

May, 2009

## Gregg Dimmick Returns in May

Texas historian, archeologist and author Gregg Dimmick will return to HAS on Thursday, May 21 at 7:00 pm to share with us the result of recent excavations at a site near the San Jacinto Battleground. The excava-



**Excavators working at the site near San Jacinto. Can you spot the HAS members in this group?**

tion was begun in December of 2007 at the mostly undisturbed site about 1.5 miles away from the battleground. A huge number of Mexican Army artifacts were found there, arranged in a special pattern.

“The site has such a distinctive pattern that we were able to match it to the archival records and pinpoint the event that caused this extensive collection of Mexican army artifacts,” says Dimmick, but “I do not want to give away the rest as there might be someone at the meeting who does not already know what our conclusions are.” (However, we have heard that it has something to do with the surrender process of the Mexican Army!)

The site was excavated under the direction of Dr. Roger Moore and has been recently featured in the Dallas Morning News, the Houston Chronicle, and the LA Times and will soon be mentioned in American Archeology Magazine.

## Different Day, Time, and Location for the May Meeting

At the April HAS meeting the membership voted to meet in May 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 May meeting will be at 7:00 pm on Thursday, May 21, 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) the Clayton closes at 5:00 on Fridays, so 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 probably would need to start our meetings by 6:45 or 7:00 in order to be finished by 9:00.

As you can see, there is a lot to consider, so be sure to come out on Thursday the 21st, and be present for the vote! (See map on Page 2.)

**Lab Schedule:** Monday, May 11th; NO lab on Monday, May 25th as that's Memorial Day. Meet at Rice University, Sewall Hall, Room 103, 7-9 p.m. Complete cataloging of artifacts from the Menard-Morris House site in Seabrook; Powell Site authors continue to refine their articles for publication. For a map, visit [www.houstonarcheology.org](http://www.houstonarcheology.org).  
**No lab in June.**

**Next Meeting: Next meeting is in July.** HAS is always on hiatus in June so members can attend the TAS Field School, which is near Perryton this year.

## The Prez Sez



Hope everyone had a good Easter and a great flood or two. Could this be a trend??

We had a good meeting last month and I was pleased to have so many people show up for it on Good Friday.

PLEASE everyone come to the next meeting. We will be at Clayton Library and you need to see the facilities. We will be taking a final vote about meeting there permanently right after the program.

Our meeting place is in a separate building with parking (lighted and with security) right outside. There are no steps and very little distance to walk. There are two bathrooms, a wonderful kitchenette with a coffee maker and a place with tables for Bill to put out his reports and such and also tables for refreshments.

Come see!

--Diane Baird, President

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## Minutes of HAS Meeting on April 10, 2009

The business meeting of Houston Archeology Society was called to order on Friday, April 10, after the speaker program. A quorum of the members was present.

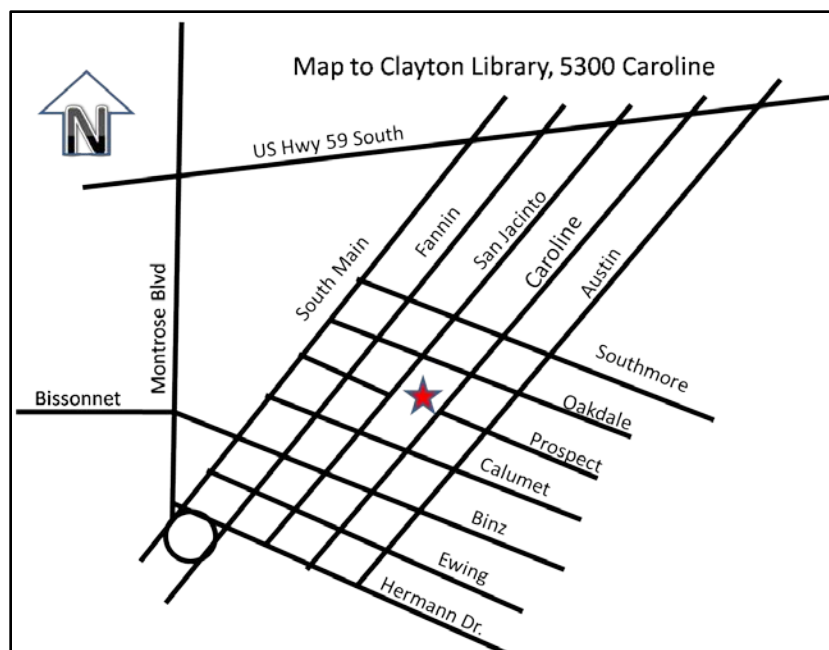
The meeting involved the motion, discussion and voting on moving HAS's meeting to the Clayton Library and changing the day to the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm.

Michael Bailey made a motion to have the next meeting at Clayton Library on the third Thursday in May at 7:00 p.m. A decision would be made at the end of that meeting whether to change our regular meeting place and time to Clayton Library on the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m.

After discussion, a vote was taken. The vote was 14 for, 4 against and 2 abstentions.

A motion was made, seconded and voted on to adjourn the meeting.

