

Camp Floyd a piece of time preserved

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Historical Archaeology Research Paper

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ABSTRACT: Camp Floyd has a large array of information to be uncovered. With the resources that can be provided from a grant to purchase new available land and new surveying methods a lot more can be learned and obtained from this archaeological site.

A. Site, Location, Map References

Just Southwest of Eagle Mountain is the small town of Fairfield Utah. A town that looks as if it has been left quiet since its founding. Despite its appearance this quiet area has had a ruckus in its history. Once in response to an alleged religious uprising a military force was dispatched to quell the threat. Upon arriving this force settled just south of the small town of Fairfield.

Camp Floyd was established in the summer of 1858 making Fairfield the third largest city in Utah. (Camp Floyd Museum) South of Salt Lake City and East of Utah Lake. (see figure 1) “Named for the secretary of war [in 1858] John B. Floyd”. (Powell, 66) A creek traveling across the area divided Fairfield from Camp Floyd. The creek still divides the two places though now the army and camp has disappeared.

The area is now owned mostly by private land owners who have left the land mostly untouched. The land being privately owned has prevented most kind of excavation. (see figure 2) As depicted in figure 2 the only sites to be excavated have been the sites in yellow. Though now some new developments have taking place creating an opportunity to obtain some land and continue the excavation of the untouched land frozen in time. This piece of land that will become available soon is the two plots of land that is located directly south of the current location of the Camp Floyd museum. The area was once where the camp built their artillery range.

My proposition is to obtain a grant to purchase the land that is now becoming available and then hire students and archeologist to survey the area and excavate the new sites. The few sites excavated have yielded a wealth of resources. With the new opportunity to obtain many

more artifacts and history from this site a variety of new prospects have been placed before us just waiting to be dug up and pieced together.

B. Current Condition

Driving up to the former site of Camp Floyd makes you wonder if really it had once “housed the largest troop concentration in the United States at the time”. (Wharton, Wharton, 24) The site is quiet and open, away from any bustling city. (see figure 3) Though it was meant to be “close enough to the major Mormon cities ... to respond to any problems the Mormons might cause”. (Wharton, Wharton, 24) Because the land lays at the foot of the Oquirrh Mountain Range it has a slight incline to it allow you to view most of the area from most places.

With a few farm houses, trailers and cattle fences dotting the area it seems strange a military force of around “2,500 soldiers” would settle among all this sagebrush. When coming to understand the tentative relations between the US Government and the Mormon people you understand why space was needed.

The mind will wonder and think of what kind of history has been left here for us to discover. But a mood of melancholy will seep in as you see the once military camp being trodden down by hoofs of beasts. The graves left saying unknown and seemingly forgotten. This was no Civil War battle ground but a piece of history, frozen and waiting to be uncovered.

C. Why

Imagine trying to tell someone what happened to you every single day from the past 3 years. You may think it a daunting task. Now imagine you have something from every single one of those days. Whether it be an object or record, the task now doesn't seem quite as impossible.

Camp Floyd has that fate. A picture of military life pre-Civil War was painted from 1858 to 1861 but then lost. The only thing left behind have been the stories told by those who saw the once great camp. Though the information contained in those narratives is valuable in its self there is still something lacking. How can the questions from the records be answered? The pieces to for this picture have laid lost and mostly untouched beneath the land south of Fairfield Utah.

Important to both local, national and Native American history, understanding camp Floyd could lead to the obtaining of much knowledge. Questions could be answered such as: What was the relations of Native American Utes to the local troop and Mormons? How much influence did the troops have on local citizens? What change in culture did the troops experience from living in the western United States? And Many other questions.

The Camp had been visited by some significant people. Mark Twain himself once called the camp an "important military instillation" after looking over the "remnant and ruin" of the former camp. (Stagecoach Inn Museum)

D. Historical Background

The story of Camp Floyd begins long before “the soldiers ... raised the United States flag above their newly completed garrison.” (Powell, 66) It begins with persecution. After being chased from state to state members of the LDS Faith (Mormons) had finally found their niche within the western United States. Having established a city amongst the desert sagebrush they felt as if they had finally found peace.

