



Concho Valley Archeological Society Newsletter

September 2015

Upcoming Archeology Fair

The Concho Valley Archeology Fair will be held on September 26, 2015 at Fort Concho NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK, San Angelo, Texas. The event will be a full day beginning at 10:00 am and ending at 3:00 pm.

There will be a Sutler's Store at the fair in the Commissary building. Please consider donating an item to be sold in the store. The money raised with having the Sutler's Store helps cover expenses for the fair.

CVAS members will be setting up for the event on Friday, September 25 starting at 1:00 pm. If you wish to set up on Friday, you are welcome to do so. If you wait until Saturday please be at Fort Concho by 9:00 am to set up. When we close the fair, everyone please stay and help breakdown all the exhibits.

This is a RAIN or SHINE event.

THANK YOU for participating and helping with this year's fair.

Callan Clark
(cell) 325-763-7361
(email) clarkc74@gmail.com



Photos from 2104 Archeology Fair

Independence Creek Bison Bone Update

Tom Ashmore

Some CVAS members remember we were out at Independence Creek to assist Lisa in the initial locating and flagging of bison bones along the creek in June 2014. Since then archeologists and a team of students from the Center for Big Bend Studies conducted a full-up excavation. Some preliminary results have been reported back to Lisa and we have some information to pass on.

Lisa reports the Center for Big Bend Studies and Sam Cason recently revisited the site to collect more bison bones for carbon dating. First attempts to date the specimens were unsuccessful due to the degraded state of the bones. They collected some more samples and are hoping to get a date back from this latest bunch.

According to Sam, the main excavation opened roughly 10 square meters to as deep as 60 cm below the surface and exposed hundreds of pieces of bone. There are indications of multiple individuals of at least two different age cohorts. They have imagery that will ultimately form a 3D model of the excavation block, bone, and sediment.

No direct evidence linking the bones to a cultural occupation has been found at this point, but the archaeologists have not ruled out the possibility because the bones are situated amidst a substantial and complex site.

Whether or not the bone bed turns up cultural elements, it still remains of interest with regard to zooarchaeology and potential research involving topics such as paleoecology and environmental conditions.



One of many specimens found and marked by CVAS members in June 2014

Digging through Texas history: Archeological dig uncovers rare cellar in San Felipe de Austin historic site

sealynews.com, by Joe Southern, June 26th

When the residents of San Felipe de Austin fled the advancing Mexican armies of Santa Ana in 1836, they burned the town and the ferry across the Brazos River in what is known as the Runaway Scrape.

The charred remains of the town were briefly occupied by the Mexican forces and then abandoned to the ravages of time. From June 16-20, however, state archaeologists began turning back time as they scratched in the dirt and began uncovering bricks, nails, lead shot, buckles, buttons and shards of glass and ceramics. Even animal bones – most likely the remnants of meals eaten long ago – began to appear amid the rubble.

The trail of 178-year-old trash led them to the brick cellar of the Farmer's Hotel, one of the very few remaining structures from Stephen F. Austin's original colony.

"It's one of six things likely to have remnants in the ground," said Bryan McAuley, site manager for San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site.

The dig was conducted at the historic site by the Texas Historical Commission (THC) with the aid of The Texas Archeological Society, the Texas Archeological Stewardship Network and the Houston Archeological Society. The Texas Archeological Society is holding its annual field school nearby in Columbus and volunteers took time from their classes to join the excavation.

McAuley said it is not known if the bricks lining the walls of the 32-square-foot cellar are still in place, but they would be a very significant find if they are. The hotel was built in 1830 and later converted to the private residence of Joseph Urban.

Among the other things believed to be in the ground on state and private lands in the area, but not sought after at this time, are the brick piers that supported the structure that was initially Austin's land office (it was converted to the

(continued on next page)

Digging through Texas history: Archeological dig uncovers rare cellar in San Felipe de Austin historic site

(continued)

Whitesides Hotel, possibly before the piers were added), and a brick bake oven closer to the Brazos River.

“We are also interested in further exploring a large cistern feature discovered during a project about eight years ago,” McAuley said. “It sits on property the state now owns.”

McAuley said identifying the Urban house/Farmer’s Hotel “may assist in establishing the location of other nearby buildings, such as the town hall that hosted the Consultation of 1835 and the subsequent provisional government of Texas. Future excavations will be necessary to determine the extent of the cellar and its proximity to other structures.”

The weeklong excavation only went down about a foot but uncovered a smattering of bricks, some of which seem to be part of a wall. THC archeologist Jeff Durst said he feels confident the cellar has been found, though it wasn’t oriented the way he expected it to be.

