

Charles Gordy to Speak on Bernardo Plantation This Month

Our new president, Charles Gordy, will be the featured speaker at the HAS meeting on Thursday, November 19, at the Clayton Library. In addition to serving as HAS president, Charlie is currently serving as the coordinator of information and volunteer work for the Bernardo Plantation Archeology Project. As you will be able to tell from reading Gregg Dimmick's report on page 3, some very exciting discoveries are already being made on this project.

As for Charlie himself, here is his biography, told in his own words:

"As with many avocational archeologists, I have no formal education in archeology. As a sport shipwreck diver, my first organized experience was in the field of marine archeology when I became a member of the Southwest Underwater Archeological Society (SUAS), surveying a 19th century side-wheeler and searching for sunken lumber schooners. While working with SUAS, I took the opportunity to join author Clive Cussler's, NUMA (National Underwater Marine Agency) and spent several summer weeks and weekends searching for the Republic of Texas ship *Invincible*, sunk off Galveston in 1837. Still with NUMA, I participated in the search for La Salle's supply ship, *L'Aimable*, sunk in 1685, off Pass Cavallo, outside Matagorda Bay. I soon joined the Institute of Nautical Archeology (INA) and volunteered to participate in the investigation of the sunken Civil War Confederate blockade runner, *Denbigh*.

"Eventually I traded my dive fins for dirt boots and joined HAS, BAS, and TAS. I participated in a number of local area excavations, including the first capitol of Texas at West Columbia, the San Felipe site, and searching for the French fort Champs d'Asile. I've participated in two TAS field schools at Menard and have completed all TAS academies with the exception of Rock Art. Currently I am the Vice President of the Brazosport Archeological Society and newly elected President of HAS."

Lab: Monday, Nov. 16th & 30th, 7:00 p.m., Room 103, Sewall Hall, Rice University. For a map, visit www.houstonarcheology.org.

Civil War Weekend at Liendo Plantation

Originally a Spanish land grant of 67,000 acres, Liendo Plantation was built in 1853 and became one of Texas' earliest cotton plantations. During the War Between the States, Liendo was the site of cavalry and infantry training camps, an internment camp, and a hospital. For a short time after the war, General George Armstrong Custer was headquartered there. Activities at the Hempstead, Texas site, located at 38653 Wyatt Chapel Rd. north of Hwy 290, are scheduled for Nov. 20-22, 2009. Adult tickets are \$10; reduced prices for seniors and children; home tours are \$4.00. Additional info: www.liendo.org, civilwarweekend@liendoplantation.com, or (979) 826-3126.



Artist's rendering of Bernardo plantation house as it appeared in 1836, with "Twin Sisters" cannon.



President's Message

In an effort to help solidify your mindset in regards to 19th Century plantation life, I would like to make you aware of a special activity coming up the weekend of November 21-22, 2009. If you haven't ever been on a tour of the Liendo Plantation just east of Hempstead, these dates present a good opportunity to get immersed in 19th Century culture close to home.

Liendo was built in 1853 by Leonard Waller Groce, son of the Bernardo plantation founder, Jared Ellison Groce II. It was Leonard who introduced the first horse-drawn cotton gin in Austin's Colony when he brought it to Bernardo and installed it near the slave quarters around 1825-26. He soon took over his father's business interest due to his deteriorating health. As a result of his declining health, Jared moved to another of his plantation homes called Retreat and shortly thereafter died in 1836. Leonard continued to live in the Bernardo house until he built a larger plantation house about five miles east of Bernardo in 1853. He called it Liendo and made it his new residence. Although the Bernardo plantation house was dismantled in 1865-66, it is fortunate for Texas the Liendo plantation home has survived and has been restored.

A tour of the house and grounds will give the avocational archeologist a feel for the 19th Century period with many of its associated furnishing. A bonus of a visit during these dates will introduce one to a variety of period activities including camp life, period blacksmithing, spinning, and soap making demonstrations, as well as music and dance demonstrations. Also included are Civil War re-enactments and an array of sutlers stocked with 19th Century accouterments and mercantile goods from buttons, to candle holders, to clay pipes. You name it. You will see many reproduction goods that identify with artifacts recovered from archeological excavations of 19th Century sites. That in itself is good training for a dig. For more information to help you plan your visit, refer to the Liendo website, www.liendo.org.

A Happy and Safe Thanksgiving to all.

-- Charlie Gordy, President

Minutes of HAS Meeting October 15, 2009

The October 15 HAS meeting was called to order by Charlie Gordy, the new President of HAS, welcoming members and visitors. He thanked Diane Baird, outgoing President, for all the work she has done over the past two years.

Michael Bailey introduced Ross Field, a representative from Prewitt and Associates, Inc., who presented a talk on the Caddo Indians, a group that lived in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma for at least 1,000 years of prehistory. A question and answer session was held after the presentation.

