



Thursday, February 17th, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.

**“BLACKSMITHING ON THE TEXAS FRONTIER:
Historic Archeology at the Tom Cook Blacksmith Shop in Bolivar, Denton County, Texas”
– Douglas K. Boyd**

The next monthly meeting of the Houston Archeological Society will be held on Thursday, February 17th. Due to continuing Covid issues, we are currently planning to hold the meeting virtually via Zoom and YouTube Livestream. Professional archeologist Doug Boyd will present a program entitled Blacksmithing on the Texas Frontier: Historic Archeology at the Tom Cook Blacksmith Shop in Bolivar, Denton County, Texas. The program will begin for HAS members at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom with an opportunity to socialize before a short business meeting at 7:00pm. Boyd’s program will begin at 7:15 p.m. on Zoom and at this YouTube link <https://youtu.be/AcUCG-uKVtU>. HAS members will receive the Zoom link to the meeting and program at a later date.



Boyd’s presentation will begin with a discussion of the site’s location on the Chisholm Trail. Although it lasted only two decades, from 1867 to ca. 1886, the Chisholm Trail era is steeped in cowboy and cattle drive history, folklore, and mythology. The trail’s route through Texas is known, but little research has been conducted on the towns and businesses that sprang up in support of this short-lived industry. One of the most important businesses along the Chisholm Trail, and in any frontier town, was the blacksmith shop. Blacksmithing was an essential service in rural areas, and good blacksmiths generally became prominent members in their communities.



This program will look at the 2020–2021 archeological and historical investigations of the Tom Cook Blacksmith Shop (41DN617), an archeological site located in Bolivar, a small town along the Chisholm Trail route in western Denton County. The site is especially significant because Thomas Cook, Sr., was an African American freedman who owned and operated his own blacksmith shop. He worked as a blacksmith in Bolivar from the 1870s until his death in 1898. Tom Cook was not only a successful blacksmith, but he was also a minister, a freemason, and a respected member of the Bolivar community.

The work was sponsored and funded by the Texas Department of Transportation. It was a collaborative project that has incorporated archival research, descendant community outreach and oral history research, and archeological investigations. The analysis of the recovered artifacts, archeological data, and

historical evidence is still ongoing. Ultimately, we hope to be able to better understand the role of rural community blacksmiths in Texas and learn more about the black entrepreneurs like Tom Cook during and after the Chisholm Trail era.

Douglas K. Boyd is a senior archeologist with Cox|McLain Environmental Consulting, now Stantec, in Austin. He has a BA from West Texas State University and an MA from Texas A&M University. He has been doing archeology, mostly in Texas, for over 45 years (gasp!). For most of that time, he has served as a project archeologist, project manager, or principal investigator on hundreds of cultural resources management projects. He has published a wide range of CRM reports, academic book and journal articles, popular magazine articles, and a variety of public outreach products such as posters, brochures, and internet exhibits. Most of Boyd's recent CRM work has focused on historical archeology. If you have questions about this meeting or about the Houston Archeological Society, please contact Linda Gorski at president@txhas.org.

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HAS Memberships for 2022 Are Now Due

We hope you will renew your membership in the Houston Archeological Society and maybe even give a membership as a gift to someone you know will enjoy digging up Texas history with us – one trowel full at a time. You can either pay your dues online using a credit card at <http://www.txhas.org/membership.html> or download a hardcopy of the membership form from <http://www.txhas.org/PDF/HAS%20Membership%20Form.pdf> and mail it to us with your payment.

Our membership is the best deal in town:

\$25 Individual membership

\$30 Family Membership

\$35+ Contributing membership

\$15 Student membership

Remember that benefits of your membership include the unique opportunity to dig with us at archeological sites in the area, work with us at our labs where we process artifacts from those sites, and your FREE copies of our current academic publications including HAS Reports and Journals. Please join us!!!!



President's Message – Linda Gorski

Some of you might have seen this map of Austin's Colony that was posted on the San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site Facebook page a week or so ago. We subsequently put it on the HAS Facebook page site as well (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/123659814324626>) to show how large Austin's Colony actually was and how many of us live in the original Austin's Colony!!!

