



**Houston Archeological Society Meeting, Thursday, January 15, 2026, 6:00 p.m.
Trini Mendenhall Community Center ~ Featuring Caitlin Gulihur**

Hello HAS members,

The January meeting of the Houston Archeological Society will be held in person at the Trini Mendenhall Community Center, with a Zoom link provided for those who cannot attend in person.



We will welcome archaeologist Caitlin Gulihur (Terracon Consultants, Inc.), who will discuss the extraction of wax from candelilla plants (*Euphorbia antisiphilitica*), a twentieth century specialization in the Chihuahuan Desert.

The versatile Candelilla wax appeared as an ingredient in cosmetics, gum, candy, floor wax, wood polish, and for weather-proofing fabrics. While large factories existed at Lajitas, Glen Springs, and Fresno Canyon, the majority of West Texas candelilla extraction took place in small temporary camps. Men from Mexico would work in these camps, gathering the nearby plants, extracting the wax, and then sending the raw product to refining facilities in Texas or Mexico. This lecture discusses the history of the candelilla wax industry in West Texas, specifically in Brewster County, and the modern archeological signatures of wax camps.

Caitlin Gulihur received her B.A. from the University of Texas at Austin and her M.A. from Texas State University. She serves as the Archeology Team Lead and Principal Investigator for Terracon Consultants in their Austin office. Outside of work, Caitlin pursues research in the Big Bend region.

We hope you will all join us for this fascinating presentation on Thursday, January 15. The meeting is free and open to the public. Be looking for your meeting reminder email, which will also contain a Zoom link so that HAS members who cannot join us in person will be able to tune in from afar.

The Trini Mendenhall Community Center is located at 1414 Wirt Road in the Spring Branch area of Houston. For more information about this program or about the Houston Archeological Society, please contact Bob Sewell at president@txhas.org.

See you in the field! Frank Kozar, HAS Vice President



Above: Caitlin Gulihur onsite. Left: Chihuahuan Desert, Big Bend area. Photographs courtesy of Caitlin Gulihur. Center: Candelilla plant (*Euphorbia antisiphilitica*), Candelilla: Big Bend Ranch State Park. Right: The plant in bloom, Native Plant Society of Texas.





President's Message – Bob Sewell



Happy New Year, Everybody!

When not out in the field, HAS members have been busy liaising with teams from the First Lego League. This organization collaborates with educators through after-school robotics activities. Each year the FLL curriculum investigates a different discipline, exploring integration with robotics projects. This academic year, the First Lego League has chosen to partner with archeology. The students have reached out to various archeological organizations, including HAS, to learn about our archeology activities and issues that we encounter, inspiring the students to develop real-world solutions.

Earlier in December, HAS Treasurer Louis Hebert visited with First Lego League students at Mitchell Intermediate School in the Woodlands to discuss archeological issues. Additionally, I met with several other FLL teams via Zoom, including groups at the HCC Coleman Campus and Stafford STEM Magnet Academy.

Left: On Thursday, December 18, Louis Hebert visited Mitchell Intermediate School in the Woodlands on behalf of HAS, December 18, 2024. He provided feedback on their Lego Robotics and Archeology project.



Right: Leonie, Bella, Michael, and Vickie working at the Lone Oak Site, December 27, 2024.



We also continued investigations at the Lone Oak site with a relatively impromptu visit on 12/27/2025. Our good friend and HAS member Leonie Waithman, visiting from the UK, joined us for a beautiful December day. We welcomed what may be close to a record number of folks participating (15) including several new members (Michael and Bella Glasgow, Vickie Mitchell, and Brittani Broussard). We hope to get back again in January to examine below the clay layer.

For 2026, HAS Vice President Frank Kozar has lined up excellent speakers, including Caitlin Guliher (Terracon Consultants, Inc.), Sammi Burke (Graduate Student, New Mexico State University/NMSU), Becky Shelton (Texas Historical Commission), Bethany Miller (Graduate Student, NMSU), Dr. August Costa, and professors Kelly Jenks, Ph.D., and Heather Para, Ph.D. (NMSU).

And finally, HAS members should have received an email regarding voting on the 2026 HAS Budget. Many folks have already registered their vote. If you haven't replied yet, we ask that you check your emails and promptly vote on this important issue.

There's a lot going on and we look forward to a busy and productive year. I look forward to seeing everyone out in the field and at our monthly meetings. If you have any questions about the Houston Archeological Society, please email me at president@txhas.org.

Bob Sewell, HAS President





Houston Archeological Society Monthly Meeting Minutes – December 18, 2025

Welcome: Meeting called to order at 6:36 p.m. – Bob Sewell, President. Welcome to all attendees, including one new member. Members were invited to bring a favorite treat for a holiday party following tonight's presentation.

Membership & Treasury – Bob Sewell, President. Membership stands at 180 members, including 14 students and 19 contributing. With the end of the year coming up, it is time to renew your HAS membership! Renewals are due at the end of December, with a three-month grace period until the end of March. Thank you to those members who have already renewed their membership for 2026. Treasury funds are looking good, and the 2026 budget has begun to be prepared. The new budget will be largely the same as this year's, with some adjustments to allow for increases in existing costs.

Newsletter – Betsy Wittenmyer, Newsletter Editor. Thank you so much to those who have contributed great articles to the newsletter! We are always on the lookout for more content for upcoming newsletters. This can be anything from a photo with a brief explanation to a longer article about any relevant topic, including projects, excavations, research, classes or academies, historical or educational trips, or any other interesting experiences that you'd like to share – doesn't necessarily have to be Texas- or United States-related. Anyone wishing to contribute is invited to contact newsletter@txhas.org.

Projects – Bob Sewell, President. All three of our active sites are prehistoric.

- **Lone Oak (41CD168)**
 - Our last visit to this site was on November 15. We had a great turnout with ten folks attending, including five new members. One of these brand-new members was lucky enough to find a lanceolate point, demonstrating that this site continues to be a great way to introduce new members to the excitement of fieldwork! During this visit we were also able to get the electric fence re-cabled, which should hopefully help with keeping the cattle away from the site. Our next visit to this site will be on Saturday, December 27th. Interested members should contact fielddirector@txhas.org.
- **Goloby Site (41WL3)**
 - We are hoping to have an opportunity to return to this site in the near future.
- **Walnut Tree Hill Site**
 - Visits here are paused for the hunting season, which will end around mid-January.
- We are regularly cycling through visits to all three of our active sites. Members interested in participating in site visits may look out for invitations from fielddirector@txhas.org.

TAS Academy – Bob Sewell, President. The Texas Archeological Society's Zooarcheology & Osteology Academy will take place from February 28 to March 1, 2026 at Rice University. HAS will once again be helping to host this event. Although registration is full at this time, interested members can still join the waitlist at <https://txarch.org/Academies> in case any spots open up. There are two other upcoming TAS Academies: Rock Art in El Paso on March 21-22 is also full (with a waitlist available), but Archeology 101 in San Angelo on April 10-12 still has some spaces left.

January 2026 Monthly Meeting – Our next meeting will be held on January 15. Our speaker will be Caitlin Gulihur, the Archeology Team Lead and Principal Investigator for Terracon Consultants, who will reprise her fascinating lecture on candelilla wax extraction presented at the 2025 TAS Annual Meeting in McAllen, Texas.

In lieu of an official presentation, tonight's speakers will be Bob Sewell, President, and Frank Kozar, Vice President, giving a review of HAS's many activities in 2025. A certificate of appreciation is also being presented to longtime HAS member Leonie Waithman, who traveled over 4,000 miles from the UK to be with us tonight!

The business meeting was concluded at 6:50 p.m.

Noah Newland, HAS Secretary



HAS Memberships for 2026 Are Due



Please take a moment to renew your membership in the Houston Archeological Society—and maybe even give a membership as a gift to someone you know who might enjoy digging up Texas history with us, one trowelful at a time. You may pay your dues online using a credit card at [HAS Membership](#). Or, if you prefer to submit your payment by mail, then please print and include this completed [Membership Form](#) along with your check made payable to Houston Archeological Society. Our memberships are the best deal in town, available at \$25 (Individual), \$30 (Family), \$15 (Student), and \$35+ at the Contributing Membership level. Remember that benefits of your membership include the unique opportunity to dig with us at archeological sites in the area, work with us at our labs where we process artifacts from those sites, and receive our newsletter and our academic publications including HAS Reports and Journals. Please renew today, we want you out there with us! Note: If you joined HAS after September 1, 2025, then your membership is already good for 2026.





Happy New Year! We Continue Catching Up With HAS Members and Friends!



Update from HAS Member Heather Leonard, Doctoral Student

Greetings from not-so-sunny Orkney, Scotland! I moved here in February to pursue a Ph.D. in Archaeology at the University of the Highlands and Islands, Orkney College. I'm studying island identities based on the data from gravestones from the kirkyards and cemeteries on Mainland, the largest island, from 1825-1925. Orkney experienced a great deal of population movement during this time. Notable factors include the Hudson Bay Company exclusively employing Orkney men until the early 1840s and, of course, the unfortunate souls who perished in World War I. You may be surprised to learn that the notorious Highland Clearances does not impact my research. Only one island in Orkney, Rousay, was cleared. Mainland has fifteen burial grounds, some dating back to medieval times! I'm still choosing research sites as I'm in the middle of my literature review, but I will focus on eight. I will be submitting my lit review in February and should start field research and/or archival work in March or April. I know my sites will include the spectacular St. Magnus Cathedral kirkyard and the Old St. Andrews Burial Ground, just across the track from my farm cottage.

