



The PROFILE

July, 2009

Plantation Site Offers Potential for Excavation Project

Texas historian and author Gregg Dimmick, who was our speaker in May, has extended an invitation to HAS members to visit Groce's Bernardo Plantation site at **9:00 am on Tuesday, July 14**, with an eye toward participating in a potential dig at that site later in the year. Dimmick's e-mail invitation includes the following:

"I am happy to announce that the landowner for the Bernardo Plantation (built by Jerod Ellison Groce Jr. in 1822-23) has agreed to help me give a tour of the site to try to stimulate interest in doing an excavation. [The plantation] was built at the Couthatta Trace crossing of the Brazos River..., used by Indians for centuries prior to Groce arriving there. Groce brought over 100 slaves with him when he came. He built a separate house near the main house for the full time doctor that he employed. He built the first cotton gin in Texas. The Texas army camped for two weeks across the Brazos from his plantation but we have discovered that two companies of the Texas army camped on the east side at Groce's and the Texas army hospital was established there as well.

"... there are one or two cemeteries. There was the first cabin built which was turned into the "bachelor quarters" for guests. There were stables, a kitchen, the doctor's house etc. behind the main house. Near the slaves quarters were the gin, blacksmith and the overseer's house.

"My early plan is to try to get the HAS, BAS, FBAS and any other volunteer group that is interested to do much of the work. I am hoping to get enough

Lab Schedule: July 13 (Powell site authors and general housekeeping duties); July 27 (activities to be determined), 7-9 p.m.; Room 103, Sewall Hall, Rice University. Due to our arrangement with Rice, lab schedules will remain the same, regardless of any change to the regular monthly meeting night.

For a map, visit www.houstonarcheology.org.

This Month's Meeting is Thursday, July 16 at Clayton Library

At the May HAS meeting the membership voted to meet once again in July at the proposed new meeting place and time, and to take a final vote at that time on whether to make the move or continue meeting at the University of St. Thomas.

Consequently, **the July meeting will be at 7:00 pm on Thursday, July 16, in the Carriage House at the Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research, 5300 Caroline, Houston, TX 77004.**

The renovated meeting room at the Clayton offers several amenities, including all needed audio-visual equipment, a fully-equipped kitchen including coffee makers, spacious restrooms, plenty of tables, space for serving food and socializing, and free parking within a few steps of the front door. There are two main disadvantages: (1) we would have to move our meeting night to the third Thursday of the month when the library is open until 9:00, and (2) we would need to start our meetings by 7:00 in order to be finished by 9:00.

Be sure to come out on Thursday the 16th, and be present for the vote! (See map on Page 2.)

funding to have a professional archeologist to supervise us. I would also love to have the surveying done with a total station and hopefully get a magnetometer and possible a ground penetrating radar study as well.

"The owner of the site is very anxious for this to be done so a window of opportunity exists that could easily close if the land were to be sold. The owner of the land is also an owner of a TV station and is interested in videoing the whole process in HD.

Bring plenty of cold water and bug spray...Bring all your ideas as well. Any suggestions will be appreciated as to how to go about this. We are wide open as to how to best approach this."

For directions to the site, contact Gregg Dimmick at 979-533-3936.

The Prez Sez

Have you noticed that summer temperatures have arrived? I have. Even though I won't say it's really hot until it is 97 degrees. Been there, gone on past it.



At our last meeting in May, it was voted on to return to the Clayton Library (Carriage House) for our July meeting. Everyone I've heard from really like the new meeting night - the third Thursday in the month. We will take a final vote on making this move permanent. This should not take long - all the angles have already been discussed.

The problem with the air conditioning has been resolved. As I suspected, the central control that handles it had not been notified. I went to the library to check on things and was assured that everything was go for our meeting this month. According to what I heard, this was the only major concern among members.

Has everyone heard about Greg Dimmick's new dig opportunity? I know we have at least four to five people going to the site on Tuesday, July 14. If you don't know what I'm talking about, we will discuss it at the meeting.