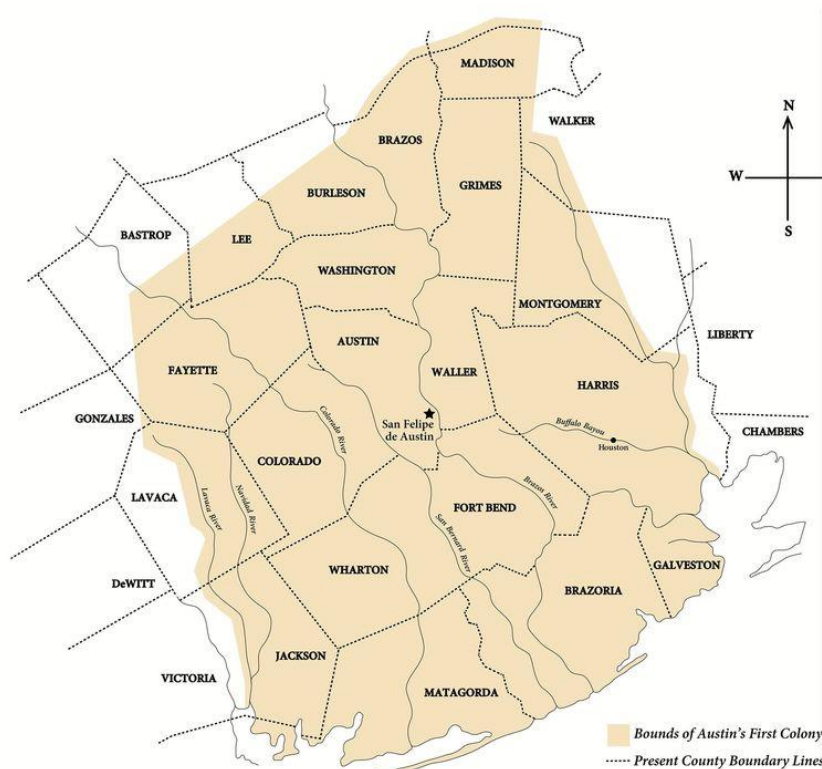
Austin's Colony was the first and largest Anglo-American settlement in Mexican Texas and **was established by Stephen F. Austin in 1821**. It was authorized by the Mexican government and allowed for the introduction of 300 families into Texas. Please get on google and look up the history of Austin's Colony – there are many sites that tell the story.

Also, do yourself a favor and pay a visit to the San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site in San Felipe (near Sealy) including the fantastic museum and the newly opened Ville de Austin. A visit will help you understand the incredibly important part of Texas that you call home. The museum is currently open Wednesday – Sunday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

And more good news!! HAS will be working with Dr. Sarah Chesney, site archeologist at San Felipe de Austin on archeological surveys and excavations in 2022. HAS members will be hearing more about these fieldwork and lab opportunities in the coming months so watch your emails for more information.

Finally - now would be a great time to renew your membership in the Houston Archeological Society so you can take advantage of working with us in the field and in the lab. Check out the membership page at www.txhas.org

Do YOU LIVE IN AUSTIN'S COLONY?



Map courtesy of San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site staff

Houston Archeological Society

Monthly Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2022

Welcome Members and Guests to our meeting location via Zoom! (Linda Gorski, President). Meeting began at 7pm. Glad to see everyone join for the remote, due to Covid, meeting.

Treasurer's Report (Bob Sewell):

- Bob reported amounts in the HAS checking and savings accounts. If any member is interested in more information about HAS finances, please see Bob. Check for \$15,000 will need to be sent to Chet Walker for Geophys Survey at Arroyo Dulce.
- Membership (Bob Sewell): We have 79 members so far in 2022. In 2021, we had a total of 255 members, which is our record high membership. Memberships for 2022 are due on January 1 and if not paid by the March deadline your name will be removed from the membership list. If you joined in September or later this year, your membership will be good through 2022. If you are paying your membership renewal online, go straight to "Payments." Credit card payment is the best.
- Budget Announcement: The 2022 budget was voted on and approved by an anonymous vote. This year there is a possibility for the organization to see a \$8,000 overrun. This is due to loss of donations normally received for publishing. Actions will need to be taken to reduce expenses and increase revenue to help offset this amount in the future.
- Website (Bob Sewell): If you experience a problem, please contact Bob. The website was migrated to a new platform with a few little glitches. With the new platform the organization will be charged for email addresses beginning in February. There will be a consolidation of the email to reduce the cost since many emails addresses are not needed or used regularly.
- Newsletter (Bob Sewell): Thanks to everyone who has contributed an article to our newsletter. If you have a topic for an article dealing with Southeast Texas archeology, and need help with writing it, please contact Bob.
- HAS Hats (Bob Sewell): The hat order has arrived. Those who ordered hats have started to receive them. Hats will be available for pick-up at activities or arrangements can be made to pick up hats at Linda's home.

