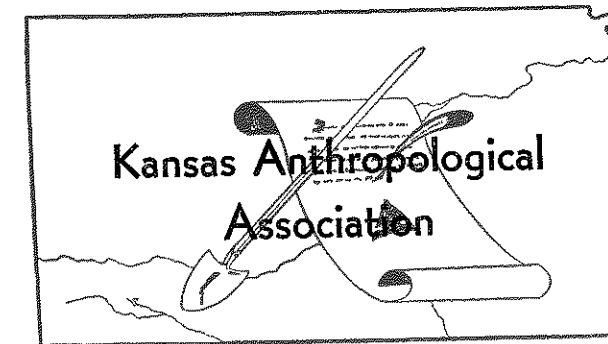


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NEWSLETTER

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GUN AND AMMUNITION PARTS FROM THE ALLISON RANCH SITE

by

Larry J. Schmits

The Allison Ranch (14BT301) was a trading post and ranch located on the Santa Fe Trail in Barton County, Kansas, near the mouth of Walnut Creek on the Arkansas River. It was established by a former mail contractor named William Allison and a man known as Booth. They freighted goods from Independence, Missouri, for sale to Santa Fe Trail travelers and for trade with the Indians. Pelts and robes were shipped back to Missouri the following Spring. Allison and Booth were famed prairie men living in a precarious environment. Allison had his right arm amputated as the result of a gunfight with his stepfather. Booth died in 1857 at the hands of a Mexican teamster armed with an ax. Allison died shortly thereafter and operations were continued by a trader named George Peacock. Peacock was killed in 1860 by Satanta and the post was operated by Charles Rath. Fort Zarah was founded in the immediate vicinity in the 1860's. Rath was accused by the military of illegally selling whiskey to the Indians and soon after he left the Walnut Creek area to open a store at the settlement which later became Dodge City.

The site excavated by the Kansas State Historical Society during the Spring of 1969 consisted of the remains of a large stone building. Sandstone footings from 2 to 3 feet in width and over one foot in thickness outlined an arrangement 80 feet in length and 21 to 23 feet in width. This structure had apparently burned completely furnished. Most of the artifacts were recovered from the north end. This was apparently a living area as evidence of furniture and kitchen utensils were numerous. The remains of a wood burning stove, coiled furniture springs and a table were found along with many broken dishes, bottles and bowls. Other items from this area included a razor, a U.S. Army belt buckle, glass beads, two metal arrowheads, an ax and a large number of gun parts and ammunition (Witty, 1969:2).

Preliminary investigation revealed that most gun parts were of Civil War vintage--a period of accelerated change and development in the firearms field due to demands of war. It was thought that an identification and analysis of the various gun and ammunition parts would be of importance in determining the approximate date of the building's destruction.

Gun parts were tentatively identified from illustrations in Hicks (1957) and from photographs in Blair (1962). Identifications were confirmed by comparisons with complete guns in private collections and with those on exhibit at the Fort Leavenworth Historical Museum. Ammunition parts were identified through illustrations and information found in Logan (1948) and Barnes (1965). Comparisons were also made with cartridges in collections from the Museum of Anthropology at the University of Kansas.

A total of 22 gun parts were recovered from the site. Included were six barrel bands, four patch box covers, six butt plates, one lock, a trigger guard, one forearm nose plate, two barrel pin plates and an ornament. Ammunition parts consisted of 29 cartridge cases, 46 lead bullets, 39 percussion caps and eight pieces of lead bar. A total of eight firearms are represented. All have percussion ignition systems but may be separated into two basic groups, muzzle loaders and breech-loaders. The ammunition parts also form two categories, those designed for use in percussion firearms and others with rimfire metallic cartridge cases.

I MUZZLE-LOADING GUN PARTS

The copper percussion cap was patented in the United States by Joshua Shaw in 1822. His invention consisted of a copper cap filled with fulminate which was placed over a nipple on the barrel of a gun. The blow from the hammer exploded the cap and detonated the main charge in the chamber of the gun. Parts representing three percussion muzzle-loading arms were found at the Allison Ranch site.

