

# KENTUCKY CAMP



# CHRONICLE



Newsletter of the Friends of Kentucky Camp

March 2005

## KENTUCKY CAMP OPEN HOUSE

EVERYONE IS INVITED!

by Mark Dumas



**Gold Panning demonstration**

Don't forget the annual Kentucky Camp open house being held in conjunction with the Coronado National Forest. The event takes place at Kentucky Camp on **Saturday, March 12, 2005** from 10:00 a.m to 3:00 p.m. in conjunction with Arizona Archaeology Awareness Month. The event is free to the public and we are advertising in a number of area newspapers and internet outlets. Plan on attending and bring a friend.

Activities planned for the Open House include demonstrations of gold panning and making adobe bricks; hands-on participation by members and guests is encouraged! There will also be tours of the site and portions of the historic water system and hydraulic workings. Snacks and drinks will be available to purchase, and the Friends of Kentucky Camp will be

selling t-shirts, coffee mugs, calendars and postcards to raise money for ongoing preservation programs. As of this writing, we are looking for a few volunteers to work the sales booth for an hour each. Contact Mark Dumas at 520 299-4281 or [dumas@mindspring](mailto:dumas@mindspring) if you are interested. Event parking is at the hilltop outside the gated access road to the site.

### *Upcoming Preservation Opportunities at other Coronado Sites*

by Chris Schragger

Several historic sites on the Coronado National Forest are being preserved for the future, just like the ongoing efforts at Kentucky Camp. Generally, volunteers interested in helping out are welcome to participate in these undertakings. Not only can you

use your skills, but get to know some terrific heritage sites in some beautiful locations. Some of the projects we have coming up:

- Brown Canyon Ranch – homesteaded 100 years ago just south of present-day Sierra Vista, the

Ranch has been part of a joint effort by the Forest Service and a local charter high school for the past three years. Students work on their Science and History coursework at the site two days each week, but on alternate Tuesdays they help work on preservation tasks, including lime plaster, adobe patching, and wood repair.



Atascosa Fire Lookout

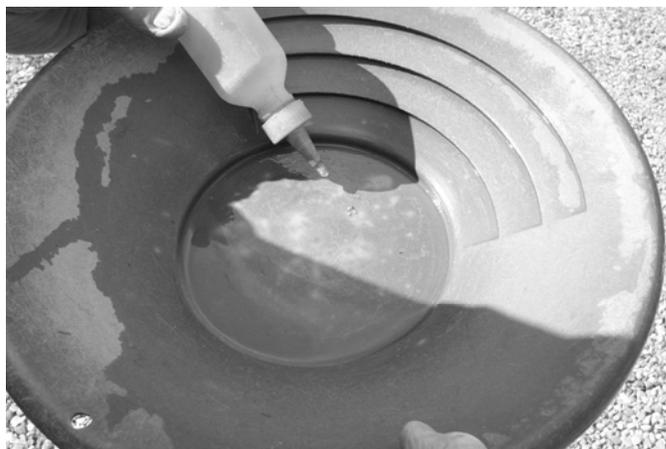
- Camp Rucker – built in 1878-80 as a military camp on the western slope of the Chiricahua Mountains north of Douglas, Camp Rucker will be the site of a major Passport In Time project this spring. We're looking forward to seeing many of our veteran Kentucky Camp PIT volunteers there, and already have an overflow crowd. However, preservation efforts will continue at the site, and other work opportunities can be arranged.
- Atascosa Fire Lookout – This historic L-4 Fire Lookout was built in 1930 by the CCC near Atascosa Peak just northwest of Nogales. A number of repairs are needed to the building and catwalk, as well as paint and construction of a mountaintop privy. It's a challenging 3-mile hike, but the scenery is spectacular! A work project is scheduled for April 5-7; volunteers can come for the whole time and camp at the site, or hike up one or more days. Pack animals will transport tools and gear; more volunteers are needed!

For information about helping out at any of these sites, contact Chris Schragger at the Coronado National Forest: (520) 388-8393, or email [cschragger@fs.fed.us](mailto:cschragger@fs.fed.us) .

## ASSAY BUILDING MYSTERIES

by Peter Van Cleve

For years I have been intrigued by the mysteries hidden from us in the Assay Cabin (Cabin 6 at Kentucky Camp). This building was used to test the gold bearing samples that Stetson and his people brought in from the gold rich area round Kentucky Camp. We do not have records of how they used the Assay Cabin or the records from the tests that told them where to run the hydraulic operations. I surmised the dirt in three by six foot concrete pit in the floor of the Cabin would provide a start to getting answers to these mysteries.



