



Concho Valley Archeological Society Newsletter

June 2012

Fort Chadbourne Visitors Center

by Ann Pate



On April 29, 2012, the new Visitor Center at Fort Chadbourne had its long awaited grand opening. Many watched as the ribbon was cut sharply at 9:00 a.m., anxious to be one of the first to view the new center.



The facility has been an overwhelming success. Since the opening, hundreds of folks have toured the center. All seem surprised by the volume of displays and information located inside. One of the greatest compliments so far has been the many return visits of folks who have toured it, and then brought back friends or family to see it because they thought it was so special.

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Fort Chadbourne Visitors Center

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On opening weekend, the favorite gathering place was the large vaulted area where most of the exhibits and artifacts are located. Many of the CVAS, along with the SMARTS, attended the grand opening. Both groups, who through the years have spent long hours volunteering at Fort Chadbourne, enjoyed swapping stories and pointing out who had recovered what object now shown in the various display cases. Many more artifacts will be added as time permits.



The Visitor Center was vital to tell the overall story of military and family history, restoration, stabilization, and archeology. All of this now housed within one facility, makes Fort Chadbourne a destination, and the "New Star in Texas".

If you haven't visited the Fort Chadbourne Visitor Center, you should do so. New days of operation are: Tuesday thru Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

On trail of Old West: National designation sought for Butterfield Trail

<http://www.reporternews.com>, April 7, 2012, By Loretta Fulton

Area residents had the opportunity to tell representatives of the National Park Service in April their opinion about designating the Butterfield Trail a National Historic Trail, a move that could boost tourism along the 2,800-mile route from San Francisco to St. Louis — including much of the Abilene area.

Frank Norris, a historian with the National Park Service office in Santa Fe, presided over the meeting. Public input meetings began Feb. 6 in El Paso. Since then, meetings have been held in communities along the Butterfield Overland Mail Stage Route, or Butterfield Trail, from California to Missouri. Norris said he never knows what kind of turnout to expect, with the largest crowds numbering about 45. Some attendees are knowledgeable about the trail's history and some own land that the trail passes through, Norris said. "And some people are just curious," he said, "because it has a really iconic name."

If the National Historic Trail designation should come to pass, Norris said the National Park Service staff would assist landowners who might want to put a sign or structure on their property. Norris said that at each of the public meetings, detailed notes are taken from comments made. Once all the input from the 13 meetings has been assembled, Norris and his team will start on a draft feasibility study. After that, another round of public comment will begin and then a final feasibility study will be prepared. That report will go to committees in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives and eventually a decision will be made. The process could take as long as five years, which is two years longer than the Butterfield Overland Mail Stage Route lasted.

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Artifact Quiz: What do you think it is?

The board is approximately 12 inches long.

Answer at bottom of page 5



Finding the First Americans

nytimes.com, May 19, 2012, By Andrew Curry

When and how did the first people arrive in the Americas?

For many decades, archaeologists have agreed on an explanation known as the Clovis model. The theory holds that about 13,500 years ago, bands of big-game hunters in Asia followed their prey across an exposed ribbon of land linking Siberia and Alaska and found themselves on a vast, unexplored continent. The route back was later blocked by rising sea levels that swamped the land bridge. Those pioneers were the first Americans.

The theory is based largely on the discovery in 1929 of distinctive stone tools, including sophisticated spear points, near Clovis, N.M. The same kinds of spear points were later identified at sites across North America. After radiocarbon dating was developed in 1949, scholars found that the age of these “Clovis sites” coincided with the appearance at the end of the last ice age of an ice-free corridor of tundra leading down from what is now Alberta and British Columbia to the American Midwest.

Over the years, hints surfaced that people might have been in the Americas earlier than the Clovis sites suggest, but the evidence was never solid enough to dislodge the consensus view. In the past five years, however, a number of discoveries have posed major challenges to the Clovis model. Taken together, they are turning our understanding of American prehistory on its head.

