Feel free to share with friends. Membership is free. **127** members and growing!)
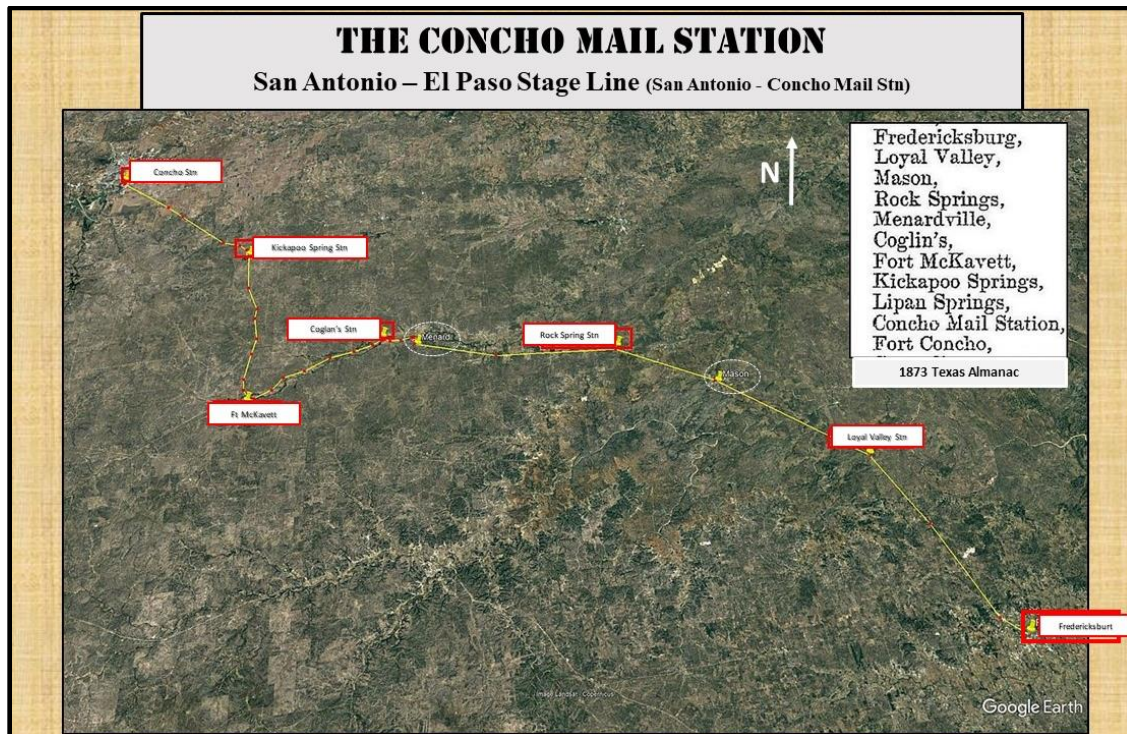
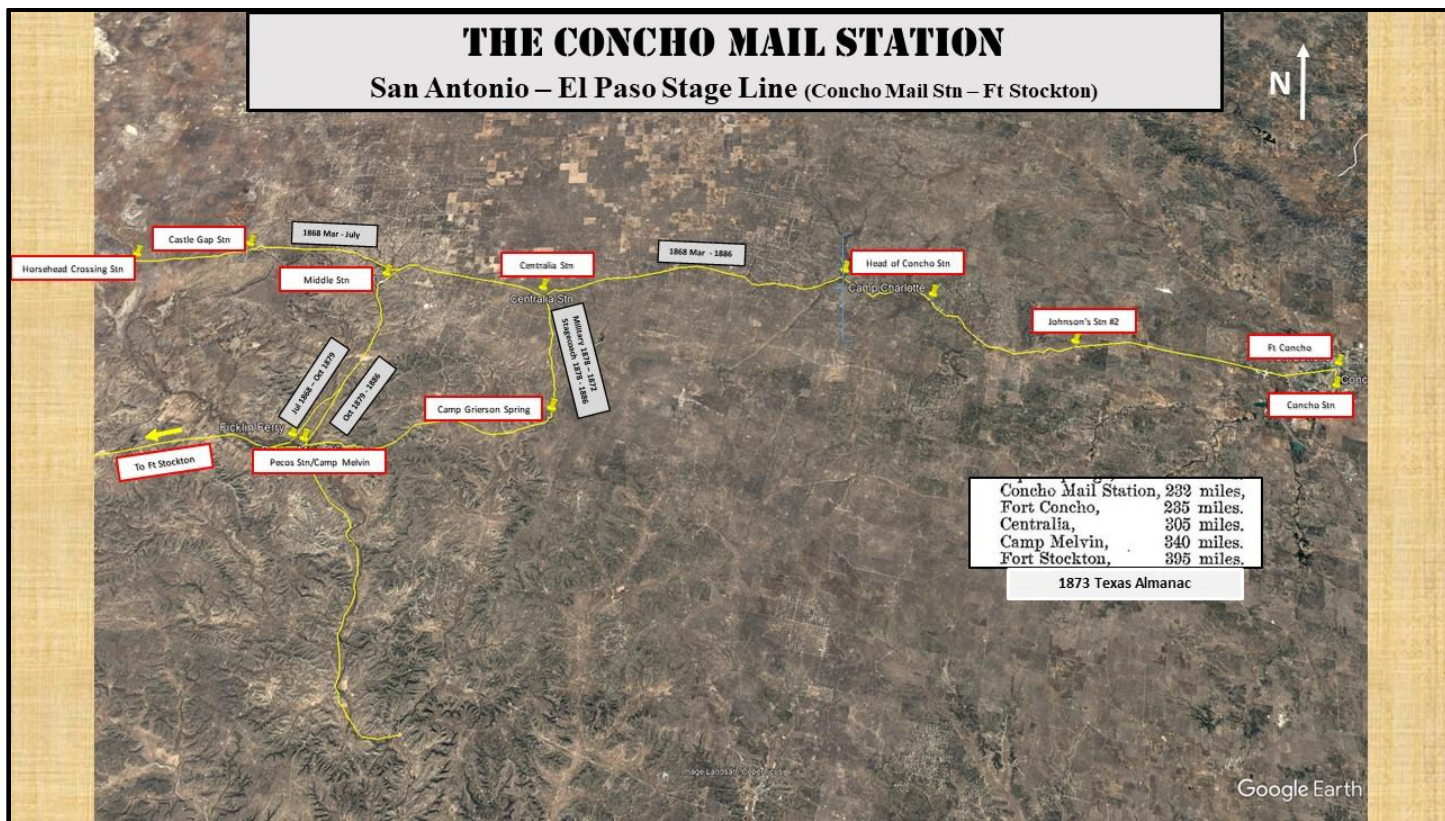# December 2025
Concho Mail Station Project Update