Amanda McVay of the Texas Historical Commission invited everyone to attend the San Felipe de Austin Father of Texas Celebration to be held Friday and Saturday, October 30-31, at the San Felipe State Historical Site. Volunteers would be welcomed to help with the event.

Charlie Gordy gave an update on the Bernardo Plantation Site and asked for volunteers to assist with the project.

Beth Aucoin announced there would be no lab the following Monday, October 19. The next lab would be in two weeks.

The President asked for approval of minutes from last meeting; no changes were made.

Dick Gregg presented the HAS Merit Award to Leland Patterson for his outstanding work in authoring 469 published articles.

Refreshments were provided by Wanda and Richard Carter and Lucia Bonno.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

-- Phyllis Bradley, Secretary

BERNARDO PLANTATION PROJECT Progress Report

Folks, I wanted to give everyone an update on the thrilling weekend of work that was carried out [October 24-25] at the Bernardo Plantation. It was far better than any of us dared hoped for.

On Saturday Robert and his crew put in two one-by-one meter pits. They started finding multiple fragments of brick and other very interesting items--fragments of melted glass. There were many nails in the two pits, and the condition of some of them seemed to be too good. We now suspect these smaller (finishing?) nails may be made of brass or have a high enough copper content that they are not rusting.

Jim Woodrick made a great discovery on Saturday. He was looking for the steps to the main house that had been reported to have been there (years ago) by Clarence Miller. Well, he found them--they are broken into pieces, but we should be able to eventually pull them out and see if we can piece them back together. This may well tell us how high the floor of the house was off the ground.

On Sunday we were able to recheck some of the data points and the mag survey points and discovered that the pits that had been started on Saturday were actually inside the area where the house had stood, not over the chimney as expected.

Robert's crew continued with the two pits and found some wonderful items. They found a small piece of a clay pipe stem, and even better, they found a wonderful dart point (Marcos point). I think I heard someone say it was middle archaic and should date to about 3,000 years ago. (See picture.)



Jim Bruseth was able to locate remnants from one of the brick chimneys. We did a shovel test at that point and found some of the old brick still in place. From this point we were able to locate both the old sandstone chimneys. Jim Woodrick was the one to figure out that the sandstone near the cistern is actually the remnants of one of the old sandstone chimneys and has nothing to do with the cistern. We also did some probing in the area of the other possible cistern that showed up on the mag survey and might have found the fireplace for the kitchen.

All in all a great weekend--we pretty much know now the original site of the main house and we have been able to verify the positions and types of the chimneys--just like our archives have told us to expect. Even more importantly we are finding that the site is intact and has not been destroyed by farming etc.

--Gregg Dimmick

About that New Logo...

In case you're wondering about the new 50th Anniversary logo in the banner of this newsletter, it's because we recently became aware that HAS was chartered by the State of Texas in 1959, making this our 50th anniversary year. Some of you may remember the meeting in which HAS was incorporated. However, as with most things archeological, this brings up another mystery: the Texas Archeological Society's records show that we have been a member organization of TAS for 52 years. Is this a mistake on their part, or was HAS an unincorporated organization for some period of time before 1959? If you can shed some light on this mystery, please let us know!

Many thanks to T. R. (Tom) Williams for the design and creation of the anniversary logo.

A Plea from San Saba

San Saba County is located in beautiful Central Texas and needs your help. A proposed power line 12 stories tall is being routed through near pristine habitat along the Colorado River. We don't understand why they are not building this along existing routes. San Saba has archeological digs and out on some of these ranches, especially along the river, Indian mounds have not even been documented. Please visit www.sansabaposse.org for more information.

--Susie Giles, cs Giles@centex.net.

BERNARDO PLANTATION PROJECT Needs Your Help

I want to talk to you all about funding and ask for some help. As you all know we have big plans for this site. We are working with the Houston endowment and the Summerlee foundation. We feel good about our chances with these two fine groups, but that money will not be available until at least this spring and possibly later. We would like to continue working on the project on a small scale in the meantime. Two or three team members have offered to help out, and this would be the time to do that. I am going to make a small contribution, and any small amount would help us get through the short term.

If any of you know of any possible foundations or potential donors feel free to share this e-mail with them or contact me or Robert, Carol or Jim and we will help following up on the leads. Donations should be sent to one of the following organizations. They are both 501(c)(3) organizations so the donation is fully deductible. Make sure you mark the donations for the "Bernardo Plantation Project."

Friends of the Texas Historical Commission
PO Box 13497
Austin, TX 78711-3497

CARI C/O Carol McDavid
1638 Branard St.
Houston TX 77006

Thanks so much for anything you can do.

--Gregg Dimmick

Please submit articles for publication to *Profile* Editor Linda Swift, swiftlinda@sbcglobal.net. Submit articles no later than December 3 for the December issue.

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