The first evidence to raise significant questions about the Clovis model emerged in the late 1970s, when the anthropologist Tom Dillehay came across a prehistoric campsite in southern Chile called Monte Verde. Radiocarbon dating of the site suggested that the first campfires were lighted there, all the way at the southern tip of South America, well before the first Clovis tools were made. Still, Professor Dillehay’s evidence wasn’t enough to persuade scholars to abandon the Clovis model.

But in 2008, that began to change. That year, researchers from the University of Oregon and the University of Copenhagen recovered human DNA from coprolites — preserved human feces — found in a dry cave in eastern Oregon. The coprolites had been deposited 14,000 years ago, suggesting that Professor Dillehay and others may have been right to place humans in the Americas before the Clovis people.

This discovery inspired other scholars to re-examine old finds with new techniques. In the 1970s, for instance, a farmer in Washington State found a mastodon rib with a bone shard lodged in it, as if the mastodon had been killed with a weapon. Since the mastodon remains predated the earliest Clovis sites by eight centuries, the nature of the finding was initially disputed. But in 2011, researchers led by the Texas A&M archaeologist Michael R. Waters announced that by analyzing the rib and the embedded fragment using scanning and modeling techniques, they had confirmed that the embedded bone was a spear point — strongly suggesting that humans in the Americas were hunting the animals with bone-tipped spears long before the end of the ice age.

The Clovis model suffered yet another blow last year when Professor Waters announced finding dozens of stone tools along a Texas creekbed. After using a technique that measures the last time the dirt around the stones was exposed to light, Professor Waters concluded, in a paper in *Science*, that the site was at least 15,000 years old — which would make it the earliest reliably dated site in the Americas.

The archaeological evidence challenging the Clovis model is also receiving support from genetic studies. Having compared the DNA of modern American Indians with that of groups living in Asia today, scholars have estimated that the last common ancestor of the two peoples probably lived between 16,000 and 20,000 years ago. That figure doesn’t square with the arrival of the Clovis people from Asia only 13,500 years ago.

Where does this leave us? We now know people were in the Americas earlier than 14,000 years ago. But how much earlier, and how did they get to a continent sealed off by thick sheets of ice?

Working theories vary. Some scholars hypothesize that people migrated from Asia down the west coast of North America in boats. Others suggest variations on the overland route. One theory even argues that some early Americans might have come by boat from Europe via the North Atlantic, despite the fact that the DNA of modern American Indians does not suggest European origins.

After 80 years under Clovis’s spell, scholars are once again venturing into unknown territory — and no one is ready to rule anything out yet.

Andrew Curry is a contributing editor at *Archaeology* magazine.

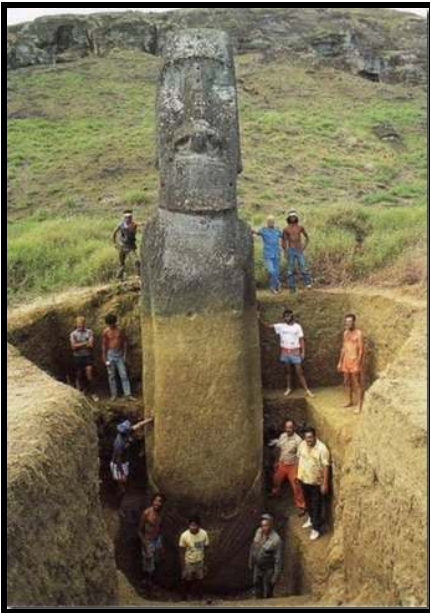
Easter Island heads have bodies!

