



FEBRUARY, 1997

The Profile

A NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY THE HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY • HOUSTON • TEXAS

FEBRUARY MEETING

Friday, February 14, 1997 - 7:30 PM

M D Anderson Hall
University of St. Thomas

Speaker: Carolyn Boyd
Texas A&M University

Topic: New Methods for Interpreting Rock Art

LABORATORY SCHEDULE

Monday, February 17

7:00 to 9:00 PM

Location: Rice University Archeology Lab
Sewell Hall, Room 103

HAS LIBRARY

Open between 6:30 and 7:25 PM before the monthly meeting, or by appointment. Call Jim Wells at 944-4276.

Location: Little Gallery
1121 Alabama at Mt. Vernon

THE PROFILE

Please send items for THE PROFILE to:

Jeanette Siciliano (795-4691)
12462 Barryknoll, Houston 77024

Please Renew Your Membership Today

MEMBERSHIP / RENEWAL APPLICATION

Houston Archeological Society, P.O. Box 6751, Houston, Tx 77265-6751

Please complete and mail with check for correct amount to the above address.

Name(s) _____ Address _____

City/State/Zip _____ Phone:(home) _____ (work) _____

Type of Membership: New Member
Renewal

Please Circle one: Single - \$15.00
Family - \$20.00

Contributing - \$30.00+
Student - \$5.00

ALL MEMBERS MUST SIGN THE FOLLOWING PLEDGE:

"I pledge that I will not intentionally violate the terms and conditions of any present or future federal, state, or local statute concerning cultural resources, or engage in the practice of buying or selling artifacts for commercial purposes, or engage in the willful destruction or distortion of archeological data, or disregard proper archeological field techniques".

Signature(s) _____ Date _____ Date _____

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

A few days after completing last month's column about de Zavalla's home on Buffalo Bayou, I found some additional information on the subject while reading a book entitled *Diary of Col. Wm. Fairfax Gray - From Virginia to Texas 1835-36*. A portion of Gray's diary entry for Wednesday, March 23, 1836 reads: "Arrived at Zavalla's (from Harrisburg) before 2 o'clock. Was ferried over by an old Frenchman; horse swam the bayou, which is here as wide as the Rappahanock at Fredericksburg. Received a cordial and kind reception. They had dined, but the table was still in the floor. Young Zavalla came down to the shore to meet me and conduct me to the house. Zavalla only owns one labor of land here, which he bought for the sake of the situation and the buildings. It is beautifully situated on a point at the junction of Buffalo Bayou and Old San Jacinto, the present San Jacinto running some distance off. The house is small, one large room, three small bed closets and a porch, kitchen, etc... The bed rooms of the little house being fully occupied by the family, a bed was spread for me on the floor of the sitting room where, after some reflection on the circumstances in which I found myself, and the vicissitudes of human affairs, which had placed me under the roof of this remarkable man, in this remote region, far away from my family, I slept soundly."

---Tommy Nuckols

EXHIBIT

CHUPICUARO FIGURINES AND POTTERY

Remarkable Pre-Columbian materials from Mexico on loan from the collection of Dr. Edward Heyne.

Little Archaeology Gallery, 1121 West Alabama

February 9 to March 7, 1997, 12 to 6pm weekdays
Stop in before the HAS meeting on February 14, 6:30-7:25pm

**HOUSTON MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE
TRAVEL PROGRAM
ROCK ART OF THE LOWER PECOS**

April 18 - 21, 1997

Led by Eliza Phelps and Jim Zintgraff
For more info call Travel Hotline - 639-4669

PURPLE BUSINESS

Scientists have a tentative explanation for why an ancient town on an inhospitable part of Turkey's southern coast thrived for more than a thousand years: snails. Specifically, murex snails, the kind used to make Tyrian purple, the most prized dye of the ancient world.

In 1970 amateur archaeologist and yachtsman Bob Carter of Seattle discovered several structures just offshore of the ancient port town of Aperlae. "Everything about the site is wrong for a coastal settlement, so the reason for it must have been very compelling" says historian and marine archaeologist Robert Hohlfelder of the University of Colorado. Prevailing winds make it impossible for a sailing vessel to get out of the bay during most of the day. There's little fresh water, as attested by the many rainwater cisterns found in the area. And getting to the nearest inland town involves a rugged, roadless, 2-hour trek, says architectural historian Lindley Vann of the University of Maryland.

But in 1996 a team of historians and archaeologists began the first systematic exploration of the site. Among their findings: a large midden of murex snail shells and broken pottery, and three large submerged brick tanks, the largest one 8 meters long. "Our preliminary reading is they may have been murex breeding tanks," says Hohlfelder. Those spiny-shelled carnivores have hypobranchial glands which secrete a substance that, when put in heated saltwater, turns purple. "In early 4th century A.D., Tyrian purple was literally worth its weight in gold. Producing a commodity of this value would explain how this city could survive and thrive." There's too little fresh water for cloth-dying, he says, so the dye was probably shipped to Myra, the nearest international seaport. Vann says the team hopes to gain definitive information on Aperlae's *raison d'être* when the team returns to Turkey next June.

—Science

HOUSTON MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE

EXHIBIT

ROCK ART OF THE LOWER PECOS

Opens February 21, 1997 - Second Level Mezzanine

The Lower Pecos Region located in West Texas along a 60-mile strip of land bordering northern Mexico, contains the largest collection of ancient rock art in North America.

More than four thousand years have passed since the first aboriginal artists were inspired to record their spiritual experiences by painting elaborate scenes upon the limestone walls of canyons and rock shelters. These early images provided inspiration to succeeding generations who also immortalized their respective world views in paint. Known as *pictographs*, the rock paintings deal with early peoples' relationship with unseen forces, including what appear to be shaman leaders. They include scenes of transformation from human to animal form.

This new exhibition features 40 color photographs taken by Jim Zintgraff whose 1952 discovery of the "White Shaman" figure inaugurated a lifetime spent documenting the rock art of the Lower Pecos. A professional photographer based in San Antonio, Mr.

Zintgraff has worked for many years with the professional archeological community and the Rock Art Foundation to promote the conservation and interpretation of Native American rock art.

—HMNS Publication

**HOUSTON MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE
PRE-COLUMBIAN LECTURE SERIES**

Dr. John Carlson
Director of the Center for Archaeoastronomy
University of Maryland

Dr. Carlson is a noted expert on pre-Columbian Mesoamerica. His ongoing work at the hilltop palace of Cacaxtla, which contains the finest and best preserved pre-Columbian painted murals ever uncovered in Mexico, has been featured in *National Geographic* and *Archaeology Magazine* (Nov/Dec 1993 cover story). His current research focuses on the widespread Mesoamerican tradition of sacred warfare and ritual sacrifice governed by Venus.

