



Concho Valley Archeological Society Newsletter

August 2014

July picnic/dinner

The turnout was really good and everyone seemed to have a wonderful time. Thanks to Carla and Callan Clark for putting on a great dinner. Thanks also to all who helped on setup, teardown, pot luck dishes and donations for the silent auction.



Special speaker for August CVAS meeting

SPEAKER: THC Archeologist Becky Shelton

TITLE: Defining the Capricorn Ridge Quarry

ABSTRACT:

During a two year period of surveys conducted in advance of development for a large wind farm development, a massive lithic resource area was discovered north of Sterling City in Sterling and Coke counties. Named the Capricorn Ridge Quarry, the resource area is located on the northwestern edge of the Edwards Plateau on an upland divide between the Colorado and North Concho rivers. Twenty-six lithic procurement sites were recorded during the wind farm surveys. When the site locations were compared to previously recorded procurement sites, a distinct pattern of distribution and location was observed. Further comparative studies have shown that when these site locations are examined in a broader, regional framework, it appears that this region was extensively utilized since the Paleoindian to the Late Prehistoric period. In addition, this quarry may represent the largest contiguous, lithic resource area in Texas.



BIO:

Becky Shelton is a Dallas native who joined the Texas Historical Commission this spring as the North Central Texas regional archeologist and project reviewer. Previously, she worked as a Project Archeologist with AR Consultants, Inc. in Dallas, Texas for almost 8 years. There, she conducted survey and testing throughout east, west and central Texas, as well as in Oklahoma, Louisiana and Arkansas.

She received her Master's in Anthropology at the University of Texas at Arlington in 2008. The research and subsequent field work for her Master's degree was of prehistoric ceramics in caves and at surface sites in Central America. Her interests have expanded from these studies to include Caddo and prehistoric Texas ceramics, historic archeology, and ancient cooking technologies. In 2010, she was a member of the Council of Texas Archeologist ceramic protocol committee, where she worked with a group of professionals to update the archaeological standards for recording ceramics in Texas.

FUN AT THE FORT

On Thursday July 10, twenty-eight kids aged six to twelve participated in 'Fun at the Fort--Digging in the Dirt'. The event was sponsored by Fort Concho and held on the fort grounds. Several members of the Concho Valley Archeological Society (CVAS) teamed with Fort Concho staff to teach young people about our past through hands-on activities.

The day started with a flag-raising ceremony (figure 1) and a brief talk about archeology and Indians (figure 2). Three hands on activities, making a medicine bag, clues in the dirt (mock dig) and painting your own rock art (figures 3 and 4) were enjoyed by all.

This was the first time Fort Concho and the CVAS sponsored an archeology event during 'Fun at the Fort' Fort Concho's summer activities. The turn out was great and the kids really seemed to enjoy the day. Opportunities like these are a way the CVAS members can promote our organization and let people know who we are. Who knows, one of these young people may one day become an archeologist and 'you' might have been one who contributed to that.

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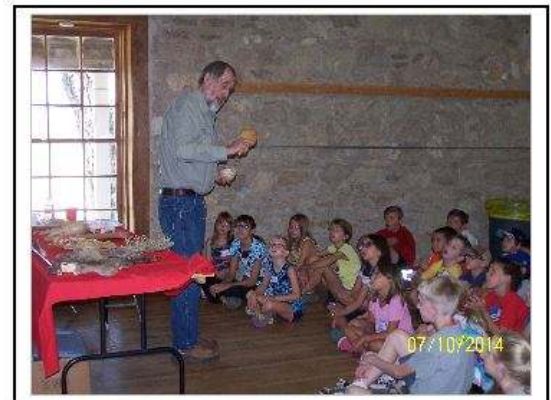


Figure 2: Speaking to kids about Indians



Figure 3: Clues in the Dirt

I wish to thank Fort Concho for inviting CVAS to help with this event, and to all of the volunteers who were wonderful enough to offer their assistance. Without all of you this would not have been successful.