Yes, I somehow wound up living across the road from one of my research sites! My family and I are renting a small farm cottage with a fairytale garden at the Hall of Tankerness. The farm itself is ancient, and I live in the shadow of a genuine castle. The ocean is a five-minute walk down the track.

Orkney is well known for Neolithic sites. The aforementioned Rousay is locally called the "Egypt of the North" because the numerous tombs on the island are older than the Pyramids! It's a bit weird that I'm here doing more modern research, but that doesn't stop me from climbing into a Neolithic tomb on my hands and knees with a flashlight whenever the fancy strikes me.



Top left: HAS Member Heather Leonard, Doctoral Student, [Anthropology at WIU](#). Above: St. Magnus Cathedral in snow,

Our dig season is short here, confined to the summer months. This past summer I was back at Skaill Farm on Rousay, where I've excavated before. My teenaged daughter, Nora, whom some of you may remember from past field schools, joined me and everyone was impressed with her excavation skills! Go HAS and TAS for training her well! Dr. Leslie Bush with Travis County Archeological Society joined me for a day and they put her paleobotany skills to work! I had the privilege of meeting Dr. John Gater from *Time Team* and gave him a tour of the site. Skaill Farm is a beautiful site that just gives and gives. This year we found a carved stone head that we suspect was part of an earlier church under the current St. Mary's next door (focus of my master's research). Nora and I also visited the island of Sanday for a few days in August and excavated a Neolithic house. It was muddy, windy, and cold, but Sanday has the best pizza restaurant in Orkney and that made it worthwhile!

I do miss Texas, but I'm also having a lot of fun exploring my island home. Two other TAS members have visited me so far this year and I had the pleasure of showing them around. If you're ever in Scotland, jaunt up to the islands and I'll give you a tour of the fabulous archaeology that Orkney has to offer.

Wishing Heather the very best as she pursues her Ph.D. in Archaeology at the University of the Highlands and Islands, Orkney College! You are researching some fascinating sites, and we hope you will keep us updated on your progress!





Message from Wales ~ Update from Leonie Waithman Author and Former HAS Board Member



It is hard to comprehend that it's been eighteen months since I moved to Wales, but life here is much busier, so time whizzes by. Someone told me before moving that the people in Wales live outdoors when the weather is dry. I took note of that and expected a lot of rainy days because of that comment. Perhaps due to climate change, I'm not sure, but this was not the case. For nearly seven months straight, from March to September, rainfall eluded Wales, resulting in springs drying up and livestock suffering due to the lack of grass growth. Needless to say, I spent a considerable amount of time outdoors during those months.

It started in spring, when I helped a farming neighbor with lambing. With 500 ewes expected to be delivered, it was all hands on deck every morning for several weeks. I don't think I can ever get enough of seeing new life enter this world, though, and I thoroughly enjoyed helping.

We took a short trip to Boulogne-sur-Mer, France, at Easter, and stayed in a small hotel adjacent to the basilica in the historic part of the town, within the medieval city walls. I took in its history as I walked over the wall and wandered the streets of this quaint medieval town and found a perfect spot with a view of the castle, where I spent a few hours writing.

I will not bore you with my activities in the following months and will proceed directly to July, when I joined Manchester University and the Herefordshire Council for their annual archaeological excavations at Snodhill Castle and Arthur's Stone near Dorstone, England. For four weeks, sixty archaeology students from Manchester, Cambridge, and the US helped excavate at both sites on a weekly rotation basis, learning what it is like to work in the field.



Snodhill Castle

A largely unknown castle, Snodhill, like many in England and Wales, fell into ruin after the Civil War (1642-1651). Fortunately, however, there is community interest in preserving what remains of the building and studying its layout.



Top left: Leonie Waithman, Author. Top right: Lambing. Above: Ruins of Snodhill Castle and excavations on site, July 2025. Photographs by Leonie Waithman.

Excavations over the last few years have revealed that the hill on which it stands likely was used for hundreds of years prior to the construction of the Norman Keep in 1068.

The castle changed hands several times until 1452, when, upon the accession of King Richard III, it passed into the crown's possession and became a royal castle. In 1563, Queen Elizabeth I granted it to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who subsequently sold the castle to William Vaughan in 1567. The Vaughan family were royalists, and the castle was besieged by the Earl of Leven in 1645 when it was still occupied. Cannonballs have been found nearby, and it is possible that the castle was severely damaged and rendered no longer livable after the siege. The castle was sold to the Prosser family in 1647, who systematically dismantled the castle and sold off its assets between 1649 and 1652.

In recent years, excavations have revealed a royal chapel, gate houses, and a fifteenth-century north keep. Window glass, painted wall plaster, and finely cut stone turrets reveal its important and high-class status. Sitting on a steep hill in a valley, it was surrounded by a deer park where one can only imagine royal hunting parties taking place.

This summer's excavations at Snodhill Castle concentrated on a field located at the rear of the castle. The field is relatively level and sits just below the keep at the back of the castle. It's surrounded by steep sides, and hopes were that it was used during the time the castle was in occupation, but nothing medieval was found this time. It did, however, reveal flint and also Roman pottery, which should come as no surprise, as the site was likely used by humans before the Normans built upon it.

Excavations also took place near the bailey to find the gatehouse. A large wall was discovered, along with roofing stones, chimney stones, an arrow point, a brass token, pottery, and numerous animal bones, all within remnants of a fire. The latter two were attributed to the demolition period of the castle.

Arthur's Stone

Less than a mile away from Snodhill Castle, on higher ground, lies Arthur's Stone, a 5,000-year-old Neolithic burial chamber. It derived its name before the thirteenth century from the legendary King Arthur, and it's said this is where Arthur slayed a giant. According to legend, the giant's elbows left indentations on the large capstone.

The University of Manchester has returned to the site every summer for several years to conduct excavations in the surrounding area. However, this year, permission was granted by English Heritage to excavate on the site itself, and no time was wasted in revealing its secrets beneath. In 26° C heat (78.8° Fahrenheit), unusual for Wales, students, teachers, and volunteers painstakingly removed all the topsoil to reveal the cairn, laying bare fallen standing stones that had not been visible previously. Unfortunately, we were unable to dig below the large capstone due to its instability.



Arthur's Stone and excavations on site, July 2025. Photographs by Leonie Waithman.



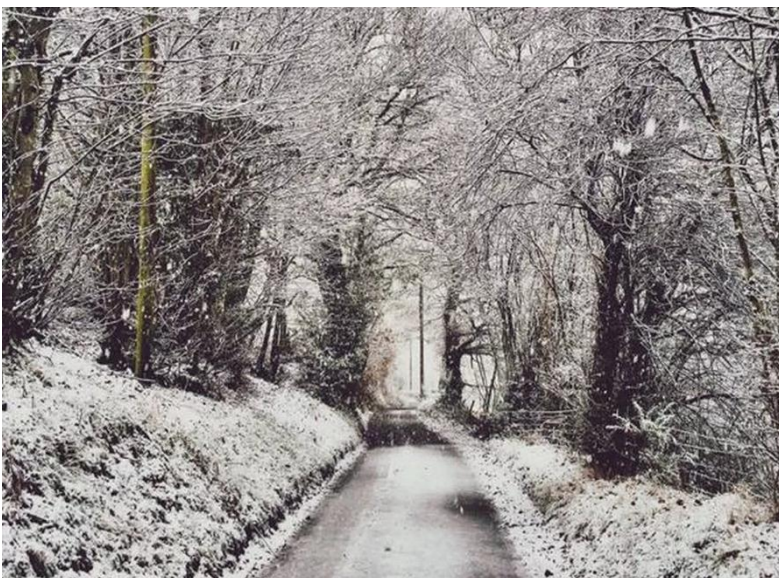
I cannot disclose the findings from Arthur's Stone due to the ongoing nature of the research and protection of the site, but it was an honor to be part of the excavation and to uncover what lay hidden beneath the soil.

Since only a small number of people could work near the stone at a time, the rest of the students worked in the adjacent field, where the previous year, postholes for a palisade had been discovered. The students dug down to bedrock, which was less than a meter below ground surface, to see if further postholes could be discovered, possibly indicating an entrance way to the burial site.

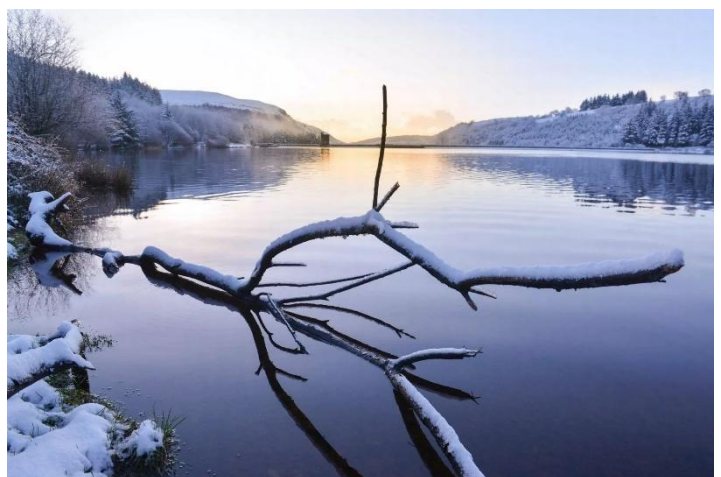
Excavations near Arthur's Stone and on Snodhill are scheduled to resume next summer, and I will undoubtedly be joining them again.