Lecture 1. March 3, 1997 - 7pm. Burke Baker Planetarium
Sky Gods of the Ancient Americas

Lecture 2. March 4, 1997 - 7pm. Third Floor Lecture Hall
Mural Masterpieces of Cacaxtla

Cost: \$15/members, \$18/non-members for individual lectures, \$20/24 for both lectures

Cost includes coffee and a selection of desserts and pastries after the lecture with an opportunity to meet and visit informally with speaker.

Reservations. Call 639-4629, select Options 1,1,3,1
Elisa Phillips, Curator of Anthropology - 639-4674

The Profile

Houston Archeological Society
P O Box 6751
Houston, TX 77265-6751

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MARCH, 1997

The Profile

A NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY THE HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY • HOUSTON • TEXAS

MARCH MEETING

Friday, March 14, 1997 - 7:30 PM

M D Anderson Hall
University of St. Thomas

Speaker: James Bruseth
Texas Historical Commission

Topic: Excavation of the La Salle Shipwreck

LABORATORY SCHEDULE

Mondays, March 17 and March 25

7:00 to 9:00 PM

Location: Rice University Archeology Lab
Sewell Hall, Room 103

HAS LIBRARY

Open between 6:30 and 7:25 PM before the monthly meeting, or by appointment. Call Jim Wells at 944-4276.

Location: Little Gallery
1121 Alabama at Mt. Vernon

LAST ROUND-UP. This is the last time the membership renewal application will appear in the *Profile* this year. Please check the mailing label - if the date is circled it means you have not yet renewed. If you do not renew we'll say goodbye and good luck as this is the last issue of the *Profile* you will receive, but we value your membership and hope you'll stay with us. Any questions - call Membership Chairman Dick Gregg at 721-4865.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

A story entitled "Cannons' discovery ends debate on La Salle fort" (Houston Chronicle Feb. 16, 1997) described how ranch workers exploring the banks of Garcitas Creek with metal detectors found eight cast iron cannons buried in heavy clay. Officials of the Texas State Historical Commission removed the cannons in October. The discovery has led historical commission executive director Curtis Tunnell to state that: "It's very unusual for historical documents and historic sites to fit as perfectly as these do." Tunnell is referring to Spanish explorer Alonso de Leon's description of Fort St. Louis. The story of de Leon's discovery, a result of Spanish reaction to rumors of a French settlement in their colonial empire, can be found in Robert S. Weddle's book *Wilderness Manhunt - The Spanish Search for La Salle*. La Salle and 280 people sailed from France in 1684 with plans to establish a colony at the mouth of the Mississippi River, but missed their objective and landed at Matagorda Bay. In 1685, the French erected six log and pole structures on Garcitas Creek, territory claimed by Spain, which collectively became known as Fort St. Louis. La Salle was assassinated in 1687 by one of his own men. Due to deaths and desertions the population of the fort dwindled to about 20 people. By the winter of 1687-88, Karankawa Indians had killed all but five children. Beginning in 1685, Spanish officials sent out eleven expeditions, six by land and five by sea, looking for the French colony. The search culminated with de Leon's discovery of the deserted fort at 11 o'clock in the morning of April 22, 1689. A detailed report was written as to the condition of the fort and its contents as de Leon and his men found them. In regard to the cannons the report states: "Scattered around the fort and the houses were eight iron cannons and three very old swivel guns which lacked their bases." Towards the end of the report de Leon refers to the cannons again saying: "As for the eight artillery pieces and swivel guns, they will be disposed of in an appropriate manner." One year later, alarmed by rumors of a possible new attempt by the French to establish a colony in Texas, Spanish officials ordered de Leon to investigate the area again. As a result of this expedition Fort St. Louis was burned and the cannons were left buried where they were.

--Tommy Nuckles

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Signature(s) _____ Date _____ Date _____

AIA MEETING

Archaeological Society of America
Sewall Hall, Rm 301, Rice University

Tuesday, March 18, 1997 - 8:00pm

Dr. Stephan Steingraber
Tokyo University
Kress Lecturer/National AIA

Palaces of the Gods - Khmer Temples and Sanctuaries in Thailand

DOES THE FLAVOR LAST.....

A small piece of used chewing gum, 6500 years old, was found in a bog at Bokeberg, Sweden. Similar ancient chewing gum has been discovered at sites all over Northern Europe. Analysis of tar from several sites by Elizabeth Aveling at the University of Bradford points to a source: birch-bark. Birch-bark tar was used for many other purposes at the time, including glue and waterproofing. Otzi, the alpine 'Ice Man' found in 1991, had his axe stuck together with it.

From the size of the tooth marks, the gum was mostly chewed by children and teenagers. "Although the taste cannot be described as pleasant," Aveling writes of gum made in the lab, "neither is it entirely unpleasant - and who knows what appealed to the mesolithic palate?" It doesn't appear to be narcotic. Did it help remove loose milk teeth or to fight plaque? Was it a pacifier, a disinfectant for sore throats, or was it just chewed to disgust adults? Some ingenuity and effort was needed to make the stuff (in the lab) so how the mesolithic cultures made it is a mystery.

As for the most obvious question - does your chewing gum lose its flavor underground over the millennia? - sadly no one has been allowed to taste the ancient gum to find out.

--Nature

THE PROFILE

Please send items for *The Profile* to:
Jeanette Siciliano (795-4691)
12462 Barryknoll, Houston 77024

HAS SPRING WORKSHOP

The Houston Archeological Society will again sponsor a Spring Workshop. The purpose of this workshop is twofold: It is intended to introduce field archeology to those who have no experience in field archeology but have always wanted to participate, or, for those who already have field experience, it will introduce them to the HAS method and procedures.

The Spring Workshop will be presented on Saturday, April 12. It will consist of a half day of instruction in a classroom environment followed by a half day of hands-on experience on a site near Houston.

The cost is \$10 per person. There are no age restrictions and it is not necessary to be member of HAS to participate. Enrollment starts immediately. One can sign up with any HAS officer or contact Sheldon Kindall at (281) 326-2160.

EXHIBIT AND RECEPTION

Saturday, March 22, 7-9 PM
Jones Gallery on the Academic Mall
University of St. Thomas

ALEXANDER IN EGYPT

A travelling photographic show about Alexander the Great and his Egyptian connections

After the opening on March 19, the exhibit may be viewed from 12-6 PM daily until early April

ROCK CHEMISTRY TRACES ANCIENT TRADERS

Chemical analysis of flecks of volcanic glass may push back the earliest dates for long-distance sea trading on the Pacific to 4000 B.C. The analysis links volcanic glass found at a 6000-year-old archeological site on Borneo to sources on islands 3500 kilometers to the east. It points to the longest sea trading network yet traced in the Stone Age.

