would be needed to determine if the remains were “of archaeological interest” (that is, if they exceeded the age threshold of one hundred years as established in the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979). When we arrived at the location, the agent, Alberts,



Figure 1.4. Fort Craig National Historic Site. View to the east. Mesa del Contadero is at the upper left, the cemetery is at the tree line just above and to the right of the ruins

and a Deputy Medical Investigator from the Office of Medical Investigations (OMI) were standing at the back of agent's vehicle examining a skull. It was the only human remains that had been dropped, and it was clearly the skull of an African-American. The skull had been taken from Brecheisen's residence (still inhabited by his children) and placed in a brown paper bag in an adjacent lot.

Both we and the OMI technician agreed that the skull was probably older than one hundred years. Alberts identified the skull as being the same one he had seen twenty years previous sans the post-cranial remains. Moreover, he asserted that the remains were those of Private Thomas Smith. He said he knew this because Brecheisen had told him, and had provided him a copy of one of the Fort Craig burial registries in which Private Smith's name had been circled (a copy of this registry was provided to law enforcement, see Figure 1.5). Alberts went on to say that Brecheisen knew the identity of the remains by matching up the grave number on the registry with the same number on a cemetery plot map. When asked about the whereabouts of the burial plot map,

List Continued

No.	Name of decedent	Rank	Regiment	Date of Death	Cause of Death	Remarks
83	Connelly John	Private	1st Regt. I. L.	July 18 1865	Not known	
83	Rouch Michael	Private	1 " "	March 16 "	"	
84	Bannon Metator O.	"	1st Regt. "	April 25 "	"	
85	Boke Charles S.	"	1st Regt. "	May 1 "	"	
86	Wright W.	"	1st Regt. "	" 5 "	"	
87	Paul Martin	"	1st Regt. "	" 5 "	"	
88	Looper J. A.	"	1st Regt. "	" 8 "	Drowned	in Rio Grande
89	Leiba J. J.	"	1st Regt. "	" 8 "	"	" "
90	Gulian Joseph M.	"	1st Regt. "	" 8 "	"	" "
91	Appleby G. L.	"	1st Regt. "	Oct 25 "	Killed	by Indians
92	Donis Patrick	"	1st Regt. "	Aug 25 "	Not known	
93	Rutherford J. A.	"	1st Regt. "	April 11 1866	"	
94	Bacon Louis	"	1st Regt. "	Nov 1865	"	
95	Lossman J. D.	"	3rd U.S. Cav.	July 5 1858	Killed	Not known how
96	Doris David	"	1st U.S. Inf.	Jan 8 1866	Not known	
97	Smith Thomas	"	125th U.S. Inf.	Nov 21 1866	Killed	
98	Dunn Marcell	"	3rd U.S. Cav.	Jan 9 1864	"	

Figure 1.5. Portion of an 1868 burial registry from Fort Craig. Thomas Smith's circled name is second from the bottom.

Alberts replied that he did not know. The next question was easy. What else was in the house?

On April 28th, we accompanied agents from the Bureau of Land Management and Federal Bureau of Investigation on a warranted search of Brecheisen's residence. Once the house was secured, we were brought inside to determine if any artifacts or documents found could be provenienced to Fort Craig. While there, we observed the following items of archaeological importance: hundreds of potsherds lying in a landscape bed on one side of the house (Figure 1.6); old historic bottles located in an adjacent bed; 34 metates (two of basalt with legs, three total basalt) lining the driveway (Figure 1.7); 2 old beer bottles in a window sill facing the driveway; in the garage boxes labeled "Fort Conrad" and "Fort Craig" which contained buttons.

We also observed a bottle labeled “Fort Conrad.” Hanging on the back porch were two “US” iron artifacts and an iron pistol. Along the back of the house there was a landscape bed filled with potsherds, iron artifacts, and manos with metates. Buckets contained hundreds of Civil War era bullets and cartridge casings (Figure 1.8).

In a barrel taken from a shed in the back yard there was what appeared to be excavated remains, including soil, potsherds and several bones. We thought all of this was a novel approach to artifact preservation and curation.



Figure 1.6. Potsherds in landscape bed.

Inside the garage, hanging on a wall, was a home-made sifting screen. The vast majority of artifacts were not seized, for two reasons. First, it was not possible to determine their provenience and second, the warrant was very specific in that only documents and artifacts related to Fort Craig could be seized. Even though the house and the grounds contained thousands of artifacts, it was clear that sometime prior to, or shortly after, Brecheisen died, showcases of artifacts had been removed. Subsequent photos obtained revealed that these cases contained valuable prehistoric pots, a pair of Civil War era Army issue brogans or shoes, a neck scarf and books. Photographs of both the shoes and the neck scarf had been labeled “taken from an empty coffin at the Fort Craig cemetery.”

No other human remains or Civil War era military clothing were discovered. However, copies of letters from the National Archives, dated to the 1970's and early 1980's, were discovered. All of these letters were responses by archivists to Brecheisen's request for information on Fort Craig maps, maps of other forts, and "cemeterial files." There were also personal letters from friends and relatives who were similarly engaged in digging on public and private lands in New Mexico and Texas.

As the investigation continued into the spring and summer of 2005, our roles involved two interrelated aspects: 1) genealogical research; and 2) archaeological excavations. While investigators had testimony that the skull belonged to Thomas Smith, and therefore, had been illegally removed from the cemetery, it was felt that forensic corroboration would strengthen the case, especially if it ever went before a criminal court in which "reasonable doubt" (rather than "preponderance of evidence" as in a civil case) was the standard in determining guilt.



Figure 1.7. Metates line the driveway of Gravedigger's house.

It was hoped that conducting genealogical research on Private Smith would reveal the existence of a living female descendant, in which case it might be possible to collect mitochondrial DNA samples to compare with the recovered skull. Hungerford spent several months in communication with genealogists who specialized in identifying the lineal descendents of slaves and former slaves, including Buffalo Soldiers. However, given the sparse biographical information obtained from the National Archives on Smith, coupled with the oftentimes sparse paper trails and lack of census data for African-Americans during the 19th century, this avenue proved to be a failure. The only other means of obtaining comparable forensic data would be through the excavation of graves in the cemetery. As will be shown below, however, this was not the only reason the decision was made to conduct excavations.

Excavations at Fort Craig Cemetery

There were three dimensions to the investigation that drove the decision to conduct excavations at the cemetery. First, as previously stated, there was the law enforcement issue of tying the recovered cranium to the cemetery to corroborate the eyewitness testimony. Assuming that Brecheisen was not as meticulous in his methods as a trained archaeologist, it was possible that partial remains of Private Smith were still in the ground. Second, there was a re-burial dimension. What if there were additional graves with human remains still present in the cemetery? Even though there were two episodes of exhumation when the fort was active and just prior to final closure, documents from the National Archives revealed that record keeping at the fort was sloppy, many graves were unmarked as grave markers became dilapidated, and approximately nineteen graves were still unaccounted for and presumably intact and un-exhumed. If there were still soldiers or civilians buried there, the moral thing to do was to find them, properly excavate them and have them re-interred in a protected military cemetery. A final dimension was Reclamation's cultural resources responsibility to proper site management. Results of the geophysical survey, which included techniques of metal detection, proton magnetometer, and ground penetrating radar, strongly indicated that an estimated twenty to thirty intact graves might still be present in the cemetery (Purcell 2005). Given the site's history of past looting and its highly accessible location, protection of the site would be difficult at best. The question whether to excavate or not was overshadowed by a much more difficult one: where to dig? The cemetery was 150 feet long and 125 feet wide, a total area of 18,750 square feet. Any attempt at excavations needed a much more narrowly defined area.

Where's the Map?

Recall that, according to Alberts account, Brecheisen was able to identify the grave of Thomas Smith by comparing a burial registry with a plot map. This registry was compiled in 1868 by Sergeant W.F. Spurgin of the 38th Infantry. It lists Private Thomas Smith of the 125th Infantry in Grave No. 97. It also lists two other Buffalo Soldiers, Private Irwin Smith of the 38th Infantry in Grave No. 101 and Caleb Scott of the 38th Infantry in Grave No. 103. Plot maps, like the 1868 map illustrated here from historic Fort McRae (Figure 1.9.), a contemporary with Craig, generally would show the layout of the graves in rows or sections and then a list of individual graves within each row. Notes accompanying this map describe the layout (Leggett 1868):

The graves in this cemetery are numbered from 1 to 10 in each row.

The rows are numbered from 1 to 4 according to location as follows.

Row No.1 lies along the western wall and the first grave in the row in the northwest corner. The graves run from north to south, number 1 being next to the north wall and number 10 next to the south wall.

The graves in all the rows are numbered in the same way, i.e. from north to south. Row No. 2 lies east of No. 1 and on the west side of the principal avenue. Row No. 3 lies on the east side and next to the avenue.

Row No. 4 lies along the eastern wall between No. 3 and the wall.

While the Fort Craig cemetery was larger and contained more graves, it is reasonable to assume a layout similar to McRae. Thus, with map in hand, it would have been a simple matter for Brecheisen to orient himself in the cemetery and then check the row number and grave number against the registry. Alberts also said that, while he had seen a copy of the plot map, he didn't know its whereabouts. We reasoned that if we could locate the plot map, then that would provide the necessary reference point for the excavations. During the summer of 2005, extensive searches were conducted by archival staff at the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland and Denver, Colorado.

Meanwhile, we conducted searches in archives at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, and the University of Texas-Austin. The map could not be located.

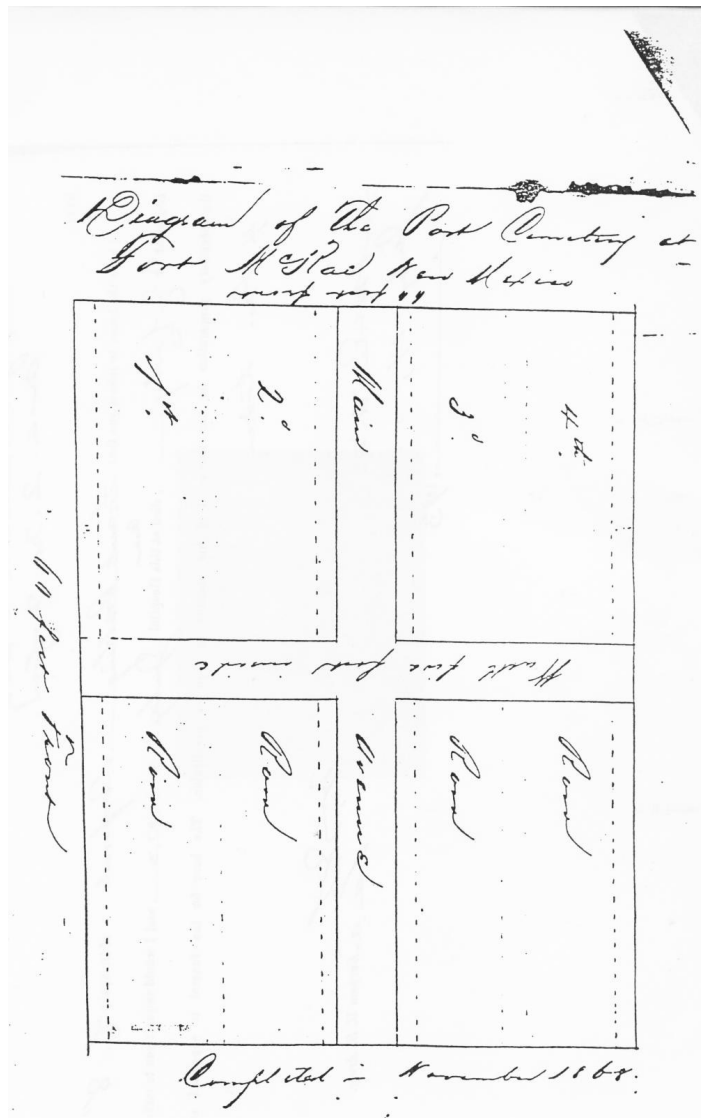


Figure 1.8. 1868 sketch map of the Fort McRae cemetery.

An independent archival search conducted by Four Corners Research, Inc (the contractor that conducted the geophysical testing of the cemetery) also failed to turn up the map. The fact that such a map existed is confirmed in Fort Craig documents (Kelton 1886; Spurgin 1868). Without the map, another way was needed to narrow down the search area.