The first is a civilian shoulder arm. The small size of its lock suggests that it may have been a rifle rather than a musket. The letter and number "N 386" are engraved on the trigger guard. At one time the gun may have belonged to a business enterprise such as a freight or fur company and this might have been an inventory number.

Parts: iron lock, brass forearm nose cap, 2 brass barrel pin plates, brass trigger guard, brass ornament

Firearm represented: civilian percussion (probably rifle)

Parts from two military muzzle-loading guns were also discovered. Both were the first United States military arms based on Shaw's percussion principle. The first was a .54 caliber rifle. The other was a .69 caliber musket. The rifle was the last U.S. military arm to use the patched ball. The Model 1842 Musket differed from the rifle only in minor details. The swivel was attached to the middle barrel band rather than to the front as on the rifle. The butt plate and barrel bands on the musket were iron while the rifle was fitted with brass mountings.

Parts: brass butt plate

Firearms represented: U.S. Rifle Model 1841

Parts: iron upper barrel band, iron middle barrel band swivel, iron lower barrel band

Firearm represented: U.S. Musket Model 1842

During the Mexican War a regiment of Mississippi riflemen under the command of Jefferson Davis was the first to be equipped with the new Model 1841 rifle and it quickly became known in many areas as the Mississippi rifle. Most of the 1841 rifles were manufactured at the Harper's Ferry Armory and they were also known as Harper's Ferry rifles. Others were manufactured by civilian contractors such as Eli Whitney. Although famous for his interchangeable parts Whitney turned out some of the worst fitting parts used in the Civil War. The rifle itself however was considered one of the best military arms in the world during its time. It was highly accurate and would penetrate eight inches of pine at 100 yards (Edwards 1962:49).

II BREECH-LOADING GUN PARTS

The Sharps was one of the first successful non-metallic cartridge breech-loaders and was considered one of the best rifles of its day. Christian Sharps was granted a patent for its invention in 1848. The mechanism was both simple and strong. The trigger guard acted as a lever for a breech block which slid downward exposing a chamber for loading. When the breech was closed an edge cut open the base of the cartridge exposing the powder to flame from the primer.

The first reported combat use of the Sharps was by free-state and pro-slavery forces in Kansas during the 1850's. Some of Quantrill's men were armed with Sharps when they attacked Lawrence. Henry Ward Beecher once remarked about the Sharps, "more moral power in one of those instruments so far as the slave-holders were concerned than in a hundred Bibles." The Sharps became known as "Beecher's Bibles" when the New England Emigrant Aid Co. and other Abolitionist organizations sent hundreds of them to Kansas free-state settlers in crates marked Beecher's Bibles (Peterson, 1962;174).

The butt plates and patch box covers of four Sharps rifles or carbines were recovered from the Allison Ranch site. Parts from one gun were made of brass. The other three were manufactured of hardened iron. An additional one or two badly corroded iron barrel bands may be from the same firearms. Sharps carbines were equipped with one barrel band, while the rifle had three. Since so few bands were found it seems most probable that these Sharps were carbines. The limited number of Sharps rifles manufactured during this period tends to confirm such a conclusion. Sharps carbines were fitted with brass butt plates and brass patch box covers from 1852 to 1859. Due to the shortage of copper during the Civil War the brass parts were replaced with iron in later models (Smith, 1948;68-69).

Parts: brass butt plate, brass patch box cover,

Firearms represented: Sharps carbine Model 1852-1859, or New Model 1859

Parts: 3 iron butt plates, 3 iron patch box covers

Firearms represented: 3 Sharps Carbines Model 1859, New Model 1859 or New Model 1863

A butt plate attached to a portion of a badly charred stock of a Starr Carbine was also found at the site. The patent covering this arm was granted to E. T. Starr of New York on September 14, 1858. Many authorities considered the Starr to be an improvement on the Sharps. Breech parts of both guns are similar.

Starr's most important contribution to the firearms field was the development of his percussion carbine into a metallic cartridge breech-loader. A total of 20,601 Starr carbines were purchased by the United States for use in the Civil War.