Some 200 obsidian flecks have been unearthed at the Borneo site. There are no obsidian sources nearby but the majority of flecks matched well-known sources 3500 kilometers away near New Guinea. Materials in the sediment layers from which some of the obsidian was taken have been carbon-dated to 4000 B.C. Widespread long-distance sea trading in the southwestern Pacific has long been thought to have arisen around 1600 B.C. when seafarers pioneered trade routes extending from Melanesian Islands near New Guinea to Polynesia in the Central Pacific, leaving behind a trail of distinctive pottery, obsidian and ornaments known as the Lapita culture. The new flecks indicate that traders took to the open ocean much earlier and that their network extended far to the west of New Guinea almost to Southeast Asia. Evidence that skilled navigators were roaming the western Pacific at such an early date also questions how the Pacific Islands were settled in the first place.

--Science

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APRIL, 1997

The Profile

A NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY THE HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY • HOUSTON • TEXAS

APRIL MEETING

Friday, April 11, 1997 - 7:30 PM

M D Anderson Hall
University of St. Thomas

Speaker: Michael Collins
Texas Archeological Research Lab

Topic: The Implications of Monte Verde,
Chile, for the Early Prehistory of Texas

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The Office of the State Archaeologist is currently conducting a study to determine how many of the known archaeological sites in Texas still exist. This will be done by re-surveying previously recorded sites. The State's Archaeological Stewardship Program will be utilized in this endeavor by assigning regional stewards to conduct the surveys. Stewards for the Houston area are Sheldon Kindall, Dick Gregg and Richey Ebersol. They have the joint responsibility of surveying 35 prehistoric sites in Chambers County. Surveys will need to be completed by the end of the year. Houston Archeological Society members will be asked to help out once the work begins. Initial plans call for survey work to be done on weekends by small groups of people assigned to a particular site. More information forthcoming.

LABORATORY SCHEDULE

Mondays, April 14 and April 28

7:00 to 9:00 PM

Location: Rice University Archeology Lab
Sewell Hall, Room 103

April is Archaeology Awareness Month for the state of Texas. The Houston Archeology Society will celebrate this event by hosting a Field School/Workshop on Saturday, April 12. Last year's workshop was a great success with approximately 45 people in attendance. I participated in the classroom part and enjoyed listening to the lectures given by Sheldon Kindall and Leland Patterson. This year the format will be the same - lecture and experience with artifacts in the morning, lunch from 12-1:00pm, then excavating at a prehistoric site. We need HAS members to help at the site. For more info call me at (H) 664-8369 or (W) 474-6576.

---Tommy Nuckols

HAS LIBRARY

Open between 6:30 and 7:25 PM before the monthly meeting, or by appointment. Call Jim Wells at 944-4276.

Location: Little Gallery
1121 Alabama at Mt. Vernon

EXHIBIT AND RECEPTION

SUNDAY, APRIL 13, 5-6:30 PM
Little Archaeology Gallery, 1121 West Alabama

PREHISTORIC CHINESE JADE ARTIFACTS

60 superb examples from a private collection which throw new light on the Chinese Bronze Age

HAS SPRING WORKSHOP

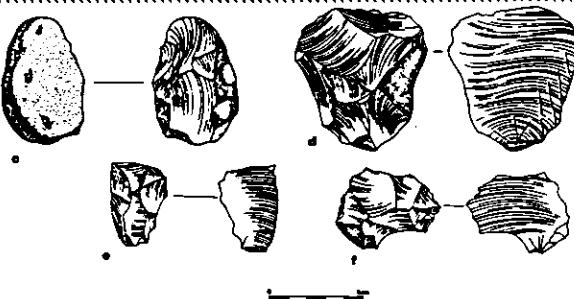
The 1997 HAS Workshop will be held on Saturday, April 12. The Workshop consists of a verbal explanation of archeological field technique (excavation) in a classroom environment followed by hands-on experience on a prehistoric site.

The location of the Workshop will be in the city of Wharton, close to the site to be excavated. Wharton is a short (30-40 minute) drive down highway 59. The classroom part of the day will be held in a meeting room in a restaurant on highway 59, which makes it easy to eat lunch before going out to the site for the remainder of the day.

The cost of the Workshop is \$10.00 per person (this fee does not include lunch). There are no age restrictions and it is not necessary to be a member of HAS to participate. It is possible to register as late as during the HAS meeting on Friday, April 11. Or one can pre-register by calling Sheldon Kindall at (281) 326-2160.

---Sheldon Kindall

Sketches of a sample of the excavated Gona artefacts. Flaked pieces: a, unifacial side chopper, EG12; b, discoid, EG10; c, unifacial side chopper, EG10. Detached pieces: d-f, whole flakes, EG10. Note that the maximum dimension of d is as large as some of the flaked pieces.



AIA MEETING

Archaeological Society of America
Sewall Hall, Rm 301, Rice University

Tuesday, April 8, 1997 - 8:00pm

Dr. Shelley Wachsmann
Meadows Assistant Professor of Biblical Archaeology
Institute of Nautical Archaeology
Texas A&M University

The Sea of Galilee Boat

STONEHENGE MILLENIUM PARK

English Heritage has submitted an application to the Millennium Commission for funding for the Stonehenge Millenium Park. The £83-million scheme will clear the accumulated 20th-century clutter, including the existing visitor centre, car park, and the A344 road, to create a park free of the current anachronistic distractions. A state-of-the-art Visitor Complex will be constructed outside the 6,000-acre Stonehenge World Heritage Site by The Tussauds Group Ltd., winner of English Heritage's Private Finance Initiative Competition. The National Trust, owner of 1,500 acres of the site, will act as English Heritage's preferred partner for the project and together with English Heritage will form a new Stonehenge Trust to manage the Millenium Park. The Millenium Commission's final grant decision is not expected until June or July, 1997. If the grant is approved, construction could begin by mid-1998 with completion in June 2000.