I often think about the people at HAS and the excavations in which I participated alongside everyone. I hope you all are well and I wish you a Happy New Year from Wales.

We were thrilled that Leonie visited Houston in December and participated in a work day at the Lone Oak site. Leonie, wishing you and your family the very best with a new year filled with more adventures in Wales and lots of writing! Blwyddyn Newydd Dda i Chi!



Left: A snowy lane in Wales. Below: Llyn-On Reservoir in the Brecon Beacons, about 45 miles from Leonie's home in Glascwm. [Wales Online](#).





Catching Up With HAS Friend Heather Para, Ph.D., NMSU Museum Curator



Hello from the land of enchantment! In July 2024, I relocated from Victoria to Las Cruces, New Mexico, to take on the curator position at the New Mexico State University Museum. I am employed by the Anthropology department at NMSU, and a large part of my duties, aside from the curation of the museum, is the management of the Museum Studies Graduate Certificate Program. I serve on graduate student committees and advise students in their studies. I also teach anthropology classes toward that certification. My goal is to send the next generation of museum professionals out into the world with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful. I really enjoy the students, and the museum is lively and fun.

We have presented three exhibit openings since my arrival, all of them student projects. Current and upcoming student projects include a reimagination of the seventeenth century cabinet of curiosities through the lens of university museums; an oral history and virtual exhibit project focused on a colonial land grant community; and a catalogue and inventory of lithic artifacts seized in a looting case on federal land.



Above: Dr. Heather Para | New Mexico State University. Right: Students in the Museum Field Methods class learning to work with artifacts to develop exhibitions. Photograph by Heather Para. Below left: Student exhibit featuring Paquimé ceramics. Photograph by Heather Para.



Recent additions to the museum's collection include a backstrap loom and Sulawesi basket from Indonesia; a massive collection of Roman and Middle Eastern artifacts (some up to 4,000 years old); and Peruvian textiles and decorated gourds.

My own research has taken me back to early medieval Wales and Ireland, for a study on ritual behavior in relation to hearthstones and standing stones. A book chapter on this is forthcoming, as is a full book on landscape archaeology in Wales.

I haven't forgotten my time in Texas, of course, and I also am working on a project about collaborative relationships between collectors and museums, which will prominently feature Bill Birmingham as an ideal case study. (Stay tuned for a talk on this in the coming year!)

On a personal note, I have a new addition to my household! I adopted Clementine at the end of April. She is a German Shepherd/Golden Retriever mix (I think?), just under two years old, and an absolute delight. Now the designated Museum Dog, she comes to work with me and relaxes under my desk until it's time to run around in the museum courtyard after closing. She enjoys the attention she gets from students (and the snacks) and provides a fluffy distraction to all who need one.

Needless to say, New Mexico is keeping me busy!

We wish Dr. Heather Para and her students the very best and we look forward to hearing more from her at our monthly meeting in August 2026!



Center: Bill Birmingham on McNeill Ranch in 2023.
Right: Clementine enjoying a stroll around the NMSU campus.
Photographs by Heather Para, PhD.



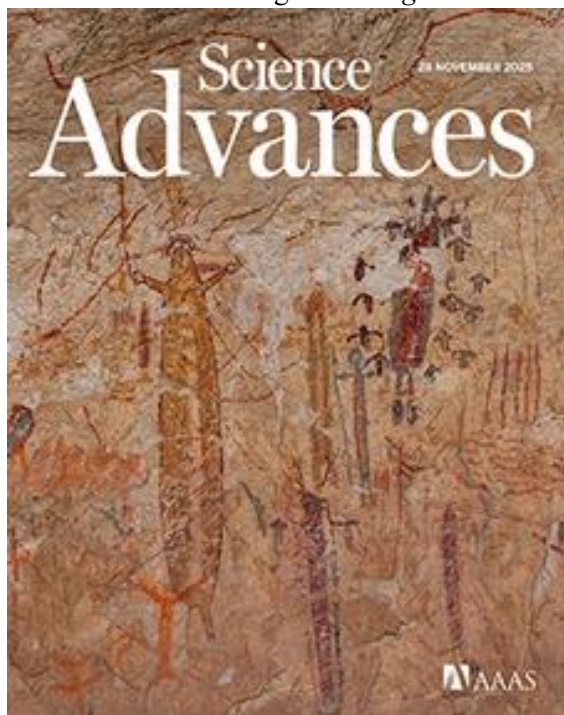
Left: Las Cruces pecan orchard dusted with snow, <https://lascrucesblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/pecans-snow.jpg>.
Right: Organ Mountains, Las Cruces, Las Cruces Blog.





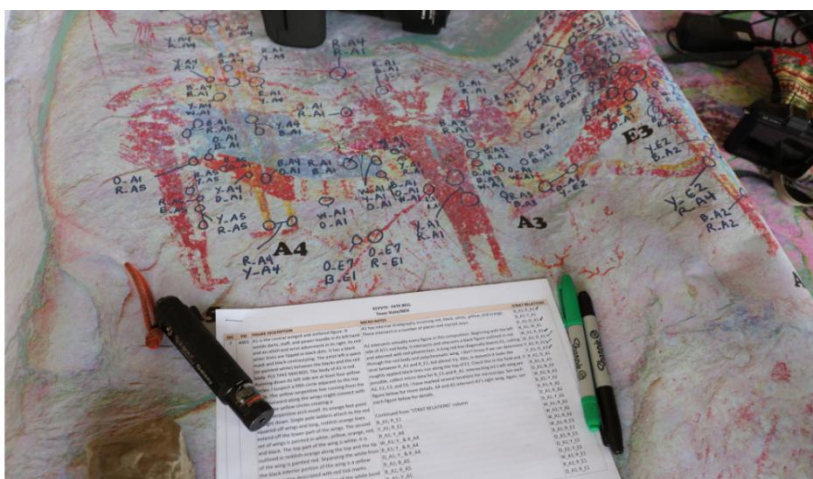
Update from Shumla Archaeological Research & Education Center

The November issue of *Science Advances* by the American Association for the Advancement of Science features Shumla's painstaking, ground-breaking research that we Texans have been following from the beginning. HAS friends Karen L. Steelman, Carolyn E. Boyd, and J. Phil Dering authored [Mapping the chronology of an ancient cosmivision: 4000 years of continuity in Pecos River style mural painting and symbolism](#). *Science Advances* is one of the most highly respected and widely reported scientific journals in the world and will now bring the art of the Lower Pecos into news feeds and people's awareness all over the globe. *Congratulations to Dr. Carolyn Boyd and team!*



A study using advanced radiocarbon dating techniques led by Shumla and Texas State University shows that Pecos River style murals in southwest Texas were painted for more than 4,000 years, beginning nearly 6,000 years ago. The results make this the most securely dated rock art tradition in the Americas, revealing a deeply rooted spiritual worldview expressed through a stable visual language over hundreds of generations and increasing our understanding about how early communities connected landscape, ceremony, and art.

Above left: Cover featuring Pecos River art. Right: Observing images at Panther Cave. Below left: Field work at Fate Bell Rockshelter. Sources: [Mapping the chronology of Pecos River style murals](#); Shumla Archaeological Research & Education Center.



Abstract: Forager societies in southwest Texas and northern Mexico painted polychromatic Pecos River style murals in limestone rock shelters containing well-preserved archaeological assemblages. To establish the temporal context of the murals, we obtained 57 direct radiocarbon dates and 25 indirect oxalate dates for pictographs across 12 sites using plasma oxidation and accelerator mass spectrometry. Bayesian modeling estimates that Pecos River style began between 5760 and 5385 calibrated years before the present (cal B.P.) and probably ended in 1370 to 1035 cal B.P. Painting spanned a duration of 4095 to 4780 years (68.3%). Stratigraphic and iconographic analyses revealed that eight of the murals were created as compositions adhering to a set of rules and an established iconographic vocabulary. Results suggest consistent messaging throughout a period marked by changes in material culture, land use, and climate. We propose that Pecos River style paintings, embedded in a cultural keystone landscape, faithfully transmitted a sophisticated metaphysics that later informed the beliefs and symbolic expression of Mesoamerican agriculturalists.





Keeping One's Head Warm in the Sixteenth Century

Man's cap | Smithsonian Institution. A man's cap constructed of off-white linen embroidered in blue, green, yellow, red and pink silks and silver metallic yarns. This embroidered nightcap represents a type of hat worn by English men beginning around 1550. It was appropriate for any time of day despite its name, and men wore it informally at home. Keeping the head covered and warm was thought to be part of a healthy lifestyle. Most embroidered hats at this time feature floral designs with insects or birds, so the pattern of rainbows and rainstorms above snails and caterpillars is distinctive. The rainbows may symbolize the peace brought by Queen Elizabeth I after a time of political storms, and the caterpillars signify this transformation. This object was featured in the Smithsonian Object of the Week series in a post titled A Little Nightcap. This object was bequest of Richard Cranch Greenleaf (American, 1887–1961). Text adapted from Man's Cap (England) | Objects | Collection of Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum.