A Stake Marks the Spot

In early June of 2005, we received a phone call from the BLM Special Agent, who told us that he and an FBI agent were headed down to the cemetery. A person of interest in the case was going to show them the

location where some of the human remains had been dug up. This information was coming through an unnamed source. When the agents arrived at the cemetery and proceeded to the grounds, they saw a wooden stake in the ground. It was labeled, “Buffalo Soldier” (Figure 1.9).

Subsequently, the anonymous source turned out to be an associate of Brecheisen’s. More importantly, he turned out to be an individual who had dug in the cemetery in the past, and claimed to have been with Brecheisen when he came across the grave of a Buffalo Soldier. According to this source, the skull of the remains he saw had only a small “clump” of black, kinky hair. This source subsequently provided a photograph of a skeleton lying next to an excavated grave (Figure 1.10). When shown a photograph of the skull believed to be that of



Figure 1.9. “Buffalo Soldier” stake.

Private Smith, the source said it was not the one he saw at the grave site (examination of the photograph for the “clump” was inconclusive). Another witness corroborated this story when shown a photograph of the Smith skull, when she replied that the skull accompanying additional remains she had seen only a clump of black, kinky hair.



Figure 1.10. Photograph of alleged Buffalo Soldier provided by an eyewitness.

.All circumstantial evidence available pointed to the conclusion that two sets of Buffalo Soldier remains had been removed from the cemetery by Brecheisen.

If the informant's placement of the stake was an approximate recollection of the location of the graves he saw thirty years ago, and if the graves of Smith and the second set of remains were, like those at Fort McRae, laid out north to south, then we had a working model of how to proceed with excavations. We began excavations on June 16th, 2005, and were assisted by federal agents and evidence technicians from BLM, the FBI and New Mexico State Police. The results of these excavations are presented in Chapter 3.

In the Spring of 2007, the U.S. for the District of New Mexico formally declined to pursue the case any further, citing a lack of leads and the fact that Brecheisen had died. This cleared the way for Reclamation to pursue its management and moral responsibility to perform a full scale mitigation of the Fort Craig cemetery. In the late summer and early fall of 2007, Reclamation contracted with Four Corners Research, Inc, to complete this task. The results of the 2007 excavations are also presented in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2: Excavations at the Fort Craig Cemetery

2005 Excavations

The 2005 excavations at the Fort Craig cemetery began in June and continued through August. These excavations were necessitated by a criminal investigation into the grave robbing and removal of human remains. Fortunately, in early June an eyewitness to the grave robbing came forward. Anonymously at first, he provided a location in the cemetery where a stake, labeled “Buffalo Soldier,” was placed in the ground. This gave us a starting place. Reasoning, correctly as it turned out, that the coffins were placed in north-south rows and facing east-west, we began by excavating a north-to-south trench measuring two feet wide by twenty feet in length. The stake served as the southwest corner of this unit. This trench was 6 feet to the west of the N40 E25 datum point established for the 2005 work. Excavations proceeded by shovel skimming and screening fill through ¼” hardware cloth. At a depth of 12 inches, wood chunks were detected. Trowels replaced shovels at this point. At a depth of 2 feet and five inches, and 11 feet from the south end of the trench, and east-to-west trending feature was exposed. This turned out to be an intact coffin, save for the lid (Figure 3.1). The coffin measured 75” long, x 22” wide and 12” in depth. There were no human remains in it, but it did contain several military buttons, small amounts of fabric that appeared to be uniform fragments, a nail and scraps of metal .



Figure 3.1. Empty rectangular coffin.

This rectangular coffin was empty, having either been exhumed by the U.S. army and/or vandalized. The scant remains of one other coffin were located seven feet north of the intact coffin.

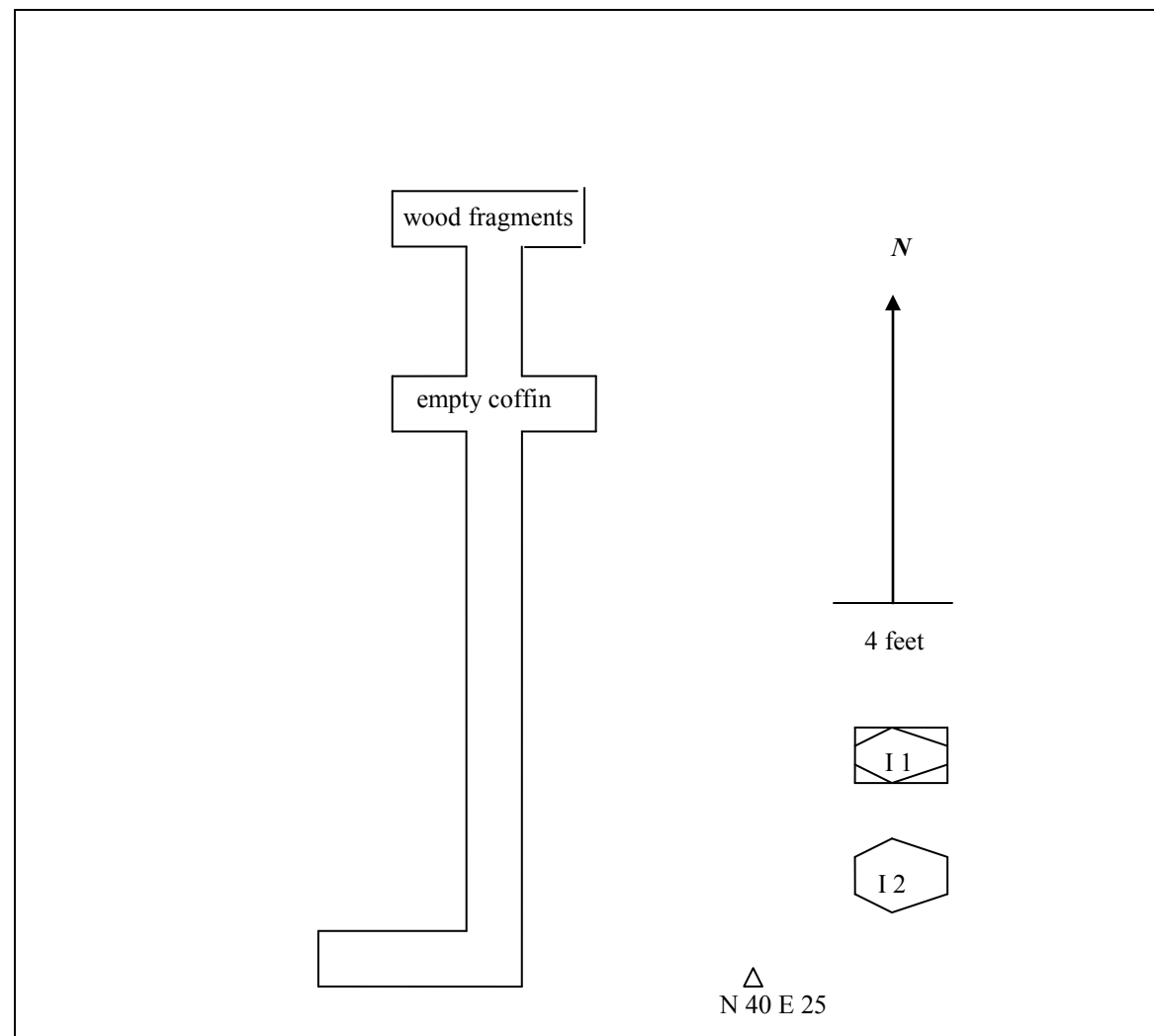


Figure 3.2. Map of manual trench in relation to datum and infant coffins, 2005.

This second coffin was mostly gone, with only a few wood plank fragments, small bits of fabric and one button recovered. The entire trench is portrayed in Figure 3.2. By this time it was clear that we were hitting coffin remains and the work was progressing at a snails pace. It was decided to bring in a backhoe and expose a larger area radiating out from the stake. This area is represented in Figures 3.7 and 3.8. As the backhoe stripped off the overburden,

we monitored for changes in soil that might indicate a subsurface feature. Once these changes were detected (Figure 3.3), the coffin was exposed manually (Figure 3.4) and excavated as a single unit (Figure 3.5). In all, twenty-eight coffins were exposed, and of these eighteen were excavated according to the following procedure. Once the coffin was exposed, “windows,” approximately 16 inches long x the coffin width were excavated at each end of the coffin until the bottom was reached. If any human remains were encountered, then the entire coffin was excavated. If not, then we moved on to the next one. Once we were into the excavations, the informant who had placed the stake in the ground told us that all the coffins he had seen were of the “shoulder-shaped” variety rather than the rectangular ones. At this point we decided to discontinue excavation of the rectangular coffins (these were subsequently excavated in 2007) and concentrate on those we felt were most germane to the case. The majority of the exposed coffins were rectangular-shaped and many of them, particularly units 9 through 16 (Figure 3.9), were rather shallow as the backhoe had stripped less than two feet of overburden before the telltale soil changes were encountered. These coffins had an average depth of 14 inches below ground surface. Several of these coffins were only 12 inches below the ground surface. The rectangular coffins were of a standard size, measuring 75” long x 22” wide and 12” deep. We believe (the 2007 excavations added strength to this belief) that the rectangular coffins represent soldiers (upwards of one hundred) who died during the battle of Valverde in February of 1862. These coffins were, compared with the shoulder-shaped ones, relatively faster to construct. They also shared two other characteristics. They predominated in the central portion of the cemetery and they were comparatively shallow. All of these characteristics are consistent with the need to bury a large number of corpses quickly. The shoulder-shaped coffins were somewhat less standardized. Three of them measured 10” wide at the head, lengths of 24” to the “shoulder-arm” expansion point and 48” to the foot, and 12” wide at the foot. Others were slightly different, measuring 11” x 54” x 19” by 20”. They also were buried deeper, as they had an average depth of 40 inches below ground surface. Two units, I1 and I2 contained the remains of human infants. I1 was a very unique coffin as it consisted of a rectangular border with four angular wood planks set inside to make the coffin into a smaller version of the shoulder shaped variety. Infant 1 was slightly older than a neonate (JPAC Central Identification Laboratory 2007: 3). I2, from a small shoulder-shaped coffin, consisted of approximately a 20% complete skeleton of an infant that was probably four to six months old. A third set of infant remains came from a pothole (Hole B) to the north of the backhoe area. This hole was 25 meters southeast of the northwest corner of the cemetery.



Figure 3.3 Working in manual trench, June 2005

This hole had numerous large rocks that had been tossed into it. It contained only small bits of coffin wood. But excavations also recovered iron fragments that might have been coffin handles, a bottle neck with an applied lip and bits of metal. All these were encountered at 29 to 30 inches below ground surface. The infant remains were found just below these, at 32 inches below the ground surface. The results of the 2005 excavations are presented in Table 3.1. Human remains were found in sixteen of the coffin units, while artifacts contemporaneous with the occupation of Fort Craig were found in nineteen. Intrusive trash was found in four of the units. This latter category included a cellophane cigarette wrapper. All coffin fill was screened using 1/4" hardware cloth, except the infant coffins, which were screened through 1/8" inch mesh. Once the excavations were completed, all the coffins were re-buried and the area smoothed over with the backhoe. The artifacts and human remains are analyzed elsewhere in this report.



Figure 3.4. Soil change signifying the presence of a coffin.



Figure 3.5. Coffin wood exposed by backhoe.

Unit	Nails	Human Remains	Rodent	Uniform Buttons	Other buttons	Glasses	Bullets	Casings	Metal	Fabric	Leather	Recent Trash	Total Items
A	1			7	6				1	3			18
B	6	3			1			1	2	3			16
1													
2													
Infant 1	1	3			4								8
Infant 2		50			2								52
3	18	15	19										52
4	4	2	81		2								89
5		4	10		1							46	61
6	3	20			1								24
7		1									9	2	12
13	14	52		4	3		1	1	1		33		109
17	10	6			10		2			4			32
19	1						1					2	4
20	14	40		3			1			1			59
21	3	11			4	1							19
22	3	33	5	6	7			1	1	4			60
24				1									1
25	1	2	6										9
26	3	24	1										28
General Surface	2			2	1		4	4	3				16
Hole B		14				1			14			2	31
Total	84	280	122	23	42	2	9	7	22	15	42	52	700

Table 3.1 Artifacts from 2005 excavations.

