



## November Meeting Features “Archeology in the Archives: Digging for Facts About the ‘Come and Take It’ Cannon

A small cannon in Gonzales effectively ushered in the Texas Revolution on October 2, 1835 as Mexican dragoons tried to take it from the citizens of the town. Afterward, the cannon's fate is disputed. Was it buried and rediscovered in 1936, or was it seized by Mexican troops after the battle of the Alamo? Was there only one cannon? Dr. Gregg Dimmick will discuss his new research about the whereabouts of the Come and Take it Cannon at the Thursday, November 21st, meeting of the Houston Archeological Society. The program will begin at 7:00 pm in M.D. Anderson Hall at St. Thomas University.

According to historical records, the Battle of Gonzales was the first military engagement of the Texas Revolution. It was fought near Gonzales, Texas on October 2, 1835, between rebellious Texian settlers and a detachment of Mexican army troops. In 1831, Mexican authorities gave the settlers of Gonzales a small cannon to help protect them from frequent Comanche raids. Over the next four years, the political situation in Mexico deteriorated, and in 1835 several states revolted. As the unrest spread, Colonel Domingo de Ugartechea, the commander of all Mexican troops in Texas, felt it unwise to leave the residents of Gonzales a weapon and requested the return of the cannon.

When the initial request was refused, Ugartechea sent 100 dragoons to retrieve the cannon. The Mexican soldiers neared Gonzales on September 29, but the colonists used a variety of excuses to keep them from the town, while secretly sending messengers to request assistance from nearby communities. Within two days, up to 140 Texians gathered in Gonzales, all determined not to give up the cannon. On October 1, settlers voted to initiate a fight. Mexican soldiers opened fire as Texians approached their camp in the

early hours of October 2. After several hours of desultory firing, the Mexican soldiers withdrew.

Although the skirmish had little military significance, it marked a clear break between the colonists and the Mexican government and is considered to have been the start of the Texas Revolution. And the question of what happened to the Come and Take It Cannon remains a mystery to this day. Dr. Gregg Dimmick will share his recent research in archives on both sides of the border to answer that question.

Dr. Dimmick (below) is a pediatrician with the South Texas Medical Clinics in Wharton, and author of *Sea of Mud: The Retreat of the Mexican Army after San Jacinto, An Archeological Investigation*, as well as the editor of *General Vicente Filisola's Analysis of Jose Urrea's Military Diary: A Forgotten 1838 Publication by an Eyewitness to the Texas Revolution*,



translated by John Wheat. An "avocational" archeologist, Dr. Dimmick is a member of the Houston Archeological Society and the Texas State Historical Association. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the San Jacinto Battleground Conservancy and the Wharton County Museum.

For a campus map of St. Thomas University, go to [www.stthom.edu](http://www.stthom.edu) and look for the Interactive Map, Building 20, Anderson Hall. Street parking is available as well as paid parking (\$2) in Moran Center Garage at the corner of West Alabama and Graustark. Teachers can receive one hour of CPE credit for attending this lecture.





## President's Message

HAS members –



Thanksgiving is just around the corner ... and among the things I am so thankful for is you -- the members of the Houston Archeological Society. Last year's board and members can be justifiably proud of what you all have accomplished as a society in 2012 - 2013. First and foremost, the ongoing HAS-TxDOT Dimond Knoll Screening project is successful beyond anyone's expectations. Dr. Jason Barrett, our PI, and all of you have made this project big news -- beyond Houston, beyond Harris County, and even beyond Texas. Do you realize we have been working on this project virtually every weekend since February 2 ... and we continue to draw a large number of volunteers every weekend and to recover amazing artifacts almost every time we're out at the site! A highlight of the project was hosting the Houston Museum of Natural Science staff and members in August at the site ... over 50 people in one day! Several of those who attended have now become HAS members. It has been a terrific project!

But that's not the only project that HAS members participated in this year. Here are just a few of the others projects our members worked on in 2012 - 2013.