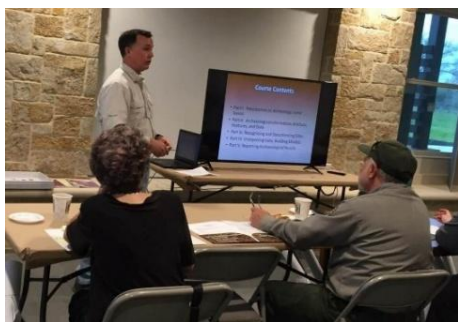
Limited Registration Still Available for TAS 2025 Academies ~ Enroll Soon!

Texas Archeological Society Academies provide learning opportunities in archeology for those interested in more in-depth training regarding archeological goals and procedures. Taught by esteemed experts and limited in class size, these popular classes swiftly reach capacity enrollment. At this moment spaces remain, but act quickly!!!



Zooarcheology & Osteology, taking place February 28 - March 1, 2026, in Houston: FULL. Instructors are Dr. Mary Prendergast, Dr. Manuel Domínguez-Rodrigo, and Sylvia Wemanya. Registration Fee is \$175 plus TAS membership; **Register for Waiting List**. The 2026 Zooarcheology and Osteology Academy is a two-day TAS event that offers an introduction to the identification, analysis, and interpretation of archeological animal and human skeletal remains. Classroom and hands-on laboratory sessions will be held in the Archaeology Laboratory of Rice University. The Houston Archeological Society is supporting this Academy.

Rock Art, taking place March 21–22, 2026, in El Paso. Instructors are Dr. Larry Loendorf, Dr. Charles Koenig, Amanda Castañeda, and Mark Willis. Registration Fee is \$125 plus TAS membership; **Register for Waiting List**. The 2026 Rock Art Academy is a two-day TAS event that explores regional rock art archeological sites, cultural history of the Jornada Mogollon region, and how investigators use this information to interpret the complex human interactions and ideological systems throughout the past. Classroom sessions will be held at the El Paso Museum of Archaeology. The instructor team includes experienced rock art specialists and archeologists.



Archeology 101, taking place April 10 – 12, 2026, in San Angelo. The instructor will be Dr. Jon Lohse. The Registration Fee is \$125 plus TAS membership; **Register for Archeology 101**. The 2026 Archeology 101 Academy is a three-day TAS event that teaches participants about site identification, recording, and proper excavation techniques in the field of archeology. Archeology is destructive, so it is important to get it right the first time. Learn how to identify, record, and investigate an archeological site by learning the proper field techniques and receive a general introduction to archeology. This Academy will include classroom instruction and field trips where participants will have the opportunity to participate in an archeological excavation. Classroom sessions will be held at Fort Concho National Historic Landmark with a field session at the Chaparral Ranch.





Highlights from 2025

Frank Kozar, HAS Vice President

HAS members participated in many projects around the state this past year. We worked at our three active archeological sites: Lone Oak in northern Colorado County near Frelsburg, Walnut Tree Hill, also in Colorado County near Alleyton, and the Goloby site in Waller County north of Brookshire. We try to rotate through the three sites as dictated by the weather, cattle, and mowing schedules of our wonderful landowners.



A group of HAS members attended Texas Archeological Society Academies in early April, beginning with the Archeobotany Academy in Kerrville, under the tutelage of Dr. Leslie Bush, Dr. Kevin Hanselka, and Dr. Phil Dering, where we constructed an earth oven. We cooked sotol, native onions, carrots, potatoes, and several other native plants for 24 hours, then uncovered and sampled them...very tasty! We roamed the woods looking for edible native plants, learned to hammer plant leaves into twine, and were lectured on how indigenous peoples transitioned from hunter-gatherers into farming.



The following week, TAS held the Lithics Academy in Fort Worth, instructed by Dr. Robert Lassen, Dr. Sergio Ayala, and archeologist Chris Ringstaff, who taught about stone tool manufacturing, use wear, break patterns, and tool uses.

In April, eight members of HAS once again traveled to Hunt to work at the Crying Woman Ranch paleolithic site for our third annual invitation. At the dig, members worked at taking apart an earth oven previously discovered, and excavated a new unit near a midden, which had several interesting finds, including a quartz crystal that had two notches on either side and was possibly used as a pendant.



Left to right: Earth oven cooking and dining; Notched quartz lithic, Crying Woman Ranch; Unit 14 with chert cores, Crying Woman Ranch; St. Mary's Hall point, Crying Woman Ranch. Photographs by Frank Kozar.

The TAS annual field school was held in June in Milam and Robertson Counties near Red Mountain. This field school focused on surveying Red Mountain and a portion of the El Camino Real de los Tejas at Rancho Grande, with more site work planned for next year at the same locale.



HAS President Bob Sewell and the HAS display at the Houston Museum of Natural History.

HAS members stayed busy in October attending the TAS Annual Meeting in McAllen and assisting at various HAS public outreach events at the Houston Museum of Natural History, the Montgomery County Memorial Library in Conroe, and the Lake Creek Greenway Partnership in Magnolia.

For more information about this program or about the Houston Archeological Society and its projects, please contact Bob Sewell at president@txhas.org.



Feedback, News, and Articles Requested! We want to hear from YOU!



Snowman Royalty-Free Vector

As always, we welcome your comments and contributions via email to newsletter@txhas.org. Let us know about topics you'd like to see in the future and offer suggestions about how we can improve. We invite and encourage all HAS members and friends to consider submitting content for *The Profile* newsletter. Report on academies, field school, site work, lectures, cultural heritage, accomplishments, favorite podcasts, reading links, recommended books, academic endeavors, or public outreach! Send photos from an HAS or TAS adventure! What archeological artifact or historical event have you been researching? What interesting trips or explorations have you experienced recently? We hope that you will add your voice to our community's conversation, because a variety of articles help to make our newsletter more interesting! Your contributions may be any length: long, brief, a couple of paragraphs, or photographs with text. We can help with editing. Submissions for upcoming issues are requested by the fifteenth of each month.

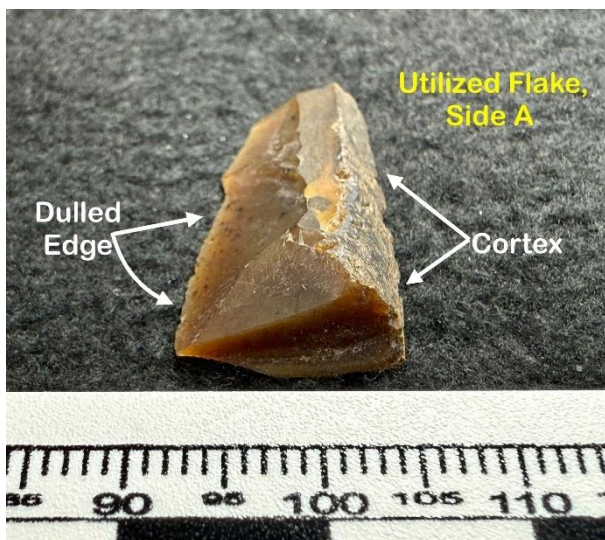




Update from CoBALT Archeology, Victoria, Texas

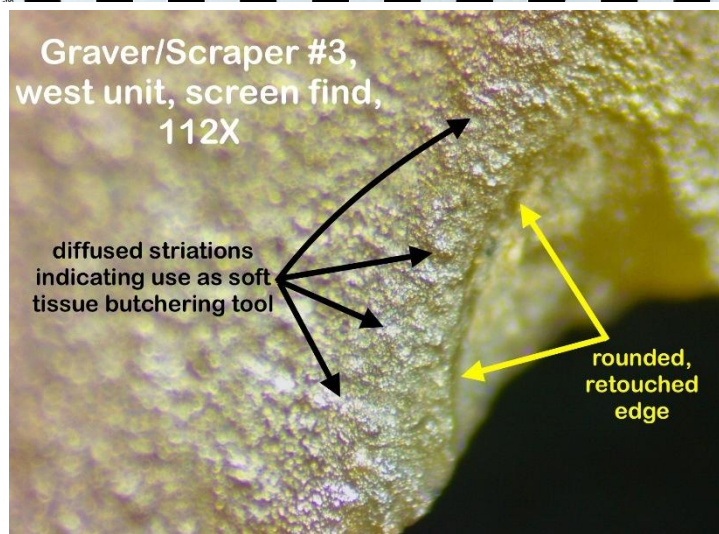
The Coastal Bend Archaeological Logistics Team, based in Victoria, is working at the McNeill Ranch site (41VT141) in a cooperative agreement with the landowner and the Museum of the Coastal Bend (MCB). While considered a significant Paleoindian site, 41VT141 was also regularly occupied by more recent prehistoric cultures over thousands of years.

Excavation Day, November 14, 2025: After a Clovis blade scraper and a utilized Clovis crested blade were found during the last excavation, we switched to a new unit directly north of the Paleoindian hearth feature. Bill and OC excavated three levels this day with very dry soil and had to rewet the soil to make the work easier. They found a surprising amount of lithic artifacts including a core and a utilized flake located next to each other. We believe the utilized flake came from the core, but it is broken at both ends. Until we can get the flake under the microscope for use wear analysis, we believe it could be a small knife or scraper.