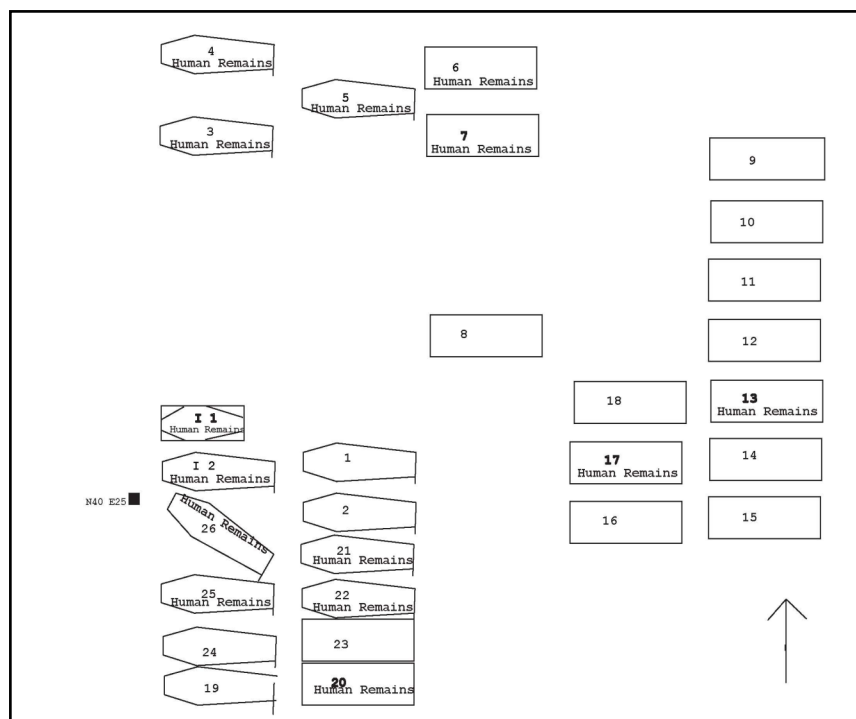


Figure 3.8. Sketch Map from 2005 excavations. Scale: 3/4 inch = 6 feet

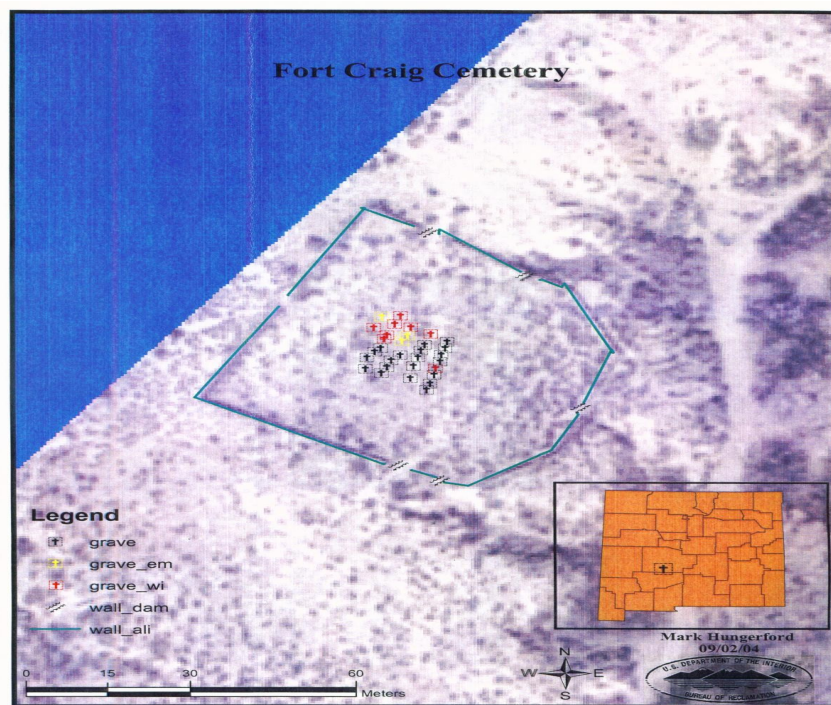


Figure 3.9. GPS map of 2005 excavations



Figure 3.6. Excavated, empty “shoulder-shaped” coffin, August 2005.



Figure 3.7. Cigarette wrapper found in empty coffin, August 2005.

2007 Excavations

Following the 2005 excavations a third issue had presented itself to Reclamation, that of cultural resources site management. The results of the geophysical survey along with archival sources indicated that there could be intact graves still present at the cemetery (Purcell et al, 2005:34-35). Recommendations by the contractor were explicit that “all intact human remains be removed from the Fort Craig Post Cemetery and be respectfully re-buried in a US National Cemetery” (Purcell et al, 2005: 36). The cemetery is an archaeological site of significant interest and is related to the National Register historic site of Fort Craig. Casual digging over the years had resulted in one attempt to protect it (a barb wire fence was put up around 1980 but was subsequently torn down) but the cemetery was still vulnerable. The overall extent of the digging and the presence of intact burials was not clear. Reclamation management made the decision that the only way to protect any remaining intact graves was to accept the contractor’s recommendations. In the spring of 2007, funding was secured to conduct a full scale, complete excavation of the cemetery. After conducting the appropriate consultations with the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Division and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Reclamation set out to conduct full scale excavations.

To fully excavate the cemetery and recover any remaining burials, a team of Four Corners Research personnel and Bureau of Reclamation archaeologists returned to the Fort Craig Post Cemetery in August, 2007. Since the ground penetrating radar data used during Phase I investigations had not been completely analyzed by the time that we returned to the cemetery, the Phase II approach was designed to mechanically excavate the cemetery completely to locate every grave and determine grave status (intact, disturbed, or exhumed). The result of these efforts proved highly effective and resulted in the discovery of 64 intact burials (10 of which were disturbed by looters) and one small wooden box identified as surgeon’s pits. Over a period of 6.5 weeks, 220 graves were located, investigated, and contents recovered, including considerable evidence relating to the looting activities.

Some basic assumptions were made prior to initiating Phase II. First, intact burials were still present in the cemetery, the numbers of which ranged from as few as two to as many as 30, interpretations supported by preliminary remote sensing data. Second, burial orientation would be more or less east-west, a common orientation for Christian burials. Third, coffin depth would occur at a common depth, uniform according to military standards. With these assumptions in mind, the process of locating graves began by subdividing areas of the cemetery, initially according to general grid units and later according to the orientation of grave rows.

Mechanical exposure of graves was accomplished by using a backhoe equipped with a 5-ft-wide smooth-blade stripping bucket. Stripping began along the west wall of the cemetery, in the southwest quadrant.

No apparent disturbance was noted in the first 6-m-wide swath that was stripped, and no graves were found here much to our surprise. Stripping efforts were continued into the northwest quadrant along the west wall, where almost immediately, areas of disturbance (graves) were detected that measured approximately 1 m in width and 2 m in length, oriented east-west. Through mechanical stripping, grave detection was generally quickly made, often at shallow depths, within 20 to 40 cm of the surface. Stripping was stopped when coffin wood was encountered, but on occasion, the wood encountered represented displaced wooden elements of the coffin (e.g., the lid positioned at an angle to the coffin or the coffin having been removed from the grave and thrown back in at an angle). The stripping process proved efficient, removing sediments until the tops of the coffins were encountered, but required additional stripping when displaced coffin elements were encountered. In only two cases were individuals buried without coffins; in these cases, mechanical excavations were stopped well above the burials and no damage caused to the interred. Mechanical stripping also demonstrated that considerable variation existed between depths of graves, with some coffins encountered with as little as 10 cm of fill over them, while others were in excess of 120 cm below the surface.

Mechanical stripping was conducted in linear areas, with the stripped sediments piled in areas previously stripped and where graves had been excavated. This reduced moving backdirt and saved considerable time. Stripped areas were only covered with backdirt once all graves and recording was completed for those areas.

In only one instance did mechanic stripping expose human remains. While stripping above Feature 177 (Grave 45), a cranium and long bone were exposed. Both were well above the top of the coffin, perhaps placed on the historically exhumed grave by looters. It is not known with certainty, but the cranium and humerus probably were removed from neighboring Feature 112 (Grave 46) and placed on the adjacent coffin.

Once a coffin was exposed by the backhoe, the edges of its ends and sides were fully delineated, mapped, recorded, and photographed. Test windows were placed in each end of the coffin to determine if human remains were present. In theory, this approach afforded a quick means to assess the status of the grave (e.g., intact, disturbed, or exhumed) and a quick means of assessing the presence/absence of human remains (cranium and feet/lower legs present or absent) and if the historic exhumation was thorough. Historically exhumed graves generally were devoid of nearly all skeletal elements, but may contain some personal effects (shoes, fabric, buttons, neck scarves, etc.). Common skeletal remains found in exhumed coffins included phalanges, metacarpals, and metatarsals, and occasionally vertebrae.

Coffins were fully excavated when intact, disturbed, or partial burials were encountered. Detailed drawings were produced of each burial (Appendix ___), documenting the position of the human remains and associated items. Photographs were taken of the entire grave and close-ups of details. These efforts were particularly helpful in documenting the archaeological context of the graves, their contents, and nature of the looting that occurred. The preservation and context of the graves were variable. Some, like Feature 109 (Figure 3.15), were highly disturbed by looting, indicated by skeletal remains out of anatomical order or missing and the presence of intrusive trash. Others, like Feature 117, (Figure 3.16), were very well intact, showing well preserved remains and artifacts. Still others, as illustrated by Feature 130 (Figure 3.17), contained human remains that were highly skeletalized with very few artifacts present.

Summary

Recovery efforts in the Fort Craig Post Cemetery resulted in 248 graves being investigated – 28 by BOR during Phase I and 220 jointly by Four Corners Research and BOR during Phase II. In all, 64 complete or near complete sets of human remains were recovered. These included 35 adult males, 4 adult females, 25 infants/children and a surgeons pit. Preservation of the remains was variable, as some were completely skeletalized while others bore remarkably well-preserved hair, skin tissue and clothing. Burials in the western portion of the cemetery, by and large, were in a better state of preservation than those in the eastern portion. This is probably related to drainage variability as the cemetery sloped gently downward from west to east. It is likely that each grave had been marked in some fashion at the time of burial, but only remnants of grave markers were found positioned immediately west of the coffin. Grave markers were primarily wooden planks, the lower portion of which was sometimes preserved below the modern ground surface. Occasionally, grave markers were found within historically exhumed graves, some possessing a white or light-colored paint but no discernable lettering. Their presence inside the coffin implies that after the body had been exhumed, the marker was removed from its set position and discarded into the empty grave. Several of the wooden markers appeared as though they had been cut or severed at the ground surface, perhaps by mechanical disturbance. Three graves possessed remnants of concrete and stone headstone bases. These three graves were clustered in the north-central portion of the cemetery, including Features 157, 158, and 160. Each had been exhumed historically. The apparent elaborate nature of these grave markers may represent the highest ranking officers killed during the Valverde Battle, although no evidence has been found to support this assertion at this time.

Documentation of each grave revealed that eleven exhibited evidence of looting, ranging from the near complete removal of the individual to total disarticulation of the remains with selected elements removed (often the cranium and occasionally long bones). Accounts from witnesses and other reliable sources indicate that at a minimum, five other burials had been disturbed or removed. If looters had completely removed individual burials, we may have placed examined coffins devoid of human remains within the “historically exhumed” category, being unable to denote the time general period of disturbance. Discoveries of modern items within coffins (e.g., bi-metal and aluminum beverage cans; an NFL plastic players cup from 7-11; other plastic items) indicate looting activities and possible disturbance to intact burials. In Feature 109, for example, a white plastic kitchen-type garbage bag filled with numerous historic-period boot fragments and shoes was found among the disarticulated remains of the interred. The collection of footwear had apparently been collected from a number of graves and then discarded within Feature 109. This type of artifact collecting/discarding suggests looting may have been more extensive than witnesses suggested. Judging from the locations of the looted burials and recent trash, it can be concluded that the looting at the cemetery was systematic and extensive. At least one coffin from almost every row in the central and southeast sections of the cemetery had been subjected to looting.



Figure 3.10. Backhoe removing overburden during 2007 excavations.



Figure 3.11. Row of exposed coffins in central portion of the cemetery.



Figure 3.14. Intact infant grave.



Figure 3.15. Surgeons pit. Notice amputated long bone at upper right in pit.



Figure 3.16. Feature 109, a looted burial. The white plastic garbage bag contained military issue shoe parts from several individuals.