New Business:

Update on Lone Oak, Frelsburg, Tx: A small group worked at Lone Oak last Saturday. Numerous good artifacts (circular stones that may be a hearth) have been found at the site in the recent shovel tests. The Sandpit area remains waterlogged, however, the units on the nearby ridge are dry and some interesting artifacts have been found there including a Scallorn point and a possible abrading stone. This site is open to the membership, who are vaccinated and if working closely to wear a mask. This location is a great learning site.

Reports and Journals (Louis Aulbach): Our next journal, # 144, will be published in April. Currently there are 4 or 5 articles but there is always room for more articles. The articles will focus on a Thimble found at Frostdown, San Felipe de Austin Dig by John Lohse, Horse Shoes by Charly Gordy and ceramics from Cottonfield by Tim Perttula. Let Linda know if you would like a copy so the right amount of copies can be ordered.

February Program: The speaker at the February 17th meeting, Doug Boyd, will give a discussion on Blacksmithing on the Texas Frontier: Historic Archeology at the Tom Cook Blacksmith Shop in Bolivar, Denton County, Texas. This will be a very interesting talk and was chosen to celebrate February's Black History Month. Doug say the project has been fun and amazing with a lot of history due to being located along the Chisolm trail.

Tonight's Program: Linda Gorski and Louis Aulbach presented "A Preview of Historical Archeology along Buffalo Bayou." The talk covered the top 24 (+1) most interesting historic and archeological sites along the bayou that have been identified and researched by Linda and Louis. A book on this topic is due out in the summer of 2022, titled the "Buffalo Bayou Greenway".

Meeting Adjourned: 8:10pm

- Diana Cooper, HAS Secretary

Texas Archeological Society's Lithics Academy, Austin, Texas

April 23-24, 2022

Learn to identify stone artifacts, how they are produced, and interpreting stone artifacts and patterns in the archeological record. The course will include a overview of stone tools, raw materials, their importance, production and use, and contribution to the record. Lithics Academy will be held at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory in Austin.



To Register, visit: <https://www.txarch.org/Academies>

Scholarship Opportunities: <https://txarch.org/TAS-Scholarships-Overview>

Registration Fee: \$100 plus TAS membership. CPE credits available.

Photo sources: Texas Beyond History and Katrina Nuncio

**Notes on Munitions
Lead Shot and Beer
Part 2 of 2
By Tom Nuckols**

Note: Recommended viewing: Shot Tower: How Lead Shot is Made (1950) | British Pathé: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2qybStWdYcs> or, Five Minute Histories: The Shot Tower: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkd1B8bQM6c>.

Making Shot

During the era of muzzle-loading shotguns, several techniques were used to make lead shot. What follows is at least five of the methods that I am aware of:

1. Gang mold. Unlike a single cavity bullet mold that could only cast one bullet, gang molds had multiple cavities, and were capable of casting numerous lead shot at one time (Figure 1). Using a gang mold to make shot was a common practice.



Figure 1. A gang mold capable of casting twelve lead shot. From A Woodrunner's Diary, 18TH CENTURY LIVING. HISTORY, HISTORICAL TREKKING, AND PERIOD WILDERNESS LIVING, <http://woodrunnersdiary.blogspot.com/2016/04/more-on-small-shot-for-smoothbores.html>

2. Brass colander. Molten lead was poured into a brass colander held several inches above a bucket of water. The molten lead fell through the holes in the colander into the water, forming shot that was slightly oval-shaped. This technique of making shot was invented by Prince Rupert of the Rhine (1619-1682) in 1663¹.

3. Tumbling. Sheet lead was cut into small cubes. The cubes were placed in a small barrel and tumbled in order to obtain a somewhat spherical shape.

4. Hole in the ground. A small diameter twig was pushed into the ground to make a hole. Molten lead was poured into hole. Once the lead solidified and cooled, it was pulled out of the ground and cut it up into shot size pieces.

5. Frying pan. Small pieces of lead were cut off from a source, such as bar lead. The pieces of lead were placed in an iron skillet held over a fire. Just before the pieces of lead melted completely, the skillet was swirled around until they took on a somewhat spherical shape. They were then poured out of the skillet into a bucket of water, where they solidified and cooled.