- Metal detecting survey at San Felipe de Austin
- Metal detecting survey and shovel testing at San Jacinto Battleground
- Survey and shovel testing with TPWD at Galveston Island State Park 41GV170
- Survey and shovel tests to locate the French fort Champs d'Asile in Liberty County
- Reviewed artifacts recovered at the Tait Ranch site in Columbus, Texas
- Reviewed and examined several other lithics collections that have been brought to us by members of the public. Additionally, we have been asked to consult on several archeological projects being conducted by TPWD, TxDOT and CRM firms in the Houston area.

In 2012 – 2013, we also:

- Rewrote the Constitution and Standing Rules (which had not been done since 2005)
- Developed a new website ([www.txhas.org](http://www.txhas.org)) that is publicizing our Society worldwide
- Developed a new brochure and other marketing materials
- Started the project to scan and put on our website all HAS journals and newsletters - 1959 – 1988 are posted with more to come soon
- Increased our public relations and media reach through digital media (Facebook, Culture Map, Archeological websites and blogs) and through printed media.
- Expanded our public outreach programs to schools, other archeological societies, regional museums, and many area groups to whom we have given presentations and workshops.
- Nearly tripled our membership from the previous year

I am really proud to be a part of an organization that can make all this happen! It's a team effort, and by a team I mean every single member of the Houston Archeological Society. At our December 19<sup>th</sup> membership meeting at St. Thomas we will ring out the past year with a PowerPoint presentation highlighting all our activities in 2012 – 2013 and announce two big projects we'll be tackling in 2014. If you have pictures you'd like to share in this PowerPoint, please send them to me as soon as you can. We'll also have holiday themed snacks!!! Look forward to seeing you at this month's meeting on November 21<sup>st</sup> and at the final meeting of the year on December 19<sup>th</sup>.

## November Lab Dates

This month, we'll meet on November 11th and 25th. We've made great progress on the analysis and cataloging of two surface collections from our coastal margin shell-midden site, but we still have work to do. We'll meet at the usual time and place: 7:00-9:00 pm, Room 103, Sewall Hall, Rice University. Best parking is in the Founders Court/Visitors Lot and requires a credit or debit card; cost is still \$3.50/hr. A campus and parking map can be found at [www.rice.edu/maps](http://www.rice.edu/maps). Hope to see you there. --Beth Aucoin

## Minutes of the Houston Archeological Society Meeting October 17, 2013

President Linda Gorski called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and welcomed all members and guests. There was a total of 57 attendees, including 7 guests signed in.

### **Linda made the following announcements:**

- Treasurers Report – Checking account balance \$5,648.27; Savings Account \$9,459.13
- HAS Membership – 114 members. Membership drive starts tonight
- Dimond Knoll Screening Project – Fridays and Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 pm
- 2014 TAS Field School is at the Tait-Jackson Plantation in Columbus. More information will be forthcoming after the TAS Annual Meeting in Del Rio October 25-27, 2013. We are pleased to have Rita Tait Jackson and her sister Roberta at tonight's meeting.
- Lab at Rice University – Scheduled for October 28<sup>th</sup>. Labs are announced in the Profile.

### **Projects the Houston Archeological Society has participated in this year:**

- San Felipe de Austin Survey – metal detecting and shovel testing
- Bernardo Plantation – backfilling excavation site
- San Jacinto Battlefield – metal detecting and shovel testing
- Dimond Knoll Screening Project 41HR796
- Galveston Island State Park 41GV170 – shovel testing with TPWD
- Tait Jackson site in Columbus – surveyed property and documenting collections
- Champs d'Asile – shovel testing for French fort
- Barnett Site excavations with Fort Bend Archeological Society
- Brand Cemetery survey in Richmond with FBAS
- Look for our slide show of the 2013 projects at the December meeting.

### **Short List of Houston Archeological Society Accomplishments this Year:**

- Rewrote the HAS Constitution and Bylaws.
- Increased HAS membership from less than 50 to 114.
- Increased public awareness of HAS and archeology in Texas through community participation in the Dimond Knoll screening project.
- Increased participation with the Houston Museum of Natural Science (HMNS) through a participation program for teachers, HMNS members and staff at Dimond Knoll.
- Bob Sewell developed a new HAS website providing greater visibility and access.
- HAS Journals and Newsletters from 1959 have been scanned and put on website.
- HAS labs at Rice continuing research on collections from eroding Seabrook site.