Figure 3.17 Burial, showing excellent preservation



Figure 3.18. Feature 130, a burial, highly skeletalized

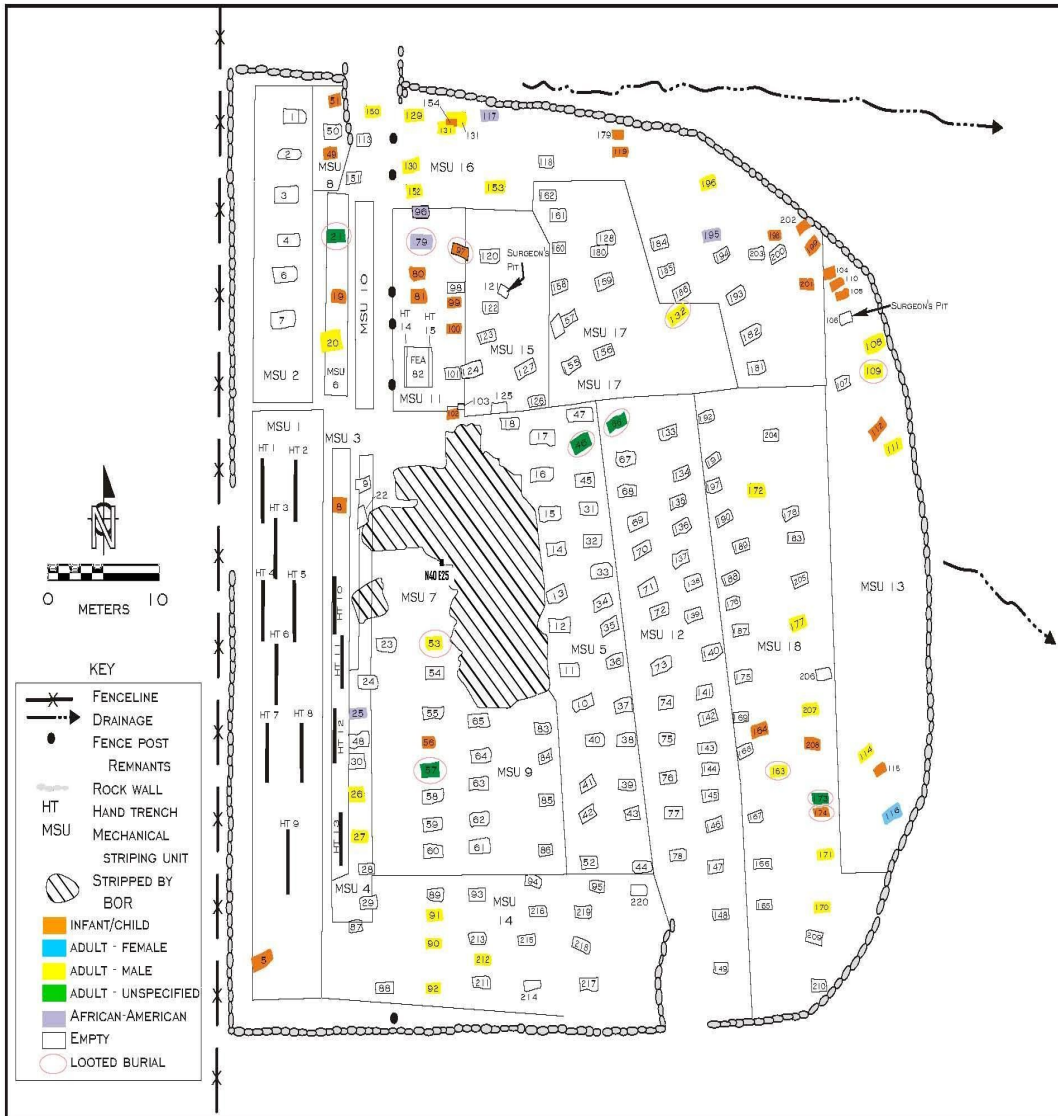


Figure 3.19. Excavation map from the 2007 excavations.

Chapter 3: Artifacts from the Fort Craig Cemetery

Artifacts from the Fort Craig cemetery can be grouped into three related assemblages. Group 1 artifacts were recovered from the surface or very shallow sub- surface of the cemetery during a geophysical survey in 2005 (Purcell, et al. 2005). These artifacts were discovered during a metal detector sweep of the cemetery in the spring of 2005. Group 2 comes from the focused excavations conducted in the summer of 2005 during the criminal investigation of the grave robbing of human remains from the cemetery. These excavations were concentrated in the approximate center of the cemetery, where an informant said the grave robbing had occurred (See excavation maps in Chapter 2). All of the artifacts from Group 2 were recovered in or near coffins that had either been exhumed by the U.S. Army or dug into by looters. Group 3 artifacts are those that were recovered during the full excavations of the cemetery in the summer and fall of 2007. Almost all of these artifacts were recovered from either empty coffins or intact burials.

Group 1- Artifacts

The assemblage from the metal detector survey consisted of 194 artifacts, including 121 which were temporally diagnostic of the Fort Craig occupation, 1854-1885. These included machine cut nails, cartridges, and solder-seamed and hole-in-cap can fragments. There was also a significant number of intrusive artifacts, in the form of beer cans that dated from 1935 to present and aluminum foil and pull tabs (Table 4.1). The majority of the beer cans were bimetallic (steel with aluminum tops) with ring pull tabs, dating from 1963-1970s (Purcell 2005: 28-29). Figure 4.1 shows the spatial distribution of the artifact assemblage. It is interesting that the distribution of machine cut nails closely approximates that of the historic cans and can fragments. This could be reflective of the exhumation activities that were conducted at the cemetery in 1878 and 1886 as many of these cans and can fragments (key strip meat cans and lids, hole-in-cap cans and a sardine can) contained food. The beer cans probably reflect looting activity from the 1970s, and it is especially interesting to note that the location of one cluster of beverage-related artifacts in the west portion of the cemetery matches where in 2005 an informant had placed a stake indicating where a Buffalo Soldier had been taken from a coffin during the 1970s.

Form/Type	Attributes	Date	Total	
Aluminum	Foil, scraps	post-1945	1	
	Pull tab	1963-1983	9	
	Pull strip	post-1963	1	
Bolt	Fragment	-	1	
Button	Fragment	-	1	
Cans (tinplate) (n=94)	Beer (n=17)	1935-present)		
	Bimetallic	1963-1970s	11	
	Flattop steel	1935-1963	6	
	Fragments (n=24)	-		
	Unspecified	-	14	
	Soldered seamed	pre-1897	9	
	Hole-in-cap	ca. 1820-1922	1	
	Key strip meat can	1895-	2	
	Lids (n=7)	-	-	
	External friction (slip)	post-1880	1	
	Internal friction	post-1906	2	
	Key strip	1895-	1	
	Unspecified	-	3	
	Unspecified square	-	1	
	Sanitary	1897-present	1	
	Sardine	1875-present	1	
	Canister (slip lid/baking powder)	post-1880	1	
	Cartridge	Internally primed (n=11)	-	-
		.22 rimfire	post-1857	5
		Unspecified shotshell	post-1866	6
Clip	Steel, attached to flat wooden panel	-	1	
Crown cap (n=3)	Aluminum	post-1945	2	
	Steel	1892-present	1	
	Horseshoe	fragment	-	1
Iron band (n=9)	Unspecified strap	-	8	
	Unspecified strip	-	1	
	Iron nails, square, machine cut (n=59)	Whole	ca. 1830-1890	-
Unspecified fragments		-	26	
Whole, with wood fragments		-	32	
Unspecified		-	1	
Iron spike	Unspecified	-	1	
Iron scrap	Unidentified	-	29	
Screw	Wood (material not identified)	-	1	
Staples (n=3)	Box	-	-	
	Fencing	-	2	
	Unspecified fragments	-	1	
Wire (n=6)	Unspecified fragments	-	-	
	Barbed	post-1875	5	
	Unspecified sheet fragments	-	1	
Zinc	Unspecified sheet fragments	-	3	
Table 4.1 Group 1 artifacts		Total	194	

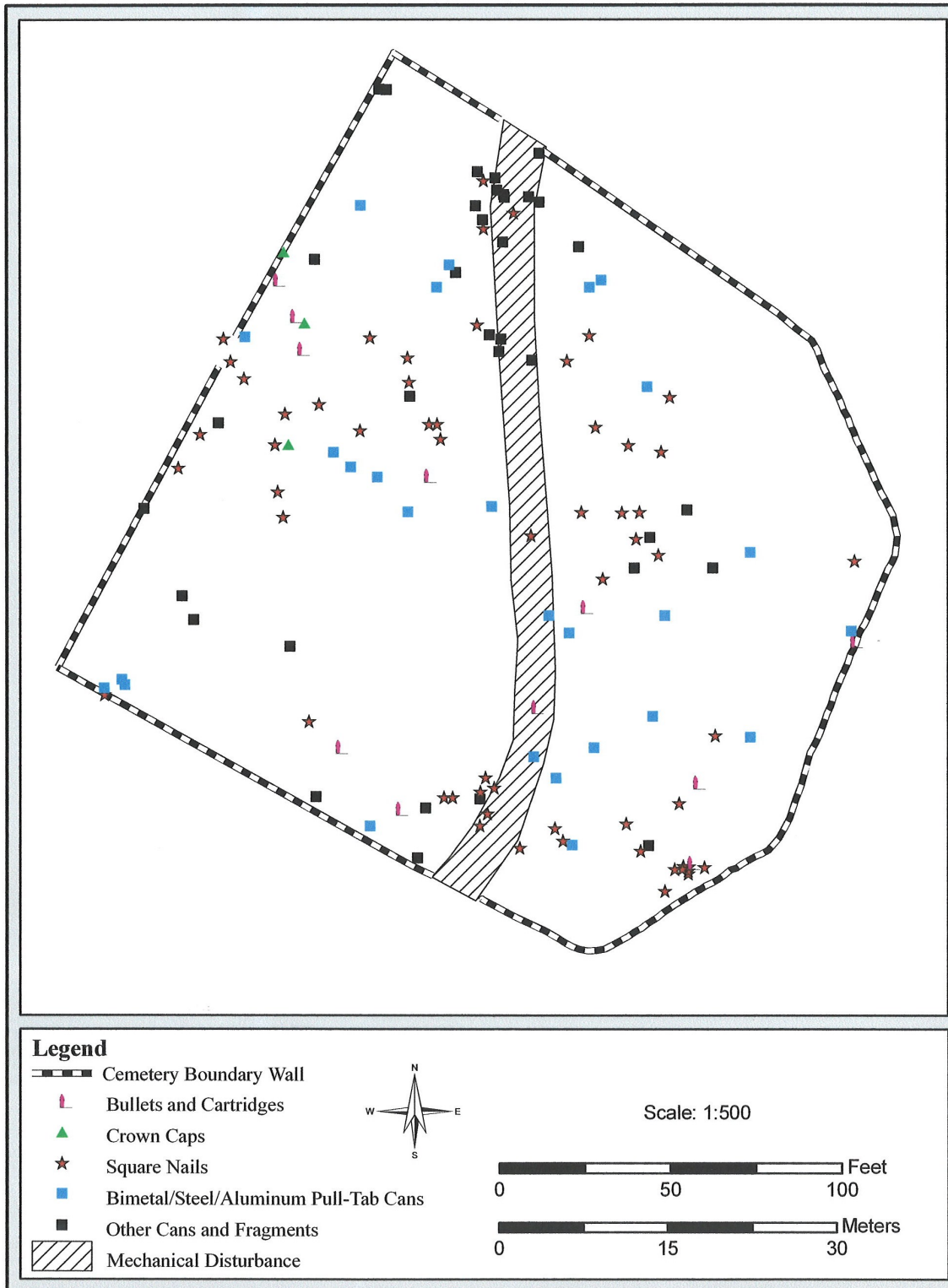


Figure 4.1. Distribution of surface artifacts documented during the metal detector survey. (After Purcell 2005).+

Group 2- Artifacts from 2005 excavations.

A total of 298 artifacts were recovered during the 2005 excavations. The vast majority of these artifacts came from empty coffins, with a small number coming from the ground surface. The artifacts were aggregated into the following artifact classes, frequencies and percentages.

1. **Nails:** 84 (18%)

2. **Uniform buttons:** 23 (7%). These include fourteen general service brass coat buttons and four U.S. Navy cuff buttons.

These buttons were found in six of the empty coffins.

3. **Other buttons:** 42 (14%). These include eleven white glass, 4-hole buttons; five shell 4-hole buttons; seven bone 4-hole buttons; and even metal (corroded) buttons. Buttons in this category were recovered from twelve of the empty coffins, and four of the coffins that contained uniform buttons.