In 1857 ten years after the first Mormons come into the Salt Lake Valley the US Government had noticed this growing territory. After many complaints from non-Mormon government officials “President James Buchanan moved quickly ... to find a non-Mormon governor for Utah.” (Powell, 607) “President James Buchanan had decided to send an army of twenty-five hundred men to install [Alfred Cumming as governor]”. (Wharton, Wharton, 20)

Albert Sidney Johnston “was assigned charge over the expedition, now well on its way to Utah”. (Powell, 287) Johnston had been a prominent figure throughout the military in the US. He served in the Black Hawk War, as Secretary of War in Texas and later became a general in the Confederate army during the Civil War. (Powell, 287)

Johnston led the army across the United States and through Wyoming. Where he met resistance from a Mormon militia sent by Brigham Young the leader of the LDS church. The militia attacked supply wagons and burned prairie grass as well to prevent the army’s livestock from grazing. (Camp Floyd Museum) Eventually Johnston’s Army made it to what was once Fort Bridger, now just ashes. “Mormon guerrillas forced Johnston’s Army into a winter encampment called Camp Scott”. (Powell, 66)

Though the efforts of the Mormon Militia had damaged Johnston's Army severely it did not deter the continued march towards Utah. More efforts made to stop the army had failed and "Successful peace negotiations [with Brigham Young] resulted in orders in the spring of 1858 for the army to march through Salt Lake City". (Powell, 66-67) The city evacuated by the Mormons, few men were left behind to watch "for signs of aggression and waited to give the order to burn the city." (Wharton, Wharton, 22)

"Johnston tried to dissuade Cumming from cooperating ... but the new governor who shared none of the general's hatred of the Mormons, sought peace instead of retribution." (Alexander, 135) Peace was kept and Johnston's army continued to Fairfield, Utah to establish Camp Floyd.

The camp "was located on the eastern fringe of the Goshute homeland, where it played a brief but important role in Indian-white relations in the area." (Cuch, 97) Not only had Johnston's Army been sent to quell the Mormon threat but also to stop the Native American threat as well.

"[With] Indian-white relations ... at a critical point. The Overland Stage was constantly harassed, and some of the permanent settlements were threatened ... The military reacted to this situation and troops were sent to quell the Indians." (Cuch, 102)

(see figure 4)

In 1860 "the post was renamed Fort Crittenden." In response to John B. Floyd's "Southern sympathies". (Powell, 67). As things began to escalate for the country moving it towards Civil War in "1861 Camp Floyd/Fort Crittenden was abandoned." (Powell, 67) Because

of the urgent call to war “The Mormons managed to buy \$4 million worth of army surplus for \$100,000.” (Wharton, Wharton, 24) This purchase was a big win for the Mormons providing them with enough resource to supply their own military and citizens well at such a low cost.

E. Research Questions

Camp Floyd has continued to intrigue me in new ways as I continue to learn more about it. The daily life of soldiers comes to mind as a question worth answering. What did they do in their free time? Did most of the soldiers dislike the Mormons? From photo’s of the camp we see the troops take part in a variety to typical military camp activities. (see figure 5) They also took part in a variety of non-military activities. (see figure 6)

The soldiers had a variety of games they played, artifacts have been dug up showing hand made dice and dominos. (see figure 7) What other items similar to these could be found. Was this an activity all soldiers took place in?

The men of camp Floyd were among the first prospectors of Utah. (see figure 8) What mining/prospecting artifacts could be found in the foothills around the camp or even in places around the creek? It’s an understanding that the troops sold a large amount of equipment to the Mormons. “But before troops left, they buried hoards of military supplies”, that they didn’t want the mormon’s to find. (Shaffer, 173)

The camps gravesite is left with gravestones reading unknown for the many troops who had died. (see figure 9) What more can be learned from these graves? Is it possible to establish which gravesite belongs to which name?

What remnants have been left behind from the Native American's who associated with Camp Floyd? Were the relations with the native and troops always hostile? These and many more questions can be answered from studying the remnants of Camp Floyd.

F. Methods

There are many ways to approach the site of Camp Floyd. The first step would be to approach the newly obtained site of the former artillery range with a survey. The plots are large and could offer a variety of small sites depending on what can be found. Next with what artifacts are found perform an excavation in that area to discover more artifacts.

The survey could include a ground survey by lining up and walking across the plots looking for possible sites. Next could be using a drone with LIDAR to survey over and even larger part of the former camp ground to discover what else could be hidden. Lastly ground penetrating radar would be useful to survey what would be laying underneath the ground and where it would be located.