—British Heritage

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NINTH ANNUAL DISTINGUISHED LECTURE IN ARCHAEOLOGY THE SHIFFICK LECTURE

Sunday, April 27, 1997 - 7:00 PM
Jones Auditorium on the Academic Mall
St. Thomas University

A SAINTLY SITE:
Basil the Great and Cappadocia

Prof. Annabel Wharton
Duke University

Byzantine art and archaeology celebrating 4th C St. Basil's influence on
Cappadocian chapels, the new chapel at UST and the
University's 50th Anniversary

ABSTRACT FROM 'LETTERS TO NATURE'

2.5-Million-year-old stone tools from Gona, Ethiopia

S. Semaw, et al

The Oldowan Stone tool industry was named for 1.8-million-year-old (Myr) artefacts found near the bottom of Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania. Subsequent archaeological research in the Omo (Ethiopia) and Turkana (Kenya) also yielded stone tools date to 2.3 Myr.

Palaeoanthropological investigations in the Hadar region of the Awash Valley of Ethiopia, revealed Oldowan assemblages in the adjacent Gona River drainage. We conducted field work in the Gona study area of Ethiopia between 1992 and 1994 which resulted in additional archaeological discoveries as well as radio-isotopic age control and a magnetic polarity stratigraphy of the Gona sequence. These occurrences are now securely dated between 2.6-2.5 Myr. The stone tools are thus the oldest known artefacts from anywhere in the world.

The artefacts show surprisingly sophisticated control of stone fracture mechanics, equivalent to much younger Oldowan assemblages of Early Pleistocene age. This indicated an unexpectedly long period of technological stasis in the Oldowan.

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The Profile

JULY 1996

A NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY THE HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY • HOUSTON • TEXAS

JULY MEETING

July 12, 1996

7:30 PM

M D Anderson Hall,
University of St. Thomas

Speakers: Members of HAS

Topic: Highlights of TAS
Field School 1996

LABORATORY SCHEDULE

Mondays - July 15 and 29

7:00 - 9:00 PM

Location: Rice University
Archeology Lab, Sewell Hall
Room 103

HAS LIBRARY

Open between 6:30 and 7:25pm
before the monthly meeting.

Location: Little Gallery
1121 Alabama at Mt. Vernon

THE PROFILE

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12462 Barryknoll, Houston 77024

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The meeting this month will be dedicated to the TAS Field School which was held in June. Bring your slides and stories to share with the membership. Anyone who would like to make a presentation can call me at (713) 664-8369, after 5:00pm, so I can coordinate things.

Have you ever wondered how good the HAS Library is? Let me put it this way: I could take a week of vacation in our Library and enjoy every minute of it. The HAS Library has an outstanding collection of books and field reports on Archaeology and related subjects. Come by and check it out.

I want to thank Evelyn Lewis, Editor of "La Tierra", the Quarterly Journal of the Southern Texas Archaeological Society for her support of the HAS. The January 1996 issue of "La Tierra" included an article by Leland Patterson and some nice publicity for the HAS.

---Tommy Nuckols

SUMMERTIME

This is a slow news time for HAS what with no meeting in June as folks head off for the TAS Field School and others are away on vacation. I will be on tour for awhile doing things archeological and otherwise and will keep up with the newsletter from a distance.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those dedicated folks (you know who you are) who have been so cheerfully helpful in folding and labeling the newsletter each month. You have certainly made it easy and pleasant for this editor to get the job done.

Also an extra thank you to those who will be doing chores above and beyond the call of duty while I'm gallivanting around.

I look forward to seeing you all in September but in the meantime do send in any news items or tidbits that might be of interest to the membership.

---editor



TALK ABOUT HEAVY TOMES...

A China specialist has brought to light the largest and heaviest book in the world, nearly 14,300 stone tablets inscribed with Buddhist scriptures found in caves near the Yunju monastery in Beijing Province. Sixteen thousand monks took more than 1000 years to chisel some 35 million Chinese characters into the tablets, which include not only Buddhist scriptures but also extensive commentaries. The tablets, inscribed on both sides, range in size from 2 by 1 and 1/2 feet to 8 by 2 feet.

A monk named Jingwan began the book in A.D. 605 in an effort to preserve Buddhist scriptures in the wake of book burnings and persecutions. Sixteen successive generations of monks continued his work until 1644. The smaller tablets were kept in caves under the monastery, while the larger ones were dragged uphill and hid in nine caves that were cut into a steep cliff.

In 1942 an invading Japanese army destroyed the Yunju monastery and carried off several of the small tablets. After the war the monastery was rebuilt, and the remaining small tablets stored in a shed. The larger tablets remained unknown to the West until Josef Guter, director of the Volkshogeschool in Bremen, Germany, was allowed to visit the caves. Convinced that the book is a valuable resource showing the evolution and history of Buddhism in China, Guter is now trying to get it included on UNESCO's world heritage list and made available for public viewing.

---ARCHAEOLOGY

ON A LIGHTER NOTE...

If you are looking for some light, fluffy reading during the summer there are a couple of mainstream series with an archeological theme that may be of interest.

The Chronicles of Brother Cadfael by Ellis Peters is a series of tales involving the good Brother as a detective trying to solve mystery, murder and assorted mayhem. Set in 12th Century Britain at the Benedictine Abbey of Saint Peter and Saint Paul at Shrewsbury, the books contain well researched bits of information about medieval life and times. I'm not sure exactly how many exist but I have just started the Eighteenth Chronicle which was written in 1991. They are paperbacks of approximately 250 pages each.

Another series, by Elizabeth Peters (as far as I know, no relation to the above), combines mystery, love affairs, Egyptian History and archeological excavations in a witty and thoroughly amusing manner. Some of the intriguing titles are: "The Last Camel Died at Noon", "The Mummy Case" and "Crocodile on the Sandbank".

A somewhat more scholarly book is "How the Irish Saved Civilization" by Thomas Cahill. Excerpts from the book jacket notes: - From the fall of Rome to the rise of Charlemagne - the "dark ages" - learning, scholarship, and culture disappeared from the European continent. The great heritage of western civilization - from the Greek and Roman classics to Jewish and Christian works - would have been utterly lost were it not for the holy men and women of unconquered Ireland. Far from the barbarian despoilation of the continent, monks and scribes laboriously, lovingly, even playfully preserved the west's written treasury. With the return of stability in Europe, these Irish scholars were instrumental in spreading learning.

---editor

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AUGUST, 1997

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AUGUST MEETING

August 8, 1997 - 7:30 PM

note change of venue

Jones Hall-across mall from MD Anderson Hall
University of St. Thomas

Speaker: Chip McGimsey
University of Southwestern Louisiana

Topic: Southwestern Louisiana Archeology

LABORATORY SCHEDULE

Mondays, August 11 and August 25
7:00 - 9:00 PM

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Sewell Hall, Room 103

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1121 Alabama at Mt. Vernon

IN MEMORIAM

DR. DONALD R. LEWIS, age 77, passed away June 17, 1997. He was Professor of Archeometry at UTSA. He received his Doctorate at University of Wisconsin, Madison. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi, American Chemical Society and charter member of Houston Archeological Society. Dr. Lewis served as past Chairman of Southern Texas Archeological Association and belonged to the Texas Archeological Society.