4. **Glass:** 2 (.06%). This includes one bottle top with tooled lip.

5. **Ammunition:** 16 (5%). This artifact class includes six .58 caliber Minie balls, five 45-70 cartridges, and two percussion caps.

Artifacts in this category were recovered from six of the coffins.

6. **Metal (non-buttons):** 22 (7%). This group includes one buckle and a cartridge box cross belt plate.

7. **Fabric/cloth:** 15 (5%). These consist of clothing fragments.

8. **Leather:** 42 (14%). Leather pieces all appear to be parts of footwear. Leather came from only two of the coffins.

9. **Intrusive Artifacts:** 52 (17%). Intrusive artifacts included a plastic cigarette filter, a cellophane cigarette wrapper, one recent .22 cartridge, and one pull tab from a beverage can. Intrusive artifacts were recovered from four of the coffins.

In order to compare these artifacts to those of Group 3 (wherein nails were not included in the assemblage), the adjusted artifact total, less nails, is 214, with the following artifact class percentages:

Buttons-30%

Glass- 1%

Ammunition-7%

Metal- 10%

Fabric/cloth-7%

Leather-20%

Intrusive artifacts-24%

Discussion

Archaeological remains from the 2005 excavations are presented in Table 4.2. This table also includes human and rodent remains. Note the great disparity in the number of remains across units. This is probably due to the varying degrees of thoroughness by the U.S. Army exhumation crews when the bodies were removed and re-located to national cemeteries in 1878 and 1886. The vast majority of human remains elements consist of small bones such as phalanges, hyoids, coccygeal vertebrae and teeth. It is also possible that some of these graves were disturbed by illegal activity in the 1970's given the presence of intrusive trash in some of the units. This trash included a plastic cigarette filter, a partial cellophane cigarette wrapper and a disposable pull tab from a beverage can. However it should be noted that almost all of the intrusive trash count comes from one unit (5). As would be expected, nails were abundant, accounting for 28% of the artifact assemblage (discounting human and rodent remains) and widespread as they were found in 68% of all units. Artifact class frequencies are presented in Table 4.3.

Uniform buttons were rare and only accounted for 7% of the artifact assemblage. This is probably due to two factors. First, since all of the coffins represent either exhumed and/or looted graves, many of the buttons were probably affixed to uniforms and transferred with the bodies to national cemeteries or they were taken by looters. One looter had a large number of military buttons that were taken from "empty" coffins from the Fort Craig cemetery. The military buttons include three artillery cuff buttons (Figure 4.2), and three Navy coat cuff buttons with the standing upright anchor, with the eagle facing left (Figure (4.3)). These are almost identical to those illustrated in *Uniform Buttons of the United States* (Tice 1997: 156), and date from 1830-1852. Thus they may have come from a recycled uniform. They all came out of unit 13. The Civil War era general service buttons are Scovill domed eagle buttons, and are coat buttons (Figure 4.5). The other buttons were an amalgam of glass, shell, bone and metal. Several of the metal buttons were heavily corroded and may actually have been uniform buttons (Figure 4.4). In total all buttons accounted for 32% of the assemblage.

Firearm related ammunition included six .58 caliber Minie bullets. These are probably related to action during the Civil War around Fort Craig, specifically the battle of Valverde in February of 1862. They are very similar to those found at Glorieta Battlefield (Oakes 1995). Most of these bullets were unfired. One bullet, possibly chewed, was recovered from unit 13, which also contained the largest number of human remains elements (52) and the largest number of archaeological remains overall (109).

The large number of bones in this unit is somewhat puzzling. One would think that many of them, such as a humerus, clavicle, rib and cranial fragments would not have gone unnoticed by exhumation crews. On the other hand, it's also possible that the grave was looted. However, had this been the case it seems unlikely that the three Navy buttons would have been overlooked.

The fabric consists of very small pieces of cloth in very poor condition, and probably are the remains of clothing. The leather items all very small fragments, are most likely the remains of military issue shoes and/or boots. Almost all of the leather came from unit 13.

Group 3 Artifacts from the 2007 excavations.

Artifacts from the 2007 excavations totaled 638, and are broken down into the following classes:

1. **Buttons:** n = 439 (69%). This artifact class included 131 corroded, metal buttons (presumably many of these were military buttons from coats, shirts and/or pants), ninety-two brass general service buttons with the familiar eagle shield, seventy-five prosser buttons, twenty bone buttons and four rubber buttons. Two of the rubber buttons were labeled "Novelty Rubber Company" and came from Feature 23, an empty coffin . These buttons, sometimes referred to as "Goodyear buttons" dated approximately from 1851 to the 1870's. The other two rubber buttons, labeled "Goodyear 1851" were recovered from an empty coffin (Feature 15). Included with the brass general service buttons were three infantry coat buttons from Burial 16 (one of which retained its gilding), four infantry coat buttons from Burial 24, two cavalry coat buttons from Burial 64 and an artillery button from an empty coffin (Feature 15). The infantry buttons are very similar to those described by Tice (1997: 110) and are illustrated here in Figures 4.8 and 4.9. All of the general service buttons appear to have been coat buttons. The larger coat front buttons averaged 19.8cm in diameter, while the smaller cuff buttons averaged 14.39cm in diameter. The gilded buttons are intriguing. Standard military uniform issue during the 1850s, and probably later given the use of large numbers of surplus uniforms following the Civil War, called for gilding and regimental stamps to be displayed only on those worn by officers (McChristian 1995: 12; Charles Haecker, personal communication). However, the gilded buttons found with Burial 16 were associated with remains from an African –American soldier. Only two African-American infantry regiments served at Fort Craig, the 125th U.S.C and the 38th infantry. As with all other African-American regiments during the occupations at Fort Craig, only Whites were officers. Buttons are illustrated in Figures 4.9-4.12, 4.16 and 4.27.

Unit	Nails	Human Remains	Rodent	Uniform Buttons	Other buttons	Glass	Bullets	Casings	Metal	Fabric	Leather	Recent Trash	Total Items
A	1			7	6				1	3			18
B	6	3			1			1	2	3			16
1													
2													
Infant 1	1	3			4								8
Infant 2		50			2								52
3	18	15	19										52
4	4	2	81		2								89
5		4	10		1							46	61
6	3	20			1								24
7		1									9	2	12
13	14	52		4	3		1	1	1		33		109
17	10	6			10		2			4			32
19	1						1					2	4
20	14	40		3			1			1			59
21	3	11			4	1							19
22	3	33	5	6	7			1	1	4			60
24				1									1
25	1	2	6										9
26	3	24	1										28
General Surface	2			2	1		4	4	3				16
Hole B		14				1			14			2	31
Total	84	280	122	23	42	2	9	7	22	15	42	52	700

Table 4.2. Artifact classes and frequencies from 2005 excavations.

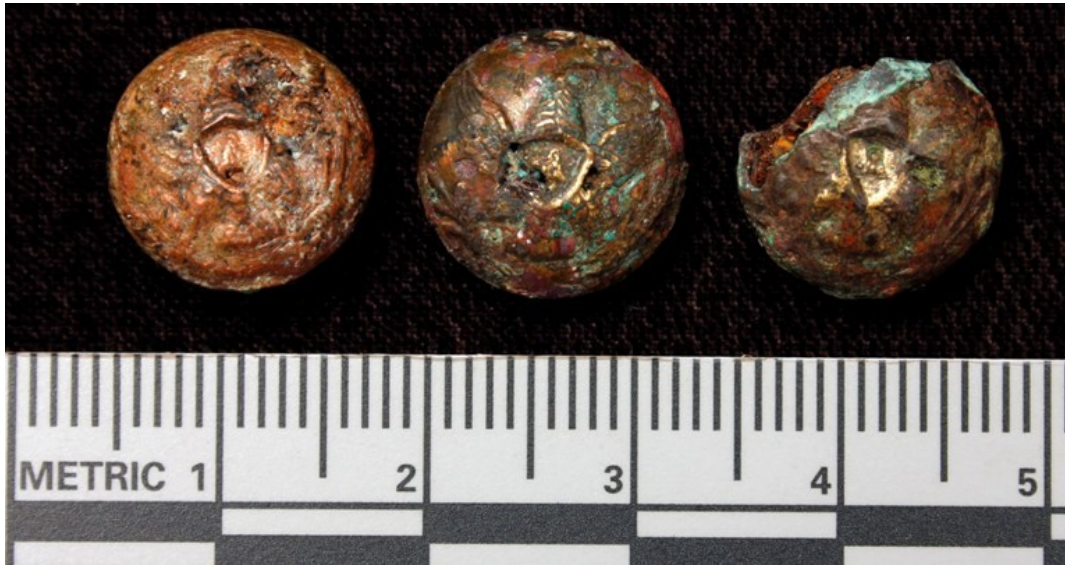


Figure 4.2.



Figure 4.3.

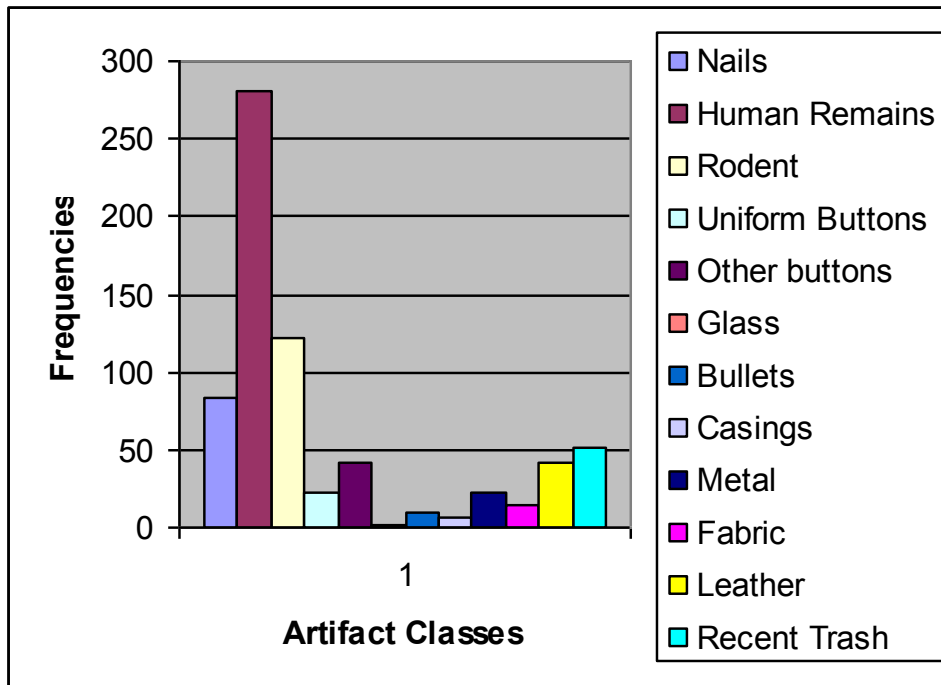


Table 4.3. Group 2 artifact class frequencies.



Figure 4. 4 Artifacts from empty coffins. Left to right: pistol balls, 4-hole metal buttons, white prosser 4-hole buttons, mother-of-pearl buttons and unspecified corroded button.



Figure 4.5 General service military buttons from Trench A.



Figure 4.6. Artifacts from 2005. Left to right, rifle cartridge cases, .58 caliber Minie ball, rusted coffin nail



Figure 4.7 Clothing fragments from empty coffin.



Figure 4.8 Artifacts from empty coffin. Left to right, intrusive beverage pull tab, .22 caliber cartridge, leather shoe fragment with lacing holes.

2. **Leather:** n = 31 (4%). Most of the leather (twenty-one elements) was the remains of footwear. These included two complete pair of military lace boots. One pair, along with socks, was recovered from Burial 39. The other pair came from an empty coffin (Feature 127). A partial pair of military lace boots and stitched soles from Feature 37. A pair of boots was recovered from Feature 140, an empty coffin. A child's pair of lace-up boots was recovered from Burial 63 and stitched soles from a child's boots was recovered from Burial 28. Leather ware is illustrated in Figures 4.14, 4.24, 4.30 and 4.31.

3. **Ammunition:** n = 12 (2%). This class includes five dropped Minie balls, five 45-70 cartridges and two percussion caps. A .58 caliber Mini ball from Burial 40 is illustrated in Figure 4.13 and a center-fired cartridge is illustrated in Figure 4.17.