¹ Rupert shot is sometimes recovered archaeologically. See Artifact of the Month: Rupert Shot: <https://www.qaronline.org/blog/2021-04-01/artifact-month-rupert-shot>.

William Watts

In 1782, British tradesman-plumber William Watts of Bristol, invented a technique for making lead shot that was perfectly globular in form, without the dimples, scratches, imperfections and non-aerodynamic seam which other shot heretofore manufactured usually have on their surface.

Watts knocked out holes in the floors of his three-story house and placed a water tank on the first floor. On the top floor, Watts poured molten lead into a sieve. The falling lead formed into spheres and solidified when it hit the water in the tank. Watts' home became the first shot tower, and it was so successful that, beginning in 1789, shot towers were built in England and Europe.

The Embargo Act of 1807

The United States relied almost exclusively on imported shot manufactured in foreign shot towers. In 1807, this reliance on shot from abroad ended when President Thomas Jefferson and the U.S. Congress passed a law called The Embargo Act. The Act was a trade embargo on all foreign nations interfering with American merchant ships carrying, or suspected of carrying, war materials and other cargoes to European belligerents during the Napoleonic Wars.

Americas First Shot Tower

In 1808, to take advantage of the limited availability of shot created by the embargo act, Thomas Sparks and two partners built a 142-foot tall, brick shot tower in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Originally, the tower produced lead shot for shotgunners. However, during the War of 1812 and the Civil War, the tower made ammunition for the Federal Government; shot, buckshot and musket balls².

In 1903, the Sparks family sold the tower to the United Lead Company of Pennsylvania. In 1913, the City of Philadelphia purchased it, and it is now managed by the Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation. It is now a tourist attraction and is surrounded by a public recreation center and playground³ (see Figure 2).

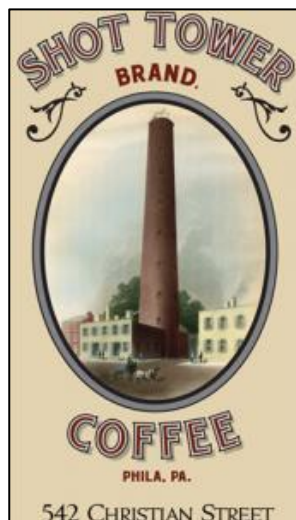


Figure 2. The Sparks Shot Tower used as brand advertising. From HIDDEN CITY, <https://hiddencityphila.org/2011/12/relieve-the-monotony/>.

² The molten lead was poured through perforated pans with different sized holes to manufacture different sizes (diameters) of spherical ammunition.

³ The Jackson Ferry shot tower predates the construction of the Sparks shot tower by one year. However, if I understand it correctly, it is not considered a true shot tower. The reason: its 150-foot overall height consists of both a 75-foot-tall limestone building above ground, and a subterranean shaft of the same length.

More Shot Towers

After the Sparks Shot Tower was built, shot towers became a common sight in 19th century city skylines in the United States, especially in the New England area, it is unknown how many shot towers were actually constructed. However, along with the Dubuque shot tower mentioned in Part 1 of this article, and the Sparks Shot tower, six of them are still standing. What follows is a list of each one of those six along with its location⁴:

- Jackson Ferry Shot Tower, Wytheville, Virginia.
- Peters Shot Tower, Kings Mills, Ohio
- Phoenix Shot Tower, Baltimore, Maryland.
- Remington Shot Tower, Bridgeport, Connecticut.
- Winchester Shot Tower, New Haven, Connecticut.
- Wisconsin Shot Company Shot Tower, Spring Green, Wisconsin.

Some shot towers continued to operate until the second half of the 20th century before they became obsolete when modern methods were developed to make shot. One such method uses a MHD (magneto-hydrodynamic) lead granulation machine. One of these machines can be seen operating at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jc3nFwDLvUA>.

A Whole Lotta Lead Shot

In November 2015, archaeological excavations conducted at San Felipe de Austin (41AU2) encountered what is thought to be a degraded leather shot pouch. In close proximity to the pouch, and probably once contained within the pouch, were 112, slightly oxidized lead shot⁵.