<http://www.eisp.org/> (Easter Island Statue Project) Letters from the Director

Our EISP excavations recently exposed the torsos of two 7 m tall statues (Figure 4). Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of visitors to the island have been astonished to see that, indeed, Easter Island statues have bodies! More important, however, we discovered a great deal about the Rapa Nui techniques of ancient engineering:

- the dirt and detritus partially burying the statues was washed down from above and not deliberately placed there to bury, protect, or support the statues
- the statues were erected in place and stand on stone pavements.
- post holes were cut into bedrock to support upright tree trunks
- rope guides were cut into bedrock around the post holes
- posts, ropes, stones, and different types of stone tools were all used to carve and raise the statues upright

We also discovered that ceremonies were certainly associated with the statues. We found large quantities of red pigment, some of which may have been used to paint the statues. Finally, and perhaps most poignantly, we found in the pavement under one statue a single stone carved with a crescent symbol said to represent a canoe, or vaka (Figure 5). The backs of both statues are covered with petroglyphs, many of which are also vaka. A direct connection between the vaka symbol and the identity of the artist or group owning the statue is strongly suggested.



On trail of Old West: National designation sought for Butterfield Trail

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Perhaps the person with the most to gain by the national trail designation in this area is Garland Richards, president of the Fort Chadbourne Foundation. Fort Chadbourne is in Coke County on U.S. 277, about halfway between Abilene and San Angelo. It was established as a military post by the 8th Infantry in 1852, and in 1858 was selected as a stop on the Butterfield route. Today, according to a brochure produced by the Texas Historical Commission, it is the only fully restored Butterfield stage stop in Texas.

Richards already is excited about the opening of a \$2 million visitor center on April 28. The thought of the Butterfield Trail being designated a National Historic Trail makes him almost giddy. Even in its remote location, the fort and the Butterfield station drew 45,000 visitors in 2011, Richards said. He said he expects that number to double when "one of the premiere visitor sites in this part of the state" opens later this month. And, a national historic designation could add another 15,000 visitors annually, he said. Even without the additional tourists, Richards said he is pleased at the thought of the trail being recognized. "The effort has not been put into this like there was with the Texas Forts Trail," he said.

Restoration of Fort Chadbourne and the Butterfield station has been done entirely through private money raised by the Fort Chadbourne Foundation. No admission fee is charged at either site, and visitors will be admitted free to the new visitor center, which will house a gift shop and museum.

The land that the fort and stage stop are built on has been in Richards' family for eight generations. It's a heritage he is proud of and wants to help preserve.

As a child, Richards loved playing cowboys and Indians at the fort ruins. It wasn't until he was older that he understood just how privileged he was to grow up on a piece of land housing so much Texas history.

"I thought everybody had a frontier fort in their backyard," he said. "I didn't know any better."

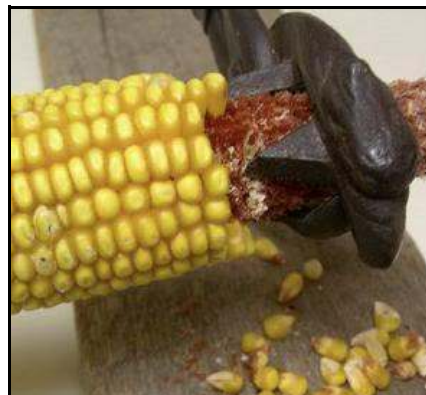
CVAS Meeting Presentation

CVAS president, C.A. Maedgen, will give this month's presentation. His presentation will be Howard's Well, McMullan Ranch, and a shelter known as 41PC23 which is very near to Iraan. We will have some fun seeing the pics from these sites. See you there.

CVAS weekend outing discussion

Members of CVAS have expressed an interest in making a day trip to Fort Chadbourne to see the new visitor center. This we can do and have a lunch under the covered patio at the fort. We will talk about this trip at the meeting and make arrangements to car pool there. Bring your thoughts and ideas for the trip. All of us at CVAS have worked over the years to see this project brought to fruition and we need to enjoy the exploration of the artifacts and displays at the fort.c a

Artifact Quiz Answer (from page 2)



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.

2012 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

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

(active military only)