4. **Fabric/cloth:** n = 56 (8%). Fabric material includes fragments from eight uniforms and four neck scarves (Figure 4.33) from adult burials, ribbon, bows and clothing from infant/child burials and clothing and netting from adult female burials.

5. **Metal (non-buttons):** n = 60 (9%). Non-button metal artifacts included twenty-seven items of buckles, fasteners, and pins. Of particular note was the recovery of four "shield nickel" coins, two of which have dates of 1867 and 1874. The latter two came from Burial 64, which contained a Cavalry buttons and the remains of an adult male Caucasian soldier. Also recovered, from Feature 22 (an empty coffin), were two helmet plume sockets, a helmet eagle shield of the 6th Cavalry, two cavalry cap plates and several other helmet components (ring bases, open washers and discs). The plumes and shield are identical to that described in *The Encyclopedia of United States Army Insignia and Uniforms* (Emerson 1996: 529). This type of helmet, in which the "E Pluribus Unum" passes in front of the eagle shield rather than across the top as in earlier models, was designed in 1881 and issued to infantry, cavalry and artillery personnel (Emerson 1996: 125, 530). This fits with the burial data from Fort Craig, where one registry notes that three troopers from the 6th Cavalry died in 1884 during a Typhoid Fever outbreak. However, records also show that these soldiers, who died within two months of one another and buried in sequence, were the last soldiers to be buried and yet are unaccounted for in the re-interment registries from Fort Marcy (Santa Fe National Cemetery) and Fort Leavenworth. Based on our excavation map, there are only two sections of the cemetery where three intact graves of adult Caucasian soldiers remains in sequence were recovered: at the extreme north edge of the cemetery (Features 129, 130 and 152); and at the extreme south edge of the cemetery (Features 91, 90, and 92).

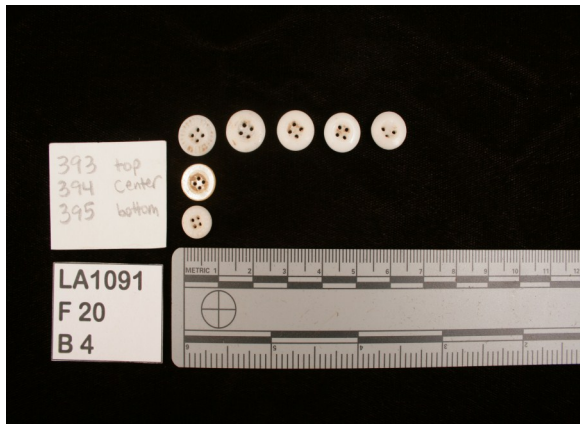


Figure 4.9 Prosser buttons from Burial 4.



Figure 4.10. Corroded button from Burial 11.



Figure 4.11. Infantry buttons from Burial 24.



Figure 4.12 Gilted infantry buttons from Burial 51.



Figure 4.13 .58 caliber Minie ball from Burial 40.



Figure 4.14 Stitched child's shoe soles from Burial 28.

The 6th Cavalry helmet accoutrements were found in Feature 22, in an empty coffin approximately 20-30 meters from each of the two burial clusters. At the present time, this arrangement of the artifacts with these burials cannot be explained. If these three soldiers were exhumed by the Army in 1886, then why are they not listed on the re-interment registries? If the helmet gear was buried with one or more of the 6th Cavalry remains, how did they end up out of context? It's hard to believe that looters would have dug into those remains and not taken the artifacts. Nor is it believable that they would have taken the artifacts and then threw them away in an empty grave. Metal artifacts are illustrated in Figures 4.19-4.23 and Figure 4.26.

6. **Miscellaneous:** 32 (5%). Artifacts from this group include two complete bottles. One bottle, labeled "Bahney & Co-Socorro N.M." was recovered from Feature 6, an empty coffin (Figure 4.32). This bottle is significant because it has a very tight timeline. The Bahney bottling company was only in operation for two years, 1884-1885. Thus the bottle helps us date the northwestern portion of the cemetery, where Feature 6 was recorded. Its presence there can probably be explained as a beverage bottle that was disposed of by someone belonging to the exhumation crew in 1886. The bottle complements the 1880s date for the 6th Cavalry helmet gear that was found in Feature 22 nearby. The other bottle, labeled "Glenn & Co, Philada," came from Burial 20 and appears to be a medicine bottle (Figure 4.25).

A copper Virgin Mary "miraculous medal", was recovered from Burial 31 (Figures 4.34 and 4.35). On the front side is an image of Mary standing on a serpent, and halo above her head. Around the edge of the piece is writing, in French, that translated reads: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee." On the back side is an image of the Cross and two hearts, one symbolizing Jesus Christ and the other Mary. The origin of the medal is rooted in the vision of St. Catherine Laboure, who reportedly in 1830 received three visitations from Mary (Dirvin 1958: 52; The Catholic Encyclopedia 1913). According to these sources, all who would wear this medal around their neck would receive great graces. In 1832 engravers in France began mass-producing these medals and they quickly spread throughout Europe and the United States. It's unclear how this medal ended up in a grave at Fort Craig. One possible explanation is that it was given to the individual by someone caring for the dying. Several Orders of Catholic Sisterhoods, including St. Catherine's Sisters of Charity, tended to the wounded and dying on both sides during the Civil War. Between 1865 and 1880 Sisters of Charity in Cincinnati traveled to Santa Fe and Albuquerque to open hospitals (A Short History of the Sisters of Charity (http://www.emmitsburg.net/archive_list/articles/history/stories/sisters_of_charity.htm; The Catholic Encyclopedia). Though there are no known records that place the Sisters of Charity at Fort Craig, many of the New Mexico Volunteers during the Civil War came from central and northern New Mexico.

Also found, near Feature 69 (an empty coffin), was a clay “face pipe” or “presidents pipe.” These pipes were widely produced during the period 1845-1870 (Bell 2004: 52). This pipe has a red glaze and has the words “Henry” and Clay” written on the shank, on the left and right sides respectively. The bowl bears an image of Clay with a laurel wreath encircling the head. Clay was a prominent American politician in the early to mid-1800s. He ran unsuccessfully for president in 1824, 1832 and 1844, and served in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate . According to Bell (2004), the Henry Clay series was made and distributed between 1850 and 1855, and is attributed to Barney Spring, a pipe maker in Rochester, New York (Bell 2004:52). However, Pfeiffer et al (2007), suggest that these pipes were made in Germany (2007: 10). The reddish earthenware and reddish-brown glaze they describe for the German pipes is very similar to this pipe. They illustrate a Henry Clay pipe that came from a privy in Illinois, and it is an exact match with the one recovered at Fort Craig (2007:13). If this pipe is of indeed German origin, it shows that some very exotic artifacts were finding their way to the desolate reaches of the American west. It’s very possible that this pipe was brought by one of the many Europeans that served at Fort Craig, including at least seven from Germany.

7. **Intrusive Artifacts:** n = 8 (1%). This group includes, a plastic 7-11 cup with a picture of former professional football player Bubba Smith (Figure 3.33), soda cans (Figure 3.34), fragments of a Diet 7-Up bottle (Figure 3.36), a white plastic bag filled with military issue shoe parts (see Chapter 2), and one cigarette filter. These artifacts are instructive in that they provide a time frame for some of the looting. Bubba Smith played in the National Football league from 1967-1976, for the Baltimore Colts (67-71), the Oakland Raiders (73-74) and the Houston Oilers (75-76). His image on the cup has him in his Baltimore Colts uniform, suggesting that the cup was dropped at the cemetery during the period 1967-71. The soda cans, one Shasta and the other Pepsi, both have holes left from pull tabs. These cans date to the 1960s and early 1970s. The Diet 7-up bottle is unique in that this particular bottle was only made in 1979.

Discussion

Group 3 artifact percentages are listed below. Less the Miscellaneous group, Group 3 artifacts number 600.

Buttons- 73%

Leather- 4%

Ammunition- 2%

Fabric- 9%

Metal- 10%

Intrusive-1%

While the percentages of Group 2 and Group 3 artifacts are interesting, the numbers alone fail to reveal the quality and archaeological significance of the artifacts themselves. For example, the difference in leather remains is somewhat misleading. Most of the leather from Group 2 came from one unit (13) in the form of small footwear fragments, whereas the leather from Group 3 came from numerous units and included full soles, uppers, heels and occasionally, laces. Thus, the leather from the latter group is archaeologically much more significant because it reveals aspects of style, manufacture and, in some cases, foot size. Footwear included cavalry boots, infantry brogans, and children's high lace shoes. The relative percentages of intrusive material are also misleading. The vast majority of intrusive trash from Group 2 came from one unit (13) in the form of numerous metal can fragments. On the other hand, the intrusive material from Group 3 reveals much more information, especially regarding looter behavior. For example, the Pepsi cans are datable to the 1970's and were found inside of empty coffins. Likewise, the large fragments of a Diet 7-up bottle, dated to 1979, were also found inside an empty coffin. The contextual association is inescapable: these coffins had been looted. Whether human remains were removed or not is unknown. In another unit (Feature 109), an intact burial had been looted. The bones had been removed from their anatomically correct burial position and the skull was fragmented. In the coffin, however, was a white garbage bag containing parts of period military issue foot wear representing several individuals, judging from the variation in foot size represented by the soles. It would appear that someone collected shoe parts from several coffins and then tossed them into this feature.

Artifacts from the 2007 excavations are presented in Appendix 1 and illustrated in 4.4 Comparisons of Group 2 and Group 3 assemblages are presented in Table 4.5. There are several differences that merit discussion. First, there is a significant difference in the percentages of buttons. This is due in part to the fact that the vast majority of buttons from Group 3 (277 or 63%) came from intact burials, whereas 162 (37%) came from empty

Coffins. This assumes that most of the buttons from the exhumed remains were attached to uniforms and clothing and therefore were transferred with those remains. Another possible factor in this difference is that one looter had a collection of military buttons that had been taken from “empty coffins.” It could be that the portion of the cemetery where Group 2 artifacts were recovered was also where this looter had concentrated his activities. Recall that many of the intrusive bi-metallic-pull tab beverage cans from the Group 1 artifact assemblage were found in this area, as were some of the intrusive artifacts in the Group 3 assemblage. In fact, the intrusive trash from

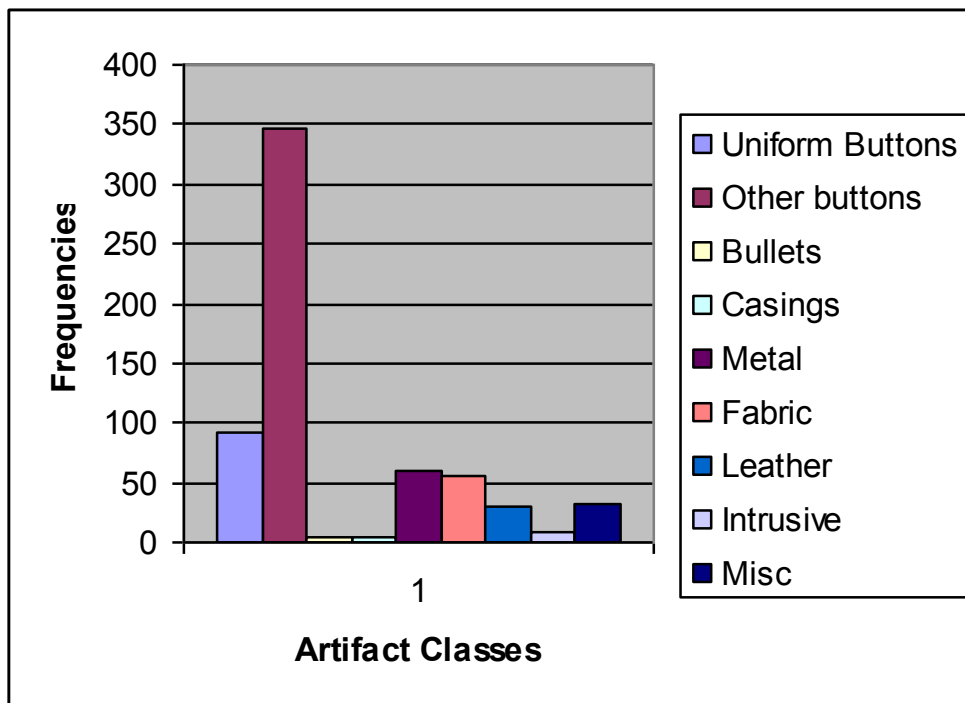


Table 4.4. Artifact class frequencies from 2007 excavations.

