



# *Concho Valley Archeological Society Newsletter*

*November 2010*

## CVAS November Presentation: The Gault Site

The CVAS November 18th meeting will include a presentation by Teddy Stickney on the Gault Site. Teddy has been a member of the Midland Archeological Society since 1964 and the Texas Archeological Society since 1966. He has been involved with archeology for many years, being raised in the Four Corner area, and has been involved with recording rock art in Texas since 1989.

The Gault Site, home to the Gault School of Archaeological Research is one of the largest excavated Clovis sites. First identified in 1929, it was thought to have been lost to looting and collecting over the years. An exploratory excavation in 1991 determined that there were still extensive intact Paleo Indian deposits. Since then more than 1.6 million artifacts have been recovered from the site, representing more than half of all excavated Clovis artifacts. Some of the more unique finds include a stone floor representative of the first architecture in North America and engraved stones—the first known art in the America's.

## CVAS and Iraan Archaeology Society trip to the Marshall Ranch C.A. Maedgen

On Friday October 29th members of CVAS and Iraan Archaeology Society traveled to the Marshall Ranch, 8000 acres, on the Pecos river half way between Pandale and Comstock. The ranch owner and the ranch manager were the hosts and provided attendees a tour of the ranch that most will never forget. Two nights and one day of touring were the order of the day and all were treated to beautiful scenery, Indian pictographs, mortar holes, Moss Head rock, and rock shelters. The roads and trails were treacherous, steep, dusty, and offered some real challenges to the drivers. Absolutely awesome canyons, ravines, river bluffs, and scenery to rival the Grand Canyon. In fact the ranch manager calls this place the "Grand Canyon of Texas". No exaggeration here.

Previously recorded rock art sites were visited for numerous miles along the Pecos. While viewing recorded sites there were serious efforts to find new undiscovered sites. New sites were found and one in particular was located by Johnny Gurley who was seen crawling around on his hands and knees in search of evidence. It seems Johnny would rather prospect for new sites than take a lunch break. For his efforts Johnny was rewarded with a very active shelter that included rock art and stone tool manufacturing. **(continued on page 2)**



# CVAS and Iraan Archaeology Society trip to the Marshall Ranch

(continued from page 1)

Johnny found the spot where the Indian was sitting and working on stone tools. Debitage was discovered right between the feet of the Indian where he would have been sitting. The sitting place was right next to a high bluff and there were striking marks on the wall where the stone tool manufacturer would pass the hand made tools through groves in the wall. Congratulations go to Johnny for his discovery.