He said the hotel appears to have been haphazardly placed between true north and what he calls “town north” based on the orientation of the written plat.

“There are so few (cellars) from this time period,” he said. “I think cellars are very unusual in this area. ... You don’t find them in this part of Texas anyway. It’s pretty rare.”

San Felipe de Austin was established in 1824 and served as the unofficial capital of the colony. Its population swelled to about 600 by 1835, making it the second largest commercial center in the colony behind San Antonio.

After the Alamo fell in 1836, the retreating Texas defenders under Gen. Sam Houston passed through San Felipe. A small garrison remained to defend the Brazos River crossing. They ordered the evacuation of the town and razed it to keep it from the pursuing Mexican forces.

After Houston’s victory at San Jacinto, the town was slow to recover and never came close to its former glory. The town incorporated in 1837 and briefly served as the county seat. The remains of the original town were left to the forces of nature and neglect. In 1940, the town donated most of the original town site to the state, leading to the eventual establishment of the historic site.

The hurried moments of the fleeing residents during the Runaway Scrape slowly surfaced last week as the dozen or so volunteers gently scraped away layers of dirt to reveal the broken and charred bits of glass and ceramics that were once luxuries to the colonists in their hardscrabble existence.

Volunteer Gary E. McKee, who is a Texas Archeological Steward, said he never gets tired of uncovering relics.

“What I like is when you’re the first person to touch something, especially if it’s prehistoric; you’re the first person in 2,000 years to touch it,” he said.

He said it gives him a connection to history. “You’re making physical contact with the past,” he said.

The annual Fort Chadbourne Fundraiser will be held Saturday, September 19, 2015 and is a fun way to support the Foundation. The evening consists of a show, live and silent auctions, and a steak dinner served outdoors amid the historic backdrop of Fort Chadbourne.

This year a multiple award winning singer/songwriter, Jean Prescott will provide the entertainment. She hangs her hat just a little bit south of Abilene, Texas, with her husband, singer/songwriter Gary Prescott. Jean’s music has been referred to as “the spiritual essence of the west” and she shares her love of western life through her songs about the real west of yesterday and today.

CVAS members offered 50% discount (\$50)



TXDOT finds archeological sites in East Texas

kltv.com, By KLTV Digital Media Staff , Jul 14, 2015

The Texas Department of Transportation has announced the discovery of archeological sites along the US 175 Expansion project in Anderson and Henderson counties that contains artifacts dating back to the 1400s. The findings suggest that the locations could have been a temporary Native American settlement.

The US 175 Expansion has been in the planning stages for years TxDOT says it is a top priority to improve the safety and mobility of the roadway. It includes three separate projects covering 13.8 miles from Baxter to Frankston and is designed to widen the roadway from two lanes to four-lane divided with a depressed median.

TxDOT has hired a consulting firm that specializes in cultural resources which investigated and found at least three sites along US 175 that could have been small farmsteads or settlements of the native people who lived in this area from the 1400s up to 1650. Artifacts such as pieces of ceramic vessels, stone tools, and more have been found at these sites and will be researched and then curated at one of the state's facilities. The data will be compiled into a report once the field activities conclude.

Archeologists are working under the guidance of the National Historic Preservation Act which prescribes how to address historic and archeological sites during the planning of transportation projects.

“Our teams are working carefully to excavate these areas in order to reduce the impact of the highway project on the heritage of the tribal community and the state of Texas,” said Kathi White, TxDOT Public Information Officer. “Construction can still occur on other segments of the highway while the investigation continues at the protected locations.”

These settlements are not uncommon findings for TxDOT. Over the years, other sites have been found during the environmental studies process that all transportation projects must go through prior to construction. Previous studies, which determine the impacts a project may have on history, heritage, culture and natural environments, have revealed ceramic and lithic artifacts, tools and other items.

The recently discovered sites have 24-hour security while the investigation continues. It is against the law to trespass on these sites.

The Roanoke Colonists: Lost, and Found?

By THEO EMERY AUG. 10, 2015

MERRY HILL, N.C. — Under a blistering sun, Nicholas M. Lucchetti swatted at mosquitoes as he watched his archaeology team at work in a shallow pit on a hillside above the shimmering waters of Albemarle Sound. On a table in the shade, a pile of plastic bags filled with artifacts was growing. Fragments of earthenware and pottery. A mashed metal rivet. A piece of a hand-wrought nail.

They call the spot Site X. Down a dusty road winding through soybean fields, the clearing lies between two cypress swamps teeming with venomous snakes. It is a suitably mysterious name for a location that may shed light on an enigma at the heart of America’s founding: the fate of the “lost colonists” who vanished from a sandy outpost on Roanoke Island, about 60 miles east, in the late 16th century.