The members of HAS extend sincere condolences to his wife, family, colleagues and friends.

Please send items for *The Profile* to:

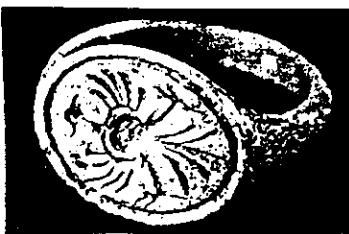
Jeanette Siciliano (795-4691)
12462 Barryknoll, Houston 77024

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

I thought this article from *Common Ground* published by the National Park Service might be of interest.

The Shakespeare Connection: Archeologists working at the recently discovered fort at Virginia's Jamestown Island have unearthed a signet ring belonging to a contemporary of William Shakespeare, whose account of a shipwreck off Bermuda is believed to have inspired *The Tempest*. Numerous scholars concur that the ring belongs to William Strachey, who came to Virginia in 1609 and was secretary of the Jamestown colony. It bears the Strachey family crest and was used to make impressions into the wax seals of letters and official documents. Traveling to Jamestown in the summer of 1609, Strachey's ship was wrecked in a hurricane off Bermuda. He wrote an account of his experiences, which was published in England the following year. Passages from *The Tempest* can be traced to Strachey's tale, and an Oxford University Press edition of the play states that it "is almost certainly indebted" to Strachey's account.

The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, which owns 22 acres of the island, is conducting the work.



P.S. My impression of the crest on the ring is that of a south Texas bird related to the cuckoo known by the name "road runner".

--Tommy Nuckols

NOMINATIONS

The Nominating Committee (Richey Ebersole, Bev Mendenhall and Sheldon Kindall) has proposed the following slate of officers for 1997-1998:

Joe Hudgins	President
Leland Patterson	Vice President
Muriel Walker	Secretary
Karen Fustes	Treasurer
Sue Hamblen	Director-at-large

Elections will take place at the SEPTEMBER meeting.

PUBLICATION NOTICE

Bibliography of the Prehistory of the Upper Texas Coast, No. 10, by Leland Patterson, 1997, Houston Archeological Society, Special Pub.

The Tenth edition of this bibliography for the prehistory of 21 counties in Southeast Texas is now available. The number of references has increased about 20 percent since the last edition. A cross-index for references by site number is included. This publication may be ordered from: Houston Archeological Society, P.O. Box 6751, Houston, Texas 77265-6751. The price is \$5.00 plus \$1.50 mailing charge.

PUBLICATION NOTICE

The Wheless Archeological Collections, Fort Bend County, Texas, by Leland Patterson, Fort Bend Archeological Society, Report No. 4

This report describes surface collections from four significant archeological sites in Fort Bend County. Various components of these sites are from the earliest Paleo-Indian time (Clovis) through the Historic Indian period of the Eighteenth Century. Many of the artifacts are illustrated by photographs. This report may be ordered from the Fort Bend Archeological Society, P.O. Box 460, Richmond, Texas 77406-0460. The cost is \$4.00 plus \$1.50 mailing expense.

MONTE VERDE - COMMENTARY

The May 2, 1997 (Vol. 276) issue of *Science* contains an article by David J. Meltzer of Southern Methodist University, summarizing the latest thinking about the Monte Verde site in southern Chile. Excerpts:

The publication of the second and final volume on the Monte Verde site by Dillehay of the University of Kentucky marks a milestone in American archaeology. For over half a century, and with increasing rancor over the last few decades, archaeologists have sought and disputed evidence of a human presence in the Americas that predates the Clovis archaeological culture (~11,500 years before the present). Scores of pre-Clovis contenders have come forward, only to wither under critical scrutiny. Few archaeologists would exclude the possibility that earlier evidence might be found, but most were unwilling to take such claims at face value. It was clear that the first site to break the Clovis barrier would have to effortlessly hurdle the traditional criteria by which early sites are judged: - unambiguous artifacts or human skeletal remains in unimpeachable geological and stratigraphic context, chronologically anchored by secure and reliable radiometric dates.

The Monte Verde site was excavated from 1977 to 1985 and subsequently analyzed by Dillehay and an international and interdisciplinary team of nearly 80 collaborators. The remains they recovered are extraordinary. The Pleistocene occupants of Monte Verde

camped on the sandy banks of Chinchihuapi Creek. Soon after their departure, water and fibrous peat spread over the site, blanketing the living surface, slowing the normal processes of decay and richly preserving many organic remains. Excavations recovered parts of nearly 70 species of plants (most unusually, in the form of chewed leaves), many of which have economic or medicinal value and were gathered from sources up to 400km distant. Other remains included mastodon meat and bone with soft tissue adhering; wooden lances and mortars, as well as planks and stakes that formed the foundation of a tentlike structure evidently draped with mastodon hide; and hundreds of stone artifacts, including distinctive projectile points, spherical stones interpreted as bolas, and cutting and scraping tools. The material was found on a complex occupational surface representing the activities of a group living on site for what Dillehay estimates was roughly 1 year. Nearly 30 radiocarbon ages were obtained from charcoal, wood and ivory materials on the occupational surface and from the strata bracketing that layer. These securely place the age of the occupation at ~12,500 BP.

The 2 volumes published by Dillehay and an examination of the site and its collections in January of 1997, convinced a group of Paleo-indian specialists - staunch skeptics among them - that the Monte Verde site is indeed archaeological and ~12,500 years old. As such, its implications are profound. Although only slightly more than a thousand years older than Clovis, the site's great distance from the Bering Land Bridge indicates initial arrival in the Americas must have occurred much earlier than 12,500 years ago. How much earlier depends on obstacles encountered along the way. Interior and coastal routes south from Alaska were impassable for long periods (~20,000 to after ~13,000 years before the present, as continental glaciers formed a physical and, for several millennia after their retreat, an ecological barrier to migration. From what is currently known, Monte Verde would imply an arrival in the New World before 20,000 years ago.

Some 70m away from the 12,500-year-old deposits, Dillehay's team recovered traces of a separate occupation that appears to date to >33,000 years before the present. Dillehay remains noncommittal about those materials and feels further excavations are required to confirm this occupation. Until then, however, those interested in the peopling of the Americas have plenty to occupy themselves, in the effort to fully explore the ramifications of the 12,500-year-old occupation site.