Creating the Concho Mail Station and San Antonio to El Paso route through our part of West Texas display will begin in January due to the upcoming Christmas at Fort Concho. The headquarters building will be filled with Christmas decorations during that time. We will work with curator Cory Robinson to create professional-grade display artifacts, photos, maps, and narratives for this display case.

From our projects on the Butterfield Trail, Concho Mail Station, Ficklin's Ferry Crossing, Pecos Mail Station, and now our upcoming report – Middle Station - we now have a complete mapping of the entire road structure and all post-Civil War stations from Fredericksburg to the Pecos River, and essentially to Fort Stockton. This will fill the display area with an engaging and accurate account of the 1868–1886 period of stagecoach travel in West Texas.

THE CONCHO MAIL STATION
San Antonio – El Paso Stage Line (San Antonio - Concho Mail Stn)

Fredericksburg, Loyal Valley, Mason, Rock Springs, Menardville, Coglin's, Fort McKavett, Kickapoo Springs, Lipan Springs, Concho Mail Station, Fort Concho,

1873 Texas Almanac

THE CONCHO MAIL STATION
San Antonio – El Paso Stage Line (Concho Mail Stn – Ft Stockton)

Concho Mail Station, 232 miles,
Fort Concho, 235 miles.
Centralia, 305 miles.
Camp Melvin, 340 miles.
Fort Stockton, 395 miles.

1873 Texas Almanac

Concho Mail Station, 1878 (colorized)

Working With AI

As new technologies become available to historical researchers, I believe it is important for us to keep pace and use them to our benefit. I spent a good portion of my military career working with the predecessors to today's commercial AI. That was where I first learned how to research on a closed military Internet system and how to create visual simulations on a system that was exactly like today's Google Earth, years before Google Earth was introduced to the public. It is also how I learned that giving visual presentations with videos and supporting imagery was the best way to convey our analysis to decision-makers. Archeology, and especially historical

archeology, now has access to these kinds of tools, and as difficult and often frustrating as it might be to learn them, we need to use them for our best results.

So, let me give some examples of what I'm talking about. First, I am using an AI grammar editor to help me write this article. It is much stronger than the standard editing software found in Microsoft Word or similar tools. It must reach back to an AI system devoted solely to grammar, offering better suggestions for conveying your ideas. https://www.grammarly.com/

Most of you know that I work extensively with Google Earth to discern lost trails, stagecoach stations, military camps, etc. This is a tool many others are beginning to use successfully. LIDAR analysis tools are now also available online.