Believe it or not, our annual meeting for our Society is coming up in October. We will have elections to the board. I am thinking about doing something special in September, for the end of our year. I will talk to the board and get with you on it.

I need three people to comprise a committee to decide who gets our awards for the year. I hope some of you will volunteer for this. Having to ask people is a real drag.

Come early, visit, eat refreshments, enjoy the program and vote! Just a few things to do!

--Diane Baird, President

Minutes of HAS Meeting on May 21, 2009

The business meeting of the Houston Archeological Society was called to order on Thursday, May 21, 2009, after an interesting talk by Gregg Dimmick on recent excavations at the San Jacinto Battleground.

Approximately 40 persons were present. A quorum of the members was present.

President Diane Baird called the meeting to order and announced that the only item of business to be brought before the meeting would be the issue of moving HAS's monthly meeting to the Clayton Library and changing the day and time to the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm.

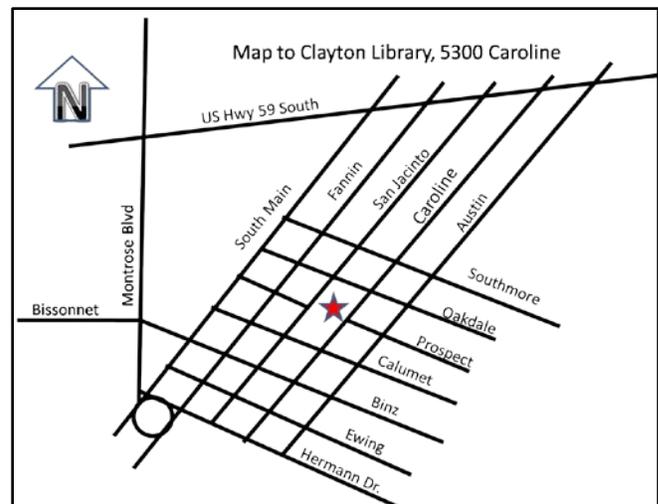
There was discussion about the merits of the new facilities, with the main concern being the lack of air conditioning on this particular night. Several persons indicated a strong preference for at least changing the day of the month to Thursday.

Ed Masten moved that we meet in July at the University of St. Thomas in the building adjacent to Anderson Hall, in order to also consider that location as a permanent meeting place. Motion was seconded by Lucia Bono. Vote was taken and motion was defeated.

Michael Bailey moved that we not make a final decision, but instead hold the next meeting at Clayton Library on the third Thursday in July at 7:00 p.m. in order to make sure that any deficiencies in the facilities would be addressed prior to a final decision. A decision would be made at the end of that meeting on whether to make the change permanent. Motion was seconded and carried. July meeting will be at the Clayton Library.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

--Minutes taken by Linda Swift



FOUR TEXAS CANNONS

Or

The Tale of an Alleged Midget, a Giant, and Two Missing Ladies – Part 3 of 4

By John M. Keahey

The second cannon in our study of four cannons of the Texas Revolution is the iron 18 pounder cannon used by the Texian defenders of the Alamo. For land-based artillery this cannon was a giant, weighed two tons and was nine feet long. Eighteen pounder cannons were generally too heavy to be pulled over hills, through mud and across rivers. They were more commonly used on ships whose flat decks and gun tackle made handling such heavy pieces more practical. The largest cannon used by President/General Santa Anna's Army in the Texas campaign were 12 pounders, so unlike what John Wayne would have us believe in his movie about the Alamo, the largest cannon in the siege was actually used by the defenders, not the Mexican Army. This 18 pounder could be fired with solid cannon balls or langrage. It had been brought to Texas by the New Orleans Grays; a volun-

teer outfit from New Orleans wearing (guess what) gray uniforms. This dominating and intimidating cannon was positioned at the southwest corner of the fort. Col. Travis answered the Mexican demand for surrender on the first day of the siege with a shot from this 18 pounder cannon. It was used with greater effect against Mexican troops attacking the west side of the fort in the pre-dawn assault on March 6. While firing to the northwest its position was captured by Mexican soldiers attacking from the south. It was then turned and fired at the Texians. Before the Mexican's evacuated San Antonio following the Texian victory at the Battle of San Jacinto, the artillery captured in the Battle of the Alamo was rendered useless. The 18 pounder had its trunnions and cascabel smashed-off. It now sits on display outdoors on the Alamo grounds.

