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**Assessment 2: Aggies with Artifacts (Podcast Script)**

Howdy! And welcome to my Podcast. Today I’m going to go on a deep dive of an early 1800s artifact called Fort Parker.

Fort Parker was a small fort near Groesbeck, Texas and the Navasota River. It was constructed in 1833 and finished in 1834. It was surrounded by walls made from split cedar logs anchored in the ground vertically, at a height of 12 feet. Blockhouses sat on opposing corners and were a nice place to view the countryside in times of peace and provided a good place to fire guns from in case of a raid. There were 6 cabins along the inside walls where the people of the fort lived. The fort had two entrances, one of them larger than the other, with gates for easy access and security. The fort was reconstructed in 1936 to show how the fort looked a century earlier.

This fort had a history of peace, but also of bloodshed. Its downfall was from a massacre from local Native Americans. The story begins with John Parker, an elder in the Pilgrim Predestinarian Baptist Church, and his sons Benjamin, Silas, and James as well as others from their Church. They created the fort after a long pilgrimage from Crawford County, Illinois. They and their families planted crops and lived rather peacefully for about three years. Some of them even created their own cabins on their farms in the outlying land, using the fort for protection. Over time, they met with multiple nearby Native American chiefs and signed peace treaties.

Things were looking well for the people of Fort Parker. That is, until they allowed a group of Texas Rangers to use the Fort unaware of the hostility towards them from the surrounding natives. Later, on May 19, 1836, after the Rangers had long left, a raiding party of 300 Comanches, Kiowas, Caddos, and Wichitas arrived at their gates.

One Native American bearing a white flag came up to the fort, despite holding no intention of peace. The five men present within the fort quickly discussed their options. Silas Parker wanted them all to man the fort and hold off the raid party. Benjamin Parker suggested he could approach the natives and buy time for the women and children to flee out the back. Benjamin’s plan was agreed upon, and he left the fort to speak with the natives. After a brief discussion, he returned and warned the people of the fort that they would all be killed if they stayed. He told them to run and not wait behind. After going out once again, not long after the sounds of battle cries filled the air, and the natives began entering the fort. Most of the women and children had already escaped, but a few were captured. During this time, Benjamin was stabbed by lance, Silas, Samuel Frost, and his son were killed, and John Parker was captured, castrated, and scalped. By the end, five men were killed, some left to die, and two women and three children were captured.

There were repercussions of the capture of some of these women and children, namely of Cynthia Ann Parker who later was married to Chief Peta Nocona. She had a son who later became a prominent war chief for the Comanche tribe.

This real life story describes a horrible account of Native American and early settler interaction. It is easy to see why so many settlers feared the natives despite other peaceful interactions. Throughout the history of settlers and natives, it is easy to say that many conflicts erupted because of a lack of understanding.

I personally chose this artifact because it reminded me of the history my ancestors had with natives. They too were pioneers moving west, and many of them died from the dangers of the frontier. Others had conflicts with natives. My grandpa Bruce, however, had a very positive experience with the Navajo nation, spending two years of his life on their reservation. He made many friends with their people and viewed them highly. I wish more people from the past could have been like him.

Thank you for listening to my podcast, it was a blast learning more about our countries history through this artifact from the past.

**References:**

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