



The PROFILE

August, 2008

Victoria Scism to Speak on The Texas Chihuahua Trail

The Chihuahua Trail was so named because of the commerce that was conducted across the route from Texas coastal ports to Chihuahua, Mexico.

Freighters and merchants carried foreign and domestic trade goods from Galveston and Port Lavaca and the Military Supply Port of Entry, Indianola, to trade for the silver bouillon of the mines of Chihuahua. This flurry of commerce occurred between 1849-1883, the heaviest activity during the 1850s. It flourished once more after the Civil War until the railway was completed across Texas.

A route forged by Dr. Henry Connelly and Mexican merchants (1839-1840), was the first route traveled for this trade. They traveled from Chihuahua



"Punta del Agua," a water stop for freighters at least as long ago as 1852.

City, crossed the Rio Grande at Presidio del Norte; traveled up the Alamito Creek valley, forded across the Pecos and found their way to Fort Towson on the Red River. After reaching Ar-

izona, the silver was taken to the mint in New Orleans and supplies and trade goods were purchased for the return trip. Tariffs were so costly when Connelly's train arrived back in Mexico that the venture was not repeated. A decade later, beginning at ports on the Texas coast and San Antonio, hundreds of trade wagons rolled across the "Upper Road" (Immigrant Trail), sharing the route

kansas, the silver was taken to the

with mail and stage lines and military supply wagons. The freighters' destination was El Paso and Chihuahua, City, Mexico.

The "Lower Road," however, became a more favored freight route. While it was known as the Military Road and the San Antonio El Paso/ San Diego Road, it was used by a number of stage lines. Numerous stage stands and springs nourished the animals and men along the route that headed southwest from San Antonio toward Fort Clark and the Rio Grande. Winding northwest, the road crossed the Devils River 19 times and the Pecos once before reaching Comanche Springs (Fort Stockton). The freight trains either traveled to Fort Davis and then south or visited the springs at present day Alpine, working through the Paisano Pass, then down the Alamito Creek Valley to the Rio Grande, bypassing the El Paso Road. Since the year 2000 a small crew led by our speaker, Victoria Scism, has been researching various aspects of the Texas-Chihuahua trade and has traced the trail across 28 ranches in Presidio County, Texas. She is now is reorganizing the crew in preparation to trace the road across three more counties in the Trans Pecos region.

Victoria has been employed and has volunteered in the fields of education, interpretation, and tourism for many years and has been employed by the Garland Independent School District for the last 13 years. She is a member of many anthropology and historical societies, and through the years has been a guest speaker for educational systems in Oklahoma and Texas, speaking to age groups primarily through college.

Our August 8th meeting will be in Anderson Hall on the Academic Mall of the University of St. Thomas, at 7:30 p.m. Parking: Use the Moran Center Parking Garage at the corner of W. Alabama and Graustark, or park in Faculty Lot S at Montrose and Branard after 7:00 pm. For a detailed map, visit our website at www.houstonarcheology.org, or e-mail HASEvents@aol.com.

The Prez Sez

Have you noticed that summer is here in Houston? Although I don't consider it really hot until the temp reaches 98 and above, we have reached that a few times already. You can choose another degree for your "hot," but that is mine. It helps to be a native; it makes you tough.

I was sorry there were so many missing from our July meeting. Linda did a bang-up job covering our program with slides of her Mediterranean trip. Thanks. I know people are out of town but if you're in Houston, come to the August meeting.

The latest UST update: We are now being told that there is no room to store any of our equipment, etc. The search committee is still at work. They have not changed the time that we can use Anderson Hall. We are good through December. After that, I don't know.

We will have a big book sale in September. I'll need someone with a truck to get boxes from Manville storage and bring to the meeting. We will display from the boxes. If you can help, please notify me at the meeting or call me at 713-895-9682.

The father of Melissa May, who you may know through working with her at Lab, has recently died. HAS sends its sympathy to her and her family.

Please make every attempt to attend the August meeting. I'll be glad to see everyone. I hope everyone has had a safe and fun summer.

-- Diane Baird, HAS President

Minutes of the July, 2008, HAS Meeting

Diane Baird, HAS President, called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Meeting

- 22 people attended the meeting
- Wanda and Richard Carter and Karen provided refreshments
- The library is now in storage in Manville
- Thanks to Bob Harris, Bill Haskell Jay Hrivnatz, T.R. Williams, Kathleen Barry, Lucia Barton, Diane Baird and Bill for helping to move the library.
- Richard Carter reported that the HAS website is still working

Program:

Since no one came forward to report on their activities at the TAS Field School, Linda Swift presented a slide show on her recent trip to Olympia, Greece, home of the original Olympic games.

