

The Biedermann-Rufley Brewery  
at  
Fort Stanton, New Mexico



by Bill Lockhart  
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## Foreword

It all began when I met Charlie Haecker at a material culture workshop in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in November 2005. I had been asked to present at the workshop because of my interest and research in local (i.e. El Paso, Texas, Southern New Mexico, and Juárez, Mexico) bottles and the firms that filled them. In addition, I belong to the Bottle Research Group (BRG),<sup>1</sup> made up of archaeologists and collectors studying all aspects of bottles but concentrating on dating, manufacturer's marks, and bottle identification.

My wife, Wanda Wakkinen, and I visited Fort Stanton on December 27, 2005, with Charlie, his wife, Lou, Lynda Sanchez, Sam Townley, and Joe Arcure. Our goal was to gather enough information from bottle glass to determine dates and uses of the five major dump sites found on the Fort Stanton Archaeology Project survey. I have tentatively labeled the dump sites, the Beer Dump 1, Beer Dump 2, the Fort Dump (Cemetery), the Hospital Dump, and the POW Dump. The results of this first visit will eventually be published in a study of Fort Stanton by Charlie Haecker.

Wanda and I returned to the fort several times during 2006 and 2007, primarily going into more depth on the two sites that were primarily beer bottle dumps. These trips culminated in a paper on the two beer bottle sites that was presented at the 2007 Jornada Mogollon Conference at El Paso, Texas (Lockhart 2009), and at the 2008 Society for Historical Archaeology Convention at St. Louis, Missouri. I wrote the second paper in 2006 about the "mold" number embossed on the bases of late-19<sup>th</sup> century beer bottles and revised the study in 2010 (Lockhart 2010).

Of course, as I became more involved with Fort Stanton, Wanda and I met more people who are interested in the fort. Several of them mentioned an old brewery that was connected with Fort Stanton but was located on private property just outside the fort boundary. Since I plan to eventually write a history of the breweries of Southern New Mexico, I was interested.

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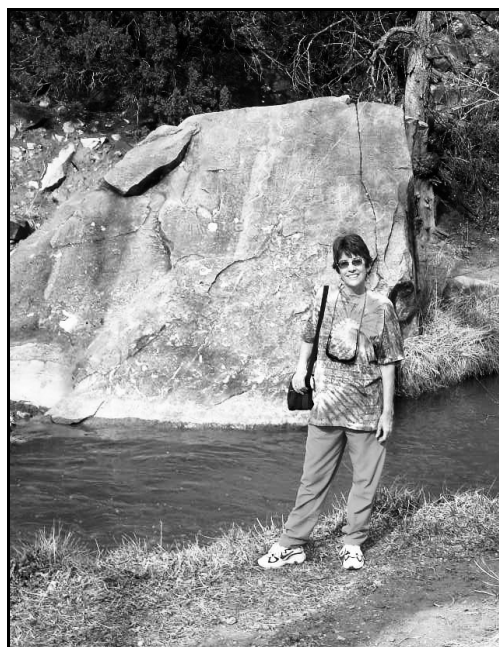
<sup>1</sup> Aside from myself, the members include (in order that they joined) Bill Lindsey, Carol Serr, and Pete Schulz. David Whitten is a former member who still makes frequent contributions. Both Lindsey and Whitten maintain websites devoted to various aspects of bottle research.

A major player in my efforts was Gary Cozzens, a local historian. Gary shared his research on the two breweries associated with Fort Stanton (also to appear in Charlie Haecker's report) and further whetted my interest. Paul Happel and Pat Flannery, Bureau of Land Management archaeologists, cleared the way for our investigations after Charlie's project was over and provided valuable background information. My curiosity was piqued; I wanted to see the brewery.

Through a Ruidoso real estate agent (whose name, I am embarrassed to admit, I have lost in the intervening years), I was able to track down the phone number of J.C. Nickens, the owner of the brewery property. Nickens was not only willing to have us examine the brewery, he was enthusiastic. He wanted to see the ruins preserved and recorded, so he gave us his permission to visit the old brewery and to do test excavations.<sup>2</sup>

The permission was one of those "eleventh hour" rescues. Because of time and schedule constraints, there was only one time when we could meet with Gary Cozzens and Earl Pittman, another Fort Stanton devotee, to see the brewery ruins. By the time, the day rolled around, I had still been unable to reach Nickens. We decided to go anyway and see what we could tell from the BLM side of the fence. We were with five miles of the location, when our cell phone rang; it was Nickens.

The grass was low; the time of year was perfect for observation and photography. Since my wife, Wanda, is the family photographer, she is usually left out of publication photos. Here she is in front of the petroglyph rock – not far from the brewery. It was a fun project.



Wanda Wakkinen at the Petroglyph Rock near the brewery

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<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, our shovel testing was interrupted by a severe thunderstorm, so any subsurface evidence will have to wait for the future.