A marine cockle shell fragment was found which indicates to us either travel to the coast, or perhaps a trade system with coastal cultures. Also found were another core, a small sandstone abrading stone, a large graver/punch, a utilized scraper and some interesting organics including charcoal, hackberry seeds, deer, gopher and an unidentified small mammal phalanx. In the west unit, Mike and Max were getting into an early Archaic elevation and found a classic utilized flake scraper and a core. On the paleo2x terrace, Frank and John found some clay balls, mussel shell, and lots of larger-than-normal land snails; but no lithic artifacts.

Excavation Day, November 21, 2025: Some days in the field remind us that the most common artifacts we recover are expedited or utilized flakes, and this was definitely one of those days. Across both the north and west units along the Paleo 1X terrace, we uncovered multiple flake tools, many of them multifunctional pieces with graver and scraper elements. In the West Unit, Mike and Max worked in Level 8, a clearly Paleo-aged elevation, where they recovered a late-stage preform, a shattered hammerstone, and a utilized flake scraper. Several large graver/scraper tools also appeared in the surrounding debitage.



In the Paleo 2X Terrace, Frank, John, and Gary discovered a massive chopper/crusher along with mussel shell, land snails, and clay balls. In the North Unit, Bill, Roger, and OC recovered a series of utilized flake tools, including several with graver/scraper combinations and others featuring gravers or hide-punch elements. They also found notable organics: two deer teeth, a pneumatic bird bone likely from a crane or heron-sized bird, clay balls, burnt clay, and charcoal.



HAS members are always welcome to join us at the site or in the lab. The archaeology lab at the Museum of the Coastal Bend is open to the public on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Stop in at the museum's front desk for directions to the lab; however, doublecheck before coming because we will be relocating our lab work space in 2026. You can follow CoBalt Archeology's news and progress in the lab and field at [CoBalt Facebook](#).

~ O. C. Garza

All photographs are courtesy of O.C. Garza. Source: [CoBalt](#).



Human Osteology and Bioarchaeology Workshops and Funerary Excavations

Recommended as an excellent opportunity for archeology students by HAS friend, Dr. Heather Para of New Mexico State University:

The University of South Florida Romania Human Osteology and Bioarchaeology Program will be offering two summer sessions directed by Dr. Jonathan Bethard (University of South Florida), in Odorheiu Secuiesc, Romania;
www.archaeotek-archaeology.org/workshop.



This program is offered in partnership with the Canada-based Archaeological Techniques and Research Center (ArchaeoTek). Since its creation in 2001, ArchaeoTek Archaeology has been providing field and laboratory education and research opportunities in Transylvania, Romania, in the fields of archaeology, bioarchaeology, anthropology, classics, history, experimental archaeology, applied geochemistry and geophysics. Working in close collaboration with Romanian museums and universities, ArchaeoTek researchers prioritize the full integration of a comprehensive educational and cultural experience for students with the research designs of the scientific directorship. Focusing on skill acquisition, ArchaeoTek offers rigorous and intensive training and hands-on experience performing essential cultural heritage field and lab work in the region, including site excavation, site survey, applied field geophysics and geochemistry, experimental archaeology, funerary and mortuary excavation, and bioarchaeological and osteological analysis and research across a range of time periods from the Neolithic to Medieval.

Odorheiu Secuiesc, Hatghita County, Transylvania, Romania, is a small yet culturally vibrant town. It has a sizeable theater, the Haáz Rezső Museum (featuring permanent and seasonal exhibits dedicated to Szekler village life, Szekler arts and crafts, the history of the region, and a growing collection of Hungarian painters in Transylvania), a philharmonic orchestra of Szeklerland, a local TV studio, and several local newspapers. Throughout the year, there are festivals and youth events, a monthly farmer's market selling local, traditional and organic products. With strong cultural ties to Hungary, the town frequently hosts artists, writers and bands from Hungary. The town also features a central park, a large open air pool and several spas. Its main square, flanked by historic public buildings, is Márton Áron Square, or as the locals call it, Horseshoe Square (due to its shape).

The program is led by Jonathan Bethard, Anthropology College of Arts and Science, jbethard@usf.edu, and Chloe King, Office of Global Learning USF World, chloeking1@usf.edu. For more information please click here and visit the Archaeotek website for more information about the program fees and logistics. Two sessions are offered, Session 1: June 7 - July 3, 2026 and Session 2: July 5 - July 31, 2026. Depending on the session, students may select from courses including Funerary Excavation, Archaeological Field Methods, Bioarchaeology in Transylvania, Human Osteology and Osteometry, and Bioarchaeology of Children.



Texas Historical Commission Real Places Conference, April 8 – 10, 2026, Austin



Join preservationists, educators, interpreters, historians, archeologists, and heritage tourism professionals to get inspired, gain practical tools, and connect with people shaping preservation across Texas and beyond. Topics and workshops include assessing historic buildings, collaborations in archeology education in Brazoria County, practical tools and resources for collaborating with Texas tribes, and historic cemetery location and reclamation.





Updates from Alamo Archaeology Church Preservation

Photos and content from Alamo Archaeology Church Preservation: Archaeologists opened EU22 on the north side of the Church and reached a depth of approximately 70 cm below surface by the end of the week. There was evidence of at least 3 utility conduits within the unit. Few artifacts were recovered from this unit, but there were several brick fragments. Archaeologists also encountered some large limestone cobbles that are possibly associated with the features previously encountered in EU23.



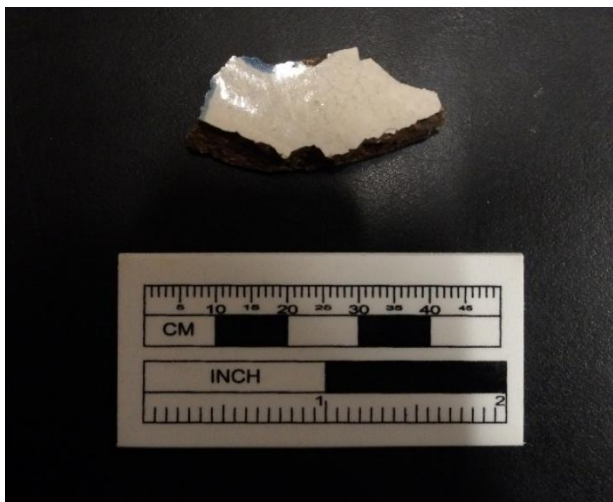
Left: EU22 at approximately 70 cm below surface, photo facing north. Right: Example of brick fragments found in EU22.

Archaeologists were also active in EU27 on the north side of the Church. Excavations reached 100 cm below surface, which was the terminal depth for the unit. Additional portions of the previously encountered limestone foundation were revealed in this unit. Very few artifacts were recovered from the unit.



Left: EU27 at terminal depth, photo facing north. Right: Limestone feature present in EU27, photo facing south.

Archaeologists reached a terminal depth of 100 cm below surface in EU-133 on the south side of the church. This unit identified and documented two postholes, a concrete pad, and an additional portion of the police substation foundation. There were not many artifacts recovered from this unit, but two diagnostic ceramic sherds were found in the lower levels. Archaeologists will complete final documentation of the unit this week.



Left: EU133 at approximately 100 cm below surface.
Right: Blue on White sherd from EU133.
Below: Goliad sherd from EU133.



Alamo Podcast – Stories Bigger Than Texas

You can stream the Alamo's award-winning podcast [through the website](#), listen and subscribe [on YouTube](#), or subscribe and download on your preferred podcasting app, including Apple Podcasts and Spotify. Recent episodes discuss Austin's Texian Army, the Tampico Expedition, and the Alamo Cenotaph restoration.



Snow Scenes of the Alamo, 1946



[The Alamo in snow - The Portal to Texas History](#), [The Alamo covered in snow, 2 - The Portal to Texas History](#), Williams, Byrd M. (Byrd Moore), III, 1946. Source: [Byrd Williams Family Photography Collection](#), [UNT Libraries Special Collections](#), [The Portal to Texas History](#), a digital repository hosted by the [UNT Libraries](#).





From the HAS Archives



A repository of past issues of *The Profile* is available on the HAS website wherein you will find a wealth of archived articles, including this article adapted from the [2011 January Profile.pdf](#).

At the next HAS monthly meeting, guest lecturer Alston V. Thoms of Texas A&M University will discuss *Cabeza de Vaca's Archaeologically Relevant Revelations: Hunter-Gather Lifeways on the Coastal Plains of Texas*. According to Dr. Thoms, Cabeza de Vaca and three Old World companions survived shipwrecks and sickness to spend part of the mid-1530s with native people along the Texas coast and adjacent inland regions, who were known later as Karankawas and Coahuiltecans.

Importantly, his observations about their land-use patterns there predate apocalyptic population crashes from Old World diseases. As such, they are applicable, in general, to the Coastal Plains during the Pre-Columbian era as well. In writing about the Yguazes, an inland group, Cabeza de Vaca noted “their dwellings are of mats placed on four arches, they carry them on their backs and move every two or three days to look for food.” Rancheria sizes ranged from a few dwellings for single and multiple families, to those with 50 or 100 dwellings. Among the region’s inhabitants were the Fig People, a reference to their reliance on prickly-pear tunas. Everywhere on the Coastal Plains, wild root foods were important. Deer typically provided the bulk of the meat diet and, at times, were hunted using driving techniques.