References:

T. Dillehay, *Paleoenvironment and Site Context*, Vol I of *Monte Verde: A Late Pleistocene Settlement in Chile* (Smithsonian, Washington, D.C., 1989)

T. Dillehay, Ed., *The Archaeological Context*, Vol II of *Monte Verde: A Late Pleistocene Settlement in Chile* (Smithsonian, Washington, D.D., 1997)

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SEPTEMBER, 1997

The Profile

A NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY THE HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY • HOUSTON • TEXAS

SEPTEMBER MEETING

September 12, 1997 - 7:30 PM

M D Anderson Hall
University of St. Thomas

Speaker: Pam Wheat
Texas Historical Commission

Topic: Four Corners Archeological Research

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

It has been a great two years for me as HAS President. Before I hand over the reins to Joe Hudgins there are a few people I would like to recognize. My special thanks to Leland Patterson for always coming through with a great speaker, Muriel Walker for taking on the job of Secretary, Mike Johnston and Karen Fustes for keeping an eye on the books, and Bev Mendenhahl for providing the refreshments at the meetings. I woyld also like to recognize the efforts of Dick Gregg in putting out the HAS Journal and Jeanette Siciliano for editing the Profile. The HAS has a great library thanks to the efforts of Jim Wells. Don McReynolds keeps the speakers on track by running the projector every month.

We have a great society and we should all strive to keep it that way as we head into the future.

Tom Nuckles

LIGHTS TURNING RED ON AMBER

Very little captures the public imagination quite so much as recovering the DNA from our ancestors and other extinct organisms, with the unspoken promise of re-creating them. According to 'Jurassic Park' science, DNA could survive for millions of years, especially when protected by amber. So are the stories about amber true? A paper by Austin, et al., in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, comes up with a resounding "no". In an exhaustive series of experiments using insects trapped in Oligocene Dominican amber, as well as insects in the younger Quaternary East African copal, they have been unable to find any traces of credibly ancient DNA in the sort of specimens that have been reported as being abundant sources of the real thing.

--*Nature*

'Editor's note: Hope springs eternal and I'm sure we haven't heard the last of this intriguing idea.)

Please send items for *The Profile* to:

Jeanette Siciliano (795-4691)
12462 Barryknoll, Houston 77024

BOOK SALE

The HAS Annual Book Sale will be held at the October meeting. Members who would like to donate books may contact Muriel Walker, Karen Acker or Jim Wells (713) 944-4276 or (281) 329-5926.

Fortress at Louisbourg, Nova Scotia

This is an impressive reconstruction of the town and fortress built by the French in the 18th C to protect the cod fishing industry on Cape Breton Island. Intensive research of maps, records, diaries, plans and official documents has assembled abundant evidence for every aspect of Louisbourg life. Archeologists have excavated the remains of the original buildings and yards of every reconstructed property (~60), uncovering foundations and artifacts numbering in the millions. Visitors can walk the streets, visit homes and public buildings and talk to "les habitants" - the people who live and work there. Soldiers, trades-people, artisans, fishermen, laborers, and government officials are available to impart information about their lives and times. The time portrayed is the summer of 1744 - the town is virtually complete and has enjoyed three decades of relatively peaceful existence since its founding in 1713. Population is about 2000 including 650 soldiers.

The Citadel dominates the town from its hilltop location and is at once autocratic and military. From the ramparts you can survey the whole system of fortification. One wing houses the governor's apartments displaying an unexpected degree of opulence - from the fine fabrics and elaborate decorations of the bedrooms and sitting rooms to the enormous and elegant dining room. The chapel, located in the central part of the Citadel is painted white with gold trim. A large portrait of the saint-king of France, Louis IX, hangs above the altar. Under the floorboards, several senior officers lie buried. The other wing of the Citadel contains the soldiers' quarters which housed about 500 men in rooms with 12 to 16 men two to a bunk. There were no messhalls and no workrooms - the men cooked, ate, drank, smoked, gambled and worked in these rooms when they weren't on guard duty or building and maintaining fortifications. A modern-day Citadel inclusion is a museum displaying historic materials, architectural details and archeological information with many of the artifacts recovered. A stop at the forge to chat with the blacksmith and a browse in the bakery where fresh, warm bread is for sale leads on to other streets where one can enter many houses and businesses and visit with the occupants. Finally, not to be missed is the Cannon Firing in the King's Bastion and the Musket Demonstration and Firing at the Guardhouse - definitely crowd-pleasers.

EXHIBITION

FACING THE PAST: Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt

September 21 - October 17
12 noon - 6:00pm, Monday - Friday

Little Archaeology Gallery
1121 W. Alabama at Mt. Vernon

Special viewing for HAS members October 10, 6:30-7:25

SECOND ANNUAL LECTURE ON ITALIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

GENEALOGY OF THE GRECO-ROMAN GODS

Dr. Jane Chance
Rice University

Sunday, October 5, 1997 - 7:00pm

Jones Auditorium, University of St. Thomas

MORE NOTES FROM ALL OVER

Fossil Cliffs at Joggins, Nova Scotia

Joggins is a small village located on the northeastern shore of Chignecto Bay near the head of the Bay of Fundy in Nova Scotia. In 1851, two pioneering paleontologists, Sir Charles Lyell and Sir William Dawson discovered fossilized reptiles in the cliffs. The cliffs undergo natural erosion on a continual basis as they are washed by some of the highest tides in the world. Each day new chunks of rock appear on the beach and it is a collector's dream to wander the red-hued sands at low tide and hunt for a unique specimen. The cliffs record the activities of active river systems that flowed over the area 300 million years ago, meandering across jungle- or forest-covered plains inhabited by salamander-like amphibians and lizard-like reptiles and *Arthropleura*, which looked like a giant sowbug, 2 metres long. Some of the first reptiles to evolve on earth, truly terrestrial forms, are to be found here. The huge tree stumps provided the necessary traps and rapid burial needed to preserve these forms. A visit to the Fossil Centre to talk with Don Reid, a native of the area who has been collecting fossils for 40 years and established this centre, is a must. He also will help identify any of the "treasures" you may find.

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NOVEMBER, 1997

The Profile

A NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY THE HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY • HOUSTON • TEXAS

NOVEMBER MEETING

Friday, November 14, 1997 - 7:30 PM

M D Anderson Hall
University of St. Thomas

Speaker: Sharon Derrick
Texas A&M University

Topic: Battling Epidemics: 1777-78 Sources
Among the Caddos

LABORATORY SCHEDULE

Mondays, November 16 and November 30
7:00 - 9:00 PM

Location: Rice University Archeology Lab
Sewell Hall, Room 103

HAS LIBRARY

Open between 6:30 and 7:25 PM before the monthly meeting, or by appointment. Call Jim Wells at (713) 944-4276.