G. Conclusion

Camp Floyd has a wealth of answers to all the questions of what happened here. History is never really about what an important person said or did but what each person has contributed to the whole of the picture. Camp Floyd is beautiful for that reason. It includes a wealth of background from a lowly military soldier to Native Americans. To miss this upcoming

opportunity to excavate and obtain more knowledge of Camp Floyd would be a waste of so much knowledge that potentially couldn't be obtained otherwise.

Visuals

Figure 1:

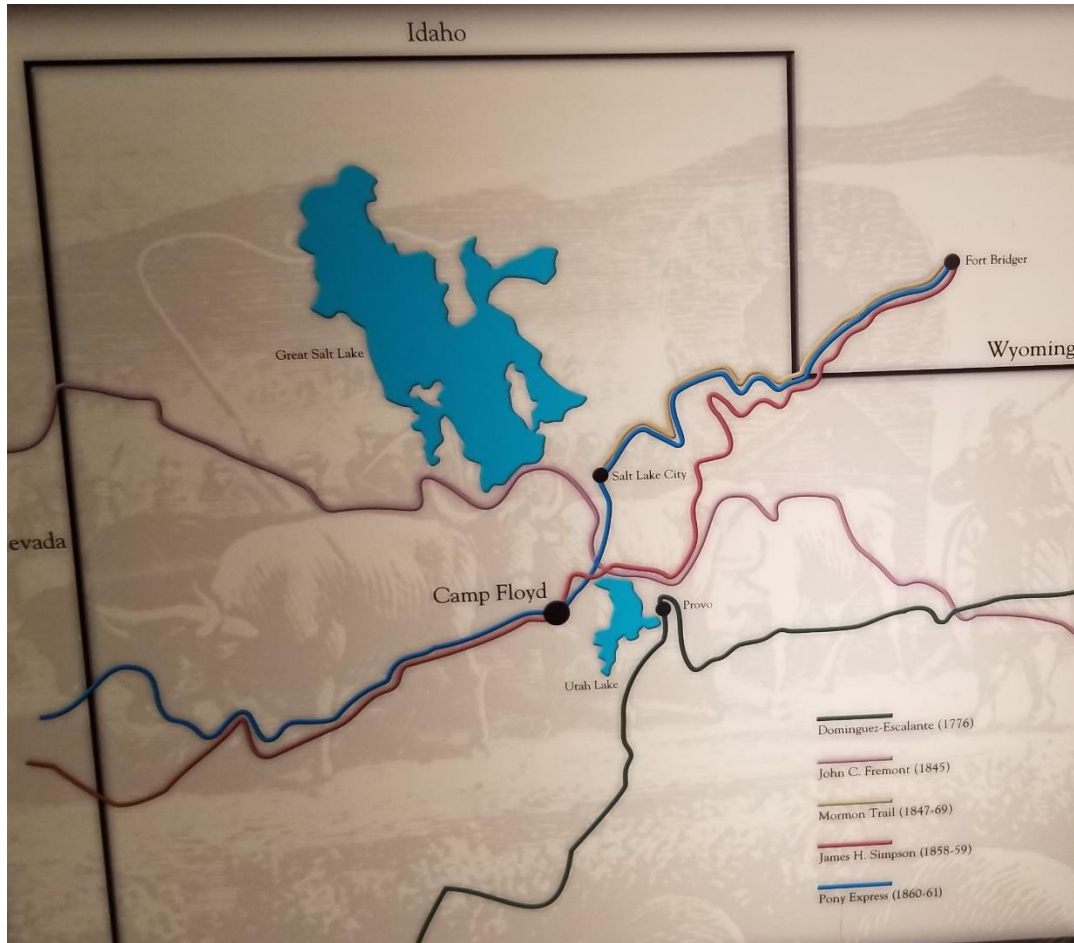


Photo courtesy of Camp Floyd Museum Figure 2:

