



# The PROFILE

May, 2008

## May Program: Archeological & Historical Investigations at West Columbia, First Capital of the Republic of Texas

West Columbia, Texas, was founded as Columbia in 1826 by Josiah Hughes Bell, who laid out the town at a site between the Brazos and San Bernard rivers in west central Brazoria County. In the city there is a historical marker that reads, in part, *In September 1836 Columbia, now known as West Columbia, became capital of the Republic of Texas...After the election called by ad interim President David G. Burnet, the first permanent government of the Republic went into operation...Inaugurated were President Sam Houston and Vice-President Mirabeau B. Lamar. Under their leadership the first elected Congress convened and the first Constitution of the Republic was ratified...Stephen F. Austin, colonizer and Father of Texas, was secretary of state...In April 1837 at the wish of President Houston, the seat of government was moved to more adequate quarters in the city of Houston.*

Douglas K. Boyd, of Prewitt & Associates and our featured speaker on May 9<sup>th</sup>, will present details of the archeological and historical investigations that were conducted in West Columbia ahead of the proposed development of a historical park by a local nonprofit group. The work focused on Lot 4, Block 2 of the old Columbia town site which once contained a wooden structure used by the First Congress from October to December 1836.

Archeologists from Prewitt and Associates, Inc. and the Brazosport Archaeological Society completed a week of field investigations at the site in December 2007. Mechanical and hand excavations exposed a brick-lined cistern filled with twentieth-century debris, several pit features containing nineteenth-century artifacts, numerous postholes, and scattered nineteenth- and twentieth-century artifacts. Following the field investigations, archival research was



Original capitol of the Republic of Texas in W. Columbia.

undertaken to define the legal history of this property and identify its historic uses.

Douglas Boyd received a BA degree in General Studies-Archeology from West Texas State University and an MA degree in Anthropology from Texas A&M University. In 1987 he joined Prewitt and Associates, Inc., where he is now a vice president.

He has served as project archeologist or principal investigator on many projects throughout the states of Texas and New Mexico.

Our May 9<sup>th</sup> 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 (\$2 fee), or park in Faculty Lot S at Montrose

and Branard after 7:00 pm (no charge). For a detailed map, visit our website at [www.houstonarcheology.org](http://www.houstonarcheology.org), or e-mail [HASEvents@aol.com](mailto:HASEvents@aol.com).

**June:** No meeting. See you on July 11<sup>th</sup> for a round-robin report on the TAS Field School!



Excavating the cistern in W. Columbia

## The Prez Sez

On April 26, a group of HAS members and friends participated in the San Jacinto Festival. We had a great time meeting new people and providing information to the public.

The kids had the best time doing the faux dig. They always do. Several came over to show me their treasures. I hope some of them develop a life-long love for archeology.

We had many brochures for the kids and adults, as well as displays on our digs at San Felipe, the Powell Site and the San Jacinto Battleground. We were there to answer any questions and there were many interesting conversations. Teachers of Texas History were given information about a wonderful teaching unit on archeology which is all inclusive.

There was a mock dig in an aquarium showing how the lower the level, the older the artifacts were. There were also examples of types of artifacts that might be found. We had cow bones and gourds that could be punctured or made into different items.

It was a wonderful way to spend the day and enthusiasm spread among our visitors and ourselves. Beth and Wanda brought goodies and drinks for the volunteers. (I hope talking uses up calories!!)

I encourage HAS members to sign up to be there next year. It's fun and even we learn a thing or two. (Maybe even about butt plates!!!)

See you at the meeting.

-- Diane Baird, HAS President

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### Minutes of the April 2008 HAS Meeting

- 30 people were in attendance, including two new members: Wanda Graziadei and John Speck.
- HAS President Diane Baird said help will be needed when the time comes to move the books from the library.
- Pat Aucoin explained what volunteers do at the San Jacinto Festival. They need volunteers to help with the booths and other activities.
- Yates tour is on May 3rd.
- Linda Swift announced that the 2007 journals are available in the lobby for members to pick up.
- Ed Masten suggested that we recruit new members at the San Jacinto Festival.
- Vice-President Michael Bailey introduced the speaker for the evening, Mr. Robert Shelby. He gave some interesting details about the Elizabeth Powell site, which was excavated over a period of years by HAS.
- UST has indicated that we probably will have a place on campus to meet. However, the Search Committee is still needed to locate a place for the library.
- By the middle of May, UST will let us know for sure about our meeting place for the rest of the year.
- Refreshments were provided by Diane Baird, Linda Swift, and Kathleen Barry
- There will be no meeting in June, so that members may attend the TAS Field School.

--Submitted by Kathleen Barry, Secretary

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### San Jacinto Festival Was a Great Success

The San Jacinto Festival and Battle Reenactment was a great success! Attendance numbers for this year's festival aren't available as yet, but lots of wonderful folks visited our booth (the largest one there).