Kentucky Camp gold!

During our Centennial celebration on October 10<sup>th</sup> the Hummel family told us they used the Assay Cabin pit as an ice box. The pit apparently kept the ice from melting too fast. However they couldn't explain what went on in the cabin during the mining years

During the November 13<sup>th</sup> Work day at Kentucky Camp I decided to do one pan of dirt from the bottom of the pit and see what answers were revealed. I found lots of black sand and one medium size piece of gold. This was encouraging but not what I expected based on years of panning in the KC area. I expected to find some sand and lots of fine gold with not so much black sand. Still I decided that the dirt in the pit was unusual but definitely worth processing.

February 12<sup>th</sup> dawned cloudy and misting rain and I decided it was definitely not a day to do the Cabin C pit. As my son, Doug and I were about

to leave for KC, my wife. Judy saw the sunshine break through the clouds and hollered at us the load out the gold stuff. We loaded the sluice, recirculating pump, battery, tubs, half dozen five gallon buckets and the gold pans into the truck and were off to KC.

Doug and I setup operations next to the Assay Cabin. We decided to half fill the five gallon buckets with dirt from the pit, sift out the rocks from the dirt and run the sifted dirt through the sluice. We would see how much gold we had after each two, half bucket loads. So, after the two buckets we cleaned up and poured the concentrates into the gold pan and impatiently worked through the large amount of black sand to find only three specs of gold. Well, the next one will be better!

Two more buckets of pit material and there were three more specs of gold. And so it went until we had run a total of seven half buckets and the pit had been swept spotlessly clean. We now had found a total of 1.3 grains of gold. With gold selling at \$440 an ounce our gold was worth \$1.19.

Doug and I concluded that someone had previously cleaned up the assay pit and made off with the gold and the pit had been refilled with dirt from outside the cabin. The amount of gold we found could easily be contained in the dirt used to fill the pit since ground in the KC area has a little gold scattered everywhere. The gold we found won't really light up the Forest Service display case in Tucson and unfortunately the mysteries of the Assay Cabin are yet to be solved.

# SOUTHWESTERN REGION ARCHAEOLOGISTS VISIT KENTUCKY CAMP, OTHER HISTORIC SITES

by Chris Schrager

During the week of Feb. 14, 2005 the Coronado National Forest hosted a meeting of archaeologists from across the Southwestern Region, which includes 11 National Forests in Arizona and New Mexico. In addition to business sessions, several field trips were offered to sites in southeastern Arizona. One group focused on historic site preservation, and visited several sites over two days.

The first day began with a visit to Tumacacori National Historical Park, where earthen architecture expert David Yubeta provided an "insider's" look at the history of the site and the Park Service's preservation efforts there. They also visited Guevavi and Calabasas, two associated mission sites north of Nogales that consist of preserved adobe walls and artifact scatters. Tour members stopped at San Xavier Mission south of Tucson on the way back to see an example of



intensive restoration work undertaken over the past few years.

The following day the group met Yubeta and assistant Ray Madril at Brown Canyon Ranch, just south of Sierra Vista. The historic homestead has been the site of preservation efforts by the Forest Service since 1991, in partnership with a

### **Brown Canyon Ranch Overview**

local high school, whose students receive school credit for helping with the preservation work. Forest Service archaeologists Kathy Makansi and Chris Schrager joined the Tumacacori preservation crew in conducting a Lime Plastering mini-workshop, joined by the students and site caretakers.

After lunch, the tour drove to Kentucky Camp. As the final stop, the site was an excellent venue to look at all aspects of successful historic preservation: assessing the properties, acquiring the

skills needed (or finding and involving those who have them!), creating cooperative partnerships, funding, etc. Kentucky Camp also offers examples of the different approaches to preservation – stabilization, restoration, and reconstruction. Kathy was able to explain the advantages of the Historic

Cabin Rental program, and both sites that day showed the benefits of having on-site caretakers. Regional archeologists appreciated what's been done, and learned, about historic site preservation on the Coronado.

The **Friends of Kentucky Camp**, a chapter of the Coronado National Forest Heritage Society, is a nonprofit organization established to help in the preservation and interpretation of Kentucky Camp. Friends sponsor work days (2nd Saturday of every month) , coordinate volunteer activities, and conduct and supervise stabilization and preservation, in cooperation with the Coronado National Forest.

Student (\$5), individual (\$10), family (\$15), contributing (\$25), supporting (\$50), and lifetime (\$200) memberships are available.

Send checks to:

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Visit Friends of Kentucky Camp on the Internet at <http://www.aztecfreenet.org/fkcamp/>

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