Callan Clark



Figure 4: Medicine bag making

17th century ship wreckage travels from A&M campus to Austin

thebatt.com, by Erik Holland, July 18, 2014

The keel and other pieces of wreckage from the 17th century shipwrecked La Belle, were moved successfully Thursday, to the Bullock Texas State History Museum in Austin after a 17-year restoration project by A&M researchers at the Texas A&M Center for Maritime Archaeology and Conservation.

The pieces will be reassembled for an exhibit entitled “La Belle: The Ship That Changed History.”

La Belle arrived beautifully yesterday and we are just very happy about it all,” said Laura Hubbard, marketing director at the Bullock Texas State History Museum. “The museum was in essence built to have this ship, so we are thrilled about seeing all of this come together.”

Jim Jobling, Texas A&M Nautical Archaeology Conservation lab manager, said moving pieces of the La Belle to Austin was a carefully considered process as the wreckage was 300 years old.



The crew Thursday, strapped the pieces to a secure platform base, which prevented the keel and other contents of the ship from destabilizing for the duration of the trip, Jobling said.

Karen Martindale, a graduate student at Texas A&M and a part of La Belle’s conservation and restoration, said freeze drying was used to help preserve the wood and was a fairly inexpensive process.

“If the wood is left untreated, it would warp really badly and would develop cracks or twists horribly, depending on how it was cut,” Martindale said.

Another process used to preserve the wood was submerging the wreckage in a solution called polyethylene glycol, to prevent warping or shrinking, said Donny Hamilton, director of the conservation research lab.

“After Hurricane Katrina essentially the price of petroleum byproducts, like polyethylene glycol, went from 33 cents a pound to almost two dollars a pound,” Hamilton said. “That increased the cost so much that it would cost 33 million dollars.”

La Belle was intended to be built as a “kit,” said Peter Fix, head project leader for the La Belle restoration project. The French colonists intended to transport the materials and build the ship in the New World, Hamilton said. However, the ship that the colonists would transport La Belle’s materials on became full. As a result, La Belle was built in France and sailed over to the New World.

La Belle was one of four ships — pioneered by Robert de La Salle, a French explorer — that explored the Gulf of Mexico, Hamilton said.

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While looking for the mouth of the Mississippi River, La Salle instead found Matagorda Bay. Hamilton said La Salle fled the ship on foot in hopes to find the Mississippi River. His abandoned crew was then overcome by a storm that ran La Belle aground.

300 years later, at Matagorda Bay Chuck Meide, an underwater archaeologist rediscovered one of the bronze cannons from the La Belle, Hamilton said. From there, the excavation began and was completed in May 1997. The project was then passed on to A&M.

After the excavation was finished, the French Government filed a claim for the ship and its contents, Hamilton said. “Texas claimed it was theirs and France claimed it was theirs, so the U.S. had to sign a treaty with France acknowledging that the La Belle is still theirs, but [La Belle] is in day-to-day control in Texas,” Hamilton said. “The French Government had to approve all our conservation processes.”

La Belle be on display Oct. 25.

Ancient Clovis Elephant-Hunting Camp Discovered in Mexico

westerndigs.org, Posted by Blake de Pastino, July 14, 2014

A tip from a rancher in Mexico’s Sonoran Desert has led to an unexpected find: an ancient encampment where members of the Clovis culture hunted an elephant-like animal never before seen in North America’s archaeological record. More importantly, the camp turned up a host of exquisite stone points and bone ornaments, with organic material dated to 13,400 years ago, making it one of the oldest and southernmost Clovis sites yet found on the continent.

Archaeologists were tipped off in 2007 to unusual bones eroding out of a cut bank some 200 kilometers south of the Arizona border, at a site given the ominous name El Fin del Mundo, or The End of the World.

There they found the remains of two animals that initially proved difficult to identify.

“At first, just based on the size of the bone, we thought maybe it was a bison, because the extinct bison were a little bigger than our modern bison,” said University of Arizona archaeologist Vance Holliday, in a press statement.

After uncovering the distinctive jawbone and teeth of one of the specimens, they realized they had found gomphotheres, odd-looking, long-jawed ancestors of modern elephants once thought to have vanished from North America before humans arrived.