(Part 4 will appear in the August Profile. – Ed.)

Archeologists Say Site Critical to Texas Independence Found

Archeologists believe they have found the place where the largest group of Mexican soldiers surrendered to Texas troops in the Battle of San Jacinto in 1836. Texas was a Mexican territory at the time, and the victory led to its independence. In an area about 20 yards wide and 200 yards long, researchers with Moore Archeological Consulting discovered musket balls, bayonets, uniform buttons, and other artifacts. In the Battle of San Jacinto, which took place near present-day Houston and occurred six weeks after Mexican forces overran the Alamo, Col. Juan Almonte and approximately 450 Mexican soldiers surrendered after the brief skirmish. The "disposition of the artifacts we found in combination with the topography" indicates this was the site of "an organized surrender," said Roger G. Moore, the company's president. The artifact scatter suggests that the weapons were dropped by troops standing in rows. The musket balls were unfired. Moore hypothesizes that the Mexican troops, who were retreating pell-mell, ran into a gully that afforded them some protection. Almonte managed to regain control of the troops and organize them into formation for a formal surrender. Historians had previously thought the surrender took place about a mile away. --*Michael Bawaya* (Reprinted from *American Archeology*, Summer 2009)

Several HAS members who are also Volunteer Stewards of the Texas Historical Commission, including two new stewards Tom Nuckols and Gary Ryman, participated in the field work conducted by Moore Archeological Consulting.

Texas Has Largest Volunteer Archeological Network in Country

Austin, Texas--From burial grounds to battlefields, Texas has nearly two million archeological sites scattered across the state. In an effort to preserve and document these sites, most of which are on privately-owned land, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) established the Texas Archeological Stewardship Network (TASN). Marking the 25th anniversary of the program, the "all volunteer army" has grown to be the largest group in the country and offers assistance to landowners wanting to learn more about their sites. Comprised of highly trained and motivated avocational archeologists, the innovative program has served as the model for similar groups in other states...Without the assistance of stewards, the THC would not be able to preserve and protect the significant real archeological sites throughout Texas to unravel the stories they tell. (Reprinted from *NEWS! BRIEFS*, a THC newsletter, June 1, 2009).

For a list of local stewards, please see the last page of the *Profile*.

Congratulations to New Stewards

Congratulations to Tom Nuckols and Gary Ryman, who were recently designated as Stewards by the Texas Historical Commission.

Second Viking Site in America?

One of Canada's top Arctic archeologists says the remnants of a stone-and-sod wall unearthed on southern Baffin Island may be traces of a shelter built more than 700 years ago by Norse seafarers — a stunning find that would be just the second location in the New World with evidence of a Viking-built structure.

The tantalizing signs of a possible medieval Norse presence in Nunavut were found at the previously examined Nanook archeological site, about 200 km southwest of Iqaluit, where people of the now-extinct Dorset culture once occupied a stretch of Hudson Strait shoreline.

A UNESCO World Heritage site at northern Newfoundland's L'Anse aux Meadows — about 1,500 km southeast of the Nanook dig — is the only confirmed location of a Viking settlement in North America. There, about 1,000 years ago, it's believed a party of Norse voyagers from Greenland led by Leif Eiriksson built several sod-and-wood dwellings before abandoning their colonization attempt under threat from hostile natives they called "Skraelings." (quote from Bob Skiles on TXARCH-L, referencing web site www.canada.com).

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

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