Dr. Jason W. Barrett presented the first public program on the Dimond Knoll project titled "Data Recovery Investigations at the Dimond Knoll Site (41HR796)". Linda Gorski presented Dr. Barrett with a lithics book collection donated by Tom Nuckols.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm. HAS members and guests then enjoyed snacks provided by Linda Gorski. The next HAS meeting is scheduled for November 21, 2013, at 7:00 pm. --Lenore Psencik, Secretary

## 2014 Texas Archeological Field School to be held in Columbus, Texas

By Dr. Jason W. Barrett

It is official – the annual Texas Archeological Society Field School will be held near Columbus, Texas, on property along the Colorado River, on June 14 – 21, 2014. This Field School will be co-sponsored by the three regional archeological societies – Brazosport, Fort Bend, and Houston. HAS member Dr. Jason Barrett, who has been the PI on our Dimond Knoll Screening Project has been chosen to be the PI for the 2014 TAS Field School.

The site for Field School 2014 offers a rare multidimensional opportunity to explore the great time depth of human occupation in our region. A rich diversity of temporally significant artifacts have been identified across the 700-acre property, providing evidence for 10,000+ years of occupation - from late Paleoindian all the way through historic! Only preliminary archaeological investigations have been conducted to date, and the number, depth, and integrity of cultural deposits has yet to be determined.

Several prehistoric upland lithic procurement and production sites have been identified to date, but excavations targeting deeply buried activity areas and habitation zones have yet to be completed. The property also contains



a number of early Texas historic sites, with at least one structure directly on top of the earlier Archaic site. Historic artifacts date from

Artifacts recovered by the landowners in the past include lithics, historic ceramic sherds, and a German coin.

the Republic of Texas period, through the pre-civil war era, and

up to the early 1900s. An extensive historic ceramic sherd collection has already been discovered which is comparable to the Velasco assemblage! The original landowner was a member of the Texas House of Representatives in the 1850s. The current landowner, a descendent with an earnest interest in discovering and preserving the property's rich and dynamic past, has been actively working to have the site recognized for its importance to regional prehistory, as well as Texas' early history.

Several members of HAS have been working weekends at Columbus, alongside members of FBAS and BAS to identify and catalog artifacts that have already been collected by the landowner during road clearing activities on the property. Surveys and shovel testing will begin at the property in January to determine which sites will be more carefully examined during field school.

This is a great opportunity for HAS members to attend a field school close to home. We hope you'll block out June 14 – 21 on your calendar. Watch for more information in the coming months on dates we'll go out to Columbus for preliminary surveys and shove tests hoping to identify new sites in advance of the TAS Field School.

**Don't Forget! Thursday, November 14 – “The Monterrey Shipwrecks Project”** a presentation at the Moody Gardens theater in Galveston, starting at 6:30 pm with a viewing of educational material, followed by a presentation by two of the Principal Investigators. This project occurred in July of 2013 and involved an ROV investigation of three shipwrecks 170 miles off of the Texas-Louisiana coast at a depth of approximately 4,500 ft. They are believed to date to the earlier part of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century and possibly represent a privateer and two prizes or consorts. An unusual aspect of this project was that the offshore portion of the investigation was streamed live online to a large audience that was able to send inquiries to the educators and archeologists during the broadcast. **Note: HAS will have a table, posters, brochures, etc. there, and everyone is invited to attend.** This presentation is free and open to the public.

## Report on the PaleoAmerican Odyssey Conference, Oct 17-19, 2013, In Santa Fe, New Mexico

This was a meeting of professional and avocational archaeologists from around the world who gathered together to discuss where the first people in the New World arrived from, when they arrived, and who they were. Presenters came from Siberia, Japan, Australia, Central and South America, from all over the USA, and many other places. Attendees received a 79-page itinerary and abstracts, while a 500-plus page hardback book of 31 of the presentations was made available for purchase under the same title, "PaleoAmerican Odyssey," and can also be ordered online.