The smallest shot (Lot 181-2) in the collection had a diameter of 0.070 inches and a weight of 0.5 grains, and the largest shot (Lot 181-82) had a diameter of 0.189 inches and a weight of 9.1 grains (see Figure 3). Under magnification, the shot looked like perfect little spheres, and some of them shared the same diameter and grain weight, an indication that they were probably made in a shot tower.



Figure 3. Lot 181-2 left, Lot 181-82 right. Photo by author.

⁴ A history of the eight extant shot towers, can be found in Richard Hamilton's article *History of the American Shot Tower*: <https://www.minnesotatrap.com/history-in-the-making/shot-towers-page-1.htm>.

⁵ See NOTES ON MUNITIONS – LEATHER SHOT POUCH by Tom Nuckols: <https://www.txhas.org/PDF/newsletters/2015/2015%20December%20Profile.pdf>, page 5.

References

Adelmann, John, Editor

2011 *THE DUBUQUE SHOT TOWER*. History Press, Charleston, SC.

Minchinton, Walter

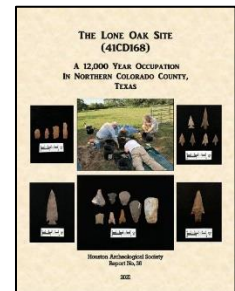
1991 THE SHOT TOWER. American Heritage Magazine, accessed January, 2022
<https://www.shotpeener.com/libra>

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Work continues at the Lone Oak Prehistoric Site, 41CD 168, in Colorado County

In early 2019 members of the Houston Archeological were invited to conduct a walking survey of a property in Colorado County. Property owner Stan Theut was eager to know if his properties contained any sites that might warrant archeological investigation and excavation. He also made available to HAS a collection of artifacts that he had already recovered from the site. Initial archival research on the site coupled with an examination of Stan's artifact collection prompted the HAS board to begin further investigations of the site and to record it as an archeological site with the Texas Historical Commission.

As most HAS members know by now, small groups of vaccinated, socially distanced, masked HAS members worked on the site during the "Covid" years and in 2021 HAS Archeological Report Number 36 entitled The Lone Oak Site (41CD168) – A 12,000 year Occupation in Northern Colorado County, Texas, was issued on Phases 1 and 2 of the project.



Recently work on the project resumed and fieldwork at the site is now open to all members of the Houston Archeological Society. Starting late in 2021 and continuing into 2022 the Lone Oak team began excavating an area known as "Stan's Sand Pit" until the entire area flooded in a large rain event and has yet to dry out! The team then began a series of shovel tests along a ridge nearby and those tests revealed some interesting anomalies including a circle of rocks at in one test. Several of the shovel tests were expanded into units and artifacts including lithic debitage, stone tools and points were recovered.



Laying out units in the "Sand Pit" before it was inundated.



A circular rock or hearth feature (possible) in one of the shovel tests.



Point identified as a Scallorn recovered on January 15, 2022

Bob Sewell is the field director and has been sending out email messages to all HAS members advising them of fieldwork dates which are normally on Saturdays from 8am – 1pm. Due to liability issues you must be a member of HAS and sign a waiver to participate in work at Lone Oak. For the protection of all our members, we require that you be vaccinated and be willing to wear a mask (if requested). If you are interested in participating in excavations at the Lone Oak Site, please email fielddirector@txhas.org

HAS Member Recovers Lost Wedding Band at Archeological Site

Several weeks ago, Stan Theut, the property owner of the Lone Oak Archeological Site in Colorado County that the Houston Archeological Society has been surveying and excavating for two years, lost his wedding ring. This occurred on the last day of fieldwork before the holidays in December 2021 when he was leveling a large sand pile near one of the original excavation areas. After putting his equipment away and removing his gloves he realized the ring was gone. Stan and his wife have been married for 56 years, so it was a heartfelt loss for both of them.

That all changed on Saturday, January 15, 2022. On that day, when fieldwork at Lone Oak was completed and equipment stored, Stan asked Garry Hartman and Gary Fleming, two HAS members and avocational archeologists as well as avid metal detectorists, if they had brought their detectors to the site and, if so, could they look for his ring. Both went to their trucks and pulled out their detectors to start hunting for the ring.

Hartmann went to the left side of sand pile and Fleming went to the right. Literally 15 minutes later, Fleming yelled out that he had recovered the ring with his Minelab Equinox 800!!!!

Gary Fleming said that it was a pleasure to be able to help Stan find his wedding ring. “You could tell he was emotional about getting it back! I have been metal detecting for several years and this was the first lost ring recovery I have been able find and return to the owner.”