I am now using ChatGPT, Grok, and Gemini in several ways. And I should say that it is best to use them against each other to check your results, as they are still in the infancy of artificial intelligence and prone to their own mistakes. But finding historical data in mere seconds as they scan hundreds of sources is an incredible tool. It's not infallible because the sources might be incorrect, but we have to determine that once we get the results. We have to discern if those sources are viable and accurate. All of these are free for standard versions.

I am now also using ChatGPT and Grok to create short videos and historical depictions for presentations. These help to make the presentations more interesting. In many cases, there is nothing available to depict incidents relevant to what you might want to emphasize in a presentation. In this case, you can become the creator of the depiction. It is somewhat tedious to explain to a computer just how you want a scene depicted, but they will get better as they learn more. Here's an example. Although there were many Indian raids on cattle drives, in some cases stealing entire herds, you cannot find a single depiction created by artists to represent this. So, I went to ChatGPT and asked it to create a scene. This is what it created. It is pretty good and gets the point across well.

My point is that although it seems like AI is being thrust upon us and can be a scary phenomenon, especially with all the fear-based science fiction we've been exposed to over our lifetimes, AI has actually been working and growing behind the scenes for at least 30 years. It is here and here to stay. Can it be misused? Of course. You can find improper use of it on YouTube right now. But it can be a helpful tool, as many of our previous breakout technologies have. We need to learn to use it just that way – as a useful tool.

Coming Soon!

➢ *Fourth Edition, 2026, Camp Meyers Spring* (currently 131 pages)
➢ *Third Edition, 2026, Butterfield Trail Through The Concho Valley and West Texas* (136 pages)
➢ *The San Antonio To El Paso Overland Mail Across West Texas, 1868 - 1886: A Journey In Historical Archeology* (combined previous reports, plus one new additional report, *Concho Mail Station, Ficklin Ferry Crossing, Middle Station, and Pecos Mail Station,* currently 87 pages)

Upcoming Events (field projects will be emailed separately)

Jan 13: Permian Basin Petroleum Museum, Midland, TX (noon lunch talk, 'Horsehead Crossing')

https://petroleummuseum.org/

Feb 17: Zoom session with Fort Worth Westerners, 7 p.m. (link to be sent via email), Independence Creek's Indian Hideout/Lookout Site

Apr 10/11: West Texas Historical Association, MCM Elegante Hotel, Lubbock, TX – 1) The Jumano Picture Story of 'The Lady in Blue' at Meyers Spring, Texas, 2) The Goodnight-Loving Trail Through West Texas

https://wtha.wildapricot.org/

Apr 25: Southwest Federation of Archeological Societies' Symposium, Amarillo, TX

May 12: Library presentation for school students and the community of Sonora, TX
May 13: Library presentation for school students and the community of Eldorado, TX
May 14: Library presentation for school students and the community of Ozona, TX
May 16: National Stagecoach and Freight Wagon Annual conference, Ft Davis, TX

WTAS member Thad Steele has generously donated metal art depictions of pictographs on the Meyers Spring pictograph wall for a fundraiser. Ninety percent of our funds are allocated to fuel for travel to field sites or speaking engagements. More success brings more travel. Last month, fuel alone cost $500. If you would like to help, here is a way to do so and receive beautiful artwork directly tied to our organization's success.

Two of these pieces represent our most recent work reported in our pictograph interpretation. The two middle pieces in this photo represent the Spanish conquistador and the Lady In Blue events, both of which are reported by us and are available for download at the links below. We only have five sets available. For perspective, the Jumano dancers' piece measures 12 inches in length. We are asking for a reduced price of $120 ($100 per set plus $20 shipping). If there is a request for individual pieces, it will be $25 plus shipping ($10 to $15). If you are interested, send me a personal email to tcashmo@gmail.com. I will provide the details for follow-up.

Conquistador report:
https://assets.zyrosite.com/AzGE74rQ66UMXrKb/conquistador-AQEZVzNn1bipWDEx.pdf

Jumano and the Lady in Blue report:
https://assets.zyrosite.com/AzGE74rQ66UMXrKb/the-jumano-picture-story-in-pictographs-at-meyers-spring-YX4j2GE6jLClRj5p.pdf

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Our webpage is updated regularly, with information on the home page indicating when and what has been updated. There is no logging in. Updates are identified at the top of the home page.

https://westtexasarcheologicalsociety.website