Indian villages, or rancherías, are shown dotting the landscape near the Rio Grande delta and up the coast in this ca. 1720s map by Alvarez Barreiro. Although the Spanish encountered numerous native groups in much earlier expeditions, no group names were recorded until well into the 18th century. Finished and first published in 1728, this map is best known from the 1770 copy shown here. Original in the British Library. Map image: Copyright © The British Library; All Rights Reserved; Additional MS. 17,650.b. [Coastal Prairies and Marshes](#); [Los Adaes](#).



Houston in the big snow of 1895. Left: Market Square, a winter snow scene in front of the City Hall and Market House. The building was located at Travis Street and Prairie Avenue. Houston reported a record twenty inches of snow February 14-15, 1895. <https://id.lib.uh.edu/ark:/84475/doi1569z083c>. [George Fuermann Texas and Houston Collection](#); [Houston & Texas History Research Collection](#); [University of Houston Libraries Special Collections](#). Right: Feb. 15, 1985, a record 20 inches of snow covers Main Street at Capitol during what residents called The Great Snow. [Houston Chronicle Files](#), [Old photos show Houston snow](#).





Updates from the Texas Historical Commission

Teach Texas History provides resources and information about the Texas Historical Commission's State Historic Sites to support classroom instruction, professional development, and all who enjoy Texas history.

- These letters from across Texas from 1880 to 1941 are great primary sources.
- This short video explores Texas' role in the Civil War.
- Take a virtual tour of a sharecropper cabin.
- These resources relate to Holocaust Remembrance Week in January.
- Prepare for Martin Luther King Jr. Day by learning about his visits to Texas.
- Download an excerpt of *A Centennial Perspective on Texas in the Great War*, plus accompanying Texas History and U.S. History lesson plans, including Texas History Day, National History Day, and an initiative for students to create documentaries.
- America's Field Trip invites young people to share their unique perspectives on what America means to them. Winners will visit some of the country's most iconic historical landmarks.
- The Governor's office has announced a new award "honoring Texas educators and advocates whose work demonstrates significant achievements to promote the history and patriotism of Texas."
- The Texas Historic Sites Atlas identifies historical markers along your route.
- Follow the State Historic Sites social media platforms for event updates.



Apply for Markers for Sites of Undertold Stories and Historical Cemeteries. The Texas Historical Commission seeks applications for historic Texas Cemetery designations year-round at Historic Texas Cemetery Designation | Texas Historical Commission. A cemetery is eligible for designation if it is at least fifty years old and is deemed worthy of recognition for its historical associations. The very nature of a cemetery being a landmark of a family's or community's presence is considered to validate the criteria of historical associations. Any individual, organization, or agency may submit a request for designation.



Houston Archeological Society - Monthly Meeting Program Schedule

Please note that meetings will vary between in-person, hybrid, or virtual (via Zoom). The meeting format may change; be sure to doublecheck the HAS website and your emails prior to each meeting for updates.

January 13 – HAS Board Meeting

January 15 – 6 p.m. Monthly meeting featuring Caitlin Guliher (Terracon Consultants, Inc.) discussing the twentieth century industry of candelilla wax extraction in the Chihuahuan Desert, including large factories at Lajitas, Glen Springs, and Fresno Canyon. In person with a Zoom link available to members.

February 19 – 6 p.m. Monthly meeting featuring Sammi Burke, New Mexico State University graduate student, discussing insect imagery in Mimbres pottery, via Zoom only.

March 19 – 6 p.m. Monthly meeting featuring Becky Shelton, Texas Historical Commission, via Zoom only.

April 16 - 6 p.m. Monthly meeting featuring Bethany Miller, New Mexico State University graduate student, via Zoom only.

May 21 - 6 p.m. Monthly meeting featuring Dr. Kelly Jenks, Professor at New Mexico State University, via Zoom only.

June – No Meeting. See you at TAS Field School.

July 16 – 6 p.m. Monthly meeting with a TAS Field School recap.

August 20 – 6 p.m. Monthly meeting featuring Dr. Heather Para, via Zoom only.

September 17 - 6 p.m. Monthly meeting featuring Dr. Gus Costa. In person with a Zoom link available to members.

Houston Archeological Society monthly meetings are ordinarily free and open to the public. Many previous HAS presentations are archived on our YouTube Site, where they are available for public viewing. For more information about HAS, visit www.txhas.org, email us at president@txhas.org, or join our Facebook Page.



Traveling icy Memorial Drive after the snowfall of February 12, 1958. Houston Chronicle Archives. [Old photos show Houston snow.](#)



Select Upcoming Events – Virtual and Onsite

Be sure to reconfirm details before making plans to attend.

VIRTUAL:

Note that most events listed are free of charge but still require advance registration. Some websites listing virtual events and resources: [Texas State Historical Association Events](#); [NTAS](#); [Bullock Texas State History Museum](#); [Virtual Events–Friends of THC](#); [The Story of Texas On Demand Programs](#); <https://www.archaeological.org/events>; [Virtual Resources | PAST Foundation](#); [Archaeology Events & Activities Eventbrite](#); [Archaeological Conservancy](#); [Events | Smithsonian](#).

Archaeological Institute of America (AIA)

1/22 – Thursday, 5 p.m. Eastern/4 p.m. Central. Into the Mani: Death, Burial, and Legend on the Southern Greek Mainland. Lecturer [William Parkinson](#), sponsored by the AIA Society of Pittsburgh; <https://www.archaeological.org/event/into-the-mani-southern-greek-mainland/>.

1/28 – Wednesday, 8 p.m. Eastern/7 p.m. Central. AIA Archaeology Hour January 2026: Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act as a Path to Healing and Reciprocity. [Registration](#).

1/29 – Thursday, 5 p.m. MT/6 p.m. Central. The Impact of Roman Military Presence on the Arid Landscapes of Southern Jordan and Israel. Lecturer [Jennifer Ramsay](#) sponsored by the AIA Society of Bozeman; [Archaeological.org/Impact-of-Roman-Military-Presence](#).

1/31 – Saturday, 2 p.m. Dr. Stephen Humphreys lectures about the Camden Revolutionary War battlefield, Sponsored by the AIA Society of St. Louis. <https://users.stlcc.edu/mfuller/aia/index.html>; [Archaeological.org/Camden-Revolutionary-War-Battlefield/](#).

North Texas Archeological Society - NTAS

1/28 – Wednesday, 7 p.m. Monthly Meeting of the North Texas Archeological Society. Guests are welcome to join all NTAS monthly meetings in-person or via Zoom. To receive the Zoom link, please email info@ntxas.org.

Old Pueblo Archaeology Center

1/15 – Thursday, 7 p.m. MT/8 p.m. Central. Petroglyphs, Pottery, and Painting in the Ancient Southwest, Zoom presentation by archaeologist Kelley Hays-Gilpin, Ph.D. For more information contact Old Pueblo at info@oldpueblo.org.

West Essex Archaeological Group

1/12 – Monday 7:15 p.m. GMT/1:15 p.m. Central. Septimus, Hammer of the Scots, presented by Simon Elliott. Non-members are welcome to join in the Zoom meetings for a £2 contribution. Contact weagmembership@outlook.com for more details.

ON-SITE:

Some searchable websites listing upcoming events in Texas: [State Parks - Texas Parks & Wildlife Department](#); [Alamo Events](#); [State Historic Sites](#); <https://texashighways.com/events/>; [AIA Event Listings](#); [Archaeology Now](#), <https://www.heritagesociety.org/calendar>.

Archaeology Now, Houston Society of the Archaeological Institute of America

1/29 – Thursday, 7 p.m. From Madinat al-Zahra to the Alhambra. Discover connections between Europe's largest archaeological site, Madinat al-Zahra, and the stunning architecture and archaeology of the Alhambra, which it influenced. Lecture by Dr. Antonio Vallejo Triano, Director of Archaeology, Madinat al-Zahra, and Dr. Farshid Emami, Architectural Historian, Rice University. Dr. Triano appears remotely. Free admission, Hudspeth Auditorium, Rice University. Entrance #8 at the Intersection of West University and Stockton Street. Paid Parking Available in West Lot 4. More information [here](#).

Houston Civil War Round Table

1/15 – Thursday, 6 p.m. Dinner/7 p.m. Meeting and Lecture. Dr. Don Frazier speaking on Tom Green: Soldier of Three Republics. Non-members may attend a meeting with one free admission, then for \$10 or membership dues. Salt Grass Steakhouse, [8943 Katy Freeway](#).

Houston Maritime Center & Museum

1/12 – Monday, 6 p.m. [Maritime Monday: Dr. Jean-Paul Rodrigue](#), leading global expert in transport geography and maritime economics and Professor in the Department of Maritime Business Administration at Texas A&M University Galveston. Dr. Rodrigue will share insights on port economics, then stay for a networking happy hour and after-hours viewing of the museum exhibits. [RSVP](#).

Houston Museum of Natural Science

Exhibition - Terracotta Warriors. Learn about the power, artistry, and history of the famed Terracotta Warriors. Accompanying film in giant screen theater, [Mysteries of China](#).

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Exhibition –Art and Life in Imperial Rome: Trajan and his Times, featuring treasures from the great museums of Rome, Naples, and Vatican City and a re-creation of a section of Trajan's Column.

1/15 – Thursday, 6:30 p.m. Trajan's Rome fascinated artists long after the emperor died. Heather Hyde Minor examines Piranesi's careful study of Trajan's contributions to the city, from the monumental column wrapped in sculpture to enormous baths. Free with museum admission. Lynn Wyatt Theater in the Kinder Building. [More information](#).