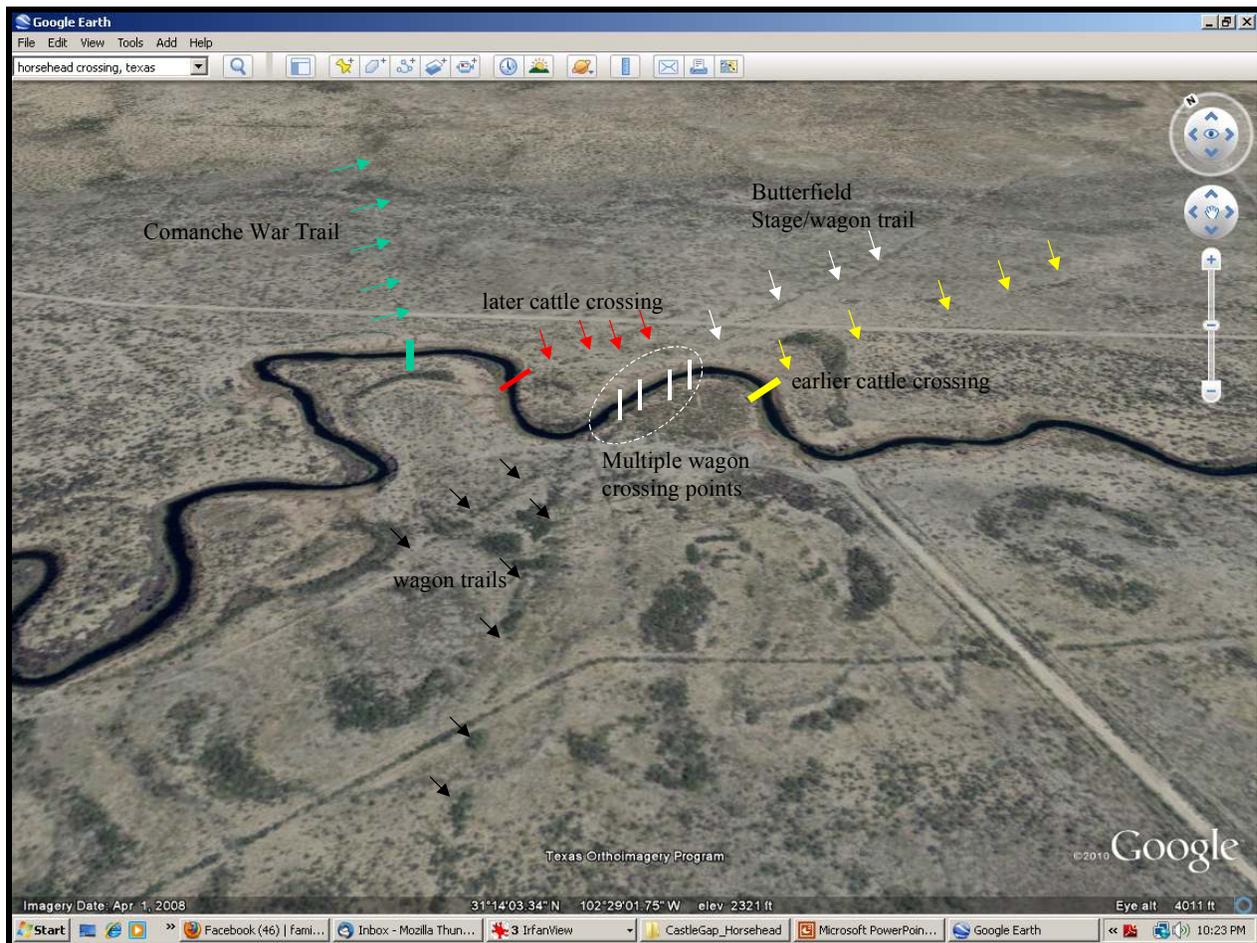
Another rock art site was discovered on a rock bluff about 15 feet above the river floor. All were treated to an oasis when we arrived at Moss Head Rock, an awesomely beautiful water fall in a canyon off the Pecos. Water has been feeding Moss Head Rock for centuries and has been a resting spot for many a weary traveler. Bill Yeates again was asked to provide his skill in recording the rock art for the group. Fred Braziel, Bill Haley, Arnetta Cooper, Paul Millican, Jack Woodrow, and C.A. Maedgen all returned safely after the tour. Just one Jeep decided to give up the ghost. That is another story for another day and time.



# Horsehead's four crossings

By Tom Ashmore

Horsehead Crossing on the Pecos River is well known to most folks in West Texas. It was the main crossing for the Jumanos on their trading excursions, the Comanche on their raids into Mexico, the early immigrants on their way to California, the Butterfield Overland Mail and numerous cattle drives on their way to New Mexico and Colorado. Our CVAS members have made several trips out to this famous crossing, one of which we reported on in the June newsletter. So it was with great excitement when I decided to stop at this site on the way through the area to see this site for myself. Since I had done research on the trail leading up to the crossing I thought it only right that I do some more in depth imagery analysis on the crossing area before heading out. To my surprise I found there was not just a single crossing point, but there are four distinct trails that can be seen in the imagery on Google Earth and they cross at slightly different locations. Other than the main and well known wagon crossing I could see a second trail breaking off from the general wagon trail and heading to a different section of the river to cross. This trail is non-distinct compared to the wagon trail and looks much like the cattle parallel trail heading into Castle Gap 10 miles before the river that I reported in the April newsletter. It appears the cattle were directed to this section to probably keep them from destroying the wagon crossing location. It also leads right into a perfect bend in the river that could be used as a kind of natural corral for resting the cattle. Then I saw a older trail, much harder to discern, on the other side of the wagon trail. I believe this might have been the original cattle crossing used by Goodnight and Loving. Goodnight allowed the cattle to cross and then later would cross them back and head them up the east side of the Pecos. I can only guess at this because it appears to be much older and harder to discern. Finally I found another crossing that appeared to have no relationship to the wagon trail at all. This trail is very wide and heads north to south, crossing close to the area of the probable cattle crossing, but headed in a different direction. By following it a ways in both directions I determined this to probably be the Comanche War Trail. On my subsequent visit I made it a point to visit each of these locations to determine if the terrain (embankments leading to the water) made sense for a crossing of these types. I was happy to note that the terrain did fit for good crossing locations in each case.