While we don’t use metal detectors regularly at prehistoric sites where metal artifacts are rare, we were fortunate that our team came prepared!! Congratulations to HAS member Gary Fleming for his superior metal detecting abilities.



Wedding band in the dirt as Gary Fleming detected it.



HAS member Gary Fleming with Stan Theut’s wedding band.



Stan Theut, property owner of the Lone Oak site, accepting found ring from Gary Fleming

The Trinity Portland Workers Safety Award

by Louis F. Aulbach and Linda C. Gorski

In the post-World War II era, Buffalo Bayou in Houston's east end was lined with construction materials companies and warehouse complexes. Many of these industrial entities have migrated away from this area in recent years. Some have relocated farther east along the ship channel. Only scant remains of their presence are evident as the redevelopment of the near east end has occurred in the 21st century. One remnant of this industrial past, however, was abandoned near the bayou, and it lies hidden by overgrown brush and vegetation. It is the monumental safety award given the the Trinity Portland Cement Plant in 1929, and additionally in 1945, 1947, and 1950 (see Figure 1).

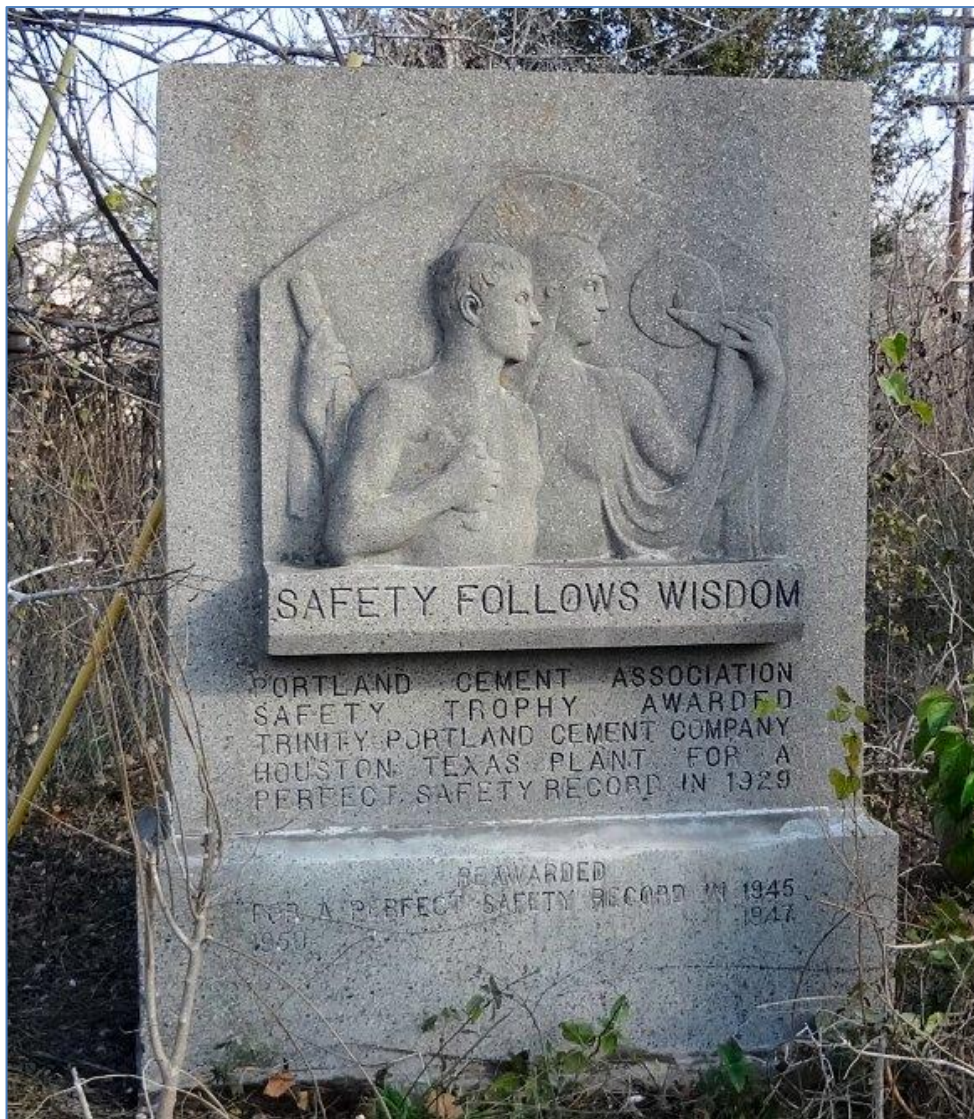


Figure 4: The Safety Follows Wisdom monument of the Trinity Portland Cement Company plant on the corner of North Hutcheson Street and Freund Street. (Photo: Louis F. Aulbach)