Museum of the Coastal Bend, Victoria

1/8 – Thursday, 4 - 6 p.m. [John W. Stormont Lecture & Reception: America 250](#). Discover the pivotal moments that shaped our nation's history and experience American Revolution music with a live performance of fife and drum.

1/8 through 1/24 - Temporary Exhibit: Celebrating America 250--The American Revolution Experience.

1/29 – Thursday, 5:30 p.m. John W. Stormont Lecture Series: The Rise of LULAC and the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement in Victoria, Cuero, and Wharton County, 1929-2026. Dr. Cynthia E. Orozco presents a sweeping history of the League of United Latin-American Citizens (LULAC) and the Mexican American civil rights movement.

San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site

1/10 – Saturday, 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Second Saturdays with Steve: The Fredonian Rebellion.

1/25 – Sunday, 2 p.m. San Felipe Nature Walk in the Footsteps of Stephen F. Austin, led by the Gideon Lincecum Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists.

1/29 – Thursday, 6 p.m. Bryan McAuley discusses From the Ground Up - A Twenty-Year Retrospective.

Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site

1/17 – Saturday, 10 a.m. A Chef and Their Tools: A Crash Course on Cast Iron Care, an exploration of enslaved chefs and their shaping of American cuisine. Enslaved chefs like Hercules Posey and James Hemmings used cast iron pots and pans to create fine meals.

Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site

1/3 – Saturday, 10 a.m. 19th Century Medicine.

1/17 – Saturday, 10 a.m. Blacksmithing. Demonstrations on the forge in the recreated blacksmith shop.

1/24 – Saturday, 10 a.m. Crockett Comes to Town. In late January 1836, the Tennessee Mounted Volunteers under William Harrison's command arrived in Washington on their way to San Antonio and the Alamo.



Upper left: Downtown Houston skyscrapers covered in snow, 1925. Harry Walker.
<https://id.lib.uh.edu/ark:/84475/do9965v949h>.

Upper right: Downtown Houston covered in snow, 1925. Harry Walker.
<https://id.lib.uh.edu/ark:/84475/do52903057f>.



Lower left: Snow in east downtown Houston, 1925. Harry Walker.
<https://id.lib.uh.edu/ark:/84475/do8566j324w>;
[University of Houston Libraries Special Collections](#)
[Burdette Keeland Architectural Papers.](#)





Medieval Advice ~ How to Handle Monsters in the New Year



Buy it a few rounds

Play hard to get



Show off your moves on the dance floor

Give 'em the ol' one-two



Read it some experimental poetry



Show it your collection of vintage buttons



Get on its nerves by being overly dramatic



Go for the nose twist. Classic.





Archaeological Institute of America
FIRST LEGO LEAGUE CHALLENGE 2025-2026
Resources Offered by the Archaeological Institute of America

The Archaeological Institute of America has responded to student inquiries by creating an extremely comprehensive and interesting compilation of suggestions and resources, good for these students as well as anyone wishing to research or teach about archeological sites and projects. Additionally, Virginia Moore at the Texas Historical Commission (archeology@thc.texas.gov) is serving as an FLL coordinator in collaboration with the League contact, Dee Wallace (dee.wallace@gmail.com). Please feel free to share all these contacts and resources with any FIRST® LEGO® League friends. More information may be found at [FIRST LEGO League Challenge 2025-2026 - AIA; FIRST LEGO League Educational STEM Program.](#)



These links are only a portion of all the remarkable resources listed at [FIRST LEGO League Challenge 2025-2026 - Archaeological Institute of America.](#)

Ask an Archaeologist: Unearthing Challenges in Archaeology: <https://youtu.be/A10Vsbmn-q4>.

Here are some common questions and trusted resources for your team to start digging into some of the challenges faced by archaeologists and the tools we use to understand people through the artifacts, texts, and architecture they left behind.

What are some of the common challenges archaeologists face?

Logistical and Practical Challenges - Fundraising! Archaeological projects rely on grants, donations, and other forms of funding to pay for staffing, equipment, travel, scientific analysis, artifact and site conservation, etc. Lack of electricity and other modern facilities on site. The need for a wide variety of (sometimes expensive) excavation tools—everything from handheld tools such as pickaxes and trowels to larger tools such as trucks, portable scientific instruments, and ground-penetrating radar. *Research and Excavation Planning Challenges* - Pre-excavation research and deciding when and where to excavate. Today, archaeologists always start with a research question and then spend lots of time reading articles, books, and excavation notebooks from past projects. Have others conducted research nearby in the past? What did they learn? Archaeologists also need to survey the broader landscape of a potential dig site from the air (using balloons, kites, cranes, cameras, drones, and satellite imagery) and talk to people on the ground who live nearby. *Fieldwork and Site Condition Challenges* - Potentially hazardous site conditions: sometimes we need to dig through garbage and outhouses! Working in the sun! We often have to block harsh sun while we work, not just to protect our bodies but also to protect our electronic devices. *Artifact Handling, Analysis, and Storage Challenges* - Studying, drawing, photographing, and digitizing artifacts. We archaeologists draw and photograph everything we find. We also often have to find joins between pieces of pottery or other broken artifacts and have to physically support pots while they are being mended by conservators. Archaeologists also have to draw and photograph walls, architectural features, and sites more broadly, to create a record of what we find. Our aim these days is to make all of that information digital as well! The need for a wide variety of cleaning tools, materials, and workers for artifacts of many different types of materials (metal, bone, stone, ceramic...). On excavation, teams sometimes spend hours washing pottery! Keeping artifacts in good condition once they leave the ground. For example, bronze is known to disintegrate (sometimes within minutes!) due to a condition we call “bronze disease.” Storage space for finds. We need storage facilities that can withstand time and weather conditions, as well as bags and boxes that can keep artifacts safe from humidity, pests, etc. *Interpretation Challenges* - Considering multiple possible interpretations of what we find: many different stories can be told with the same data! Countering misconceptions about our field, such as “theories” about aliens and the “lost civilization” of Atlantis. We also sometimes have to remind people that we don’t study dinosaurs or rocks! Archaeologists study *people* through the things they left behind. And we don’t dig for “treasure” OR keep the things we find! *Public Engagement and Communication Challenges* - Forming and maintaining good relationships with local populations and governments where we are working. Collaboration is key. Making sites accessible to visitors: leading tours, having signs and pamphlets or other types of information available, maintaining websites and/or public social media accounts. Sharing our work with the public and other researchers. How can we share our findings as widely as possible? *Site Preservation Challenges* - Looting, vandalism, littering, and other human effects on sites: if we leave a site overnight or for months between seasons, we need to protect it. Environmental effects on sites, such as tree roots, animal burrows, erosion, flooding, and sea level rise. Getting and keeping sites clean, open, and presentable. For example, exposed mudbrick architecture needs to be protected in special ways to prevent it from being damaged by rain, wind, and other stresses.

Some Common Questions We’ve Gotten from Teams So Far

How does Archaeology contribute to our understanding of humans (ancient and modern)? By unearthing the material remains of the past, archaeologists can better understand how humans lived throughout history. People use physical objects of all kinds as they interact with the world around them, so studying those objects and thinking about how they might have been used in the past can help us to learn about how people lived in different times and places. There is no one right answer! Archaeology shows us the wonderful diversity of human beings, reminding us that there are many ways to experience the world, and to interact with its material objects and make meaning from them. By understanding our past, we can bring new perspectives to the present. Archaeology helps us to think about what it means to live within a whole range of experiences, and to better inform the future and how humans interact with one another. *What tools or technologies do archaeologists frequently use in their work?* It depends on what stage of research they are in, but the number one tool these days is definitely a computer! Whether archaeologists are doing initial research, recording their findings in a database, making spreadsheets to find out the distributions of different kinds of pottery, editing photos, making 3D models of sites or photos, or writing up a final report, journal article, or book manuscript—computers make it all possible! Aside from computers, there are many tools used in excavation such as trowels, plumb bobs, pick axes, paint brushes, cameras, handheld GPS devices, and total stations. Lab and conservation tools might include a flotation tank, scales, calipers, compass and protractor sets, microscopes and Scanning Electron Microscopes. Archaeologists with different scientific specialties will also employ highly technical analysis tools such as Ground-penetrating radar, LiDAR, magnetometry, portable X-ray fluorescence analyzers, micro-CT scanners, and more.

How has the field of archaeology evolved with the use of modern technologies? One way to simplify this big question is to think about a specific site with a long history of excavations. Here's an example from Corinth, Greece. In the late 1800s, the excavation employed a large number of people and primarily recorded intact artifacts like vases and sculptures. So much dirt was dug that they built a railcar system to move earth to an excavation dump! By the mid-1900s, the model changed to dig seasonally, only three months of the year. Fewer people were involved, and even the small fragments were recorded. Today, specialized tools like iDig, an archaeology app, are used to record artifacts and excavation layers, and archaeologists can use additional technologies like portable X-ray fluorescence to study traces of color on artifacts. *What skills or qualities are key for someone interested in archaeology?* Archaeologists have to be good team players, first and foremost. Everything we do in archaeology is collaborative, and teams working in the field are made up of many people, from specialists who work on pottery, to scientists to help us analyze what we find, to students just learning how to excavate—the experts of the future. Generally speaking, people who are interested in archaeology should understand that there are many different kinds of sources we use to learn about the past, such as artifacts and ancient texts, and that there is no single “truth” that we seek to know about the past—many answers are possible, scholarship in archaeology is a series of hypotheses and conversations, and we rarely ever know “the answer” for sure. Future archaeologists should also be interested in learning about people, rather than just the things they left behind; the work we do in archaeology is meant to help us learn more about communities and individuals’ lives in the past, but also about ourselves as humans more generally.