**Horsehead Crossing's four trails—note the wagon trail splits on the west side. One heads west and one heads south. Another not seen in this photo heads due south. The lines without arrows are fence lines.**

# Tower Hill and perseverance

by Tom Ashmore

We call ourselves avocational archeologists. Well, on October 23rd Ray Theiss and myself were put to the test as we braved Mother Nature's fickle nature, pressed on with the mission and Mother Nature relented. What was the mission? Trying to search out clues of just what is the lost story behind Tower Hill outside Sterling City.

This was the second time I had scheduled another trip to Tower Hill. The first was cancelled because of rain and this one was on the verge of it too. The line of thunderstorms had moved into the area by the time I woke up and looking at the radar picture it definitely looked dicey. However, I wasn't going to be deterred and began the trip up to Sterling City. Ray called on my way up to tell me he was already up there with his father. The closer I got the worse it got, until I was driving through some serious lightening and it was coming down in buckets. When I arrived we talked it over and called Mr. McEntire for his opinion. There was a chance that it was going to subside so we all decided to go to the local café and wait it out. Mr. McEntire and his wife came down for breakfast and as we talked the weather did begin to clear. It was going to wet and muddy though.

When we arrived at the ranch we had to hike the half mile to the hill on muddy roads but the weather continued to clear. Our actual goal was to work the bottom of the hill with metal detectors, working our way to the top and then sweeping the top again. It was not going to be easy covering that much territory but we were determined. The previous trip we had not found a single piece of metal and that is very strange for a possible former cavalry lookout post. We figured the treasure hunters over the last 90 years had pretty much cleaned it out, but we wanted to find something, anything that could point to a clue.

As time passed the weather got better and better until we were on top of the hill and it was clear, blue skies and we had a beautiful view as payment for our determination. What did we find? Well, at the bottom of the hill we found the remnants of a .22 bullet. At the top of the hill we found a .22 cartridge, but it is cannot be dated (it could be anywhere from 1870s to recent). We found a small, broken piece of spring steel, but I'm not sure just what it could have been used for. (It looks to me like a piece that might have been used in the spring hinge of a trunk lock.) We also found what looks to be shrapnel from a musket ball and a square boot heel tack. It's not much in the way of diagnostics, but we were still proud of ourselves for our perseverance and maybe Mother Nature was too.



Tom Ashmore



Ray Theiss

Top row: spring pin, boot heel tack (square)

Bottom row: .22 long, .22 bullet, lead shrapnel (possible musket)



# Humans Crafted Complex Tools Earlier Than Thought

Discovery News, Thu Oct 28, 2010

Prehistoric people in southern Africa developed a highly skilled way of shaping stones into sharp-edged tools long before Europeans did, suggested a study released Thursday.

A technique known as pressure-flaking, which scientists previously thought was invented in Europe some 20,000 years ago, involves using an animal bone or some other object to exert pressure near the edge of a stone piece and precisely carve out a small flake.

Researchers from the University of Colorado at Boulder examined stone tools dating from the Middle Stone Age, some 75,000 years ago, from Blombos Cave in what is now South Africa.

The team found that the tools had been made by pressure flaking, whereby a toolmaker would typically first strike a stone with hammer-like tools to give the piece its initial shape, and then refine the blade's edges and shape its tip.

The technique provides a better means of controlling the sharpness, thickness and overall shape of two-sided tools like spearheads and stone knives, said Paola Villa, a curator at the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History and a co-author of the study published in the journal *Science*.

"Using the pressure flaking technique required strong hands and allowed toolmakers to exert a high degree of control on the final shape and thinness that cannot be achieved by percussion," Villa said. "This control helped to produce narrower and sharper tool tips."

To arrive at their conclusion that prehistoric Africans could have been the first to use pressure flaking to make tools, the researchers compared stone points, believed to be spearheads, made of silcrete -- quartz grains cemented by silica -- from Blombos Cave, and compared them to points that they made themselves by heating and pressure-flaking silcrete collected at the same site.

The similarities between the ancient points and modern replicas led the scientists to conclude that many of the artifacts from Blombos Cave were made by pressure flaking, which scientists previously thought dated from the Upper Paleolithic Solutrean culture in France and Spain, roughly 20,000 years ago.

"This finding is important because it shows that modern humans in South Africa had a sophisticated repertoire of tool-making techniques at a very early time," said Villa.

The authors speculated that pressure flaking may have been invented in Africa and only later adopted in Europe, Australia and North America.



A Still Bay bifacial point from Blombos Cave made on silcrete and finished, say researchers, by pressure flaking, mainly at the tip.  
Photo Image © Science/AAAS

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.

### 2010 CVAS 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: Cynthia Purcell, PO Box 703, San Angelo, TX 76902

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

(active military only)