Group 3, along with the disturbed graves noted in Chapter 3, Show that looters had sampled coffins from every row in the central portion of the cemetery. Significant data was lost through this behavior.

Group	Buttons	Ammo	Metal	Fabric	Leather	Intrusive
2	30	7	10	7	20	24
3	73	2	10	9	4	1

Table 4.5. Percentages of comparable artifact categories in Group 2 and Group 3 artifact assemblages.



Figure 4.15. Clothing clasps from Burial 59.



Figure 4.16. Decorated clothing button from Burial 59.



Figure 4.17. Center-fire cartridge from Burial 35



Figure 4.18. Ceramic pipe fragment from Burial 25.

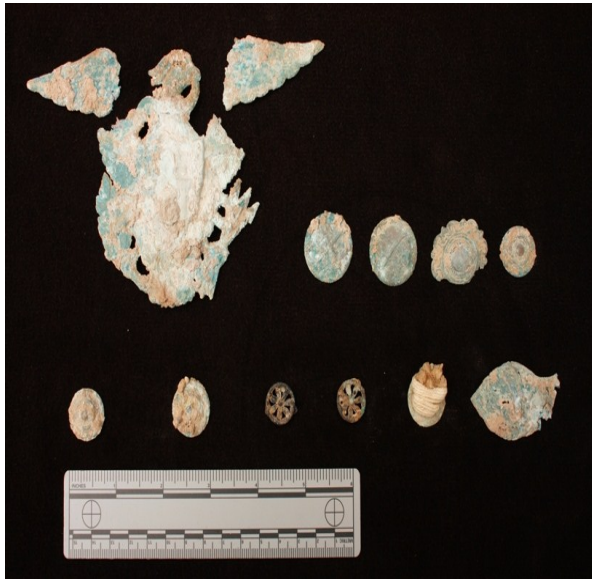


Figure 4.19. Helmet accoutrements, Feature 22

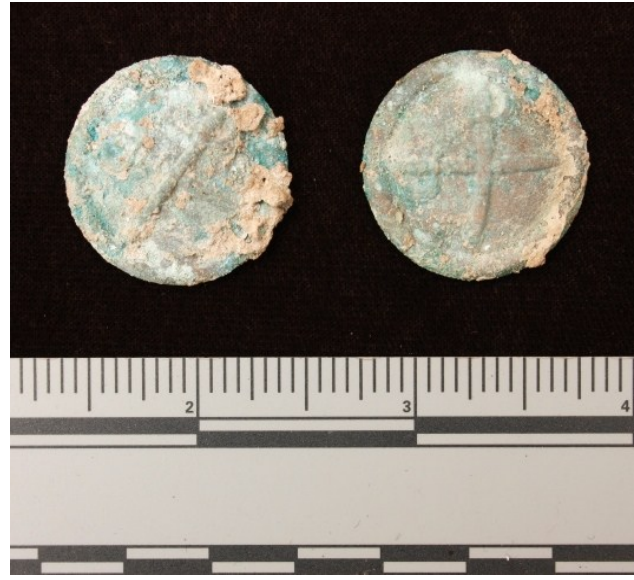


Figure 4.20. Cavalry helmet side buttons, Feature 22.

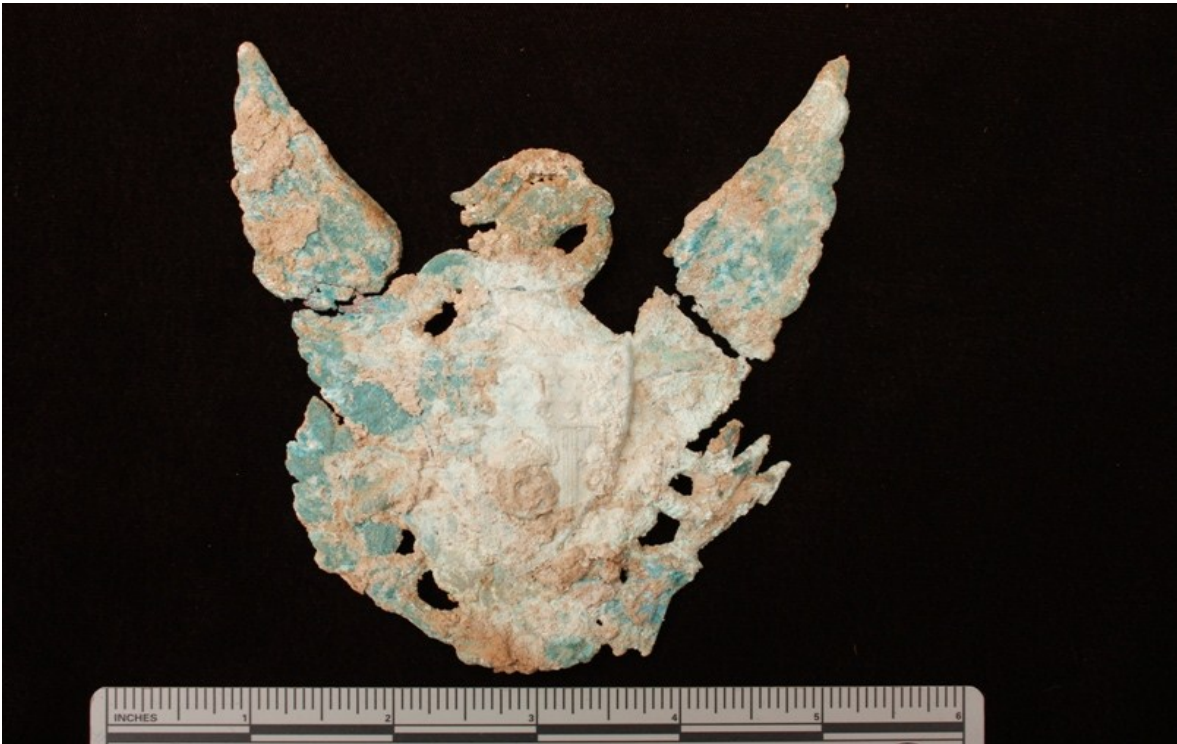


Figure 4.21 6th Cavalry helmet eagle shield, Feature 22.



Figure 4.22. Helmet sockets and bases from Feature 22.



Figure 4.23. "Shield" nickels, dated 1867, left and 1874, right, from Burial 64.



Figure 4.24. Childs boot heel, soles and uppers, burial 63.



Figure 4.25. Medicine bottle, Burial 20



Figure 4.26. Safety pin, burial 36.



Figure 4.27 “Goodyear’s” rubber button, with 1851 patent date, Feature 15.



Figure 4.28. “Henry Clay” portrait pipe bowl, Feature 69. Figure 4.29 Portrait pipe, frontal view.



Figure 4.30. Military riding boots from Feature 140.



Figure 4.31 Military lace boots and stitched soles from Feature 37.



Figure 4.32. “Bahney & Co, N.M.” bottle from Feature 6.



Figure 4.33. Neck scarf from Feature 69.



Feature 4.34. Virgin Mary medallion, front side, from Burial 31.



Feature 4.35. Virgin Mary medallion, backside.



Figure 4.36. "Bubba Smith" plastic cup



Figure 4.37. "Pepsi" and "Shasta" cans, Feature 187.



Figure 4.38. Pull tab openings of cans from Feature 187.

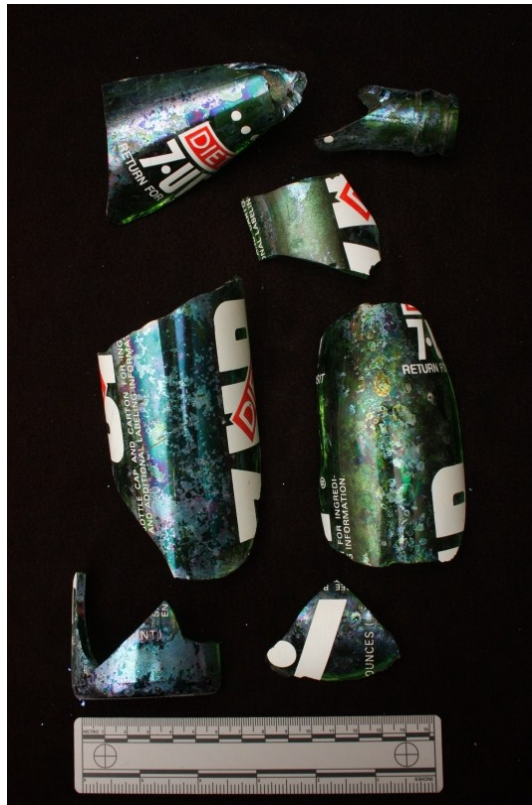


Figure 4.39 "Diet 7-Up" bottle from Feature 174.

Chapter 4: THE ACCRETIONARY GROWTH AND DYNAMICS OF THE FORT CRAIG POST CEMETERY

by David H. Greenwald and Jeffery Hanson

The search for any Fort Craig Post Cemetery plot maps has resulted in nothing short of a huge disappointment. Informants provided indications to Bureau of Reclamation personnel and law enforcement agents investigating the looting of the Fort Craig Post Cemetery that they had seen *copies* of the cemetery map. Yet, no such document(s) has been located through various searches of public document repositories and archival facilities. Without the visual record provided by the cemetery plot map, the interment registers/logs and re-interment records (Purcell 2005 Appendices A-G) have evaded interpretation with the exception of identification of a few individuals or possible identification of others. Still, reconstruction of the cemetery according to individual burial plot/numbered grave location evades us, even with having excavated 100 percent of the cemetery. The various burial registers created in 1866, 1868, and 1884 provide *grave numbers*, but lack any physical associations or references to geophysical features within the cemetery to aid interpretation of the grave numbers within specific locations of the cemetery. The physical remains of the cemetery, when examined as a dynamic data set, and the reconstruction of its accretionary development/growth provide some insights into how the cemetery evolved and offers a few clues that may help unravel the seemingly uninterpretable Post records and burial logs. Working from the earliest known information about Fort Craig, and by association, its cemetery, this is what is known:

- Fort Craig was officially garrisoned on April 1, 1854.
- The first interment, according to Post records, occurred February 16, 1855 (Walter Clifton, Sergeant, Company J, 3rd Infantry).
- The initial cemetery was enclosed by a fence that included wooden and iron elements (by 1866).
- The Valverde Battle resulted in a series of rapid interments, many placed in shallow, rectangular coffins (interments between February 21, 1862, and June 3, 1862).
- In 1868, a requisition was placed for the construction of a dry-laid stone wall or adobe wall around the cemetery, effectively replacing the original fenced enclosure and enlarging the original cemetery.
- The stone wall construction was initiated during 1869; its completion date is currently unknown.
- The new stone wall extended the cemetery area to the west and perhaps to the east (an unknown distance), but did not add much to the northern or southern extent of the cemetery, where arroyos prevented its expansion, or to the east due to the terrace edge and other shallow drainages.
- Accretionary growth of military grave plots extended in a westerly direction, evinced by at least one row of graves west of the original fence in Mechanical Stripping Units (MSUs) 3, 4, 6, and 8, and a second row in MSU 2 in the northwestern portion of the cemetery.
- Access to the cemetery after the stone wall was constructed was in the center of the west

- wall, perhaps similar to the original fenced enclosure.
- The southwestern portion of the cemetery (MSU 1) was never used, except for a single infant burial in the corner against the wall, perhaps due to use of this area as a stockpile for stones for wall construction, access for Caissons, and military parades. The infant burial may represent an interment that occurred after the 1885 abandonment of the fort.
 - The last recorded interment occurred on October 2, presumably, 1884 (the year was not entered on the burial register).
 - Initial disinterment of the Fort Craig Post Cemetery occurred in March 1876.
 - In July 1878, the garrison was withdrawn, leaving a reduced force of one officer and seven enlisted men (Grinstead 1973).
 - Fort Craig was recommissioned in 1880 following Victorio's renewed hostilities.
 - Fort Craig was decommissioned in September 1884 and the last troops left by June 1885 (Grinstead 1973).
 - Following the second garrisoning of Fort Craig, all military interments were exhumed on or about April 4, 1886, for reburial at Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery.
 - Captain Jack Crawford and family remained in residence at the fort until 1894, when the government sold the land and buildings; hence, some burials, especially those that appear to be intrusive or positioned in corners of the cemetery may represent interments between 1886 and 1894.