--Minutes taken by Diane Baird



# FOUR TEXAS CANNONS

Or

## The Tale of an Alleged Midget, a Giant, and Two Missing Ladies – Part 2 of 4

By John M. Keahey

The first “cannon” of the four memorable Texas Revolution cannons is the Gonzales Cannon. I put the word cannon in quotation marks because this cannon as currently displayed is somewhat farcical and not very threatening. It is a midget cannon, 22 inches long and made of iron. Its homemade carriage sported two solid wood wheels sawn from tree trunks on a recycled cart axle. The bore is not much larger than the standard military smoothbore musket of the day. It apparently had no cannonballs to fire and certainly none that exploded. As the story goes, in 1831 it had been given by the Mexican Army to the citizens of the town of Gonzales, probably to frighten away Indians by making a noise louder than a shoulder arm. As hostilities with the Texian colonists became imminent, the Mexican Army came to Gonzales to retrieve their property. The Texians resisted the Mexicans under an impromptu flag which stated, “Come and Take It.” The cannon and other more effective weapons were fired at the Mexicans, and one Mexican soldier was killed (probably not by the cannon). That started the Texas Revolution. Later during the Texian march to attack San Antonio, the homemade wheels rotating on the wooden axle made a loud screeching noise and repetitively caught fire due to friction. The cannon was unceremoniously dumped in a river. In 1936, some boys swimming in the river found the cannon barrel, and it was displayed in the Gonzales Post Office until moved to the Gonzales Memorial Museum. This is the current accepted story.

At least one first author who saw the actual Gonzales cannon in person in 1835, Noah Smithwick, described it as an old six pounder field cannon, not a midget cannon. A six pounder would be normal field artillery for the period. Armies typically traveled with six, nine or twelve pound cannons. This meant that the weight of the round solid iron cannon balls used as ammunition by these cannons weighed approximately six, nine or twelve pounds respectively. The reason that the Mexican Army was probably willing to loan this full size cannon barrel to the Texian settlers was that the vent, the small hole at the breech with which the main charge was fired, had grown larger with corrosion. This made the cannon less effective when fired, not to mention more dangerous to the crew due to blast of pressure through the enlarged vent. A period powder horn scrimshaw does illustrate the Gonzales Cannon as a full size artillery piece requiring horse drawn transportation. This type of cannon would be potentially repairable, worth owning, worth fighting over and is something that the Mexican Army would actually want returned. Obviously, the cannon displayed as “The Gonzales Cannon” which started the Texas Revolution does not match any of these criteria. Catholic frontier missions sometimes had small bore cannons with which to scare off hostile Indians. The cannon found by the boys in the river and on display is probably one of those--a Texas colonial era piece, but not the “The Gonzales Cannon.” That field piece may still be in the river.

*(Part 3 will appear in the July Profile. – Ed.)*

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## Last Call for Field School 2009 Registration

May 31 is the deadline for registering for the TAS Field School 2009, to be held June 13-20 in the Texas panhandle on Lake Fryer near Perryton. As usual, it promises to have something for just about everyone’s archeological interests. Plans are to continue excavating the three blocks that were opened last summer at Chill Hill, a large Antelope Creek phase (A.D. 1250-1500) village. Already uncovered are numerous cultural features including shallow roasting pits, hearths, and at least two house structures. In addition, there are numerous exotic trade items from New Mexico, suggesting that some of the more exciting finds of the 2009 field school will likely come from this site.

Another of the sites is Evan’s 1868 military supply depot along Monument Creek. Artifacts recovered include cartridges and percussion caps, and daily living items such as a butcher knife, a tin cooking vessel, square nails and tin cans. The third site is Cross L. This site represents a Middle or Late Ceramic period encampment where it appears that bison hunting was a major activity.

A number of small crews will begin testing at several small Antelope Creek phase settlements scattered upstream from Chill Hill in the Dugout Creek valley. This work, combined with investigations at Chill Hill, will provide insights into Antelope Creek phase settlement strategies for the whole valley. *(Continued on p. 4.)*

## **Field School 2009** *(continued)*

The last site to be investigated is 41RB118, another Antelope Creek phase permanent habitation site. This site, along with several Antelope Creek sites along a tributary to the Canadian River, is referred to as the "Archie King Ruins." This site contains the remains of four residential house structures whose wall foundations are outlined with local caliche stones, the purpose of which is currently unknown.

There will be an interesting program for youngsters, as well as a teacher training program with education credits. Once again, there will be flintknapping and pottery-making demonstrations and an Indian dance troupe known as the Kwahadi Indian Dancers. Ken Weidner and his group of Plains Indian re-enactors will set-up another historic tipi encampment near the TAS camp at Lake Fryer. A live band will perform on two nights.

For registration forms and information, visit the TAS web site at [www.txarch.org](http://www.txarch.org). Even though the field school is over on June 20th, everyone is welcome to stay longer, as the core staff will continue working in the field and labs until June 30th to complete all of the work began by TAS. For those willing to stay on longer, please contact Scott Brosowske ([sbrosowske@pphm.wtamu.edu](mailto:sbrosowske@pphm.wtamu.edu) or 806-434-0175) so that plans can be made to accommodate you. Free camping will be provided at Lake Fryer for everyone who elects to stay.

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**Please submit articles for publication to Profile Editor Linda Swift, [swiftlinda@sbcglobal.net](mailto:swiftlinda@sbcglobal.net)  
Submit articles no later than June 26 for the July issue (no Profile in June).**

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

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