--Submitted by Kathleen Barry

Lab Schedule: We will meet on August 11 and August 25 from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in Room 103, Sewall Hall, Rice University. Check www.houston archeology.org for a map.

September meeting: Next meeting is Friday, September 12th. Program to be announced.

Wrap-Up on Macedonia Excavations

[Editor's note: the 2008 excavation season at Bilazora, Macedonia, sponsored by the Texas Foundation for Archeological & Historical Research (TFAHR) was completed at the end of July. If you recall from last month's article, principal investigators Eulah Matthews and Bill Neidinger plan to build a facsimile of this site to conduct a mock dig for students at Startzville Elementary School in Canyon Lake, Texas. The following are excerpts from their last three dispatches from Macedonia.]

July 12: The torrential downpour of July 3 had both harmful and beneficial effects on our excavation. In Square M12 we were provisionally calling one surface a street. But erosion revealed the edges of some massive cut stones just beneath the assumed street level. We spent the entire week slowly [uncovering] a structure which astounded us all. It was



Ramp leading to large public building

a wide paved ramp (R) which led up to a threshold (T) with a square socket hole for a gate or door behind the threshold. Beyond the threshold was a floor surface (F) of large paving stones, pebbles, and miscellaneous flat roof tiles. As soon as the socket was uncovered, we surmised that we were excavating a large public building, approached by a massive paved ramp. The ramp (and probably the building, too) seems to have two construction phases, and preliminary evidence suggests this building was inhabited by squatters after Bilazora was destroyed.

July 19: We may have now cleared the full extent of the ramp; it measures about 3 meters by 10 meters. At the top of the ramp, there is a threshold to what may be a monumental gateway to the acropolis of Bilazora. We are starting to piece together the

history of the city. It appears (from ceramic evidence) that the ramp may have been built and sub-



Cleaning the door / gate socket

sequently destroyed prior to the fifth century BC. After that time, some of the stones of the ramp and gateway were pillaged for re-use elsewhere, and "squatters" moved in to the ruins of the gateway building. They left behind little in the way of architecture, but a great deal of pottery.

July 26: During the last week of an excavation, the archaeologists are supposed to leisurely excavate a few soundings to answer the lingering questions about the season's work. But temperatures dropped precipitously (from 98 to 42 degrees F), and the rains moved in, causing us to lose most of the work week and washing out our scheduled press conference. We also had visits from several government officials, as well as Doctor-Professor Ivan Mikulcic, who 32 years ago was the first to propose that the site TFAHR is currently excavating is the fabled Paionian city of Bilazora.

One of the outstanding features of this season's excavation was the long and broad ramp we discovered. The outstanding question remains, to what did this ramp lead? [This question] we hope to resolve in next year's excavations. The dig officially ended on Friday, with an invitation to TFAHR to return in 2009. By the middle of August, our website, www.tfahr.org, will be updated with a short report and photos from the 2008 excavations in Macedonia. Bill Neidinger will be giving a public presentation on this season's work in Houston, Texas in the fall (date and place to be announced), and at that lecture we hope to have available our printed report.

--Eulah Matthews and Bill Neidinger

Call for Papers for the 79th TAS Annual Meeting in Lubbock

The TAS Annual Meeting is returning to Lubbock October 24–26, 2008, and in some ways the TAS is coming home. Many of the pioneers of Texas Archeology and founders of the Texas Archeological Society got their starts in the Southern Plains!

This is the final call soliciting presentations. All members are invited to submit abstracts of papers, symposia, and poster displays to be presented at the Annual Meeting. Authors will be notified in September if their paper has been accepted (please note the deadlines provided below).

Individual Papers—Titles and Abstracts are due by September 1, 2008.

Symposia—Titles and Abstracts are due by August 15, 2008.

Poster Presentations—Titles and Abstracts are due by September 1, 2008.

Abstracts should be submitted to the Program Chair, Dr. Tamra Walter, via email to papers@txarch.org.

For more details, go to the TAS web site at www.txarch.org.

Don't miss this chance to share your archeological work with your colleagues! --Carolyn Spock

Please submit articles for publication to Linda Swift, swiftlinda@sbcglobal.net
Submit articles no later than August 28th for the September issue.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ARCHEOLOGY IN THIS AREA, CONTACT THE FOLLOWING:

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The Profile

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