Figure 1 provides the final plan view of the Fort Craig Post Cemetery, showing all defined graves and their status when investigated. Although it is not possible to determine the location of many of the specific interments within the cemetery without a plot map, six rows of graves (Rows 5-10; Figures 1 and 2), many of them shallow and possessing similar coffins, are believed to represent the Valverde Battle graves. These six rows are centrally located within the stone wall enclosure, extend across or nearly across the cemetery from north to south, and are aligned at a slight angle to Rows 1-4 (Figure 1), which are considered to represent later interments based on military paraphernalia, associated personal items, and the occurrence of African-american interments and civilians. Two graves may represent members of the 6th Cavalry, known to have been in service in the Southwest between early 1880 and 1881. However, no members of the 6th Cavalry appear on any burial registers, suggesting that they were interred at Fort Craig during the period that the fort was reduced to a force of eight military personnel. These two graves (Features 9 and 22) occur in MSU 4, immediately west of the original cemetery fence (Figure 1) supporting the position that they were interred after the cemetery had been enlarged by construction of the stone wall.

Rows 5 through 10, in addition to being shallow and possessing similar coffins, are tightly packed, with less space between the rows and in some cases between individual graves, than witnessed elsewhere in the cemetery, as a general rule (Figure 1). The central portions of these rows present the greatest symmetry in spacing, orientation, row alignment, and depth. Graves at each end of the rows are deeper, often by over 50 cm, somewhat out of alignment with the rest of the row (see the south ends of Rows 5 and 6) (Figure 1), and exhibit differences in coffin shape, construction style, and wood. These latter graves appear to represent temporally later burials, perhaps individuals related to the Valverde Battle who died several days or weeks later, or

individuals who died several years later and were placed in existing rows. As shown on Figure 2, the aberrant nature of those



Figure 1. Plan map of the Fort Craig Post Cemetery with grave row numbers and all graves shown.

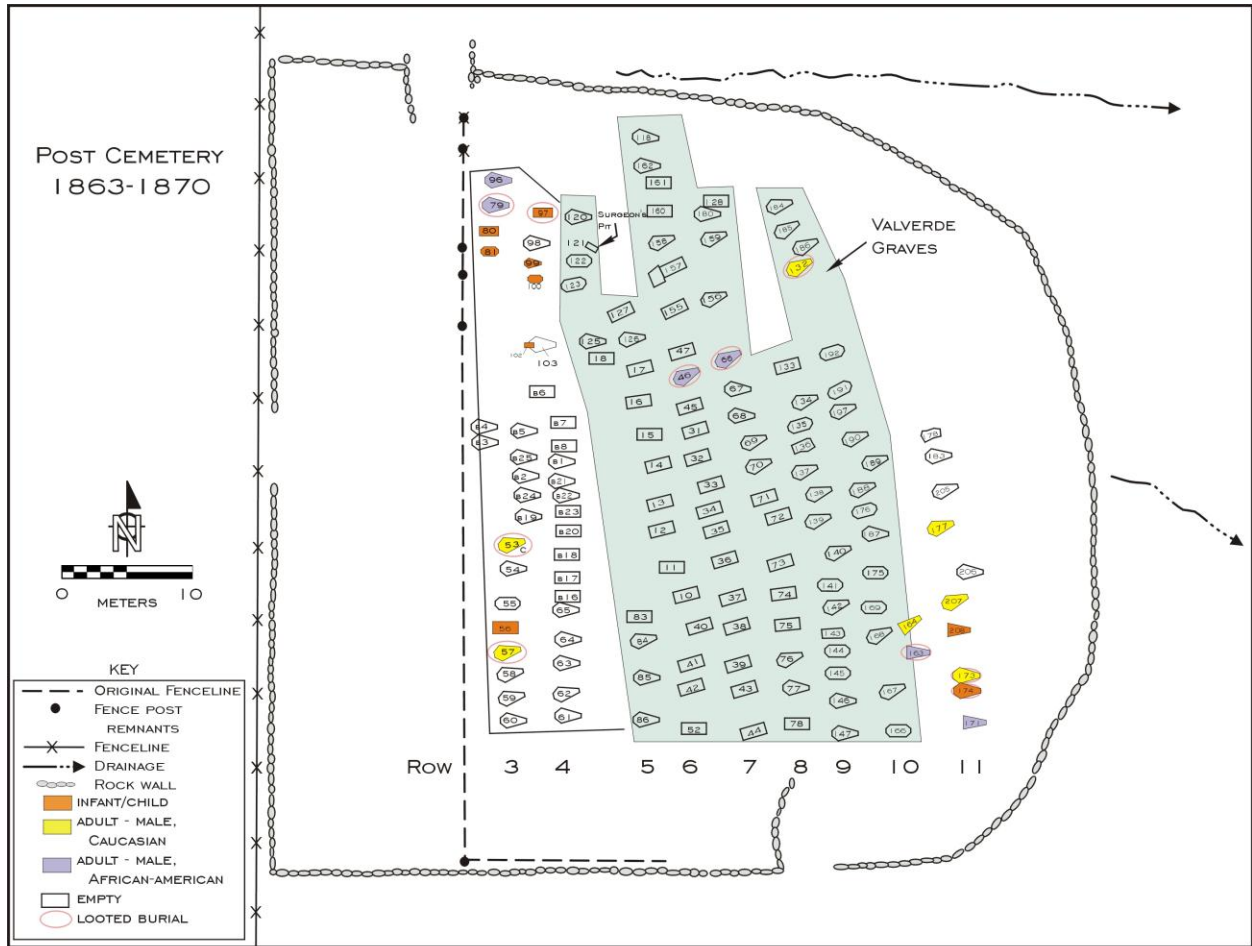


Figure 2. Original fence replaced by stone wall. Rows 3 and 4 added to central portion of cemetery.

graves/coffins has resulted in their exclusion from the area defined as that used in concert with the Valverde Battle (Figure 2).

At the north end of Rows 5 through 10, several aberrant graves were discovered (Figure 1). In Row 7, Feature 155 was an oversized coffin made of the same materials as most of the Valverde graves, but the coffin was 12 inches wider and 12 inches deeper (over 3 times as large as the standard coffin); its size suggests that either an exceptionally large individual was buried within or perhaps this coffin housed the fragmented remains of several *unknown* individuals recovered after the climax of the Valverde Battle; based on its construction method and the type of wood used, it most certainly relates to the Valverde Battle. Also, in Row 7 were three deep graves that possessed remnants of constructed foundations for head stones (concrete and rock bases). Features 157, 158, and 160 were adjacent to one another, with Feature 157 possessing the most elaborate headstone base. None of the headstones were present. Their increased formal appearance suggests they were associated with some level of importance and greater bestowed honor, perhaps representing officers and perhaps one being Captain Alexander McRae, Medal of Honor recipient for heroic action at Valverde. Perhaps the two other graves were Captains Roderic and Bascom, also casualties of the Valverde Battle. The coffins were of higher quality production and wood, also suggesting higher status. However, no confirmation has been made regarding these assignments. The oversized coffin, if serving remains of unidentified individuals, may have been placed near the officers to honor them for their sacrifice. Alternatively, this general area may have not been used by the military, but rather for civilians burials, which may account for the change from well aligned rows to greater irregularity of grave placement and orientations, such as seen in Rows 5 and 6. The general absence of burials in these graves, however, strongly argues that occupants were military personnel who had been historically exhumed. As shown in Figure 1, Row 5 is nearly continuous, becoming somewhat irregular towards the north end. Row 6 terminates at the point where Feature 157 occurs, perhaps due to some type of surface obstruction (a flag pole or cemetery monument that cannot be defined today). Row 7 is nearly continuous from the south end to the north end, with room for three graves at the south end. Row 8 is not completely filled at either end and is interrupted in the vicinity of Features 155 and 157. Row 9 begins at the south wall and extends to nearly the area of Features 155 and 157. Row 10 is similarly interrupted as Row 8, with space available at each end. The discontinuous nature of Rows 6, 8, 9, and 10 suggest space was occupied by surface features or reserved for other purposes within MSU 15 and 17.

Rows 3 and 4 (Figure 1) appear to reflect the next area in which the cemetery was used within the original fenced area (Figure 2), with Row 4 preceding Row 3. This inference is supported by military insignia, the addition of infant and young adolescent burials, and African-american burials, who first served at Fort Craig in 1866-1867 (125th Infantry), in 1867-1869 (38th Infantry), and 1876-1877 and 1880-1881 (Ninth Cavalry). As illustrated in Figure 1, the graves excavated by BOR prior to the Four Corners Research efforts have been added. Row 4 contains both rectangular and shoulder-shaped coffins. However, the row orientation does not parallel Row 5 and greater consistency exists within grave spacing, suggesting these interments occurred at a different time than those identified as the Valverde graves.

is exhibited near the center of the rows than at the margins, suggesting the margins reflect accretionary extensions of the rows, perhaps representing later burial of those who were Row 2 was added following Row 3; however, some of the burials along the south edge of the cemetery in Rows 3 and 4, such as Features 90, 91, 92, and 212, and at the north edge, such as Features 117, 129, and 131, may postdate Row 2 (see Figure 1). If this is the case, the south edge may have been one of the last areas to be used by the military; this is suggested by the recovery of two copper nickels (1867 and 1874) from the individual's eye orbits in Grave 91. Row 1 also may have been an area in which later interments, associated with 1881- 1885 occupation of Fort Craig, were placed. Row 11 (Figure 1) is problematic. It appears to represent a mixed assemblage of military and civilian burials, with some or all of the military graves associated with the Valverde Battle. Row 12 reflects civilian burials; these graves occur primarily in two clusters as opposed to a row, with three located in the southeast corner of the cemetery and 15 concentrated in the northeast corner. No graves were found along the central portion of the east wall in MSU 13, which is the lowest portion of the cemetery that contains shallow gravels.

With nearly 125 individuals buried within the Fort Craig Post Cemetery as a result of the Valverde Battle, a concentrated pattern could be expected given the need to rapidly inter those individuals. Greater uniformity not killed on the battlefield, but died a few days later from wounds or infection. A similar pattern is noted for the Fort Stanton Post Cemetery, although the interment process at Fort Stanton was not affected by a single, rapid interment event as at Fort Craig. Fort Stanton exhibits initial use of the central portion of the cemetery, which resulted in gaps in rows. Through time, additional graves were added to the ends of rows. In partial contrast, the cemetery plot map for Fort Union illustrates grave rows beginning at one edge or the other of the cemetery and grave placement extending toward the interior on some rows, with burial in other rows beginning near the center and extending outward. Based on the Fort Craig field data, the rapid interment of the Valverde casualties resulted in much of the original center of the cemetery being filled and dictating to a certain extent the pattern that continued even after the cemetery was expanded. Military interments were concentrated in the central portion, with civilian interments placed generally along the cemetery margins. Exceptions to this pattern may reflect post-military use of the cemetery by civilians, in which civilian graves, predominately children, were buried within areas that had previously been used by the military or set aside for civilian and non-Anglo populations. This is apparent in the northwestern portion of the cemetery in MSU 11 (Figure 1), where six sub-adult and two African-american graves were discovered.

The greatest use by civilian populations occurred in the northwest quarter and the northeast and the southeast corners of the cemetery. No non-military graves were found along the south edge of the cemetery, although non-military graves did occur along the north edge. Because the military grave plats and civilian burial records have not been located for the Fort Craig Post Cemetery, it is difficult to determine the exact relationship between the civilian graves and the military graves. At least one instance was identified of an infant burial that intruded an exhumed military grave, with a possible second case noted. Both were in the northwest quarter of the cemetery.

In summary, the Fort Craig Post Cemetery use pattern evolved from strong influence initiated by

the rapid interment of individuals who died at Valverde. The pattern that evolved began in the south-central portion of the original fenced cemetery and expanded northward in Rows 5-10. In subsequent years, Rows 3 and 4 were utilized until the cemetery was expanded and demarcated by the construction of the stone wall in 1868-1869. Row 2 was then added. Voids within the cemetery, primarily along the south wall and northern margins were then used, with the eastern portion among the last areas used. The geology of the eastern portion of the cemetery contained shallow gravels and cobbles, difficult to excavate a grave pit into without it collapsing. For that reason, it may have been avoided, using areas with greater stability and easier to excavate, but eventually used by primarily the civilian population. Among the last areas to be used by the military was Row 1, in the far northwest corner; this area was probably used during the last military occupation, until 1885. Six graves are located here, but do not reflect all of the graves indicated in the burial records for the 1881-1885 occupation.

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