As usual for archaeology presentations, the lectures ranged from dry as week-old Sahara toast to exciting and even exhilarating. When will lecturers learn to spare us the graphs and thrill us with the artifacts? Take a group of well fed folks, restrict their activity, turn down the lights, show them a graph and, Voila!..sleep. Those few compelled to see the decimals can read the report later for themselves. Several lecturers also insisted on reading the same report which was published in the book. Please! Did they not take college Speech class? Now the highlights.

For myself, the complex DNA discussions are hard to beat. Seems as though those studies are pointing to Western Asians in Siberia, those folks of Indo-European/African origin heritage as being the ancestors of Native Americans rather than the Mongol/ East Asian groups we might have expected. One possible explanation of why Kennewick Man's DNA pointed toward Ainu/ Polynesian origins is that they appear to share the same MOTHER group as American Indians.

There were approximately 100 poster presentations running in four hour sessions concurrently with the major oral lectures. It was truly difficult to take everything in. My favorite poster was on the subject of paleo textiles. There have been many such found including closed toe sandals, large shopping type bags, mats, cloth aprons, string, rope and etc all found in dry caves in Nevada, USA, and dated 8,000-9,000 years old. Easily the most attended poster presentation was of a 9,000 year-old atlatl dart foreshaft found on a receding ice sheet in Colorado and its reconstruction. Other presenters spoke on every imaginable subject having to do with mammoth, bison, extinct fauna, and all possible knappable material. The quest for projectile point collecting dominated the program.

Dennis Stanford of the Smithsonian had a strong presence as he announced five new Solutrean points found in New England complete with associated with C-14 charcoal dates of about 22 KYO. These Solutrean points have prototypes on the Spanish coast of Iberia. (KYO= thousand years old; means adjusted radio carbon years old, same as calendar years old= BP- before the present; Archaeo-speak) Dennis had obviously kept his cards close to his chest on this Solutrean info as only Michael Collins of our Texas Gault Site seemed to have previous knowledge.

Readers may remember several years ago when Stanford and Collins shared the microphone at an AIA event at Houston Baptist University and Collins was congenial but not willing to dance to Stanford's Solutrean tune. No Longer! Collins took the lead announcing a map of five new cultures in the New World encompassing most previous theories into one unified one. The big game hunters of "Clovis First" in the Americas timeline of 13 KYO could now be doubled and then some, according to Collins' new "Siberia and Iberia" tune.

Several other archaeologists of retirement age and more seemed willing to bet their careers on finds ranging to 34 KYO and even older for New World sites. Many had been previously published which had come under a suspicion which is now lifting. The door appears to be open to investigate older sites which looked too early to accept in their time.

*--Jack Farrell*



**Paleo (?) artifact featured at [paleoamericanodyssey.com](http://paleoamericanodyssey.com), no provenience specified. – Ed.**

## Time to Renew Your Membership!

It's membership renewal time! To renew your membership, go to the HAS web site, [www.txhas.org](http://www.txhas.org), and click on "Membership." From there, click on the link to download the Membership Form. Mail your completed form and dues payment to: Houston Archeological Society, PO Box 130631, Houston, TX 77219-0631. Or bring your payment and completed form to the next monthly meeting.

As a nonprofit organization, membership in the Houston Archeological Society is open to all persons who are interested in the diverse cultural history of Houston and surrounding areas, as well as the unique cultural heritage of the Upper Texas Gulf Coast Region. To become a new member, you must agree with the mission and ethics set forth by the Society, pay annual dues, and sign a Code of Ethics agreement and Release and Waiver of Liability Form. These are explained fully on the web site.

Dues for 2014 have gone up by \$5.00 for each membership category. Current rates are:

Student: \$15  
Individual: \$25  
Family: \$30  
Contributing: \$35+

Good news for new members: If you joined HAS on or after September 1, 2013, your dues are considered paid for the year 2014.

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**Please submit articles for publication to *Profile* Editor Linda Swift at [swiftlinda@sbcglobal.net](mailto:swiftlinda@sbcglobal.net).  
Submit articles no later than December 5 for the December 2013 issue.**

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

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