This monument is one that the Portland Cement Association awarded annually to the plant in their organization that had the best safety records for the year. The program for the Safety Follows Wisdom awards was initiated in 1923 in order to improve the general safety of the workers in their plants across the nation. The design for the award was submitted to the association by a team of students at the Art Institute of Chicago working under Albin Polasek, the director of the sculpture department. The design was created and sculpted by Ruth Sherwood, one of the students (see Figure 2 and 3)¹



Figure 5: The Safety Follows Wisdom award was designed under the direction of Albin Polasek, the director of the sculpture department at the Art Institute of Chicago.²



Figure 6: Ruth Sherwood, a student at the Art Institute of Chicago, created the design of the Safety Follows Wisdom award.³

The safety award was a large Neo-Classical medallion that was made of cement manufactured at the plant that had won that year's competition. The theme of "Safety Follows Wisdom" is depicted on the upper portion of the trophy in a scene with two figures. In the foreground is an image of man who represents the workers of the plant. The figure in the background is the image of the Greek goddess Athena. Athena, who is recognizable by her typical Greek headgear, was the goddess of wisdom, and in the image, she holds a lighted oil lamp, with a reflector plate, to lead the way for the worker⁴.

The Safety Follows Wisdom trophy is a massive block of concrete that certainly was intended to convey the message that the award was to be a permanent fixture at the plant just as the record of safety was expected to be a standard trait of the workmen. Mounted on a raised concrete base, the trophy occupied a commanding position at the facility. The award was a monumental rectangular block of concrete measuring eight feet

above its base, six feet wide, and eighteen inches thick. The concrete was mixed with particles of black and white marble to give the surface a luxurious variegated appearance. Weighting in at six tons, the Safety Follows Wisdom Award was not going anywhere!⁵

Not surprisingly, the monument is still there. Stop by and see it. With any luck at all, it will be preserved by the city or some other entity for a long time.

Footnotes

1. "The Safety Crusade." *Blast Furnace and Steel Plant*, Vol. 12, No. 9 (Pittsburgh: Steel Publications, 1924), 407.

"Safety Follows Wisdom: Monuments stand as reminders to CEMEX employees ..." *CEMEX USA*, accessed January 15, 2022, <https://www.cemexusa.com/-/safety-follows-wisdom-monuments-stand-as-reminders-to-cemex-employees-about-importance-of-safety/>

The Municipal World, Volume 37 (1927), (St. Thomas, Ontario: [publisher not identified]), p12.

2. "File: Albin Polasek.jpg." *Wikimedia Commons*, accessed January 21, 2022, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Albin_Polasek.jpg&oldid=285346242.

3. "The Safety Crusade," 407.

4. "The Safety Crusade," 407.
The Municipal World, 12.

5. *The Municipal World*, 12.

(This article is an excerpt from our upcoming walking guide to historical and archeological sites along Buffalo Bayou in downtown Houston that we have entitled The Buffalo Bayou Greenway. The book is due out in the Summer of 2022. The site was mentioned in our recent presentation to the Houston Archeological Society that can be viewed on the HAS YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUIj0gby1LQ>)

Houston Archeological Society

Monthly Meeting Programs for 2022

6:30pm Third Thursday of every month

March 17th – Chris Kneupper, **Chronological and Archeological History of the Forts Velasco**

April 21st – Dr. Mary Prendergast – **A Zooarcheologists tour of the new Rice University Lab and the Bill McClure Faunal collection**

All **Houston Archeological Society** meetings are normally free and open to the public. For more information about HAS then visit our website at www.txhas.org or email lindagorski@cs.com. You can also join our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/123659814324626/>

Please submit articles for publication to *The Profile* Editor Bob Sewell at newsletter@txhas.org. Please submit articles for the March 2022 issue no later than 25th February 2022.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ARCHEOLOGY IN THIS AREA, CONTACT THE FOLLOWING:

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