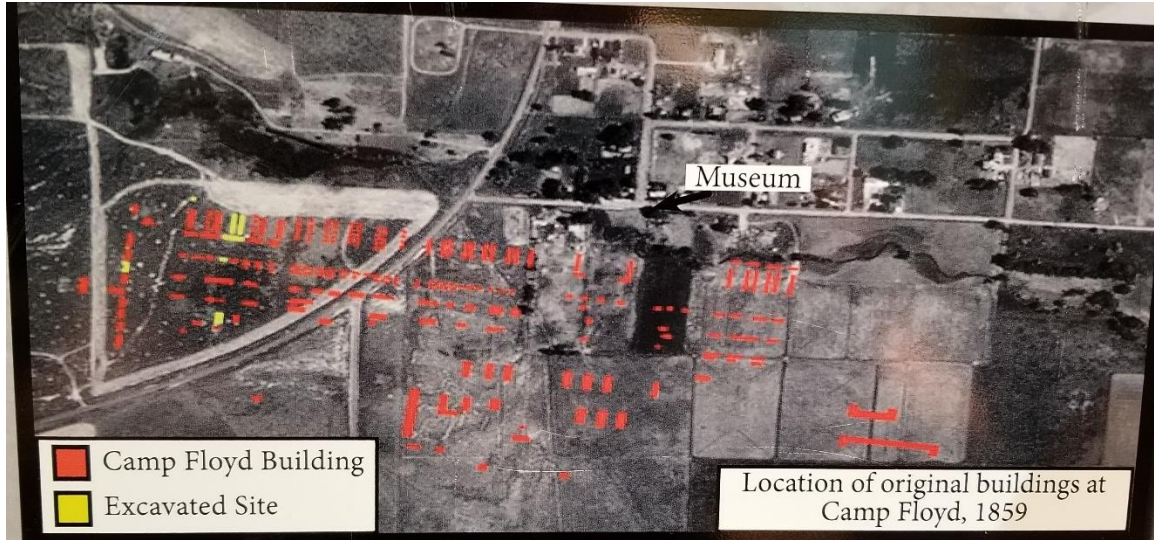


Photo courtesy of Camp Floyd Museum

Figure 3:



Photo by Geoff Kroll

Figure 4:

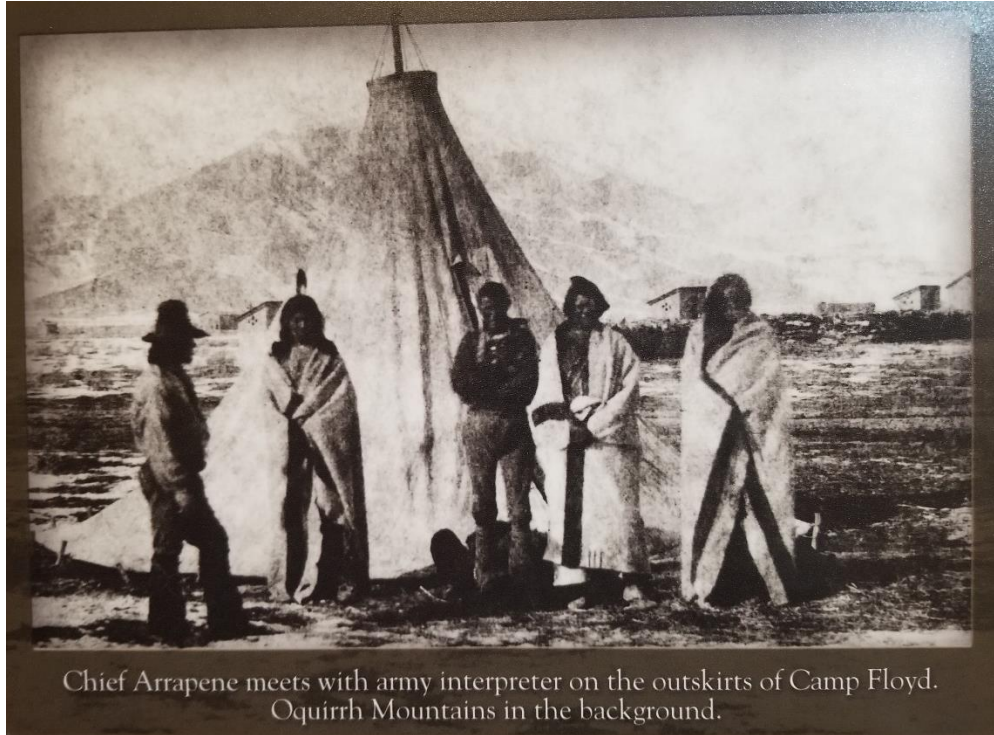


Photo courtesy of Camp Floyd Museum

Figure 5:



Photo courtesy of Camp Floyd Museum

Figure 6:



Photo Courtesy of Camp Floyd Museum

Figure 7:



Photo Courtesy of Camp Floyd Museum

Figure 8:



Photo Courtesy of Camp Floyd Museum

Figure 9:



Photo Taken By Geoff Kroll Camp Floyd Military Camp Ground

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