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Family wants to document camp's history

By Nick Phillips • Nogales International

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Cousins Donna Jackson-Houston and Richard "Ricky" Jackson during a visit to Nogales last week. They wore shirts commemorating the Buffalo Soldier units at Fort Huachuca.

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Nogales' Camp Little is known for housing Buffalo Soldiers, all-Black regiments of the U.S. Army, and the descendants of one Buffalo Soldier are trying to learn more about the site and document the contributions of Black soldiers in Nogales.

The Perez-Jackson family trace their roots to Lucius Jackson, who moved to Nogales as a soldier in the 25th infantry, an all-Black unit. Lucius' son, John Jackson, became a prominent member of the community and served on the Nogales City Council.

When contractors working on the FUDS project – an Army-sponsored effort to evaluate old military sites and conduct necessary clean-up work – came to town last week, members of the Perez-Jackson family joined them to visit sites and review materials available at the Pimeria Alta Historical Society. They included cousins Donna Jackson-Houston and Richard “Ricky” Jackson, who both grew up in Nogales and now live in Pomona, Calif. and Tucson, respectively.

Jackson-Houston said that she wants to gather information about Camp Little and put up a commemorative plaque at the site. She'd also like to place Camp Little-related objects at the Pimeria Alta Historical Society Museum, she said, adding that she was inspired by a visit to the Buffalo Soldiers Museum at Fort Huachuca.

She's also hoping to work with the Nogales City Council on a proclamation for Black History Month, which is in February, and talk with local schools about teaching the history of Camp Little in their classrooms.

The Perez-Jackson family also donated and maintains a plaque commemorating the K-8 Grand Avenue School, which served Black children in Nogales from 1928 until 1952 when public education was still segregated.

For more information or to contribute to the project, contact Donna Jackson-Houston at DLJHouston@aol.com.