

# FORT CONCHO

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK



## Happy New Year!

2022 brought programs and adventures back to Fort Concho and our volunteers. In 2022 we began the reconstruction of Barracks and Mess Halls 3 and 4, which should be completed in the coming months! We marched in the San Angelo parade to celebrate Juneteenth, which became a federal holiday for the first time. More importantly, we got to get out and do the programs we had missed since 2020.

As we go into 2023, we are looking forward to continuing our programs that help the public to understand our western heritage while also creating new programs that will engage with new groups so more people can learn our local history.

CHEERS TO A NEW YEAR!

## Find yourself in San Angelo?

### COME VISIT US!

Fort Concho is open for self guided tours.

Come see us 7 days a week.

Monday through Saturday we are open from 9AM- 5PM and 1PM-5PM on Sunday.





# Christmas at Old Fort Concho 2022

**THANK YOU FOR ANOTHER GREAT YEAR!**

Starting right after the new year, Fort Concho staff comes together and begins planning for our biggest event. Almost every building is redecorated and transformed for this one weekend and it is no small task. This was my third year hosting living history at the Winter Rendezvous. To those who attended, thank you so much for your help preserving American history!



## Attendance

**12,500**

Over the course of three days, about 12,500 people attended Christmas at Old Fort Concho.



## Students' Day

**900**

180 of the students in attendance are home school or private school groups.



# Students' Day

DECEMBER 2, 2022

Following the program, the Education Department received this email from a teacher: "Our experience at the fort was amazing—I think it was the best one yet! There were plenty of presentations, so none were too crowded. All of the presenters were very kind to my student & even didn't seem to mind all their random questions!"

This response is why we in living history do these kinds of programs. Students had the opportunity to learn from us and engage in a way not possible with a book. We spend hours studying and learning and in return we extend our knowledge to the public. I am really proud of the parade field this year. We knew we could walk up to any camp, at any age, and learn from you all.

The goal for 2023 is to bring more of you fantastic people to the field. If you know anyone interested, or anyone who used to attend Christmas at Old Fort Concho, please let them know they are welcome to join us and I will be sure they get their water and firewood earlier this time.





# Photos from the Field 4





# Photos from the Field 5

# Battle of Olustee

written by Rhett Kearns, Fort Mckavett



On February 17, Ehren Thomas, Luca Lohse, and I drove from Fort McKavett to Lake City, Florida for the annual Battle of Olustee reenactment. The drive was seventeen hours straight, adding one hour for Ehren and Luca coming from San Angelo. We arrived on Friday morning at about 9 AM EST and we promptly set up Fort Concho's Sibley tent. Brigadier General James Permane, commander of the Federal forces, was kind enough to loan us a center pole for the tent. Unfortunately, the pole was too big for the pyramid, so we hoisted the entire tent over a small pine tree and found it worked just as well! Immediately, word spread throughout the camps that three Texans brought a Sibley tent from over a thousand miles away.

When Saturday morning arrived, the three of us were detailed with our company to prepare rations. We portrayed the 6th Florida Infantry, under the command of Major Walter Cook. We participated in company and battalion drills during the mid-morning, went sutler shopping and touring in the late morning, and met many friends I had not seen in nearly two years (COVID canceled 2021's event). In the early afternoon, it was time for battle.

Saturday's battle was intense, with one of my friends from Savannah dislocating his shoulder and another participant getting struck in the eyebrow with a flag finial, causing profuse bleeding. As dangerous as battle reenactments sound, everyone exercised the utmost safety, and these few incidents were promptly handled by professional medical personnel. Neither wounded man wanted to leave the mock fight. Despite being a Confederate victory, Saturday's battle is fought to a draw to be fair to the Federal reenactors. The real commemorative battle is fought on Sunday.



Saturday evening was one of the most fun times of the event, in my opinion. I toured around Confederate, Union, civilian, and sutler camps, conversing with old friends and even a former coworker from Fort McAllister. Later that evening there was a large ball, and I must say that one may never have seen so many hoop skirts in one area. Live music played and a dance caller guided us on reels, polkas, waltzes, and many others from 7 to 11 PM.

That night the temperature dropped to almost freezing, which is unusual for Florida even in the winter. The Sibley stove kept us warm the previous night, but this time the door was shut and the fire snuffed out. The three of us recall two of my friends desperately trying to bring the fire back with a twig and a lighter. That worked as well as one can imagine. Sunday involved a memorial service with both Union and Confederate brigades gathering around the monument erected in 1912 to commemorate the fallen, both in 1864 and in the last two years. Every year the reenactment holds this memorial service. Participants who had family in the military who had passed away are given mention before a moment of silence. The battle followed a few hours later, and this time, the Confederates swept the field.

On the exact date of the battle, February 20, the 6th Florida reenactors charged with a fierce rebel yell and joined their wavering comrades on the battlefield. In full view of the public, no less than 1,000 viewers, we charged the Federal forces and routed them, taking a few prisoners in the process. After a final commemoration, the armies split and everyone broke camp.

As a final goodbye, the three of us shared some champagne and wine with the Confederate Brigade commander, Brigadier General Hunter Poythress, and his wife, Stacy. We drove to Fort Blakeley near Mobile, Alabama, and arrived around midnight. The park ranger, and also our company first sergeant, Brian DesRochers, was kind enough to let us stay overnight. Monday morning began the twelve hours home, and we arrived at my house a little after midnight on February 22.

Despite being a long drive both ways, there was so much to see, do, learn, and take home. Ehren even bought an original bugle from one of my friends and will be using it at future events here in Texas. We hope to go again next year, and most certainly, the 160th anniversary in 2024.

***Rhett and others will be attending this event again this year! The 46th annual battle of Olustee Reenactment will commemorate their 159th anniversary on February 17 through 19, 2023.***

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## Upcoming Events 2023

**February** February 26 Buffalo Soldier Heritage Day

**March** March 10-12 Ladies Living History Symposium  
March 25 School of the Soldier

**April** April 5, 12, 19, 26 Fort Concho Speaker Series  
April 20-22 Regional Cavalry Competition  
April 22 Frontier Day

**May** May 20 Armed Forces Day  
May 29 Memorial Day

**June** June 22-Aug 6 American Plains Art Show

**July** July 4 Independence Day at Fort Concho  
July 22 National Cowboy Day

**August** August 3-5 Frontier Ladies Living History Workshop

September 6, 13, 20, 27 Fort Concho Speaker Series

**September** September 29-30 Cowboy Way Jubilee  
September 29- Oct 1 Artillery Training

October 26 National Mule Day

**October** October 27-29 En Plein Air Art Show  
October 13 & 21 Fort Concho After Dark

**November** November 3-4 Murder at Fort Concho

**December** December 1-3 Christmas at Old Fort Concho

**SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**



Have you considered collaborating with Fort Concho? Do you know a niche in late nineteenth-century history that others may be interested in?

The Education Department is still building our 2023 and 2024 program schedule and we would enjoy including you!

Please reach out to Sarah Ross @ [sarah.ross@cosatx.us](mailto:sarah.ross@cosatx.us) if you are interested.

## Preserving our *Western* Heritage

Find us on facebook @ Fort Concho National Historic Landmark

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**WWW.FORTCONCHO.COM**