Location: Little Archaeology Gallery
1121 Alabama at Mt. Vernon

*****LIBRARY NOTES*****

The library will be moving from its present location in The Little Archaeology Gallery to newly renovated space in the Old Chapel. Move date is set for Saturday, November 29. Librarian Jim Wells would greatly appreciate receiving empty boxes for packing the books, and volunteers to fill and move those boxes. Call Jim at (713) 944-4276 or stop by the library in The Little Gallery before the monthly meeting on November 14th.

CONGRATULATIONS....

...and Best Wishes to Anne and Tom Nuckols on the birth of their 9lb, 4oz son Jake, Wednesday, October 29 at 11:15 am.

Jake joins his parents and brothers John and Joe in their new home at 4421 Tonawanda, 77035. New phone: (713) 728-0075.

Please send items for *The Profile* to:

Jeanette Siciliano
12462 Barryknoll, Houston 77024
(713)795-4691
e-mail: JnetteB@aol.com

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Six members of the HAS attended the 1997 annual meeting of the Texas Archeological Society (TAS) in Odessa, Texas, October 31 - November 2. All acted fairly civilized. The new president of the TAS for 1997-1998 is Tom Middlebrook of Nacogdoches. His goals include an effort to considerably expand the TAS membership and to educate private landowners throughout the state concerning the importance of archeology. Tom has also been invited to speak to the HAS in the near future.

There seems to be a great deal of interest in our dig (41FB3) and some of the professionals have been invited down to observe our work. Get well Tom Palmer.

—Joe Hudgins

HAS 1997 AWARDS

Annual awards of the Houston Archeological Society were presented at the October, 1997 meeting.

The Southeast Texas Archeological Research Award was given to **Richey Ebersole** for his extensive survey and recording of coastal margin shell midden sites.

The HAS Merit Award was given to **Jim Wells** for several years of outstanding work as HAS Librarian.

The Southeast Texas Archeological Research Award has previously been given to William McClure, Joe Hudgins, Lawrence Aten, Alan Duke, Lee Patterson, Grant Hall, Sheldon Kindall and Harry Shafer.

The HAS Merit Award has previously been given to Pam Wheat, Sheldon Kindall, Bob Etheridge, Richard Gregg, Bernard Naman, Karen Acker, Jeanette Siciliano and William Haskell.

Other previous HAS awards include a special award to Alan Duke as HAS Journal Editor, and election of Alan Duke, Don Lewis, Evelyn Lewis and Pam Wheat as Lifetime Members of the HAS.

EXHIBIT

FIRE AND CLAY: INDIAN POTTERY OF THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST

Special time for HAS members
6:30 - 7:25 on November 14th before the monthly meeting
Little Archaeology Gallery

LECTURE ON EXHIBIT

Replicating the Black and White Pottery of the Ancient Pueblos Charles Hixson

Sunday, December 7 at 5:00 pm
Jones Auditorium, University of St. Thomas
Reception in Exhibit Gallery following lecture

AIA MEETING

Herring Hall Auditorium
Rice University (Entrance 2)

Tuesday, November 18, 8:00 pm

The Rise and Fall of the Inca Empire

Geoffrey Conrad, Indiana University

BOOK REVIEW

If you love south Texas as much as I do, you might enjoy reading Arturo Longoria's *Adios to the Brushlands*. This book tells the story of the author's life and his interest in the natural history of northern Mexico and southern Texas; a story that begins in 1959 and continues to the present.

As a newspaper reporter and biologist, Longoria delves deeply into the subject of the brushlands' destruction due to agribusiness, ranching and politics. Although this topic becomes somewhat depressing, the author makes up for it by discussing his passion for walking in the woods and observing nature in a way that is both humorous and educational.

The author says it all in the final paragraph: "I was lucky I guess, I had people in my life who were willing to share their love for the brushlands".

--Tom Nuckols

PUBLICATION NOTICE

The Meitzen Archeological Collection, 41FB249,
Fort Bend County, Texas. 1997.

Leland W. Patterson
Fort Bend Archeological Society, Report No. 6

The Meitzen collection contains a good representation of projectile point types from Early Paleo-Indian (Clovis) through Late Archaic time periods. All point types are illustrated by photographs. This collection also contains several types of unifacial and bifacial stone tools.

This report may be obtained from the Fort Bend Archeological Society, P.O. Box 460, Richmond, Texas 77406-0460.

The cost is \$5.50 including mailing charges.

SEVENTH ANNUAL LECTURE ON GREEK ARCHAEOLOGY

Sunday, November 23, 1997 at 7:00 pm

ARCHAEOLOGY OF PLACE: 5000 YEARS OF HUMAN ACTIVITY AT TORONE IN NORTHERN GREECE

Dr. John Papadopoulos
Curator of Antiquities
J. Paul Getty Museum

Jones Auditorium, University of St. Thomas

Greek reception for speaker will follow the illustrated lecture

BOY SCOUTS ANNOUNCE ARCHAEOLOGY MERIT BADGE

The Boy Scouts of America announce the introduction of the Archaeology merit badge. Although Indian Lore has been a merit badge for many years, the Boy Scouts realize the widespread interest in archaeology and have chosen to recognize the importance of the conservation and preservation of "these resources". The merit badge pamphlet includes a variety of topics and the overall focus is upon historic preservation. The requirements involve a full range of archaeological activities from research planning to field work and analysis to curatorship of records and artifacts. This will not be an easy badge to earn. Counselors who administer the badge will include vocational and avocational archaeologists. To serve as a counselor, you will need to register with your State Archaeologist's office to get on the list. You will also need to register as an adult leader with your local Scout council office. You can purchase the merit badge pamphlet (item # 35,000) from your local Scout shop for \$2.00 or order it from the Boy Scouts of America Distribution Center by calling 1-800-323-0732. For additional information contact your local council office and ask to speak to the Advancement Chairman. The Special Interests Subcommittee of the Public Education Committee of the Society for American Archaeology is compiling information about merit badge activities; please send that information to S. Alan Skinner at P.O. Box 820727, Dallas, TX 75380 or e-mail at arcdigs@aol.com.