Parts: brass butt plate and part of stock

Firearm represented: Starr Carbine Model 1858

III AMMUNITION PARTS FOR PERCUSSION FIREARMS

A total of 45 bullets including 9 spherical balls were obtained from the site. Fifteen of these can be associated with metallic cartridge cases. The remainder were contained in combustible paper cartridges or as loose unfixed ammunition intended for use in muzzle-loading firearms.

.36 Caliber, total 22:

Thirteen conical bullets and an additional 9 spherical balls were included in the lot. The diameter of the conical bullets varied from .375 to .38 inch. The spherical balls averaged .377 inch with two exceptions. One was slightly smaller and may have been intended for use as buck shot. The second had been cut in half. These bullets were probably intended for use in a .36 caliber Colt revolver such as the 1851 or 1861 models.

.46 Caliber, total 1:

Algernon K. Johnson of Middletown, Conn., and Lorenzo Dow of Topeka, Kansas secured a patent on October 1, 1861 for a waterproof paper cartridge. This bullet could have been manufactured for such a cartridge and used in the .44 Caliber Colt (Logan, 1948;27).

.52 Caliber, total 2:

This bullet was designed for use in the .52 Caliber Sharps Linen Cartridge and used in the Sharps Carbines.

.55 Caliber, total 1:

This .55 caliber bullet has a slightly concave base. It could have been used in the .54 caliber Starr Carbine.

.58 Caliber, total 2:

This 500 gr. conical bullet had a concave Minie type base. It was also known as the .58 Caliber Springfield.

Unidentified, total 2:

Two bullets were badly damaged and could not be identified. They range in diameter from approximately .40 caliber to .50 caliber.

Percussion Caps, total 39:

A total of 39 percussion caps were recovered from the site. Two sizes are represented. The larger could have been used on the Model 1841 Rifle or on the Model 1842 Musket. The smaller caps were designed for use on a revolver.

Lead Bars, total 8:

Parts of eight lead bars are represented. Total weight is 443 grams. They were molded with the identification "Tower Comapny St. Louis" on one side. They were likely used for casting bullets as the ends of many have been melted.

IV RIM FIRE METALLIC CARTRIDGE AMMUNITION

Ammunition parts included 29 rimfire cartridge cases ranging from a low caliber revolver cartridge to the large Spencer Rifle cartridge. Many specimens were unfired and consequently exploded when the building burned. As a result a number of bullets from exploded cases were also recovered. Rimfire cartridges cannot be reloaded and it may be suggested that the fired specimens were retained as trinkets for the Indian trade. Many historic aboriginal sites have produced punctured Spencer cases suggesting their use as ornaments.

.25 Short, total 1:

The .25 Short was originally developed for the F.D. Bliss revolver. It is also known as the .25 Bacon and Bliss. It was introduced about 1860 and discontinued in 1863 (Logan, 1948; 64).

.44 Long, total 6:

The rimfire .44 Long cartridge originated with the Ethan Allen Carbine patented in 1860. It was later adapted to rifles made by Ballard, Remington and others. It was gradually replaced by the reloadable .44 Centerfire cartridge. Of the 6 cartridge cases recovered at the site two have been fired. The remainder exploded during the fire. Associated were 3 .44 caliber lead bullets. The length of these cartridges (.95 in.) is somewhat below standard for this caliber probably indicating a manufacturing variation.

.56-56 Spencer, total 22:

This was the cartridge for the first Spencer rifle invented by Christopher M. Spencer and patented on March 6, 1860. It was manufactured in quantity beginning in 1862. Spencer's rifle was a lever actuated repeater with a tubular magazine located in the stock. The hammer had to be manually cocked for each shot. Seven unaimed shots could be fired in about 10 seconds. The Spencer has been credited with giving the Union armies a decisive advantage at the Battle of Gettysburg. An entry in the Fort Larned records reports that as of April 5, 1867 Fort Zarah was manned by an officer and 21 men armed with Spencer repeating rifles (Schultz, 1969; 7).