A resounding "Thank You" to our intrepid staff: Pat & Beth Aucoin, Diane Baird, Ray & Meg Blackstone, Richard & Wanda Carter, Don Keyes, Sheldon Kin-

dall, Muriel Walker, Christopher Wells, Tom Williams and friend, Anita Siler, Laura Witzel (and her Mom, Diane, and fellow UH student, Josh Luedicke). A standing ovation to the Carters, Don, Pat, and Sheldon who have been there every year and all day since the society began its participation. THANK YOU!

-- Beth Aucoin & Laura Witzel

## Lab Schedule

In May there will be only one lab session, due to the Memorial Day holiday. We will meet on May 12<sup>th</sup> from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in Room 103, Sewall Hall, Rice University. Check [www.houstonarcheology.org](http://www.houstonarcheology.org) for a map.

## Pick Up Your Journal at Meeting

The HAS Journal for the year 2007 has been published and is available to the members of record for 2007. In an effort to save the \$1.65 postage for each copy, the Board is asking that members pick up their copies at the April and May meetings. About 20 copies were picked up by members in April, and the remainder will be available in the lobby of Anderson Hall at the May meeting. Please come by and get your Journal and help us save \$\$.



### Your HAS Board of Directors Hard at Work!

*Left to right:* Director Muriel Walker, Director Phyllis Bradley, President Diane Baird, Secretary Kathleen Barry, Treasurer Ed Masten, Director Lucia Bonno. *Not pictured:* Vice-President Michael Bailey.

## Boxes Still Needed

HAS is still in need of the kind of boxes that come with lids and reams of paper inside, for packing the contents of our library. Our library must be moved from its location in the Little Gallery building by the end of this month, so if you have any such boxes, please bring them to the May meeting.

## Texas Beyond History Rocks!

One of the world's premier archeology web sites, [www.TexasBeyondHistory.net](http://www.TexasBeyondHistory.net), won the Award for Excellence in Public Education at the Society for American Archaeology's annual meeting in March.

According to the SAA, the site was commended "because it successfully unlocks knowledge of human history previously buried in technical reports. This virtual museum compellingly presents 13,500 years of Texas heritage, over 80 years of archaeology, and preservation ethics through on-line exhibits and learning activities. TBH is attractive, easy to navigate, and averages over 5,500 viewers daily. 100 + volunteers contribute expertise and resources to the project, and this virtual museum offers Cultural Resource Management (CRM) firms working in Texas a meaningful and enduring way to fulfill their public-outreach responsibilities. Other outstanding aspects of this website, including more than 60 standards-based lesson plans, have been expertly tailored to address the needs of K-12 classroom curricula. Texas Beyond History is a nationally recognized education resource and an admirable model of public archaeology."

*Texas Beyond History* (TBH) is based at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) at the University of Texas at Austin. However, it depends on the contributions of many corporations, organizations and individuals for its support. TBH is currently trying to meet a goal of \$10,000 in individual contributions for this year.

If you would like to contribute to TBH, there are two ways to do it: 1) go to [www.TexasBeyondHistory.net](http://www.TexasBeyondHistory.net) and click on the small "Help!" link on the TBH front page, which leads to a fundraising letter and donation form (pdf) that can be used to make a contribution; or 2) Make out a check to "UT-Austin" and note "For TBH," and mail it to: Texas Beyond History, Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, University of Texas at Austin, 1 University Station R7500, Austin, TX 78712.

## The Archaeology Channel Now Running Clips of Archeology Movies

*The Archaeology Channel's* fifth annual International Film and Video Festival will take place May 20-24, 2008 in Eugene, Oregon. This event showcases the world's best films and videos on archaeology and indigenous peoples. You can see a preview video, including short clips of the 18 finalists which will compete in the competition, by going to <http://www.archaeologychannel.org> and selecting *TAC Festival 2008 Preview*. One of these includes a keynote address by the former Director of the Iraq Museum in Baghdad, Dr. Donny George. Filmmakers from 17 countries submitted a total of 81 entries for this event, which is one of the world's few contests in the genre of heritage film and the only juried competition of its kind in the Western Hemisphere.

# Archeology. . . Life in the Past Lane

**Two Websites of Interest:** HAS member, author, historian, and reenactor, David Pomeroy, has two websites: <http://EarlyTexasHistory.com> for Texas 1836 history and <http://EarlyTexasHistory.com/Pasadena> for Pasadena and Texas history. Lots of information and links; I think you'll enjoy them. --  
*Beth Aucoin*

**2008 TAS Field School Returns to the Panhandle near Perryton, June 14-21.** Registration forms

available at the May meeting or visit [www.txarch.org](http://www.txarch.org) for online registration, PDF forms, or general info on Wolf Creek Park. Cool nights, excavation and other field work, two labs, and kid's program await you in Perryton. Meals/mail-in registration must be postmarked by May 31.

**The 79th TAS Annual Meeting** will be October 24-26, 2008, in Lubbock. Start now making your plans to attend.

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Please submit articles for publication to Linda Swift, [swiftlinda@sbcglobal.net](mailto:swiftlinda@sbcglobal.net)  
Submit articles no later than June 30 for the July issue (no *Profile* in June).

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

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*The Profile*

**Houston Archeological Society**

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