On and off for three years, Mr. Lucchetti and colleagues with the First Colony Foundation have been excavating parts of the hillside, hoping to find traces of the colonists. As if clues in a latter-day treasure hunt, hidden markings on a 16th-century map led them to the spot on the sound’s western shore, which Mr. Lucchetti had previously surveyed.

Mr. Lucchetti, 66, chose his words carefully as he described the fruits of their latest work. “I’m trying to make sure that I say this correctly,” he said. “We have evidence from this site that strongly indicates that there were Roanoke colonists here.”

In Chapel Hill, N.C., on Tuesday, the foundation will reveal its findings, which have been submitted for peer review, and the theory that at least a few of the settlers moved inland to Site X.

The announcement, along with separate findings from another excavation on a coastal island, is sure to stir excitement. Some scholars who have seen the evidence are supportive of the findings, but at least one sees the evidence as too slight to draw firm conclusions. All agree that more digging is needed. The new findings are likely to set off a new round of questions: Why would some of the settlers have split off to the inland site? Where did they go after that? And what became of the rest of the Roanoke colonists

86th Annual TAS Meeting

If you plan to attend the **86th Annual TAS meeting** on the westside of Houston on October 23rd and 24th you should be getting your reservations ready. Saturday the 24th is the big day to hear the presentations prepared by very talented archeologists. Saturday evening at the banquet our speaker, Dr. Jean Clottes, an internationally renowned rock art expert, will have an hour or more to let us know about his recent work on "Rock Art and Tribal Art in India". The Omni Resort and Hotel on the westside of Houston will be the location for the events. If you want more information please contact me and I'll get the necessary information. Hope to see you there.

C.A. Maedgen

Dig at Colonial battleground in upstate NY uncovers stone walls from unfinished British fort

Foxnews.com, Published August 19, 2015 by Associated Press

LAKE GEORGE, N.Y. – An archaeological dig at an 18th-century military site in the southern Adirondacks has uncovered large sections of stone walls that are believed to have been constructed within a larger British fortification that was never completed more than 250 years ago.

The excavations at the state-owned Lake George Battlefield Park wrapped up on Friday, with some work being done this week to protect exposed walls by lining them with sandbags. During the six-week summer field school sponsored by the nearby State University of New York at Adirondack, about four dozen volunteers and students dug numerous pits in an area that was occupied by thousands of British and Colonial American soldiers during the French and Indian War. Musket balls, gun flints and pottery pieces were among the artifacts found amid a 35-acre park that gets few visitors despite being located in the middle of a busy summer tourist town.

David Starbuck, the archaeologist who led the dig, said the most significant find was the intact stone walls buried in a bastion of Fort George, which the British never finished building.

In 1759, the commander of British forces in North America, Jeffery Amherst, ordered the construction of a large fort on rising ground near the lake's southern end, the site of two previous battles. The British army engineer assigned to the task, James Montresor, would also build the English fort at Crown Point on Lake Champlain.

With the British capture of the French fort at Ticonderoga in the summer of 1759, Amherst halted the work on Fort George. Only one corner bastion of the stone and earthen fort was completed, along with an interior stone building. The interior structure may have been part of an underground casemate, a chamber usually constructed underneath a fort's rampart. A casemate could serve as a barracks or a place to store supplies such as gunpowder, and burying it would make it less likely to blow up during a bombardment.

The fort fell into disrepair after the war ended in 1763, but the bastion was used by the Americans when the Revolutionary War started. The British captured Fort George in 1777, only to lose it again after their defeat at Saratoga that year. The redcoats recaptured the bastion in 1780. What remains is a U-shaped, 20-foot-high grass-covered ruin of the bastion, with the interior sloping upward from the U's open end.

Experts from the state historic site at Crown Point, where the ruins of the British fort still stand, viewed the uncovered walls at the Fort George dig and saw comparisons in the way the two fortifications were constructed, Starbuck said. Another recent visitor to the site, former National Park Service archaeologist David Orr, called the Lake George site "just amazing" in terms of what's being discovered from an often overlooked period of American history.

Starbuck usually digs at local sites where wooden forts once stood. Finding a structure with stone walls 6 feet high and up to 5 feet thick is a major highlight after 25 years of digging at military sites in the region.

"We're looking at something that was used and rebuilt and improved upon for 20 years or more. I think that prompted them to build it more strongly," he said. "It's not something we expected."

Starbuck said he hopes to return to the Fort George site next year for another summer of digging.

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.

2015 Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

Cell _____

Family members _____

132 Kilt Road San Angelo, TX 76901

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 _____

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

(active military only)

Mail to: CVAS, 132 Kilt Road, San Angelo, TX 76901