The Spencer cartridges found at the Allison Ranch can be divided into two groups based on minor variations. The first includes three fired cartridge cases. The length of this type is .875 in. The firing pin mark is rectangular and flat

In shape. The second group contains six fired cases and an additional 13 exploded cases and 12 conical bullets. This type is slightly longer in length measuring .973 in. Firing pin marks on this type are slightly concave and are located on the edge of the rim of the case. Differences in firing pin marks indicates the use of more than one Spencer rifle. Variations in case length may indicate different manufacturers.

CONCLUSIONS

The variety and types of gun and ammunition parts found at the Allison Ranch site permit a relatively accurate date to be assigned to the building's destruction. The Model 1858 Starr carbines were manufactured for a government contract of Nov. 27, 1861. The first lot was delivered on July 30, 1863. The Ballard single-shot rifle using the .44 Long cartridges was introduced in 1862. The Spencer carbines and ammunition were manufactured in quantity beginning in 1862. The Starr and Spencer carbines were manufactured principally for government use in the Civil War. After the war they were sold as government surplus. The absence of cartridges such as the .52-52 Spencer, .52-70 Sharps and .44 Henry indicate a time period which did not postdate the Civil War by many years. A suggested date of 1866 to 1869 seems probable for the destruction of the building at the Allison Ranch.

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University of Kansas
 Lawrence, Kansas

KANSAS ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
 Officers Meeting

The Executive Committee of the Kansas Anthropological Association met at the home of Edith Dobbs February 13, 1971.

State Officers present included:

Earl Monger -- Past President
 Rozeene Lyon -- President
 R. D. Brent -- First Vice-President
 Harold Reed -- Second Vice-President
 John Rhine -- Secretary-Treasurer
 Tom Witty -- Editor

Others present at the meeting:

Inez Ernzen -- President Waconda Chapter
 Betty Melton -- Secretary-Treasurer, Waconda Chapter
 Norman Horn -- President, Apache Chapter
 Edith Dobbs -- President, Smoky Hill Chapter
 Iris Monger -- Member at large

The meeting was called to order by the president to discuss the program for the spring meeting. Speakers are being contacted for the morning program. Workshops and the business meeting will again be conducted in the afternoon session.

The program for the 16th annual meeting will be published as soon as the program slate is complete.

A proposal was made by the president to reorganize the present office of the Secretary-Treasurer into two positions; Treasurer, Secretary and adding a new position of Recording Historian. Each position will be well defined in the constitution. The present Secretary-Treasurer would continue his duties until the term expires.

The proposal will be voted upon at the spring meeting.

Tom Witty discussed a revision of the procedure of the "digs" which will be presented to the members at the spring meeting.

The plans for the spring dig include the possibility of two sites. The dates for the spring dig have been suggested for the Fourth of July weekend.

WACONDA CHAPTER NEWS

In November nine members of the Waconda Chapter enjoyed a scheduled field trip. Among the places visited was the Ellsworth National Armory where a Ellsworth Lapidary Convention was being held, Charles B. Roger's art Museum, Ellsworth County Museum, Fort Harker, Mushroom Rock State Park, and to a small State Monument south of Lincoln honoring some early settlers who were massacred by the Indians in 1864.

The December meeting of the Waconda Chapter was held as usual in the Community room of the Guaranty State Bank. Paul Gritman was our honored host. He showed slides of many places, including the Arizona National Monument, San Carlos Indian Res., and Bandelier National Monument.

The January meeting of the Waconda Chapter met Tuesday evening, at the usual place. There are 22 paid 1971 members. We are proud of this. Rosemary Conley gave a brief summary on what she had learned from the Anthropology Course given by Dr. William Bass. Then each of us who had taken the course, spoke of what had impressed us most, other than our esteemed Dr. Bass. Mr. C. R. Hubbard then produced slides of his (Trip through Kansas), proving that our state is one of the most beautiful in the World. He also showed slides that Inez Erzen had brought of several of our trips to cliff sites, and their impressive petroglyphs.