Archaeological Institute of America online resources: [Interactive Digs](#)—follow 20+ excavations right from your computer; [ARCHAEOLOGY magazine](#); get the latest from the AIA’s popular publication; [ARCHAEOLOGY magazine archive](#); [American Journal of Archaeology online](#); [International Archaeology Day \(IAD\) Build Your Own Monument Challenge](#) – See the submissions and results! [Fun archaeology trivia games from our IAD archive](#). Take a virtual trip around the world by viewing the entries to this year’s [AIA Photo Contest](#); [AIA Outreach and Education Pages](#); Skype a Scientist: Now available for families at home. [Archaeologists can read more about signing up here](#). [Introduction to Archaeology](#); [FAQ](#); [Lesson Plans](#); [Multimedia](#): videos, podcasts, virtual field trips, movies, and more; [ArchaeologyTV](#) – The AIA’s YouTube channel

Check out these webinars from the AIA-Spokane Society: [“Humans as Artifacts: Inventing and Displaying Pompeian Body Casts”](#) by Dr. Kevin Dicus; [“Living With the Dead Urbanism in the Roman Suburbs of Pompeii”](#) by Dr. Allison L. C. Emmerson; [“Street Theater: A Pompeian Neighborhood in Five Acts,”](#) presented by Dr. Jeremy Hartnett; Follow AIA on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Additional Resources from around the web, resources in a variety of formats for various age groups: [Acropolis Museum Learning Resources](#); [American Center of Oriental Research Photo Archive](#); [American Research Center in Egypt \(ARCE\) Podcast](#); [Ancient Rome Live – Live Lectures \(Online Seminars\)](#); [Archaeology in the Time of Black Lives Matter](#) – a panel discussion held on June 25, 2020. Sponsored by the Society of Black Archaeologists, Theoretical Archaeology Group (North America), and Columbia University Center for Archaeology; [Archaeology Online Educational Content Resources for Teachers and Students](#) (Google doc started by Lewis Borck, University of Missouri); [Archaeology Podcast Network](#); [Council for British Archaeology Resources hub](#); [DigVentures – How to do Archaeology \(April 2020\) \(Virtual Fieldschool\)](#); [GlobalXplorer](#); [Google Arts & Culture](#); [Harvard Museums of Science & Culture](#) – “Hold” Augmented Reality Artifacts from HMSC’s Cases; [National Park Service – Archaeology Program](#); [Learning Sites](#) (projects listed by region); [Monument Lab Field Trip](#); [Smithsonian Magazine \(86 Cultural, Historical and Scientific Collections you can Explore online\)](#); [Society of Black Archaeologists resources \(Online Maps and Databases\)](#); [The Heritage Education Network \(THEN\) Annotated Bibliography Project](#); [TrowelBlazers](#); [UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology – Virtual Pizza Talks](#); [Zoom Goes the History](#) video sessions hosted by the American Battlefield Trust

Virtual Museums, Exhibits, & Museum Tours: [Acropolis Museum, Athens](#); [American Research Center in Egypt \(ARCE\) Virtual Tours](#); [Virtual Tour of the Aslam al-Silahdar Mosque](#); [Virtual Tour of the Bab Zuwayla](#); [Virtual Tour of the Monastery of St. Anthony](#); [Virtual Tour of Theban Tombs 286 and 159](#); [Virtual Tour of the Tomb of Menna](#); [Virtual Tour of Zawiya and Sabil Faraj Ibn Barquq](#); [Ancient North Carolinians \(A Virtual Museum of North Carolina Archaeology\)](#); [Archeologie Gemeente Den Haag](#); [Art Gallery of South Australia](#); [Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford \(Online Collection\)](#); [Bureau of Ocean Energy Management \(BOEM\) Virtual Archaeology Museum](#); [Boston’s Black Heritage Trail](#); [The British Museum](#); [The Final Passage](#), a 28-minute immersive experience of the Chauvet-Pont d’Arc Cave and its paintings (available to view for free through June 7); [Colonial Williamsburg \(Explore from Home\)](#); [Egypt’s Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities’ Virtual Tours](#); [Ben Ezra Synagogue](#); [Mosque-Madrassa and Khanqa of Sultan Barquq](#); [Red Monastery in Sohag](#); [Tomb of Kheti in Beni Hassan Necropolis](#); [Tomb of Queen Meresankh III](#) (presented by the Giza Project at Harvard); [e-Museum National Treasures & Important Cultural Properties of National Museums, Japan](#); [Guggenheim Bilbao](#); [Harvard Museum of Natural History \(HMNH\) \(Online Exhibitions\)](#); [HMNH Exhibit Videos](#); [Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East \(HMANE\) Virtual Tour](#) (formerly known as the Harvard Semetic Museum); [HMSC Connects](#) (Online resources from all four Harvard Museums of Science & Culture); [Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum](#); [The J. Paul Getty Museum](#); [Jamestown Rediscovery – Historic Jamestowne \(Map of Discoveries\)](#); [360 ° virtual tour of the Lascaux Bull Room \(AOL-Digital-Vision by AquitaineOnline virtual tour\)](#); [Massachusetts Historical Society \(Online Exhibits\)](#); [The Met 360° Project \(The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York\)](#); [Monticello \(Live Virtual Tours\)](#); [Monticello \(Online Exhibits\)](#); [Museo del Oro, Bogota](#); [Museu de Arte de Sao Paulo Assis Chateaubriand](#); [Museum of Fine Arts, Boston](#); [Mount Vernon \(Digital Experiences\)](#); [Mount Vernon \(Virtual Tour\)](#); [National Museums of Kenya](#); [The Natural History Museum, London](#); [Open Virtual Worlds \(Research Group at University of St. Andrews\)](#); [Open content: 150,000 works from the museum collections of the city of Paris, freely available](#); [Paris Catacombs](#); [Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology at Harvard \(Online Exhibitions\)](#); [PMAE Collections Online](#); [Rezan Has Museum, Istanbul](#); [Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam](#); [Smithsonian \(Online Exhibits\)](#); [Vatican City Tour \(Virtual\)](#); [Virginia Museum of History & Culture](#).



Vintage Images Snow

Happy New Year!

We invite you to join us in 2026 as we continue our work ~
digging up history one trowelful at a time!



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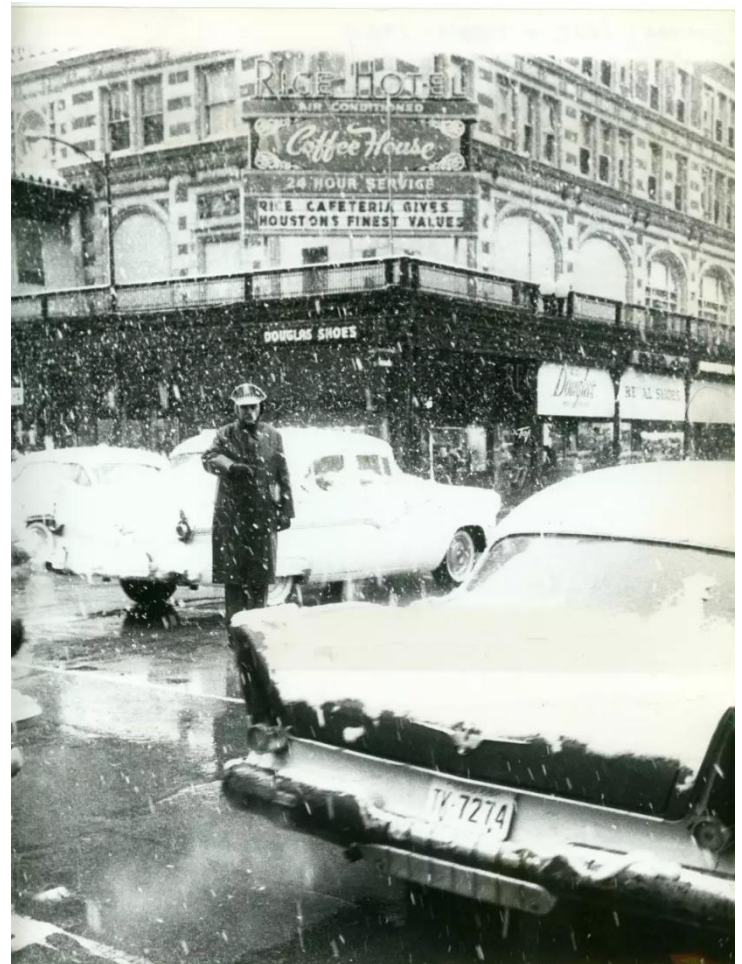
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Feb. 13, 1960: Snow falls on traffic at Main St. and Prairie in downtown Houston. Snow falling heavily downtown in front of the Rice Hotel while officer directs traffic, c. 1960. Owen Johnson/Houston Chronicle. February 13, 1960: This was the view at Lamar Avenue and Chenevert Street. Houston Chronicle Archives, [Old photos show Houston snow.](#)