Much older gomphothere specimens had been found elsewhere in North America, Holliday said, and Clovis hunters were known to have stalked their evolutionary cousins, the mammoths and mastodons. But this is the first evidence that humans shared the continent with, and hunted, gomphotheres.

“This is the first archaeological gomphothere found in North America, and it’s the only one known,” Holliday said, before ticking off the many firsts marked by the find.

“This is the first Clovis gomphothere, it’s the first archaeological gomphothere found in North America, it’s the first evidence that people were hunting gomphotheres in North America, and it adds another item to the Clovis menu.” Evidence of the creatures’ fatal encounter with humans includes four large stone points, all crafted in the characteristic fluted Clovis style, found in situ among the animals’ remains.

Three more points were found within two meters of the animals — including one striking projectile fashioned out of crystal clear quartz — along with stone flakes, two small carved bone ornaments, and burned bones.



The jawbone, or mandible, of a gomphothere as it was found, upside down, at El Fin del Mundo excavation site. (Courtesy Vance T. Holliday)

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Ancient Clovis Elephant-Hunting Camp Discovered in Mexico

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In addition to shedding light on the historical longevity of the ancient elephants, the find perhaps more importantly may broaden our understanding of the Clovis, thought by many to have been the continent's first widespread indigenous culture.

As the team concludes in its paper, "These data expand our understanding of the age range for Clovis, Clovis diet, raw material preference, and the late Pleistocene megafaunal assemblage of North America, and provide evidence for a southern origin of the Clovis."

Like many things in American archaeology, when and where the Clovis culture originated are topics of debate.

But the dates from El Fin del Mundo eclipse almost every other reliably dated Clovis site on record, including Montana's Anzick site, which produced the remains of a 13,000-year-old Clovis boy.

Only a bison-hunting camp known as the Aubrey site, discovered in North Texas in 1988 and dated to more than 13,400 calendar years ago, is definitively older, Holliday and his colleagues said.

And the presence of early Clovis sites so far south may suggest that the culture actually arose in the Southwest, they noted, and not in the northern Great Plains, as many have previously theorized.

"Including Aubrey and now El Fin del Mundo in the corpus of dated Clovis sites raises the possibility that Clovis originated in the south," they write in their study, published today in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. And if it did originate in the North, they add, then the Clovis culture must date back even farther than 13,500 years in order for its members to have reached these southern latitudes.

All told, the evidence emerging from El Fin Del Mundo promises to revise our understanding of the continent's most influential native cultures, from its practices and its range to the ancient environment with which it interacted so successfully.



Although very difficult to shape into a tool, quartz was used by Clovis tool makers at several sites. (Courtesy INAH Sonora)

Annual Genealogy Fair

This year's annual Genealogy Fair will be held at the Tom Green County Library (3d floor) on **Tuesday, August 19th from 6:30 p.m.—8:00 p.m.** We need volunteers to man a table with CVAS information. Callan has fold outs and various items from previous years, but cannot attend this year. **Please help by volunteering. The Genealogy Club supports CVAS during the Archeology Fair and we have always reciprocated.**

For either of these events, please contact Callan at (325) 763-7361 or clarkc74@gmail.com

The CVAS 2014 Archeology Fair will be Saturday, September 27 this year. Callan will be contacting previous participants for this year's event. So, put this on your upcoming calendar.

WE'RE ON THE WEB AT
CVASSANANGELO.ORG

Meeting Location

Please remember that our meetings are now in the classroom at the Fort Concho Living History Stables, **236 Henry O. Flipper St.** We enter **through the side door.**

2014 Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

Cell _____

Family members _____

Email _____

I pledge I will not intentionally violate the terms or conditions of any current or future 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 of archeological data, or disregard proper archeological field techniques

Signature _____ Date _____

Mail to: CVAS, 4063 Green Meadow Dr., San Angelo, TX 76904

Individual	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family	\$20	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student or military N/C		<input type="checkbox"/>

(active military only)