PARTY TIME

Holiday Party at Tom and Etta Palmer's home

January 4, 1998

Details in next newsletter

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DECEMBER, 1997

The Profile

A NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY THE HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY • HOUSTON • TEXAS

DECEMBER MEETING

Friday, December 12, 1997 - 7:30 PM

M D Anderson Hall
University of St. Thomas

Speaker: Roger Moore
Moore Archeological Consulting

Topic: Home Run or Strike Out: Looking for
Houston's History at the New
Baseball Stadium

LABORATORY SCHEDULE

Monday, December 15, 1997
7:00 - 9:00 PM
(only one session this month)

Location: Rice University Archeology Lab
Sewell Hall, Room 103

HAS LIBRARY

Open between 6:30 and 7:25 PM before the
monthly meeting, or by appointment. Call
Jim Wells at (713) 944-4276.

NEW LOCATION:

Little Archaeology Gallery
3909 Yoakum Boulevard
(adjacent to Hughes House)

See MAP and further information in next column

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Work is continuing on the 41FB3 site. Interested HAS members are welcome to come out and help us unearth the past. See me at the next meeting if you would like to participate in the field work.

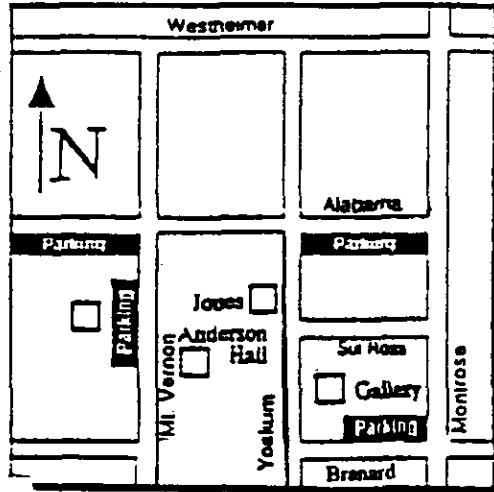
Wishing you all a Happy Holiday Season.....

--Joe Hudgins

LIBRARY NOTES

Librarian Jim Wells would like to thank all who participated in moving the HAS library from its old home to the new location. It was a job well done and greatly appreciated.

The Library will be open in its new quarters before the monthly meeting on December 12. It is convenient to the meeting hall but Jim has arranged for guides, who will be wearing appropriate badges, to direct folks to the new location. Y'all come!



MEMBERSHIP / RENEWAL APPLICATION

Houston Archeological Society, P.O. Box 6751, Houston, Tx 77265-6751

Please complete and mail with check for correct amount to the above address.

Name(s) _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone(home) _____ (work) _____ e-mail _____

Type of Membership: New Member
Renewal

Please Circle one: Single - \$15.00
Family - \$20.00

Contributing - \$30.00+
Student - \$5.00

ALL MEMBERS MUST SIGN THE FOLLOWING PLEDGE:

"I pledge that I will not intentionally violate the terms and conditions of any present or future federal, state, or local statute concerning cultural resources, or engage in the practice of buying or selling artifacts for commercial purposes, or engage in the willful destruction or distortion of archeological data, or disregard proper archeological field techniques".

Signature(s) _____ Date _____ Date _____

BOOK REVIEW

Alternative History

We all know that the Spanish explorer Alonzo de Leon found La Salle's abandoned Fort St. Louis in 1689 and buried its eight cannons. Recent excavations by the Texas State Historical Commission confirmed their existence. Yoakum in his 1854 *History of Texas* quotes Prairiedom (p. 140) as to the fate of these cannons:

"These pieces of artillery were afterward transported to La Bahia (now Goliad), and were used by the Spanish till 1812, when they were taken by the Americans under Gutierrez. By them they were used against Salcedo. After the close of the Guachupin war, they fell again into the hands of the Mexicans. They were taken by Collinsworth; retaken by Urrea in 1836; and when Texas succeeded at the battle of San Jacinto, they were left at Goliad, where as late as 1838 they were seen with the impression of Louis XIV upon them".

---Tom Nuckles

THE GETTY CENTER

A recent visitor to Houston, Dr. John Papadopoulos, Associate Curator of Antiquities at the new Getty Center in Los Angeles, says the complex is nicknamed 'the Acropolis'. He gave a brief description of the Center before delivering the Annual Lecture on Greek Archaeology at St. Thomas University.

According to an article in the Los Angeles Times, the Center, which opens with great hoopla and fanfare on December 16 (in true Hollywood style) has been so difficult to describe that a communications specialist was hired by the Getty trust to create a concise way of characterizing the center. Result: "a museum, five institutes and a grant program".

On my Thanksgiving trip to L.A. my desire to view the Getty overcame my fear of flying in small planes and I took to the air with my son (the student pilot). After circling my daughter's house, the Rose Bowl, Coliseum, etc., we were treated to a magnificent view of the Getty Center on its impressive hilltop location in the Brentwood area. I have several aerial photos and will bring them to the meeting if anyone would like to see them.

—Editor

HOLIDAY PARTY

Bells that jingle, Friends who mingle,
Holiday Party on its way,
Oh what fun it will be to ride to The Palmers'
By car, truck or sleigh.

Sunday, January 4, 1998

2 - 6 PM

Tom and Etta Palmer's House

(Maps will be available at the December meeting)

Palmer's phone: (281) 342-0600

Bring a dish of your choice - veggies, starch, snack, dessert to serve 4

Entrees and drinks will be provided

Y'All Come!

---Bev Mendenhall

BALANCE OF POWER IN ANCIENT IRELAND

According to ancient texts, before Christianity came to Ireland about A.D. 400, the country was dominated by three principal kingdoms, the most powerful of which at any one time was the home of the "high" king or queen. Their centers of power - at Navan Fort in Northern Ireland; Tara, near Dublin; and Rathcrogan, in the west - date back as far as 2500 B.C. The kingdoms' struggles for power and prestige are the stuff of Celtic legends

Archaeologists have focused most of their attention on Tara and Navan Fort thinking Rathcrogan less significant and built around a mound formed by nature rather than human excavation. Recent studies indicate Rathcrogan may have been more impressive than its two rivals. A 3-year study by researchers from University College Galway has shown that the broad, flat 7-meter-high mound appears to have been built for ritual purposes, and the enclosure is larger than those at Tara and Navan. The geophysical survey used ground-probing radar and magnetic gradiometry as well as a new tool in the surveyor's armory, electrical tomography. Evidence of ditches, wall, postholes indicating structures and fences and different phases of building were found, indicating a very complicated site with a prolonged history of human activity. Many discoveries are reminiscent of features at Tara and Navan Fort - repeated burnings on and around mound and "ritual roadways" leading to mound - and support archaeologists' earlier conclusions that these sites were used for important rituals.

The size of Rathcrogan was a big surprise. It is 370 meters from the middle of the central mound to a circular enclosure of postholes, indicating the presence of a wooden perimeter fence. This is almost double the size of the 200-meter enclosures at Tara and Navan Fort.

—Science

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