Joyce Bell
Secretary

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Snow, frozen ground and mud prevented much field work during February. I did make one trip to Scott City to talk with a contractor about the beginning of the ruin reconstructions at the El Cuartelejo site in the Scott Lake State Park. The project is now out for bid and should get underway soon. On the 13th I made a trip to Hays to attend a K.A.A. officer's meeting. That night I gave a program to the Apache Chapter in Great Bend.

Tom Barr made a one day trip to the Leavenworth area to re-examine a site area in connection with our on going Fort Cavagnolle search.

John Reynolds completed his survey report of the Onaga reservoir area for the National Park Service this month. Ninety-six sites were located that will be threatened if the reservoir is constructed. These range culturally from Archaic to Historic Pottawatomie. The rest of the Month John has been up to his neck in Highway maps and plans. As soon as the weather improves he will begin the highway survey field work. Some of his first survey areas will be between Iola and Chanute, along K10 east of Lawrence and I435 around the east edge of Kansas City, Kansas.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. Witty;

In looking over your bulletin Vol. 16, No. 5 on "Archeology and Early History of the Scott Lake State Park Area," I notice a statement that "El Cuartelejo" has been translated to mean "the old building or the old barracks."

Probably it is not important but it occurs to me that a better translation might be "the house far away" or the "far home."

Cuarto of course means room or dwelling. Viejo means old. Lejos means far. So if we combine Cuarto and lejos we get "Cuartolejos."

It is quite common in some Spanish speaking countries to drop the final s. Drop the "s" and we get "Cuartolejo." The change of the "o" to "e" could easily occur in a copier misreading the letter or a clerk using his own spelling.

So it may be that "cuartolejos" or the "far home" would be closer than "cuartoviejo" or the "old house or home."

C. R. Hubbard
Guaranty State Bank and Trust Co.
Beloit, Kansas 67420

Dear Editor:

As Consultant in Outdoor Education for the Nashville Schools, I am attempting to set up a special exhibit for our Nature Center on Prehistoric Indians of the United States. Part of this exhibit will be a large map with some Indian relics from each state--points, sherds, etc.

Would there be any people in your organization who would be willing to donate, trade for Tennessee-Kentucky-Arkansas-Alabama relics, or sell any points or sherds which we might use for this map? Over 15,000 inner-city children visit this center very year and we are trying to help them understand the ecology of man with both natural and physical history.

I would appreciate any help you might be able to give me.

Elizabeth Roller
Consultant in Outdoor Education
Metropolitan Public Schools
2601 Bransford Ave.
Nashville, Tennessee 37204

INFORMATION FOR K.A.A. MEMBERSHIP

The objects and purposes of this association are: to unite individuals who are interested in the Indian history and prehistory of the State of Kansas; preservation and display of Indian remains within the State; the scientific study, investigation and interpretation of archeological remains and ethnological materials; the publication and distribution of information concerning Kansas archaeology and ethnology; the development and promotion of greater public interest and appreciation for the cultural heritage of the State.

Types of memberships and dues:

Active	\$5.00	Institutional	\$7.00
Student	\$3.00	Contributing	\$10.00
Family	\$8.00	Life	\$100.00

Application for membership and dues should be addressed to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Kansas Anthropological Association as the address appears on the title page of the Newsletter. A membership year begins on September 1st and annual dues are payable at that time.

PUBLICATIONS

Members will receive the Newsletter nine times a year. Printed from September to May the Newsletter contains reports of archaeological and ethnological work in the state as well as activities of the K.A.A. members. All members and interested individuals, professional or amateur, are invited to submit material to the K.A.A. editor for use in the Newsletter. Five reprints will be provided free to the author for each article accepted. Additional reprints or reprints of back numbers if available, may be ordered from the Secretary-Treasurer.

Prices are 35 cents each for issues from Volume 1 - 12. Fifty cents each for issues from Volume 13 on.

The Association also publishes bulletins on specific subjects as the material becomes available. Currently in print is Bulletin No. 1, Coal Oil-Canyon, by Peter W. Bowman, \$2.25. Bulletins may be ordered from the editor.

MEETINGS

Association meetings are held one or two times a year.

1971 Spring Meeting will be held April 17, 1971 at the Memorial Union, Fort Hays Kansas State College, Hays, Kansas.