

Carlisia McCord Summer 2014 Internship at the Fort Davis Archaeological Project in Texas



This summer I had the opportunity to work with the field school component of Fort Davis Archaeological Project. The project is directed by historical archaeologist Katrina Eichner and geoarchaeologist Erin Rodriguez through UC Berkeley. I spent six weeks in Fort Davis, Texas excavating in various parts of the town learning field methods, lab techniques, archaeological excavation and survey. The Fort Davis Archaeological Project (FODAAP) research focuses on the

lives of civilians and soldiers in the town after the Civil War (1867-1891). The project's particular interest in the African American Buffalo Soldiers and the women of the frontier is what drew my interest. This was my first time attending a field school, as well as my first time in Texas. The scenery for our excavations was magnificent. The large expanses of desert back dropped by beautiful mountains were home to some of the first settlers of the American ranching frontier. Fort Davis has played a significant part in American history as a post. The fort was home to some of the first African American men allowed to serve in the United States military; the 9th and 10th Calvary and the 24th and 25th Infantry. These men were responsible for protecting the roads between the post from raids or attacks by Native Americans, the original settlers of the land. It was interesting learning how the remnants of clothes, dishes, and sparse personal narratives left behind gave the team insight into their lives. Reading the written records left behind by them, hearing the stories handed down by locals, and comparing all of this to the material culture we found was fascinating. For example, I learned how to classify various types of pottery and dishware. Not only in how they were made, but the social symbolism attached to each type for the time in which it was used. We then learned about the various dish wares found in association with the soldiers, and how they were using these things to create community and exhibit social status. I'm a hands on learner. So, being able to



immediately apply what we learned to our actions in the field was great. I am proud of the work I did this summer. It will help in the reconstruction of past identities that would otherwise be forgotten despite their contributions to creating a nation, and very historic town.